

BELLY UP

Written by

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INT. A STRANGER'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Present Day. Scotland.

RONNIE THOMAS, 20, American, the kind of girl you ask to watch your laptop at a cafe, ties her sex-wrecked hair back and throws on sneakers.

Behind her, A BODY stirs in bed. Without a second glance, Ronnie exits and closes the door.

EXT. EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY - DAY

Ronnie speeds across campus. Her FRIEND, carrying books, stops as she passes.

FRIEND

Are you coming to Lit?

RONNIE

Yes! Just going to my room to grab my stuff. I'll see you in a sec!

They part ways. Ronnie heads for another dormitory building.

INT. DORM - DAY

Ronnie climbs up a stone spiral staircase. VARIOUS STUDENTS greet her as she passes. She holds up her PHONE to reveal "Voicemail from Dad."

INT. RONNIE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Ronnie absentmindedly hits play and speakerphone, setting her phone down on her bed.

ED THOMAS, 50s, emotionally stunted in only the way British men can be, speaks.

ED (V.O.)

Hi Ronnie, it's Dad. I, uh, just wanted to check in with how school is going. We, uh, miss you here in California and-

Ronnie isn't listening. She has spotted her beloved GOLDFISH floating dead in its tank.

RONNIE

Oh my God!

Ronnie runs over to the tank, scooping the fish out of it and holding it in her palm. She begins trying to resuscitate it by using her finger to do compressions.

ED (V.O.)

I also was just calling because, well nothing urgent, I just have something to tell you.

RONNIE

Come on. Come on.

ED (V.O.)

I, uh, don't know how to say this but...your Mum is dead. Call me back. Bye.

Ronnie stops the compressions. She has just tuned back in to the message. She pauses for a minute, processing, and then lets out a heart-wrenching SHRIEK.

As Ronnie SHRIEKS, her roommate ABIGAIL, 20, enters the room. Abigail looks at the fish and at the now silent Ronnie.

ABIGAIL

(in a delightful British accent)

Well that seems a bit dramatic, doesn't it?

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: BELLY UP

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

Santa Barbara.

From a distance, we see a FAMILY, entirely dressed in white, staring out at the sea.

Ronnie looks forward blankly.

She is flanked by ELLE THOMAS, 18, trans, & wearing slightly too extravagant a gown for the occasion, and SOPHIA THOMAS, 13 (going on 30 if you count her anxieties). They both have tear-streaked faces.

Ed Thomas approaches the water with an URN. He's wearing flip-flops.

ED

Wendy...we hope you find the peace  
you couldn't find in life...out  
here.

Ed sets the urn into the water and pushes it forward. They watch as it floats out to sea briefly and then is immediately swept up by a wave. It CRASHES back onto the shore.

Ed scrambles forward. He grabs the urn and walks out further into the ocean. He chucks it. Ronnie winces.

The urn floats back.

RONNIE

Oh, God.

ED

This is ridiculous. It's  
biodegradable. It's supposed to  
just sink and release the ashes  
into the water.

Everyone starts to crack up.

RONNIE

You know she's not going to let you  
do it.

ELLE

Yeah, because she fucking hated  
you.

Ed shrugs in agreement. Elle takes off her heels.

ELLE (CONT'D)

I got it.

Elle wades into the water and grabs the urn. She swims out to sea, fully submerging herself. The urn sinks. Elle swims back.

Ronnie, Sophia, Elle, and Ed all look out at the water. A pink haze fills the sky. It's beautiful.

Sophia turns to look at Elle, who is sopping wet.

SOPHIA

Are...are those my earrings?

ELLE

No.