

THE CURE

Written by

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INT. DOCTOR'S MESSY CAR - AFTERNOON

A MAN sits alone in his car contemplatively. He holds a gun and a picture of a young girl. He stares at both before placing the picture in his dashboard.

INT. AN ABANDONED HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The same man, an imposing height, mid 40s, stalks through a desolate hallway. His grip on his gun is tight as he checks each corridor and room methodically. He has done this before.

As he sweeps the hallway, there is a crash and a groan from afar. The man carefully makes his way there.

Turning the corner he sees a man laying on the ground with a broken mug next to him, shattered from impact. There are shards of glass from the mug in his hair. Rope is taugth around his neck. A girl, somewhere in her late teens or early 20s, holds the other end of the rope, exhausted.

INT. AN ABANDONED KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The man steps into the room making his presence known. The girl screams and cowers. She is in tattered clothes with bruises nearly everywhere except her face.

THE DAUGHTER

Are you... our Doctor?

THE DOCTOR does not react, still staring at the body.

THE DOCTOR

Not you. Just him.

He walks closer to his PATIENT, then aims the barrel at him.

THE DAUGHTER

NO! No. No, it's done. I... I handled everything. The virus... it... please. Just leave him, I don't want to see my dad like this.

The Doctor pieces together what she is saying, then turns his gun to her.

THE DOCTOR

You sick too then?

He cocks his gun and she shuffles backwards, cowering again.

THE DAUGHTER

No. I don't know. No. No symptoms
and I've been with him the whole
time. No. I don't- no.

He holds his aim for a beat then withdraws and turns sharply
to leave without a word.

THE DAUGHTER (CONT'D)

Wait - wait that's it? Come back!

THE DOCTOR

You're not on my schedule anyway.

The Doctor turns again to leave.

THE DAUGHTER

What should I - wait, come back!!
What should I do??

He lets out a deep sigh.

THE DOCTOR

Start learning to live on your own.
You reap what you sow, kid.

INT. DOCTOR'S MESSY CAR - AFTERNOON

The Doctor gets into his car and sees the Daughter running
after him from the abandoned building. He locks his doors as
she tries to open it, before knocking on the window.

THE DAUGHTER

(muffled from outdoors) I don't
know how to do that! Please! I have
nothing!

The Doctor sighs before catching sight of the photo in his
dashboard. He rolls his eyes and slowly cracks his window.

THE DAUGHTER (CONT'D)

Please. You're a doctor still -
right? I-I lived with him for years
and nothing. Maybe I'm immune.
Can't you help? Or do doctors not
do that anymore.

A beat. He grabs the photo from the dash and throws it in his
glove compartment, then reaches over and unlocks the door.

THE DOCTOR

You get one night. I get one blood sample. Then you figure out how to be on your own.

She gets in quickly and shuts the door.

INT. DOCTOR'S MESSY CAR - EVENING

The Doctor drives as the girl sits uncomfortably. They steal glances of each other back and forth, each one choosing not to interact. The girl, tired of the boredom, takes out a notepad from her bag. She begins to draw.

The Doctor shoots glances, until finally catching a good glimpse and being impressed. He stares for a moment too long and has to adjust the wheel.

THE DOCTOR

Shit - my bad.

THE DAUGHTER

You should watch the road.

THE DOCTOR

Yeah. Thanks.

Another beat of silence.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Those are pretty good. You like to draw?

THE DAUGHTER

It is all I have had really while we have been hiding from... well. You.

THE DOCTOR

Right.

She senses his attempts to communicate and feels the tension slightly release.

THE DAUGHTER

You want to see some more?

She starts to flip through as he shifts his gaze between the road and her drawings.

THE DOCTOR

These are really good, kid. You should be proud.

The Daughter brings her feet up to sit perched in the passenger seat. She looks out the window briefly, then looks around the car. He senses she is more comfortable.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
(awkwardly)
So, what other kind of stuff do you like?

THE DAUGHTER
Like... food? Colors? Flowers? Activities? That's a really dumb question.

THE DOCTOR
I don't know, yes. That. All of that, what do you like?

A beat; then-

THE DAUGHTER
Um. Soup, lavender, peony. And singing but, I'm bad.

The Doctor nods, not sure how to continue the small talk.

THE DAUGHTER (CONT'D)
You know you should clean your car.

The Doctor looks at the road, remaining silent.

THE DAUGHTER (CONT'D)
Like one wipe probably would pick up a decade of dust. Pre-pandemic bunnies all over!

Still no response from The Doctor.

THE DAUGHTER (CONT'D)
Do you have any in here?

She reaches for the glove compartment which finally draws out a reaction.

THE DOCTOR
DON'T touch that!

He lurches to grab her wrist to stop her before she can open. She tenses and stares up at the Doctor with a slight shake. He notices her reaction and slowly lets go.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Just... Jesus, kid. Stop. Please.

They return to silence as she reverts back to the shell she started in.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Sorry. Just didn't you learn not to be going through people's stuff? Should've learned that years ago. How old even are you?

THE DAUGHTER

Uhh.. I don't really remember. We stopped counting after I turned 16. Old enough, he would say.

The Doctor looks over to her quickly, seeing a stare forward as if losing herself in memories that she tries to forget.

THE DAUGHTER (CONT'D)

How much longer? I'm pretty drained.

After she asks, she swings to look behind the car, as if searching for something.

THE DOCTOR

About 3 more hours. You can sleep in the back if you need.

THE DAUGHTER

No I get... car sick if I do that. Can we stop for the night? Isn't there a motel on this road?

He looks to her, examining her thought process curiously.

THE DOCTOR

Yeah - how did you know that?

THE DAUGHTER

Oh, we used to live up this way before he got on your list. Yeah.

She checks the back window again, then turns back quickly when she notices that the Doctor is watching her.

THE DAUGHTER (CONT'D)

Please, I just really need to get off the road.

He continues to examine, unsure of what to make of this shift in her behavior, before nodding and pulling off.

INT. MOTEL LOBBY - EVENING

The Doctor walks up to a young man in his early 20s who works the front desk. The Daughter wanders around the lobby, looking through various magazines that lay around.

MOTEL WORKER

Did you not see the sign man? No vacanc-

The Doctor pulls out a badge from his coat pocket, with a caduceus symbol and a government ID.

MOTEL WORKER (CONT'D)

Oh shit, you're a Doctor? My bad, man, I didn't... sorry, man, I wasn't expecting one of you. Shit - you coming back from a job?

The Doctor remains silent and stows his badge.

THE DOCTOR

I assume you got a reserve room for me? Just for the night.

MOTEL WORKER

Yeah, man, I mean, sir, yes, just need you to fill out your credentials in our system.

The worker slides a pen and paper which the Doctor writes his name, address, DOB, and badge number on. As he writes he looks up and sees a fridge behind the desk.

THE DOCTOR

Can I get an iced tea?

The motel worker nods and hands a bottle from the fridge.

The Doctor tosses it to the Daughter, who has been curiously checking the front door windows in between all of her laps. She catches it, startled.

THE DAUGHTER

You need me to open this for you?

THE DOCTOR?

What? No that's for you, kid.

Her eyes light up and she starts to drink it. She is overjoyed by how good it tastes, nearly finishing the entire bottle, before the Doctor comes up with a key.

THE DOCTOR

Here we are. I can take the floor.
I'll wait in the lobby as well if
you want to take a moment to
shower.

The Daughter's eyes start to water and she looks to the front door windows again. She wipes her cheeks and her expression changes.

THE DAUGHTER

Can- can we keep driving? I think
this drink was just what I needed.
I don't want to sleep here.

Another nervous look to the window.

THE DAUGHTER (CONT'D)

Please.

Frustration begins to well inside the Doctor at her recent strange behavior, but seeing how serious her face is convinces him to agree against his better judgment.

EXT. THE DOCTOR'S CAR - NIGHT

The pair closes car doors in a driveway leading up to a small house. The Doctor crosses to the other side and pulls out his gun and the picture of a girl from his glove compartment. The Daughter stares at him for a moment before they walk inside.

INT. THE DOCTOR'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Daughter lays uncomfortably on a disheveled couch, with a small needle and IV connected to a vial. The Doctor finishes collecting a blood sample as she winces. His gun lays on the living room table as well, next to his picture.

THE DOCTOR

There we go, you're done. Nicely
done, kid.

He taps the top of her arm awkwardly but congratulatory. She sits up as he takes out the needle and covers the wound.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

You did good - I know some people
who pass out from that. I remember
back when I was in school I would
practice on my dau-

He cuts himself off as he was about to lose himself to a thought he doesn't want to relive. He slowly stands up and walks to the kitchen, clearing his throat. Stoically again, he instructs her of the next steps.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I laid some clothes out in the bathroom that should fit you. After we eat you can hop in there. Come help me first though.

She stands up and stares at him for a moment.

THE DAUGHTER

That picture you carry around. Is that her?

He stays in the kitchen, not turning to face the Daughter, while getting ingredients out of cabinets. She stares at him for a moment, connecting the dots of his kindness, before walking up to help.

The two work in tandem, carefully maneuvering around each other in the tight kitchen, the Doctor cutting vegetables and handing things off to the Daughter. She weaves around him, opening cabinets for dishes, and setting the table next to them. They sit together, sharing a meal in soft silence.

INT. THE DOCTOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The steam pours out from underneath the door as the Doctor gets the bed prepped, and grabs blankets for himself to go to the couch. The Daughter steps out of the bathroom in the t-shirt that he had originally laid out.

THE DOCTOR

Should be sweatpants that I left in there too. I'll take the couch.

She nods and stays in the doorway. After a beat, she walks up to the doctor and slowly tries to give him a hug. She is tense and uncomfortable in her hug, before awkwardly leaning up to try and kiss him, her hands on his shoulders trembling. The Doctor jumps back, pushing her away.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

The girl stares at him.

THE DAUGHTER

I just - thanks, that's all.

THE DOCTOR

That is how you *thank* someone?
Jesus, kid, what the hell is wrong
with you??

He stares at her, yet she returns the gaze confused. She does not know what she has done wrong.

Quickly her gaze trails off from the Doctor, past him into the living room, and the confusion she was experiencing switches to panic in an instant.

The Doctor turns to the living room to see what has caught her attention. Behind him walks in THE PATIENT, the man originally thought to be dead. The father of the girl that stands before The Doctor. He has a baseball bat in his hand and he swings it, connecting with the temple of The Doctor right as he comes into his focus.

INT. THE DOCTOR'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A black sack is ripped off the head of The Doctor as he comes to from unconsciousness. He feels his hands and legs tied to the chair he is seated in, and as he regains his senses, two voices are locked in conversation.

THE PATIENT

You know how fucking hard it was to
find you? I thought we said the
motel. I thought we had a fucking
PLAN!

The Daughter is collapsed on the floor as the Patient yells at her. She is profusely apologizing, flinching at every sudden movement the Patient makes.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)

I still love you, baby, but when
you weren't at the motel like we
planned I just... I panicked. You
did that, you made me do that. But
it is okay, baby, I found you. And
now we can do what we wanted.

Her sobbing intensifies as the Patient turns to face The Doctor.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)

Good morning, sunshine, you finally
come to? Good. See, I was just
going to keep swinging but.

(MORE)

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)
You made my baby girl all worked up
and I figured we could savor the
moment.

The Doctor starts to connect the dots of what he was hearing
and tries to speak.

THE DOCTOR
You, this, this was all planned?

The Patient starts laughing and swings the bat he was
holding, connecting with the Doctor's knee. His leg jolts up
in reflex.

THE PATIENT
There we go, remember that? When is
the last time you even did some
real Doctor shit like that. Reckon
I'm more of a real Doctor than you
now. No, no, now all you do is-

He slams his other knee to see it jolt up in reflex.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)
Kill us! Kill whoever is sick!
Cause you didn't get no cure, did
you. Well guess what, Doctor. I'm
the cure.

One last crack of the bat into his ribs and the chair topples
over. He feels his weight crack the wood which loosens the
rope that has him tied. He hears the Daughter scream out as
he hits the floor.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)
SHUT UP. This is your fault too,
you're lucky I don't have you
strapped up with him. But remember,
your daddy is kind, and he loves
you. Isn't that right, darling.

The Patient lifts the bat towards the Daughter quickly,
causing her to flinch so hard she collapses. He laughs and
puts the bat down, and goes to grab the gun that the Doctor
left on the table.

THE DOCTOR
What is this then, revenge? You
think I like what I do?

THE PATIENT

I bet you do, you sick fuck. Hm?
Killing innocent people and then
stealing their children to try and
what, have sex with? I bet that's
why you fell for this shit, too.

He waves the gun around haphazardly, before pointing it at his Daughter.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)

And you almost fell for it too,
didn't you. But don't worry. I'm
here to set you stra-

In an instant, the Doctor lurches forward off the ground, blindsiding the Patient with a tackle, the gun cascading out of his hands and sliding towards the girl. The Doctor begins to wail on the man, furiously.

THE DOCTOR

You are the sick fuck. What you do
to this girl.

Another punch.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Who you think she is and who she
actually is-

Another punch.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

You have no fucking idea. You want
revenge? Instead, allow me to
finish my job.

The Patient tries to turn to look to his Daughter.

THE PATIENT

Ple-please. Please! Help me, he is
trying to kill me! Please! Please
baby, I'm sorry, I love you.
Please.

Each attempt at pleading is interrupted by another *thwack* from the Doctor on top of him.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)

Ple-

The last plead is cut off as a gun shot rings out. Silence follows until.

Thud.

The Doctor slides off of the Patient onto the ground, bleeding from his stomach.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)
I knew you would help, I knew you
could do it-

Another gun shot echoes.

THE PATIENT (CONT'D)
Wha-what?

Two more shots. Then three. Then four. All rattled into the Patient, as the Daughter unloads the rest of the magazine into her father with rage. Relief washes over her, then realization of what she has done, as she drops the gun. Looking over the two bodies on the ground, she dives over to the Doctor, slowly picking him up in tears.

THE DAUGHTER
I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry. I don't
know what... I don't...

The Doctor, with labored breathing as he clutches his stomach, looks back up at her with eyes that reflect a sense of comfort - something she is not expecting.

He grunts as he tries to reposition himself but gives up quickly. She starts to panic and tries to help.

THE DOCTOR
Please- no. I'm proud of you.

For The Doctor, there is a cyclical sense of finality that he views as penance for his previous life. He closes his eyes with a smile, and he lets out one last breath. The Daughter, now alone in the house, holds tight.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE - MORNING

The Daughter stands next to a mound in the earth, a makeshift grave with stones carefully placed around it, and a grouping of larger ones on top.

She has in her hands her sketchbook from earlier, and the photo that the Doctor carried around. She rips out a page from the book, which has a sketch of the Doctor smiling, and tucks it in between the rocks on top. She then carefully places the picture between the rocks as well. She takes a moment to stare before walking back into the house, leaving the Doctor's grave with a final farewell.