The Good Fight - One Day

By

Tori Mills
1 INT. HOUSE/KATIE'S ROOM - DAY

KATIE (10 years), lays in bed with the covers pulled over most of her face, covering her ears.

HARSH COUGHING echoes through the house, breaking the morning silence.

Katie scrunches her face up, eyes still closed, and pulls the covers up over her head. Her fists tighten around its edge, her fingernails each alternate blue and green.

Underneath her covers, a light hits Katie's face. She opens her eyes to see a couple National Geographic magazines and a flashlight that's still on. She sits up from under her quilt and turns off her flashlight.

2 INT. HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Katie walks in with her magazines in hand.

MARVIN (40s-50s) lays on the couch watching TV. An oxygen mask covers most of his face as he breathes in and out painfully. An oxygen tank stands beside him.

Katie plops down on the floor next to him, her eyes bright.

KATIE
I think we need a koi fish pond.

Marvin's eyes wrinkle as he smiles underneath his mask. He raises an eyebrow and lifts the mask up slightly to speak.

MARVIN
Really?

Katie nods matter-of-factly, with a slight grin.

KATIE
It adds aesthetic appeal. And we can sell koi, they're the most in-demand at fish shows.

Marvin smiles and gives a half-laugh, half-cough.

MARVIN
I didn't know they had shows for fish.

Katie giggles and holds open one of her magazines to him.

KATIE
I've done the research.

From another room, Katie's mom, LILY, calls to her.

    LILY
    Breakfast!

Katie closes her magazine and stuffs them under her arm. She stands up and grabs Marvin's oxygen tank to wheel it in to the kitchen.

    KATIE
    I can help.

Marvin lifts his mask up again to give her a smile, although this one doesn't reach his eyes.

    MARVIN
    I need to lay down right now, kiddo.

Katie's eyes drop for a second. She walks out of the living room, leaving Marvin on the couch.

3 INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Katie sits at the kitchen table, ignoring the plate of eggs in front of her. She meticulously clips out images of koi fish and tapes them to a piece of scrapbook paper, collage-style.

Her sister ERIN (16-18) french braids Katie's hair out of her face. Lily puts together lunches for the girls as she talks on the phone.

    LILY
    Yes...yes, we can do that...

Katie chatters as cuts up pictures.

    KATIE
    They're also really easy to make, we just need to dig a hole that's three feet deep, and then we can line it with sand and newspaper, or we can buy a kit that has a special tub--

Erin sh's Katie.

    ERIN
    (gently)
    Don't talk while Mom's on the phone.
Katie scowls and looks away.

Lily hangs up and walks over to the kitchen table. She reaches over Katie's collage to a stack of papers and pads, pulling out a small agenda. Katie looks up at her as she does this.

Lily sits down to study the agenda, her brow creased.

Katie watches as Lily finds the day's date. Lily's pen hovers over for a second. It reads "me, haircut - 2:30." Lily crosses it out.

Lily looks up to Erin, her face tired.

    LILY
    We have to move radiation to today.
    Can you pick your sister up?

Erin's eyes go wide.

    ERIN
    Mom...

Erin gestures to the athletic clothes she's wearing.

Lily closes her eyes, nodding as she recalls.

    LILY
    That's right.

    ERIN
    I just came so close to varsity last season.

Lily gives a small smile.

    LILY
    Sorry Katie, you have to take the bus home today.

Katie gives a dramatic sigh.

    KATIE
    I hate the bus.

Lily stands up, giving Katie an exasperated look.

    LILY
    It's just for today.
Katie scowls, begrudgingly sticking a fork in her eggs.

Erin, finished with Katie's hair, stands up and puts her own plate in the kitchen sink. She goes to leave the room but stops in the doorway as Marvin appears, slowly making his way in. Marvin smiles at her.

**MARVIN**
Good luck on try-outs.

Erin smiles and walks out of the kitchen. Marvin walks around Lily to the kitchen counter, where a cigarette pack sits.

Katie excitedly pulls her collage back out for Marvin, presenting it Vanna-style.

**KATIE**
(showboating)
This wonderful piece could be in your very backyard!

Marvin gives her a dismissive smile as he opens his cigarette pack and pulls one out. Katie's face falls.

Marvin looks down, noticing there's only a few left.

**MARVIN**
Could you add this to the grocery list?

Lily nods as she keeps her gaze on putting lunches together.

**LILY**
Yeah, I'll do that now.

Katie watches the whole exchange, disheartened, her shoulders drooped. She sets the collage down and pulls her plate back in front of herself.

Marvin takes a lighter from a drawer and walks out the kitchen door to sit outside. He leaves his cigarette pack on the counter. Katie's gaze lingers on it.

Lily zips up the lunch boxes. Katie looks back down, sticking her fork in her eggs.

**KATIE**
(not as spirited)
You know, Mom, if we had a koi pond, it would add tons to our resale value.
LILY
(exasperated)
We're not building a koi pond in our
backyard.

Lily grabs her purse off the kitchen counter and walks out.

Katie watches her leave, disappointed. She takes a half-
hearted bite out of her eggs, looking outside.

Through the kitchen window, Marvin sits on the patio,
smoking. Katie stares at him, her expression growing more and
more hurt.

Katie looks down at her plate next to all of her art
supplies. She squints at the tape, then over at the cigarette
pack on the counter.

Katie sets her fork down and picks up the tape dispenser,
carrying it over to the kitchen counter with her.

Katie pulls off a long piece and picks up the pack, wrapping
it around the lid. When that piece is done, she adds another
piece, and another, and another.

Lily calls to Katie from another room, making her jump.

LILY (O.S.)
Get your stuff, we gotta go!

Katie hurriedly sets the pack down and shoves it back behind
various stacks of letters and bills on the counter.

INT. SCHOOL/CAFETERIA - DAY

Katie perches on the outskirts of a group of kids at lunch.

Katie sits with her head on top of her hands on the table.
She reads one of her magazines, but not as excitedly as
before. Occasionally, she takes a bite of her turkey sandwich
and her off-brand potato chips.

Some excitement towards the other end of the long table makes
Katie look over. Two younger kids swipe at each other in a
little scuffle.

Next to Katie, the group of kids start to bustle, making her
look back to them. A kid next to her, MATTHEW (10-11), talks
excitedly.

MATTHEW
My brother just got one for his birthday, you keep them in really small bowls and they don't care.

Katie pipes in.

KATIE
Are you talking about Betta fish?

Matthew looks over at Katie, surprised that she's talking.

MATTHEW
Yeah.

KATIE
You actually shouldn't keep them in those small bowls, they actually need at least a gallon tank.

Matthew looks slightly disinterested. A girl across the table, ROBIN (10-11), clears her throat, widening her eyes to the other kids.

ROBIN
Matthew, I'll trade my chips for your cookies.

MATTHEW
No way!

The kids go back to chattering amongst themselves. Katie's face falls, but she hides it by going back to her magazine.

The kids from the edge of the room make more noise. Katie looks up to see MS. JANE splitting them up and scolding them.

MS. JANE
Tyler, if I have to call home one more time--!

Katie raises an eyebrow.

EXT. SCHOOL/PLAYGROUND

Katie sits on top of the jungle gym by herself, surveying the playground. Her expression is nervous, and she keeps clenching and unclenching her fists.

Finally, she picks her target. Off by the swings, Robin and the group of friends from lunch stand and talk to each other. Katie swallows and climbs down from the jungle gym.
Katie approaches the group. She zeroes in on Robin. Katie tries to stand a little straighter with each step, puffing up her chest and standing tall.

Katie keeps walking, picking up speed until her shoulder bumps into Robin.

Robin falls back a step. She turns to Katie.

ROBIN
(confused)
Hey, watch it.

Katie scrunches up her face, trying to build up her courage. She shoves Robin. Robin's friends all stare at her.

Robin scowls at Katie and pushes her back. Katie takes a deep breath in, rears back her fist, and punches Robin in the face.

Robin's friends gasp. Robin grimaces, holding a hand to where Katie just hit her, then looks up at Katie in anger.

Robin rears back and punches Katie. Katie lets out a small oomph, a bit of wind knocked out of her, then launches herself at Robin, knocking her down.

The kids around start to raise their voices, watching Katie as she punches Robin repeatedly. Robin struggles, screeching, and punches Katie back.

Katie grits her teeth and rears her fist back again, when suddenly MS. MARISA yanks her off of Robin.

MS. MARISA
Let's go.

The teacher tugs Katie away from the rest of the kids gathering around Robin. Katie is out of breath and bruised up, but she has a small smile on her face.

INT. SCHOOL/WAITING ROOM - DAY

Katie sits up straight in a chair outside the principal's office. She taps her thumb as she looks around, smug, waiting for her parents to arrive.

The front doors open and Katie looks up. Her look turns to confusion.

Erin walks in, out of breath. She holds Katie's gaze for a
second, concerned.

    ERIN
    Are you okay?

Katie takes a moment to respond.

    KATIE
    Where's Mom and Dad?

Erin starts to say something, then stops, not finding the words. She turns and charges into the principal's office. The door doesn't close all the way.

    ERIN
    I'm so sorry about her, there's just...there's a lot going on right now...

Katie huffs and crosses her arms, annoyed.

7 INT. ERIN'S CAR - DAY

Katie and Erin climb into the car. Katie holds a pink slip in her hand. Erin glances over at it as she buckles her seatbelt. She wears a stern expression.

    ERIN
    Okay, so I'm not advocating this behavior or whatever, but for this one time, I can just forge the signature on that.

Katie's eyes widen, thinking fast.

    KATIE
    No, they need to know...whatever they want to do to me is fair.

Erin hesitates, deciding how to proceed.

    ERIN
    Dad's feeling worse than usual today with his treatment. We don't need to stress them out even more.

    KATIE
    (urgently)
    No, they should see it.

Erin stares at her, frustrated.
ERIN
Just listen to me, okay?

KATIE
Just--
Erin grabs the slip from Katie's hands and stuffs it in with her duffle bag in the backseat. She turns around and grips the front wheel.

Katie jerks around and stops. The slip is stuck haphazardly in the open zipper, and Erin's soccer cleats stick out. Katie stares at them and chews her lip, guilty.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY
Erin and Katie climb out of the car. Erin slams the door shut, then opens the back door to grab her duffle bag.

Katie follows her in, watching the pink slip as she walks.

INT. HOUSE/KATIE'S ROOM - DAY
Katie sits on the floor by her door, barely open. Footsteps echo in the next room. Katie peers out the door, only to see Lily walk by. She frowns and then sits back again.

After a moment, footsteps echo again. Katie peers out to see Erin walking into the bathroom. Katie's eyes brighten and she jumps up.

INT. HOUSE/ERIN'S ROOM - DAY
Katie runs in and starts rummaging through Erin's duffle bag. She sees various soccer gear and clothing, but no note.

Katie steps back and looks around Erin's room. No note in sight. Katie furrows her brow, frustrated.

Katie starts to walk out of Erin's room, then stops as she crosses her desk. The slip sits amongst Erin's books. Katie snatches it, triumphant, and runs out.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
Katie walks into the kitchen, pink slip in hand. Marvin hunches over the counter, coughing into his fist. He looks up as Katie enters the room.

MARVIN
(weakly)
Hey, how was school?

Marvin returns back to search through their messy counter.

Katie's eyes glimmer and she starts to unfold her pink slip. As she does so, Marvin pulls out his pack of cigarettes. Katie looks back up and stops.

Marvin holds the pack still, noticing the layers of tape around the lid. Katie watches, guilty.

Marvin looks back up at Katie slowly, shame in his eyes. They hold each other's gaze for a moment.

MARVIN
(quietly)
Did you do this?

Katie doesn't answer. She flicks her eyes away. Marvin takes in a shaky breath. His eyes become glassy. It takes him a minute to find his words.

MARVIN
I know this is very bad for me...And...I'm so glad you're watching out for me, kiddo.

Katie watches him, mashing her lips together.

MARVIN
Quitting these is a long process. But I promise I'm going to, okay?

Marvin waits for Katie's response.

Katie's eyes widen. She looks down at her pink slip. For a second, anger flashes in her eyes. Her hands shake slightly.

Katie exhales. Her anger fades. She refolds the slip.

KATIE
Okay.

Marvin returns her smile and puts the pack of cigarettes in his pocket.

MARVIN
I'm going to lay down now.
Katie nods and steps aside as Marvin slowly walks past her, breathing heavily. She watches him as he leaves, the pack of cigarettes sticking out of his pocket.

INT. HOUSE/ERIN'S ROOM - EVENING

Katie slowly wanders in. Erin works out of a Geometry textbook at her desk, focusing hard. Katie looks at her for a moment before sliding the pink slip onto Erin's workbook.

Erin looks up at Katie, eyebrow raised.

ERIN
I wondered where that went.

Katie shrugs.

Erin goes through her book bag and pulls out an old permission slip with Lily's signature on it. She sets it down beside the pink slip and carefully tries to mimic it.

Katie watches Erin with her arms clasped awkwardly behind her back, chewing her bottom lip. She looks down and notices Erin's cleats at the foot of her bed.

KATIE
Are you going to try out again?

Erin answers without looking up.

ERIN
It's too late.

KATIE
(quietly)
Maybe if you asked the coach...

Erin finishes and looks up. She hands the slip to Katie.

ERIN
It's fine.

Katie takes the slip and looks at Erin. Erin gives her a gentle smile. Katie tries to smile back, but it wavers.

Finally, Katie awkwardly reaches forward and wraps her arms around Erin, hiding her head into Erin's shoulder. Erin's eyes widen in surprise.

KATIE
(whispers)
I'm sorry.

Erin waits a second, realization dawning on her face. She hugs Katie back.

13 INT. HOUSE/KATIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Katie stuffs the pink slip into her book bag at the foot of her bed.

Katie climbs into bed, pulling a couple of magazines from her nightstand and switching on her flashlight.

Marvin's coughing starts to echo from another part of the house.

After a moment of this, Katie realizes her heart's not in it. She switches off the flashlight and lays down, pulling the covers up to her chin.

FADE OUT.