BAD THINGS, GOOD PEOPLE

Written by

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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