

I BET

Written by

Simon K. Parker

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Simonkyleparker@hotmail.co.uk

INT. CHLOE'S HOUSE - CHLOE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Teddy bears and other stuffed animals are scattered everywhere. Fresh flowers in the window and a neatly made bed. A clean, tidy and very girly bedroom.

CHLOE, 16, on a beanbag sits and reads. There are two large bookcases on either side of the room and they're both filled to the point of overflowing with books.

She's in her own little world and couldn't be happier.

INT. CHLOE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Cluttered and messy. The sink is filled with unwashed dishes.

THOMAS, 40, puts on his shoes and coat and gets ready to leave.

MEGAN, 44, in slippers and a dressing gown stands in his way. Shoves her hands into his chest and fights hard to keep him in the house.

MEGAN

You're going to the bookies again?
Gambling, again!

He looks down at the floor, tries to get past her.

THOMAS

I just want to get back the money
that was lost, please.

She screams into his face, furious.

MEGAN

You lost it and now you're gambling
away money we don't have! They're
going to cut off the electricity
because I can't pay them! Next
you're going to make us homeless!

THOMAS

Please, I can get it back.

MEGAN

You're an addict.

THOMAS

Please, I know I can get it back.

Megan breaks down into tears. She drops her arms and steps to the side, gives up.

Thomas quickly exits, quietly closing the back door shut behind him.

INT. CHLOE'S HOUSE - CHLOE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Chloe, still immersed in her book daydreaming is suddenly snapped out of it as Megan bursts inside.

MEGAN

Hey, get up.

Chloe looks at Megan, shocked.

CHLOE

Why, what did I do?

MEGAN

Your father doesn't listen to me anymore, but for whatever reason he still does listen to you.

CHLOE

Not really.

MEGAN

You get him to agree to go into rehab by the end of the day otherwise I'm leaving him here on his own. And I'm taking you with me to live at grannies.

Chloe leaps up, horrified.

CHLOE

No.

MEGAN

Yes. And you know what it's like at grannies. There will be no time for reading. You'll lose all of this.

CHLOE

Why am I being punished because dad won't stop gambling?

MEGAN

I can't put up with this anymore. Get him to stop, or this life that you enjoy so much you'll lose forever.

EXT. BETTING SHOP - DAY

Chloe stands on the opposite side of the road and looks across at a group of alcoholics that are all gathered outside the front of the dirty betting shop.

She folds her arms out in front of her chest, pulls a face and sticks out her tongue, disgusted.

CHLOE

I can't believe this, how gross.

INT. BETTING SHOP - DAY

Filled with depressed looking MEN watching horse races from all around the country.

Chloe hurries through and makes her way up to the counter, where JACK, 16, sits, his attention on a book held in both hands.

Chloe opens her mouth to speak but stops when she sees what he's reading.

Jack slowly lifts his eyes up and sees her in front of him.

JACK

Yes, can I help you?

She snaps out of her daze.

CHLOE

I hope so.

JACK

I don't think you're old enough to place a bet.

CHLOE

You look like you're the same age as I am and you work here.

JACK

I don't gamble. So what is it that you want?

CHLOE

My dad's an addict. I need to get him into rehab or my life will be over. Can you put him on some kind of list?

JACK

What kind of list?

CHLOE

Like, you won't take anymore bets from him?

Jack shakes his head knowingly, sad for Chloe.

JACK

If your father really is an addict that's not going to get him to stop. Even if I could do that for you and I can't, it wouldn't work.

Chloe puts her head in her hands, defeated.

CHLOE

Then my life really is over.

Jack watches her for a moment then narrows his eyes, curious.

JACK

When you first came in, why were you staring at my book?

Chloe takes off her backpack, reaches inside and pulls out the book she was reading back at the house.

CHLOE

Because I'm reading the exact same story, only difference is, mine's a first addition.

His mouth hangs open as he sees what Chloe has, awestruck.

INT. BETTING SHOP - OFFICE - DAY

A small back office, just a table and a couple of chairs.

Jack sits on one of them and holds onto Chloe's first addition copy of the book.

She stands in front of him, hands behind her back and looking a little lost, confused.

JACK

Do you have any idea how rare first additions are?

CHLOE

And this is my favorite book of all time.

She nods, proud of herself.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I cued up for three days to get my hands on what you're holding now.

He takes a moment just to think to himself, then smiles at Chloe.

JACK

If I can help you get your dad into rehab, I want this book in exchange.

Chloe puffs out her cheeks.

CHLOE

You promise?

He nods.

JACK
I swear on my life.

CHLOE
Alright, for my family I'll agree.

JACK
Then we just need to think of something.

CHLOE
I think I might have an idea.

INT. BETTING SHOP - DAY

Thomas stands at the counter, counts out a small amount of loose change. Pushes it towards Jack, who's back behind it working.

Chloe suddenly comes up beside Thomas, grabs his money, stopping him from placing his bet.

He turns to face her and is shocked to see who it is.

THOMAS
Chloe, you shouldn't be here. This isn't a place for you.

She ignores him. Points at one of the video screens.

CHLOE
I want to make a bet with you dad, seeing as how you like to gamble away all our money.

THOMAS
What are you doing?

She stares at him hard, her face blank, she's deadly serious.

CHLOE
If I can pick the next three winners of the next three races you'll agree and sign up for rehab.

He's lost, doesn't understand.

THOMAS
And if you don't?

CHLOE
You can keep on gambling and I'll never mention rehab again.

THOMAS

Do you have any idea what the odds
are for doing that?

CHLOE

Just because you're a bad gambling
doesn't mean it runs in the family.

He gestures to the coins he puts down onto the counter.

THOMAS

That's all the money I've got left.

Chloe offers Thomas her hand.

CHLOE

Have we got a deal?

He shakes it.

THOMAS

I've picked nothing but loser for
the last two months, why not.

CUT TO:

Chloe and Thomas watch the next horse race.

Chloe smiles to herself.

CHLOE

Number four.

The race is over and number four is the winner.

Thomas breaks out into laughter.

CUT TO:

Chloe and Thomas watch the next race.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Number seventeen.

The race finishes and number seventeen comes first.

Thomas laughs even harder.

THOMAS

How is that possible?

Chloe doesn't acknowledge him, stays staring hard at the
television screen.

CUT TO:

Thomas now watches Chloe, she remains locked on the screen in
front of her.

The next race is in full flow.

CHLOE
Number eleven.

Number eleven comes in first place.

Chloe gives Jack a signal and he turns their television screen off.

Thomas is just in a state of shock.

THOMAS
How did you do it? How did you get them all right?

CHLOE
We made a deal. Go home and pack your things, you're going to rehab.

THOMAS
And then you'll tell me?

CHLOE
If you come out of rehab on the other side then you've got yourself a deal. I'll tell you.

Thomas takes down a deep breath. He nods, turns around and exits.

Once he's left another of the gamblers comes over to Chloe.

GAMBLER
I've got to know too. No ones that lucky. So how did you do it?

With a smile Chloe gives Jack the same signal and he turns the television screen back on. With a video remote he hits rewind and we watch those same three races but this time in reverse.

CHLOE
You're right, no one's that lucky. These races are all six months old.

Chloe and Jack share a smile and a laugh.

INT. CHLOE'S HOUSE - CHLOE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Chloe is back doing what she loves most, sat on a beanbag chair and reading her book.

Jack is here with her, sat on a beanbag chair of his own, he's reading the same book but he's got the rare first edition.

On the same page as one another they seem to be reading in unison.

He looks up and smiles at her.

JACK
Are you OK?

She nods.

CHLOE
Couldn't be better.

They look into each other eyes, share a tender moment then almost at the same time they return to their books and continue reading.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END