

MONARCH CROSSING

Written by

Tara Kaye Burgh

Based on, If Any

Address  
Phone Number

EXT. RANCH - DAWN

A farmhouse sits below overgrown grass. The white panelling and yellow trim are a need of a touch up.

A soft breeze WHISTLES.

INT. BARN - DAWN

A pile of hay covers the ground. A HORSE grazes. Their breathe rises and falls beneath their chestnut mane.

A Rooster CROWS.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Dust fills the stream of sunlight coming over the counter.

A kettle sits on the front burner. A tea bag, cup, and spoon neatly displayed beside it. In the corner, somewhere around 10 pill bottles, are gathered.

ON THE FRIDGE

A Note: Blue pills @ 7am. White pills @ 9am.

INT. FARMHOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

A WOMAN, 80s, silver hair, and wearing her long life, lays in bed. Her hands, clasped across her chest. Her feet move beneath the sheets. She watches the ceiling.

INT. FARMHOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING

The woman stands before the vanity in her night gown. She takes a dollop of lotion and gently applies it. She examines her arm, the spots, the scars.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

A faucet turns on. The woman fills a glass. She switches off the water. About to take a sip. She stops. She stares intently out the window. It's nothing.

She sets the glass down beside the sink, turning back to her burning bacon.

She quickly scoops the pieces up and onto a plate.

The table is set with two plates, two sets of silver ware, and two cups of tea. She goes to the side across from where she's placed the bacon, sliding into the seat, almost child like.

She sips her tea and smiles at the bacon.

INT. BARN - MORNING

A linen dress blows. Worn cowboy boots stand in the hay.

The woman gently brushes the chestnut horses nose.

WOMAN

There there girl. Oh. Isn't that nice.

VOICE (O.S.)

Ms. Laurel?

WOMAN

I'm in the barn.

A YOUNG MAN, mid 20s, dressed from head to toe in rancher gear, and cheeks flushed, enters holding a bag of horse meal.

YOUNG MAN

Hi, Ms. Laurel, how are you today?

The young man take the bag to a bucket.

MS. LAUREL

My husband won't be home until later. I can't pay you quite yet.

The young man unloads the bag. He looks at her.

YOUNG MAN

I know.

She eyes him, confused. Realizing he may of upset her.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Hey. Look, this ones on the house.

LAUREL

That's very kind of you.

He nods and continues unloading. She pets the horse, in thought.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

How did you know my name?

Young man stops.

YOUNG MAN  
It's on the order. Ma'am.

Laurel smiles at him, but still unsure.

A BUTTERFLY swipes past her ear. She looks up, mesmerized, and watches it fly through the barn.

Suddenly-

She follows.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)  
Ms. Laurel?

He goes after her.

EXT. BARN

Laurel is half way through the pasture. Young man watches after her.

YOUNG MAN  
Ms. Laurel!

She doesn't stop.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)  
What in sam hell.

He runs to the truck parked behind him.

EXT. PASTURE

Laurel's eyes meticulously watch the butterfly. She comes to the edge of a forest. The butterfly disappears behind the leaves. She steps through.

INT. FOREST

Laurel pushes past the branches, coming into a clearing.

The air hollow, before hitting the roof of tree tops high above. Sunlight bounces off bark in different directions. The birds CHIRP. A calming stream of water plays.

The butterfly perches on a rock in the water. Laurel goes to it. She kneels down to get a better look.

Just then—

It's off again.

Together, they stroll along the river bank.

The river widens. Here, a large tree lays across the river.

The butterfly lands on the log.

Laurel slides off her boots and climbs into the cold water, gritting her teeth.

A foot away, she reaches out and almost loses her balance.

The butterfly rises to meet Laurel's gaze. It pauses and Laurel stares back. She puts out her index finger, but it retreats.

Laurel gulps back a deep breath. She slowly turns her hand over, welcoming them. The butterfly slowly goes to her, and lands on her open palm.

She lets out a giggle. A tear falls to her cheek.

Then—

LAUGHS come from the other side of the tree.

Laurel breaks her gaze to see a YOUNG COUPLE.

A YOUNG WOMAN, mid 20s, wears loose curls and a long cream and floral dress. She stands barefoot on the edge of the water.

YOUNG WOMAN

Mama's gonna get mad if I ruin my  
dress, Lee.

The young man, LEE, mid 20s, in a white tee with the sleeves rolled, moves through the water.

LEE

Totally worth it! I promise!

The young woman contemplates. Then, grabs the hem of her dress and steps in. She goes to Lee, who stands at the tree, looking straight to the sky.

LEE (CONT'D)

Come on.

He picks her up. She lets out a gleeful yelp.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Lee! What are you doing?

He sets her on the log.

LEE  
You'll see.

He climbs up beside her and lends his hand. She takes it and stands.

YOUNG WOMAN  
What are we doing?

He takes baby steps back and fourth, searching the sky.

LEE  
Okay. Stand right here.

He takes her waist and brings her to him. She smiles. He continues to search the sky. She watches. He takes notice and smiles back.

He whispers—

LEE (CONT'D)  
See the opening in the trees.

Eyes still locked on him—

YOUNG WOMAN  
Mhmm.

LEE  
Your not looking.

She grins and looks up. He steps back.

LEE (CONT'D)  
Now say something.

She looks back to him.

YOUNG WOMAN  
What?

LEE  
Go on.

YOUNG WOMAN  
What am I suppose to say?

LEE  
Anything.

She looks up again.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Lee Simons is an idiot.

"Idiot" rings through the tree tops. She clasps her hand over her mouth.

LEE  
Hey! At least say I'm a handsome idiot.

Lifting her head again—

YOUNG WOMAN  
Lee Simons is a stupid idiot.

"Stupid Idiot" rings through.

LEE  
Alright. My turn.

She steps back and he takes her place. He pauses.

YOUNG WOMAN  
What?

He stares at her.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)  
Lee.

He smiles.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)  
Alright. You can call me an idiot if you want. But stupid idiot is—

He lifts his head.

LEE  
I love LAUREL K. Scott!

It echoes through even louder.

YOUNG LAUREL  
You stupid idiot. That's what you brought me here for. Mama is gonna kill me for ruinin' this dress.

He goes to her and kisses her. She leans into him.

LEE  
I love you, Laurel.

She wraps her arms around his neck and kisses him.

A butterfly circles them.

Below them, watching, older Laurel.

The couple is gone.

LAUREL

Lee.

The Butterfly flies toward the opening in the trees.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

Wait!

She pushes herself against the log, head following the butterfly.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

The grass is freshly cut. The same white panelling and yellow trim wrap the house, but with 50 years less wear and tear.

The Butterfly sits on the porch railing.

Young LAUREL paces. Lee leans against the post.

LEE

Hey. Hey. Look at me. Everything is gonna be fine.

She stops. Her breathing panicked.

The front door opens.

A MIDDLE AGED MAN with a comb over and a neatly tucked shirt, stands in the door way. Young Laurel rushes to the door.

YOUNG LAUREL

Hi Daddy.

She gives her father a kiss and goes inside.

LEE

Mr. Scott. Good to see you.

SCOTT

Mr. Simons. Hello.

Scott steps back, gesturing for him to come inside. Lee nods and steps in.



INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Young Laurel and Lee sit on the sofa, Mr. Scott in an arm chair.

MR. SCOTT  
Elaine! The kids are here!

ELAINE (O.C)  
I'm comin'!

ELAINE enters. She is a middle aged woman, who considers anything that takes her away from her mundane house wife duties an inconvenience.

She wipes her hands on her apron and fluffs her hair.

ELAINE (CONT'D)  
I've got the timer on for 30 minutes and that alots for time to put on make up and somethin' appropriate for service tonight. I know you couldn't possibly understand that Laurel.

Young Laurel blushes and rings her hands in her lap.

MR. SCOTT  
Elaine. For God sakes. Will you sit down.

ELAINE  
Alright. Alright.

She sits.

ELAINE (CONT'D)  
Well. What is all this fuss about?

A moment of SILENCE.

Young Laurel opens her mouth but-

ELAINE (CONT'D)  
I know you aren't tellin' me your pregnant.

Young Laurel swallows her words. Her father sits up.

ELAINE (CONT'D)  
Oh my god.

LEE

Mr. and Mrs. Scott. I love your daughter.

ELAINE

How could you do this to me? Do you know what people will say?

LEE

I plan to marry your daughter.

ELAINE

Well, by god you better. We won't have some bastard child-

MR. SCOTT

Elaine!

ELAINE

What, Jon? Someones got to say somethin' Your not sayin' anything. Your just sittin' there.

Young Laurel stands and storms out of the house. Lee follows.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Young Laurel hurries down the steps, Lee coming after her.

LEE

Laurel. Wait.

YOUNG LAUREL

When were you gonna tell me?

LEE

What?

YOUNG LAUREL

The marriage.

LEE

What? I thought that's what you wanted?

YOUNG LAUREL

Not like this. I don't need you to marry me Lee. I can do this by myself. Okay? I don't need some obligatory marriage. Alright?

LEE

I love you. Laurel. Despite what  
you might think. I want to be here.  
I want to raise this baby with you.  
I want to marry you.

She thinks.

YOUNG LAUREL

I can do this by myself.

LEE

I know you can.

He takes her hand and kisses it.

LEE (CONT'D)

But I can't. I need you.

The Butterfly leaves the porch.

EXT. APARTMENT - WINDOW - DAY

The Butterfly rapidly flies around the frame.

INT. APARTMENT - WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

The Butterfly continues.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Young Laurel watches the Butterfly as she washes dishes. Lee  
stands behind her. His hands on his waist.

LEE

Laurel. I. It's just. When I'm with  
her I think about you. And when I'm  
with you I think about her.

Young Laurel whips around.

YOUNG LAUREL

Is that suppose to make this  
better? What do you want me to say  
that to that Lee? Am I suppose to  
feel bad for you? Your in love with  
two women?

LEE

No. Laurel. Not in love with two  
women.

Young Laurel is stunned.

YOUNG LAUREL

Oh.

LEE

No. I didn't mean it like that. I  
love you.

He moves toward her.

YOUNG LAUREL

Don't you dare.

The front door swings open.

VOICE (O.C)

Mommy!

JENNY, 4 years old, messy pig tails and paint smudged on her  
face, runs in.

JENNY

Mommy. Look what I made at  
grandmas.

She holds up a piece a paper covered with different colors.  
Young Laurel tries to wipe the paint from her daughters face.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Grandma says it's abstract.

Elaine enters holding a BABY, maybe a year old.

ELAINE

Just like her mother.

MICHELLE, 7 years old, passes them with a book cracked open.

LEE

Hey kiddo.

MICHELLE

Hi.

The baby starts to cry.

ELAINE

Oh. No.

YOUNG LAUREL

Here Mom. Let me take him.

Young Laurel rocks the baby and turns into—

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The phone rings.

Elaine is at the stove.

Mr. Scott picks up the phone.

Jenny and Michelle sit at the kitchen table.

YOUNG LAUREL  
Did you girls finish your homework?

JENNY & MICHELLE  
Yes, mom.

Whispering-

MR. SCOTT  
You really shouldn't be calling  
here.

YOUNG LAUREL  
Daddy. Who is it?

MR. SCOTT  
Lee.

He extends the phone.

YOUNG LAUREL  
Hello?

INT. APARTMENT - KID'S ROOM - NIGHT

Young Laurel lays the baby in his crib. Jenny and Michelle are tucked in their beds. Lee kisses the girls. Young Laurel watches him.

LEE  
We did good didn't-

Young Laurel brings her finger to her lips, motioning for him to be quiet. He cups his mouth. Laurel laughs. They lock eyes.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lee and Young Laurel stand together in the darkness. He holds her face and leans in to kiss her. She pulls away. He pauses. He slowly kisses her forehead, then her cheek.

He lingers over her lips. He softly presses his lips to hers. She kisses back and folds her hand over his.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

CRIES come from the other room. Lee lies in bed. He stare out the window.

The crying stops.

Young Laurel enters and climbs into bed. She holds Lee. He doesn't move.

LEE  
I can't do this.

YOUNG LAUREL  
What?

LEE  
I can't Laurel.

YOUNG LAUREL  
What are you talking about?

LEE  
I got to go.

He gets up and pulls on his pants.

YOUNG LAUREL  
What do I tell the kids? You can't keep doing this to them Lee.

He grabs his shirt and goes to the door.

YOUNG LAUREL (CONT'D)  
You coward!

She throws a water glass. Missing his head, the glass smashes into the door. He stops. Recovers and exits.

CRYING starts again.

JENNY  
Mommy!

Young Laurel sits on the edge of the bed, tears streaming down her face.

YEARS LATER

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Boxes are stacked. Cabinets are open. The phone rings. Laurel struggles to open a window. Finally, it budes. She lets out a sigh of relief. Before she can make it to the phone-

BEEP

VOICEMAIL

Hey mom.

Laurel stops and looks to the phone.

We're about to go in, but I just wanted to call and say...  
(whispering)  
I was able to snag a few things of dads from Carol Ann. I left it on the table.

Laurel sees the box.

Wish you were here. Dad would have wanted you to be. Love you. Okay. Bye.

BEEP

Laurel sits at the table and slides the box over. She opens it. A letter sits on top. It's address to: "My Laurel"

LEE (V.O.)

Dear Laurel, If your reading this I'm either dead or I finally got up the courage to give this to you myself. So, I'm probably dead.

Laurel laughs.

LEE (V.O.)

I'm not a brave man. You were right. I am a coward. I couldn't be the man you needed. I made a lot of mistakes in my life, but nothing compares to letting you go.

Tears begin to well in Laurel's eyes.

LEE (V.O.)

Thoughtful. And so strong. Seeing that just made me realize I'm not. I could never face you.

(MORE)

LEE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I could never face the man I was. I could never look my self in the mirror and see the messed up parts of me. But in the process I hurt you. And I'm sorry, Laurel. I did love you. More than you'll ever know. I hope you can forgive me one day. You are the best thing that ever happened to me, Laurel K. Scott. Tell the kids I love them. Until we meet again, Your Lee.

Laurel holds the letter to her chest as she cries. The Butterfly flutters in from the window, landing on the box.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

A car pulls into the dirt road. The Young Man waits. A WOMAN, mid 50s, gets out of the car.

YOUNG MAN

She just ran into the forest. I couldn't get her to...

WOMAN

It's okay. Thanks, James.

The woman rushes into the house.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The woman enters.

WOMAN

Mom? Are you here?

She stops. She sees the two plates set on the table. One empty. One full of burnt bacon.

Taking in the kitchen, she sees all the pill bottles next to the sink. The lids are off.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Oh no.

She runs out.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The young couple stands atop of the tree stump. The sun seeps through the opening and onto their faces.



LEE  
You're mine.

YOUNG LAUREL  
Forever?

LEE  
Forever & Always.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Laurel now takes the couples place. She smiles to the sky as the sun shines down.

BLACK OUT

THE END.