

BAD THINGS, GOOD PEOPLE

Written by

Richard F. Russell

Wordmstr007@gmail.com
910-285-3321
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FADE IN

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Half a dozen people sit in a circle. Among them, ALICE, 40, fit and trim and pretty, fetching. Also, CARL, 45, paunchy with a dad body and a handsome face. The FACILITATOR, 30, taps his clipboard with a pen.

FACILITATOR

Who's next?

Alice stands.

ALICE

My name is Alice, and I'm an alcoholic.

GROUP

Hello, Alice.

ALICE

I have been sober for twenty-nine days.

The group applauds.

ALICE

I want to say this is one of the hardest things I've ever had to do.

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - LATER

Alice stands at the table at the back of the room. She sips punch and nibbles on a cookie. Carl arrives, a cup in hand.

CARL

Hello, Alice. I'm Carl.

ALICE

Hi, Carl, I remember.

CARL

Welcome to the group. This your first meeting?

Alice nods.

CARL

The first one is the hardest. I remember my first.

(MORE)

CARL (CONT'D)

I could barely speak. My voice was so squeaky they thought I was a mouse.

ALICE

Well, you certainly had no problem tonight.

CARL

No problem with speaking. I'm still an alcoholic.

They share a moment.

CARL

Have a sponsor?

ALICE

I'm too new.

CARL

I'd be happy.

ALICE

I'm not clear on what it means.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Carl and Alice occupy a booth in a typical diner. Sipping coffee, sharing ice cream, they like each other.

ALICE

I guess, I guess it started when I hurt my back. Drinking was a way to deal with the pain.

CARL

We all start somewhere.

ALICE

It was a night thing at first, a way to go to sleep. Then, it was afternoon, and that led to morning. I was pouring vodka over my Cheerios when my husband took my son and left me. Then, the drinking got worse.

CARL

I won't bore you with what I did before I discovered AA—mainly because I can't remember half of it.

(MORE)

CARL (CONT'D)

What I do remember is driving home with a hand over one eye and praying there wasn't a cop behind me. I sideswiped a car once and didn't stop because stopping meant a DUI. I remember the note my wife left when she packed her bags and left in the better car. So, I know where you're coming from, Alice, I know.

She smiles, reaches across, and takes his hand. They smile.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Carl and Alice stand next to her car.

CARL

You have my number. Call any time. None of us are strong enough to go it alone.

ALICE

That goes both ways. If I can help.

Carl opens the door and watches her slide in. She's sexy.

CARL

Call.

He closes the door and waits as she starts the car and drives away.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Side by side, Carl and Alice watch the show. She reaches over, grabs his hand and holds it in hers. He grins.

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Alice and Carl stand on the porch, that last minute of a date.

ALICE

I had a wonderful time. Thank you.

CARL

Me too. I hope the movie wasn't too gory.

ALICE

Not at all, I love horror. The bad guy always loses.

CARL

In the movies maybe. Tomorrow?

ALICE

Sounds good.

CARL

I'll text you.

ALICE

No, don't. I don't text. It's a thing.

CARL

Sure, sure, no problem. E-mail is find.

ALICE

No e-mail. I'm technically challenged. You don't mind?

CARL

No, no, not a all. Call me, OK?

ALICE

I'd like that.

She leans forward and kisses his cheek. Then, she disappears through the door, leaving him standing. Yet, he smiles before he whirls and fairly skips off the porch.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Carl, in store vest, walks an aisle and talks on his cell.

CARL

(on phone)

TV at my house? Sure, sure, sounds great. I'll cook.

(beat)

OK, you bring dinner. Great. See you then.

He kills the call, grins at his phone, and spins as if dancing.

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Middle class kitchen in a middle class home. Carl sits at the table, playing a game on his laptop and watching Alice fill plates with spaghetti and meat balls.

ALICE

I hope you like sausage in your meatballs.

CARL

Italian is my favorite.

ALICE

It better be. I made enough for a dozen people.

CARL

I'll call the AA clan.

ALICE

Don't you dare. This is our night.

She serves him a plate and adds a goblet of what looks like wine.

ALICE

Grape juice.

CARL

(tasting)

Ahhhh, a vintage year.

Alice grabs a plate and joins him at the table. He offers a toast.

CARL

To a night to remember.

Alice clicks her glass against his and sips.

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Carl watches TV. He yawns and clicks the remote to change the channel. Alice arrives and hands him a bowl of ice cream. She sits and snuggles, her own bowl in hand.

ALICE

I have a confession to make.

CARL

(yawning)

Oh? What?

ALICE
I said my husband and son left me.
That's not exactly true.

CARL
No?

ALICE
They didn't leave, they died.

Carl shakes his head as if to clear it.

CARL
What?

ALICE
They died in an accident.
It...it...if the other driver
hadn't been drunk...

He puts down his bowl and wraps an arm around her.

CARL
Bad things happen to good people,
Alice, good people.

He leans over and kisses her on the lips, a solid kiss.

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - LATER

Carl sleeps soundly, his arm still around Alice. She removes his arm, kisses her fingertips, and places the kiss on his cheek. Rising, she grabs the bowls and leaves.

INT. CARL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Alice dries the dishes and glasses she has washed. Using the towel, she places the items in the cabinets. She looks around the kitchen to make sure everything is in its place.

On the table is Carl's laptop next to a single coffee cup. Alice sits at the table. Using a pencil, she slowly types out a message that shows on the screen.

TIME TO LEAVE

GOOD-BYE

She smiles at the message and stands. Grabbing her bag, she heads for the back door.

She opens the door and looks into the garage.

In the garage, Carl sits behind the wheel of his car, asleep. The engine is running, the car windows open.

With a smile, Alice waves away the fumes and closes the door.

EXT. CARL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Swinging her bag, Alice leaves the house and heads for her car.

FADE OUT