

Behind the Eight Ball

by
Rachael Biggs

Based on the book
Yearnings for Nothings and Nobodies
by Rachael Biggs

Andrew Webster
Webster Talent
604.828.7775

INT. GAS STATION BATHROOM - DAY

CAITLIN (3), blonde, disheveled and small for her age, leans against a dirty toilet seat unraveling toilet paper onto the floor until the roll is done.

She stares at it for a minute before looking around, curiously.

Spotting the paper towel dispenser, she jumps to reach it repeatedly, succeeding a couple of times.

She kicks a syringe around, before attempting to open the heavy door.

Opening credits roll...

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

HEATHER (50), tall, short brassy hair, missing an eye tooth and sporting a poorly drawn Playboy bunny tattoo on her bicep, walks hurriedly to her dusty K-car.

She kneels down to pet a cat, PROFESSOR.

HEATHER

Go home my sweet boy, you can't
come with me today.

The cat rubs affectionately against her legs until she picks him up.

She rummages in her purse and holds some candy out for him, before having some herself.

He PURRS loudly and nuzzles into her.

HEATHER

All right, Professor, you can
come, but don't tell your father.
You know how he gets. And
definitely don't tell him about
the snack. If he had his way,
you'd be living on kibble. What
kind of life is that for someone
of your stature?

Heather gets in the car and revs the gas. A look of confusion comes across her face and she tries to open the window but vomits and passes out on the horn before she can.

(CONTINUED)

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As the HORN sounds loudly, Professor begins to lick up the vomit.

People poke their heads over apartment patios to see what's up.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

CAITLIN (30), hip, confident and comfortable being in charge, floats around a chic, crowded restaurant making sure guests are happy and everyone is doing their job.

MILLER (42), the dapper and charming host, approaches Caitlin at a table of GUESTS, lightly placing his hand on her forearm.

She startles.

MILLER

(to the guests)

Excuse us just a moment if you would.

CAITLIN

(to the guests)

I will have Andrei come over to help you with pairing a wine for your next course.

She signals curtly but subtly to a SERVER to come to the table and he does.

She and Miller step away.

MILLER

You have a phone call.

CAITLIN

You know I don't receive calls when I'm on the floor.

MILLER

Yes, I know, but he said he's your brother.

CAITLIN

Really?

MILLER

I didn't know you had a brother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAITLIN

Why would you?

MILLER

He's on line two.

CAITLIN

Thank you. I'll take it in the office. Nels and Agatha will be here at 9:00. I told them we would make room for them at the fireplace.

MILLER

I'll shift things accordingly.

CAITLIN

And can you check that the tuna isn't sinewy? I saw a Nicoise on table 4 that was on the cusp.

MILLER

I'm on it.

CAITLIN

That's why I keep you around.

She smiles and walks toward the office.

INT. RESTAURANT - OFFICE - NIGHT

Caitlin enters an organized and tastefully decorated office.

She sits behind a desk and picks up the phone.

INTERCUT:

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY

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In a modest and messy apartment, two small KIDS sit in front of a TV that BLARES cartoons.

A BABBLING BABY sits in a high chair with food all over its face, smearing a pudding-like substance on every surface within reach.

JAMES (23), rugged, small town, working class, holds a hand over one ear and the phone to the other.

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CONTINUED:

JAMES

Hey.

CAITLIN

James?

JAMES

Hey. I wasn't sure you were coming to the phone. I was on hold for like 20 minutes.

CAITLIN

Sorry, I'm at work.

JAMES

I thought I called your cell?

CAITLIN

I have it forwarded. What's up?

JAMES

Mom's in Intensive Care.

CAITLIN

Why?

JAMES

They're not sure yet.

CAITLIN

It's probably nothing.

JAMES

She passed out in her car.

CAITLIN

Couldn't make it inside the bar?

JAMES

No, like unconscious I mean.

CAITLIN

She's been unconscious her entire adult life.

JAMES

Forget it. I thought you'd want to know.

Caitlin softens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAITLIN

You know mom. It will be fine.

JAMES

I thought you'd want to know.

CAITLIN

I do, it's just you know, not like breaking news or anything.

There is a long pause.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)

Is it?

JAMES

They don't know yet.

The baby lets out a SCREAM.

CAITLIN

Is that a kid?

JAMES

Yeah, I gotta go. I'll call you when I know more. I mean, if you want me to.

CAITLIN

Yeah, of course. I didn't mean to be glib.

JAMES

What does that mean?

The baby SCREAMS loudly again.

JAMES

I gotta go.

CAITLIN

Love you--

He hangs up before he hears her.

END INTERCUT.

INT. RESTAURANT - OFFICE - NIGHT

Miller pops his head in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MILLER

Everything okay?

CAITLIN

No, not really.

MILLER

What do you need?

CAITLIN

To erase the first 20 years of my
life?

MILLER

How about a tea?

CAITLIN

No, I'm good.

MILLER

Everything okay with your brother?

She busies herself tidying the already tidy desk.

MILLER

If you want to take off, I've got
everything under control here.

CAITLIN

Why would I do that?

He smiles at her wanting to know more but she averts her
eyes and gets up to leave.

MILLER

No reason.

He shuts the door quietly and leaves.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Caitlin stands a moment and takes it all in.

She looks at one of the outer booths where a FAMILY sits
watching a GIRL (10), open a gift.

Caitlin focuses on the MOTHER who beams with pride.

Cut sound.

INT. GREEK RESTAURANT - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

There is no sound accompanying this memory.

Red velvet booths and dim lighting adorn a Greek restaurant.

CAITLIN, (11), gangly and awkward, sits with a napkin tucked into a garish yellow halter dress made for someone twice her age.

She eats a massive plate of spaghetti with her eyes down.

Heather (32), drunk, gulps a rum and coke and waves for the WAITER to bring another.

Caitlin spills some spaghetti sauce on the dress and moves quickly to clean it before Heather notices.

Heather fumbles in her coat pocket and pulls out a MAGIC EIGHT BALL (toy), setting it beside her daughter's plate.

As she feels her mother's eyes burning into her, Caitlin glances up from her plate and sees the toy.

She picks it up and shakes it, forcing a smile.

END FLASHBACK

INT. CAITLIN'S BEDROOM CLOSET - DAY

Caitlin rummages frantically through the shelves of her walk-in closet in her underwear.

She tips over boxes and throws things around the otherwise tidy room.

She is near tears when at last, she pulls out what she has been searching for: the Magic Eight Ball.

She crumples to the floor and shakes it as she fires questions.

CAITLIN

Is my mom going to be okay?

MAGIC EIGHT BALL

Focus and ask again.

She closes her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAITLIN

Is my mom going to be okay?

She opens them.

MAGIC EIGHT BALL

Can't say now.

CAITLIN

Well when then? When can you say?!

MAGIC EIGHT BALL

The stars say yes.

CAITLIN

The stars say my mom is going to be okay?

MAGIC EIGHT BALL

Maybe.

Caitlin throws the toy against the wall.

It leaves a mark and she tries to rub it out with her T-shirt.

She picks up the Magic Eight Ball and begins the questions again.

CAITLIN

Should I be worried about my mom?
Do I need to go there?

MAGIC EIGHT BALL

Yes.

CAITLIN

Wait. That was two questions. Yes, I should go there or yes I need to be worried? Okay, (speaking loudly and clearly) Should I go home to see my mom?

She closes her eyes again and breathes in before she turns the toy over again to see its answer.

MAGIC EIGHT BALL

It is decidedly so.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - DAY

Caitlin sits in business class looking around anxiously for a flight attendant.

NED (64), attractive, dressed in a classic summer suit, sits across the aisle from her holding up the New York Times with his exquisitely manicured hands.

Caitlin rings the overhead call button for service. After a minute of no one coming, she curses under her breath.

Ned looks over the corner of his newspaper.

NED

The service is not what it once was.

Caitlin smiles in agreement.

NED

There was a time that flying was a luxury. They brought you hot towels, you could have a nice steak dinner, everyone smiled and called you sir or ma'am. Hell, some airlines even had a shoe shine service.

CAITLIN

I'd settle for a glass of wine.

NED

Now they act like you're an inconvenience.

CAITLIN

(to a passing flight attendant)

Excuse me?

The FLIGHT ATTENDANT holds her finger up to tell her to wait a moment.

Caitlin is not impressed.

Ned passes her his unopened single-serving wine bottle.

NED

Here, have mine.

CAITLIN

Are you sure?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NED

Consider it a throwback to the days of chivalry.

CAITLIN

Thank you.

Realizing she doesn't have a glass, she sips from the bottle.

NED

How is it?

CAITLIN

Somewhere between terrible and better than nothing.

He smiles.

NED

I've got a bottle of 1995 *Screaming Eagle*, Cab Sauv that would knock your socks off. I'd love to share it with you.

CAITLIN

I have somewhere to be when I land.

NED

That's a \$5,000 bottle of wine. You sure it can't wait?

CAITLIN

Yeah.

She unbuckles her seat belt frantically, as if trying to escape a cage.

Seeing she is shaken, Ned reaches for her arm.

NED

You okay?

CAITLIN

Do NOT touch me.

The absent flight attendant appears.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Is everything okay here, ma'am?

Ned pulls the newspaper in front of his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAITLIN

Fine. I'm fine.

She walks quickly toward the back of the plane.

INT. AIRPLANE BATHROOM - DAY

Caitlin barely makes it to the bathroom and locks the door before a dam of tears bursts.

She stands in the cramped quarters with her head in her hands, doing her best to muffle her sobs.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK/POOL - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Kids run around the grassy area that surrounds a large but shallow public pool. They SCREAM, splash and run free as bored parents look on.

CAITLIN (8), teeth a variety of awkward sizes and painfully skinny, calls out to JAN (late 20s), petite, tightly-wound, middle-class suburbanite, before leaping into the pool.

CAITLIN

Auntie! Auntie! Look! Look Auntie!

Jan, sitting on the grass with a toddler in her lap, waves.

BIANCA, (late 20s), a plump version of a Stepford wife, sits next to her looking confused.

BIANCA

I thought you said that was your daughter?

Jan nods tersely.

Bianca looks at her, wanting more information but getting none.

In an attempt to get away from further questioning, Jan waves Caitlin over for lunch.

Bianca follows suit and a gaggle of kids come running over, dripping wet and having fun.

Food is handed out and everyone sits on the grass eating.

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CONTINUED:

CAITLIN

Auntie, can I have another pop?

JAN

One pop is enough. Are you still thirsty? Here, have a water.

WALLY (7), looks puzzled.

WALLY

Why'd you call her Auntie?

Jan is visibly upset.

CAITLIN

Can we go back in the pool now?

JAN

Sure, you're all done. Let me just wipe your face.

BIANCA

She's barely had two bites of her sandwich.

JAN

We had a big breakfast.

CAITLIN

The pool will wash it.

The kids get up and Caitlin separates from them, heading for the change rooms.

Before she gets in the door tears are coming.

INT. POOL CHANGE ROOMS - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Caitlin quickly ducks into one of the changing room stalls and lets the tears loose.

When she hears someone come in, she pulls her feet up and quiets down.

Thinking the coast is clear, she exits.

Bending down to pick up a penny, she hears a kind grandmotherly VOICE.

VOICE(O.S.)

Make a wish!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Caitlin closes her palm tightly around the penny and squeezes her eyes closed, making her wish.

END FLASHBACK