

CHOCOLATE MILK

Written by

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Address
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ON BLACK:

Sounds of papers rustling, pencils tapping, office chairs squeaking and scratching of fabric.

POSSIBLE MOM (O.S.)
Do you think...

POSSIBLE DAD
(Finishing Sentence)
You could settle down. That like a nervous thing?

FADE IN:

EXT. INTERVIEW OFFICE. DAY

An Asian couple sit together, their patience is being tested but they are terrific at hiding it. The woman holds her husband's shoulder.

Across them is BARRY (8), black, playful, too smart for his own good. Office supplies are strewn about on the table separating him and the couple.

On the table is a file with a logo: Seedling Orphanage. Where the future is growing. A timer ticks away.

Currently Barry scratches the fabric of his chair, while swiveling left and right. He looks unfocused. The question addressed to him is being ignored.

The man wants to get up, but his wife tightens her shoulder grip. She gives him a look. The woman tries another approach.

POSSIBLE MOM
Um... Barry. Are we playing a game right now? Like, charades or something you made up here with your buddies?

He begins to spin on the swivel chair. The couple does not exist to him.

POSSIBLE DAD
(Softly, leaning over)
I can't do doing this today, Carrie.

POSSIBLE MOM
(Whispering, sternly)
We were all children once...

The timer rings obnoxiously. This interview is finished. The wife torn, the husband relieved. They stand up and head for the door.

The lady addresses the still spinning Barry.

POSSIBLE MOM (CONT'D)
 (Sugar-coating)
 We're just gonna chat this one out,
 hun. Don't have too much fun
 without us.

No response. She exhales from her nose and walks out. CLICK!
 Barry stops spinning as soon as the door shuts.

He gets a touch of vertigo, but shakes it off. He presses
 against the door and listens intently.

The couple argues in the hall outside.

POSSIBLE MOM (CONT'D)
 We just need to communicate that
 we're willing to listen.

POSSIBLE DAD
 We have, Carrie! But he's too deep
 in la-la land.

POSSIBLE MOM
 Do you pay one hundred percent
 attention to anything my mother
 says?

POSSIBLE DAD
 That's different, its not like your
 mother has anything...

POSSIBLE MOM
 Don't you dare finish that
 sentence.

POSSIBLE DAD
 All I'm saying, is that you don't
 have to pick the first kid that we
 see.

POSSIBLE MOM
 I don't? I don't have to pick? Just
 me? Am I the only one here serious
 about picking a child to raise? Are
 you just here for the ride to avoid
 arguing with me?

POSSIBLE DAD

We have options! Wouldn't you prefer a younger child? Eight is already--

POSSIBLE MOM

Lower your voice!

They sigh, mold the fakest smiles imaginable and re-enter the office to greet a still spinning Barry.

POSSIBLE MOM (CONT'D)

We sure had lotsa fun, sweetie. Hope to see you soon.

Barry fails to respond. The husband breaks his act.

POSSIBLE DAD

(threatening, voiced raised)

You see just how far that will get you in life! It's no mystery why your still here!

Barry stops spinning, a satisfied grin on his face.

BARRY

(To possible dad)

With people like you, I'm left with no other choice.

The couple is shocked. Barry gets to his feet and pulls out a file from a nearby cabinet. A picture of a four-year old tanned girl is clipped on the corner.

BARRY (CONT'D)

If you're on the prowl for something smaller, I recommend Tammy. Curious, energetic and responsive.

Barry nonchalantly pushes the file into the lady's hands as if he's doing a favor.

BARRY (CONT'D)

(To possible mom)

You'll make a wonderful mother. Welp... that's lunch. Try to watch that tone, four-year-olds tend to be sensitive.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAFETERIA. CONTINUOUS

Barry chows down on a sandwich while writing something down on paper. In the zone, focused.

A tall thin shadow casts over him. He pauses, undaunted and looks up. LIZZETTE (34) greets him. Lanky, red curly hair, purple specs and exuberates pep. She could be the star of a children's show.

LIZZETTE

(loud and proud)

Hiya, friend! Havin' a good lunch?
Whatcha writin' there?

BARRY

If you're really interested, just
knocking some homework out of the
way. But I have a feeling this
isn't just small talk.

She sits down with him.

LIZZETTE

Catch on quick! That's what we love
about you here. But, say...
don'tcha think any visiting couples
here might have some spare love?
How did your interview with the Ye
family go?

BARRY

(writing, not making eye-
contact)

Lizzette, their verdict is not in
my control. I did what you asked,
and let them do the talking for a
change.

LIZZETTE

A-huh, A-huh... so in other words,
ya blew it again? How many times
does this make?

BARRY

Let's just say they wont be leaving
empty-handed.

Barry points with his pencil to four-year-old Tammy from the files happily bobbing up to the Ye family he interviewed.

BARRY (CONT'D)

One less toddler on your hands.
You're welcome.

LIZZETTE

And another eight-year-old I still have to worry about. Barry, you're a smart cookie. You should know the importance of child development are nurturing parents. There's a lot of kids here, we can't do it all.

BARRY

I sympathize deeply, truly. But as far as I'm concerned, the benefits outweigh the costs of being here. Plus... don't need to grown-ups peeping in my ear to do this or that. I'm a kid not, a maid. And the elephant in the room...

LIZZETTE

(frustrated)

There's nothing wrong with being black, Barry! It's just a chemical in your skin.

BARRY

Oh, I know that. You know that. The world doesn't know that. Or should I say America? Nah... the world.

LIZZETTE

How about this? Take my hands.

BARRY

What is this?

LIZZETTE

(sternly)

Take 'em.

He clasps hands with Liz.

LIZZETTE (CONT'D)

Now, you're gonna close your eyes. And simply imagine. What will life be like when you leave seedling...

Barry closes his eyes and imagines.

We cut to a 18 YEAR OLD BARRY happily strutting out of the orphanage. Happy/upbeat R and B music plays. Almost instantly, a cop tackles him.

When he struts along the block, a cop car follows when he isn't looking. People that walk along Barry are afraid to go near him.

He offers to help an old white lady cross the street and is pepper sprayed.

Grown-up Barry is then seen working at a quiet star bucks. A man pulls out a gun and Barry tosses his hands up. The police show and Barry is the one arrested.

Barry is tossed into a cramped jail cell with another innocent looking black man.

INMATE

Whole foods?

GROWN-UP BARRY

Star bucks.

INMATE

Condolences.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY.

Kid Barry opens his eyes and looks into Liz's hopeful stare. Barry doesn't want to break her heart. He swallows.

BARRY

That certainly was an experience.
Okay look, it's like you said:
Healthy humans start with good
parents. I know that, you know
that. Great. Its just that I can't
get that right... fit. And I pretty
much only get one shot. And I'm not
getting any cuter. So, until the
perfect family shows up. I will
remain Barry... Last-name-pending.

Liz sniffs a bit. She'll take it.

LIZZETTE

I just want you to live your life.

She playfully pinches his nose and tends to the other children. Barry drops his sandwich. He isn't hungry anymore.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. T.V ROOM - NIGHT

Barry scribbles away at notebook, the T.V being his only source of light. Based on the lack of kids or adults in the room, we can tell it's pretty damn late.

BARRY

(Contemplative)

Tuesday is the Feldsteds... that's gonna be a no. (Crosses out name) Mormon household. Thursday with Benjamins. Yuck, super old. Next. (Squints at the paper) I can't even pronounce this one. Safe no. Tongue-twister names are usually the strict ones. Okay, break time.

Barry sets aside the notebook, strained. He's been at it for a while. Barry absorbs his surroundings and blows from his lips.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I just don't understand in any conceivable universe why Liz wants me to give ALL of this up. No bed times, unlimited T.V.... it's not adding up. Maybe there's something I missed.

Barry's train of thought is interrupted by an obnoxiously saxophone riff from the T.V. Barry's attention is brought to an old 80s style sit-com: You gotta be kidding me!

The style is like an exaggerated version of Full-house. He sits down and decides to watch, not knowing what else to do with himself.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM SET FOR SITCOM - DAY

The main characters of the show, WILLA and BREX Parker and their way-too-cool daughter, PENELOPE, are presented as a beautiful perfect upper middle-class white family with so much love to give.

BREX

(coming in, cheery voice)

Hey-hidy-ho family. I've got a special surprise for you all.

WILLA

Finally cleaned the garage, like I asked?

Cue Laugh track.

PENELOPE
 Didja discover the lost city of
 "Who-cares-ville"?

Another laugh track.

BREX
 Come on, guys. Where's your sense
 of adventure? This is pretty darn
 big.

WILLA
 Well don't stall us, dear. Share
 away.

Brex leans from the door and carries in a shy little black
 girl. VIXIE. A collective "AWW" is heard.

BREX
 Meet the latest member of the
 Parker pack!

PENELOPE
 We are SO not calling ourselves
 that!

Laugh track.

WILLA
 That's great, honey. I'll make some
 cookies. In the mean time you can
 get to that garage.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. T.V ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Barry laughs away at the show, its funny for all the wrong
 reasons.

BARRY
 (Chuckles)
 Watching T.V Network heads adding
 tokens as a lukewarm attempt at
 being progressive will never get
 old.

He turns up the volume.

WILLA (O.S.)
 Now who went and made this mess?

VIXIE (O.S.)
I'm sowwy, Mama.

WILLA (O.S.)
Oh, that's okay, chocolate chip. We
all make mistakes.

PENELOPE (O.S.)
If you think I'm cleaning that,
then you gotta be kidding me.

Barry is intrigued by the exchange he just witnessed.

BARRY
That black girl stained an
expensive carpet...and got away
with it. By being cute.

Barry contemplates for a moment and closes his eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM SET - CONTINUOUS

Brex leans out from the door way and pulls out Barry. He is
now in the sitcom.

BREX
Meet the latest member of the
Parker pack.

We hear offscreen audience cheer, Barry takes it in, gestures
for more.

PENELOPE
We are SO not calling ourselves
that.

BARRY
Ditto.

Laugh track.

Barry walks around the living room, content, unburdened. He
fiddles with a wide rack of pricey looking China and vases.

It all comes crashing down, lasting longer than it should,
the sound of breaking ceramic overlaps the looping laugh
track.

WILLA
Oh my stars, would you look at this
mess! Barry...

BARRY
 (Puppy eyes)
 My fingers slipped, Mama...

Collective "Awww..."

WILLA
 (magnanimous)
 It's okay sweetie-kins. Besides, I
 hated that collection. My mother-in-
 law has terrible taste.

Laugh track, there is a knock at the door. Barry answers, and
 is greeted by a stern-faced cop.

COP
 We heard excessive breaking. Looks
 like my hunch was right. You're
 coming with us, son! This is gonna
 be a safe neighborhood.

Before the officer can grab Barry, his family intervenes.

BREX
 Hold it there, buster. You're not
 taking my son!

WILLA
 My chocolate yum-bear is innocent.
 We'll get a lawyer. A good one.

PENELOPE
 Yeah! Scram before I T.P the
 precinct. Again!

The officer sighs. He lost this battle.

COP
 You gotta be kidding me...

The audience cheers. Barry gives a goofy grin and thumbs up
 to the screen, selling his victory.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. T.V ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BARRY
 (moment of genius)
 Yes! The perfect fit. Barry Last-
 name-no-longer-pending, you're too
 smart for this world.