

**CAGED**

by  
DOMINICA MAY

special thanks  
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**EXT. SUBURBAN SYDNEY STREET - DAY**

A typical suburban street with duplexes and one-story houses. One particular house with a couple of palm trees in the front garden stands out as a luxurious BMW pulls out of the driveway.

**INT. MOORE RESIDENCE; KITCHEN - DAY**

APRIL (24), an attractive Filipino woman wearing a summer outfit is wiping down the stove top. JODIE (3), an Eurasian child tugs at her skirt.

JODIE

Come play with me, Mama.

APRIL

In a minute, honey, I just need to finish this.

**INT. JODIE'S BEDROOM - LATER**

APRIL and JODIE sit cross-legged on the floor, facing each other. Between them is a twelve piece jigsaw puzzle that APRIL is watching JODIE put together.

The DOOR BELL rings. APRIL stands.

**INT. FRONT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

APRIL opens the front door as much as the latch will allow for her to check who is on the other side. It is an Indian salesman, ANDREW (30) carrying catalogues and a box of books.

APRIL

Yes?

ANDREW

Hello, ma'am, my name is Andrew. I'm a representative of Alabaster Bookhouse - we're a mail-order book club. Can I trouble you for a moment of your time?

APRIL

Uh, I don't normally talk to salesmen. I don't have any money.

ANDREW

That's okay, all I ask is for me to let me show you some of my books for now.

APRIL hesitates, then closes the door and unlatches the lock, letting ANDREW inside.

**INT. LOUNGE ROOM - LATER**

APRIL is going through the box of books when a particular title, "Escaping Monogamy," catches her attention. She turns it over to read the back cover.

ANDREW

A lot of people pick up that one but normally they don't want to risk buying it. How about I leave it with you to have a look at overnight?

APRIL looks up at ANDREW, lost for words. ANDREW assumes her answer and starts packing the books away, then leaves the room. APRIL starts flicking through the book as the front door closes.

**INT. JODIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

APRIL and JODIE sit at a child-size table on child-size chairs. APRIL watches JODIE paint a picture. The front door can be heard opening in the distance.

Moments later, GEORGE (38), APRIL's buff, fair-skinned husband enters the room.

APRIL

How was your day?

GEORGE

Dinner ready?

APRIL

Yes, sorry. I'll put it on the table.

APRIL leaves the room.

JODIE lifts up her painting of a bird in a bird cage and shows it to GEORGE.

JODIE

Tiganan mo ang iginuhit kong  
ibon.\*  
(\*subtitles: Look at my bird)

GEORGE

(shouting to APRIL)  
And teach your child to speak  
fucking English.

**INT. DINING ROOM - LATER**

GEORGE, APRIL and JODIE are seated around a dining table big enough for six. They each have a plate of roast beef and vegetables, partly eaten. They eat in silence.

GEORGE stuffs half a baked potato in his mouth.

APRIL

A guy came today, selling books.

GEORGE spits out the potato. He starts to raise a hand.

GEORGE

What did I tell you about answering the door to strangers?

APRIL

He just wanted to show me what he had.

GEORGE

Yeah, and what if he wanted to show you his cock? What if he forced his way in and raped you?

GEORGE slaps APRIL across her cheek.

GEORGE

Don't you fucking dare disobey me again or you'll be on the streets.

**INT. LOUNGE ROOM - NEXT DAY**

APRIL sits on the sofa reading "Escaping Monogamy." The door bell rings, but she remains seated.

**EXT. MOORE RESIDENCE - CONT'D**

ANDREW waits at the door for a moment. When there is no answer, he goes to the window and looks inside.

**INT. LOUNGE ROOM - CONT'D**

Though there is some distance from the window to APRIL, her face is clearly bruised.

**EXT. MOORE RESIDENCE - CONT'D**

ANDREW rings the door bell again, and knocks more intensely. When APRIL still doesn't answer, ANDREW takes out his mobile phone and dials a number.

**EXT. MOORE RESIDENCE - LATER**

A police car pulls into the driveway. Two white Australian POLICE OFFICERS exit the vehicle and join ANDREW by the front door.

OFFICER #1  
What's the trouble, sir?

ANDREW  
I think the woman inside has been abused. She won't answer the door, but she did yesterday.

OFFICER #1  
And what is your relationship to this woman?

ANDREW  
Oh, I'm just a salesman, but I left a book with her yesterday that I said I'd be back for.

OFFICER #2 rings the door bell.

OFFICER #1  
If she doesn't come to the door, you can always file a report for stolen items.

ANDREW  
I don't think you understand. I don't care about the book. I think she's been hurt.

The three look at the door, but there is no answer.

OFFICER #1  
Well I'm sorry, sir, there's nothing we can do if she refuses to answer.

The OFFICERS turn away from ANDREW. He tries to speak up to get them to stay but no words escape his mouth. The OFFICERS return to their car and drive away.

ANDREW sits on the door step, thinking.

**INT. LOUNGE ROOM - LATER**

APRIL finishes reading the book. She heads toward the front door and looks through the side window, noticing ANDREW is still outside. She opens the latched door and pushes the book through.

APRIL  
I can't...

**EXT. MOORE RESIDENCE - CONT'D**

ANDREW takes hold of the book but keeps it in the doorway to prevent APRIL from closing it.

ANDREW  
Wait. Talk to me. Why did you take the book?

APRIL  
I can't.

ANDREW  
Let me help you. What's your name?

APRIL  
Uh... April. April Moore. Can you please go now?

ANDREW  
Can I see you first?

**INT. FRONT ROOM - CONT'D**

APRIL lets go of the book but hesitates.

ANDREW  
Please?

APRIL  
You'll have to move the book.

ANDREW  
Promise to not keep me out?

APRIL  
I guess you'll just have to trust.

ANDREW pulls the book away from the door and APRIL closes it. As she stands, JODIE comes running in and latches on to APRIL's leg.

JODIE  
Mama...

APRIL  
What is it, sweetie?

JODIE analyses APRIL's face in a way only a three year old can.

JODIE  
Don't cry, Mama.

APRIL brushes the hair out of JODIE's face and smiles at her, then unlatches the door and opens it for ANDREW.

ANDREW looks at APRIL's face and gently touches her bruise with his right hand. He thumbs away the tears in her eyes.

ANDREW  
You can't live like this.

APRIL  
He's my husband. I have nowhere else to go. My family are back in the Philippines - he supports them. He's a good man, really.

ANDREW  
No good man beats up his wife.

APRIL doesn't respond, she just looks at JODIE.

ANDREW  
Can I ask you something personal?

APRIL looks at ANDREW and nods.

ANDREW  
How did you meet him?

APRIL hesitates.

ANDREW  
It's okay. I won't judge you.

APRIL  
(avoiding eye contact)  
I was his maid. In Malaysia.

ANDREW looks at JODIE.

ANDREW  
Did he get you pregnant before marrying you?

APRIL drops to the floor. JODIE instinctively hugs her mother.

ANDREW  
Please let me help you. This isn't right.

**INT. ANDREW'S KITCHEN - DAY**

ANDREW pours hot water into a couple of coffee mugs and hands one to APRIL, sitting at the kitchen table.

JODIE, a couple years older now, runs into the kitchen and pulls down the cookie jar from the kitchen bench before running back out again with the jar in hand.