

MONITORED

Written by

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INT. HOUSE - EVENING

RACHEL, a stressed single mom, rushes around trying to keep her three kids occupied while making dinner and dozens of cupcakes for the upcoming PTA fundraiser. The house is a mess, legos and books are strewn around in piles, the sink is full of dishes, and Cheerios and chocolate chips litter the floor.

MASON, 10, builds with legos. LEAH, 7, sits at the kitchen table and messes around with glitter glue while eating gummy worms. CHLOE, 2, pulls books off the bookshelf and chews on them. Rachel sets a timer on the microwave.

The phone RINGS and Rachel groans. She dashes away from the pasta she stirs on the stove, managing to hit her hip on the side of the table. She mutters a curse under her breath. She grabs her cell phone and holds it to her ear with her shoulder.

RACHEL  
(hurriedly)  
Hey Jess, this really isn't the  
best time.

MASON (O.S.)  
Mom! Leah got glitter glue in my  
hair!

RACHEL  
I'm gonna call you back, okay? Bye!

She abruptly hangs up the phone and storms into the living room. She rips the glue away from Leah and goes over to Mason.

LEAH  
Mom!

RACHEL  
(coddling him)  
Are you okay, sweetie? It didn't  
pull on your hair, did it?

MASON  
(pulling away)  
I'm fine, okay? I'm not a baby  
anymore, Mom!

A look of hurt crosses Rachel's face.

RACHEL  
I know, I just want to make sure  
you're okay.

A timer goes off in the kitchen. Rachel gets up to check on the food, but suddenly her attention diverts across the living room, as Chloe picks up a chunk of lego blocks and starts chewing on them.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Chloe, legos aren't for chewing on!  
Mason, come pick up your legos  
right now before she chokes!

The pasta boils over in the kitchen. (O.S.) Rachel runs over to pick Chloe up. Then, the SMOKE ALARM goes off. Chloe immediately starts crying.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
You can't be serious.

Mason whimpers and covers his ears while Leah drops to the floor and starts rolling around, gummy worms in hand.

LEAH  
Stop, drop, and roll. Stop, drop,  
and-

Rachel sighs and sprints over to the stove, balancing Chloe on her left hip. Grabbing an oven mitt, she rips the charred dinner away from the burner and throws it into the sink.

Rachel rushes to the fire alarm. She frantically waves the smoke away with a dish towel, but the smoke alarm doesn't stop. Chloe screams louder. Rachel pounds the smoke alarm with her fist. Mason starts crying too. Rachel manages to pry the batteries out of the smoke alarm. She leans against the wall, tired and defeated.

RACHEL  
(softly)  
It's gonna be okay, it's gonna be  
okay, it's gonna be okay.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Rachel lies on the couch, one sock missing and her hair tussled. The living room is an absolute disaster. She is talking to JESSICA on the phone again in a relaxed position.

JESSICA  
How've you been holding up?

RACHEL  
(unconvincingly)  
Oh, things are fine, you know.

JESSICA

Really? 'Cause earlier today you didn't sound so fine.

RACHEL

(ranting)

It's just that the kids went crazy while I was trying to make dinner and cupcakes- which, by the way set off the smoke alarm- the house is a mess, Chloe didn't get her nap, so working from home just didn't happen-

JESSICA

Whoa, alright, you need a chill pill, Rach.

RACHEL

(in denial)

Oh, no no no, I'm totally fine, things gotta a little out of hand, but really I'm okay.

JESSICA

Okay, sure, but you should take time to get in touch with your inner spirit. You haven't been showing up to my yoga classes lately, why not?

RACHEL

You know I don't have time anymore, the kids are at that age-

JESSICA

I think you need to get away from all the crazy la-la-la that's going on. Maybe go on a date. Someone else can look after the kids for a night.

RACHEL

Really Jessica? You think I would leave my kids home with a twelve-year old babysitter after what happened today?

Beat.

JESSICA

I have this friend, Ethan, who I want to set you up with. Would you think about next Friday night?

RACHEL

(hesitantly)

I think I'd be too worried leaving the kids-

JESSICA

I can tell you need a break. Even if you don't like this guy, you'll get away from the house. I'll even babysit for you, I just want you to stop stressing so much.

RACHEL

(reluctantly)

Okay, I'll give it a shot.

INT. HOUSE-EVENING-NEXT FRIDAY

Rachel is in the bathroom putting on mascara to cover up her baggy eyes. She gives Jess the rundown for the night who leans against the door frame. Jess wears loose pants, cardigan over a flowered tank top, and five toe rings. Her long blond hair cascades over her shoulders.

RACHEL

I'm a little nervous about tonight, Jess. But you know the rundown, kids in bed at 8:30, the kids had dinner, but there's other stuff in the pantry, and the kids love jumping on the couch, but don't let them do that.

JESSICA

Okay got it. Don't worry so much, go have fun. I've got it under control.

Mason and Leah argue loudly about who gets the window-shaped lego (O.S.)

Rachel, mascara in hand, helps break up the fight and looks over at Jess who is now unsuccessfully helping Chloe get into her pjs.

RACHEL

Are you sure you're going to be okay? They're a handful especially around bed time and-

JESSICA

Yeah, yeah, I promise I'm good. It's kinda late, you should probably head out.

Rachel scrambles for her purse and shoes, Leah hugs Rachel's knees and won't let go. An M&M wrapper sticks out of Leah's pant pocket. Jess zips up Chloe's pjs and peels Leah away from Rachel. Rachel blows kisses and runs out the door.

Jess does the tree pose with her eyes closed. The kids are running around in circles.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Okay kids, now it's time to center ourselves.

Rachel bursts back in.

RACHEL

I forgot my keys! Has anyone seen my keys?

Jess shrugs and Rachel runs up to her bedroom. Rachel comes back into the living room, keys in hand. Then she notices Mason by the door and crouches next to him.

MASON

Mom! Mom! Look at my new car I built!

RACHEL

That's great, honey-

MASON

Mom! Just look at it, it drives and everything.

Mason pushes the Lego car back and forth on the carpet. Rachel pauses and crouches down next to Mason. She picks up the car.

RACHEL

Wow! I really like it.

Rachel smiles at Mason, who smiles back. She hastily shoves it into her purse and runs outside.

## INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

The restaurant is peaceful. There is ambient orchestral music playing and ETHAN is already sitting at a table for two looking at a menu. Ethan wears a long sleeve dress shirt and kaki slacks. His hair is well kept and he has glasses. A few couples sit in the background chatting. There are no kids in sight.

RACHEL  
(awkwardly)  
Oh, hi! Are you Ethan?

ETHAN  
Yes, nice to meet you Rachel.

Ethan stands up. Rachel slips her keys into her pocket. Rachel starts to go for a hug but Ethan sticks out his hand and they settle on a handshake. They both slide into their seats.

The two sit in silence for a few very prolonged seconds. Both hold their menus in front of their faces, Ethan occasionally glancing over at Rachel, bewildered.

A waitress appears and sets two glasses of water on the white tablecloth.

WAITRESS  
Hello, and welcome to Vazo Azzuro!  
May I take your order?

ETHAN  
(confidently)  
I'll take the Capellini al Pomodoro  
Fresco.

WAITRESS  
And for you?

RACHEL  
Can I get the Risotto Pescatore?  
Thanks.

The waiter takes the menus and exits.

Ethan looks up at Rachel and attempts to start the conversation.

ETHAN  
(joking)  
Guess we can't hide from each other  
anymore, huh?

Rachel laughs, a little embarrassed.

RACHEL

Yeah, I guess not. Sorry, I'm a little... I don't know, it's been a while since I've dated. It's tough to get away from my kids.

INT. HOUSE-EVENING

Jessica, muttering mindfulness quotes, runs away from Mason who wields a plastic sword. Leah chants war cries with a mouth full of chocolate and Chloe bangs on pans with a wooden spoon.

INT. RESTAURANT

Rachel and Ethan are comfortably chatting.

RACHEL

This is a beautiful restaurant, good choice.

ETHAN

Well, it's nice having someone to share it with.

They smile at each other. The waitress enters carrying platters of seafood and pasta.

WAITRESS

Here we are! Buon Appetito. Let me know if you need anything!

Ethan and Rachel smile and thank the waitress. Ethan places his napkin on his lap. Rachel unfolds her napkin to put it on her lap and moves her purse off of her lap onto the floor. Mason's car rolls out towards Ethan, who notices it and picks it up.

ETHAN

What's this? Did you bring more toys to this date?

RACHEL

Oh, that's Mason's Lego car he built today. He showed me it on my way out the door and I must've slipped it in.

ETHAN

It's so cool! With the pull back wheels and everything. Those were my favorite. Remember when-

Right then Rachel's phone, which is in her purse, rings. Rachel cringes at the noise.

RACHEL

Ooops, forgot to silence my phone.

Rachel turns the volume on her phone down without looking at it, then slips it back into her purse. Her phone starts to excessively VIBRATE. She fumbles to get it out and excuses herself quickly to the bathroom.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Sorry, it's my kids, I'll be right back.

INT. HOUSE-EVENING

Jess attempts to corral the children by sweeping her arms around in circles. Chloe chews on a red block. Leah runs around the living room and kitchen screaming "be do be do" like a fire engine. Mason jumps on the couch with the phone.

MASON

So hey mom. You were so smart to leave us with Jessica, she doesn't know anything about kids. All she wants to do is yoga but Chloe is crying and Leah is screaming like the house is on fire-

INT. RESTAURANT-EVENING

The bathroom is clean, tidy, and empty. Rachel's on the phone with Mason.

RACHEL

Mason are you jumping on the couch?  
How is everyone? Are you alright?  
Why are you calling?

MASON

I'm having a great time!

RACHEL

Then why did you call? I'm in the middle of a date!

MASON

Because-

INT. HOUSE-EVENING

Jessica snatches the phone away from Mason and goes into Warrior II pose.

JESSICA

(breathing heavily)

No, no everything is fine, we're having a wonderful time!

INT. RESTAURANT BATHROOM- EVENING- CONTINUOUS

Rachel's face is skeptical as she listens to Jessica's rant through her cell phone.

JESSICA

Don't worry about us, we're just doing some yoga, reading books, the usual.

RACHEL

Do you mean to tell me that my kids have magically started reading?

INT. HOUSE-EVENING- CONTINUOUS

JESSICA

I brought this great book about mother nature. Okay, have fun! Chloe, don't touch-- You should probably head back before the food gets cold-

Jessica hangs up on Rachel.

INT. RESTAURANT BATHROOM - EVENING -CONTINUOUS

Rachel looks confused down at her phone. She pauses but turns to leave the bathroom, slipping her phone into her pocket.

INT. RESTAURANT-EVENING

Rachel arrives back at the dinner table. The race car sits next to Ethan's glass.

ETHAN  
Everything alright?

RACHEL  
Oh yeah, just a call from my kids,  
they thought it was funny to steal  
Jess's phone, but they should be  
okay...

An uncertain beat.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Yeah. Yeah, I'm sure they're fine.  
Jess is gonna try to teach them  
yoga.

ETHAN  
You like to do yoga, too? Last  
summer I was on a vacation on the  
east coast visiting family. For my  
nephew's birthday we went to a  
petting zoo and they were offering  
this goat yoga class.

RACHEL  
Wait, seriously? Goat yoga? That's  
insane.

ETHAN  
Yeah, I know, right? I'd never  
really done yoga before but I  
couldn't exactly turn down all six  
of my nieces and nephews. It turned  
out to be really fun, believe it or  
not!

Rachel laughs.

INT. HOUSE-EVENING

Jessica does lizard on a rock pose. Chloe fusses on the floor next to her and Leah jumps on Jessica's back. Mason jumps and runs around Jessica's yoga mat. Jessica sighs and tries to compose herself.

JESSICA  
Remember kids, the key to centering  
yourself is to find your inner  
spirit, the calm, quiet place where-

Chloe starts to cry. Leah behaves like a farm animal, snorting, bleating and walking on all fours.

INT. RESTAURANT-EVENING

Rachel and Ethan chat with each other, they both enjoy the conversation and each other's company.

INT. HOUSE-EVENING

The house is so messy you can barely see the stained carpet. Leah sits on a bean bag eating large forkfuls of cookie dough ice cream out of the tub. Mason knocks down his tower of Legos, which scatters everywhere. Leah puts the fork down, exhausted and sickly. Upstairs, Jessica looks fondly at Chloe asleep in her crib and shuts the door.

INT. RESTAURANT- EVENING

Ethan and Rachel eat, slowly and deliberately while making eye contact and smiling at each other.

Suddenly, Rachel's phone starts vibrating in her pocket. It is quiet enough that Ethan cannot hear, but it startles Rachel.

ETHAN

Are you okay?

Right then her phone stops vibrating and she looks up.

RACHEL

Um, yeah. Sorry-

Rachel's phone starts vibrating again. She pulls it out of her pocket.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Sorry, it's my kids again. I wonder if it's another prank call-

Rachel looks up at Ethan, wondering what he'll respond.

ETHAN

If you're worried, you should take it. I don't mind.

RACHEL

Are you sure? I'm sorry they keep interrupting, it's been a while since they've had a babysitter..

ETHAN

No, no go ahead.

RACHEL  
Thanks, I'll be right back.

INT. RESTAURANT- BATHROOM

Rachel excuses herself and calls her kids back in the bathroom once more. Mason picks up.

MASON  
Mom! Leah just threw up all over my  
Lego tower! There's rainbow puke  
all over everything and-

RACHEL  
(disappointed)  
Oh no, really?

Rachel sighs and looks towards the door.

INT. RESTAURANT-EVENING- CONTINUOUS

Ethan sits at the table, head propped up on one hand, waiting.

INT. RESTAURANT- BATHROOM-CONTINUOUS

RACHEL  
I'm sorry Mason, don't worry, I'll  
be right there.

INT. RESTAURANT

Ethan sits waiting for Rachel, not eating just waiting patiently. Rachel comes back, phone in hand, looking worried and uptight. She stands next to the table.

ETHAN  
Is everything alright?

RACHEL  
I'm so sorry Ethan, I really have  
to go. That was Mason, Leah's sick-

ETHAN  
Oh no, what happened? Is she  
alright?

RACHEL  
She probably ate too much. I'm  
really sorry, I've gotta go.

ETHAN  
I, uh-

RACHEL  
I had a really nice time but I  
really have to go-

Rachel rushes out of the restaurant, grabbing her coat on the way out. Ethan watches her leave, perplexed.

INT. HOUSE- NIGHT

Jessica mutters softly to Leah and helps her get into bed. On her way downstairs, she notices Mason brushes his teeth. Jessica attempts to clean up the puke mess with Clorox wipes.

INT. MINIVAN-NIGHT

Rachel speeds through the darkness, her hands grip the steering wheel.

INT. HOUSE-NIGHT

Jessica's hair is a mess. Her cardigan slips off one shoulder. She looks around and notices that the entire house is an utter disaster. Jessica closes her eyes and attempts to center herself. Then she starts picking everything up.

INT. MINIVAN-NIGHT

Rachel peels into the driveway, yanks her keys out of the emission, and runs up to the house.

INT. HOUSE-NIGHT

Jessica has barely made a dent in the mess but she keeps trying. Rachel bursts through the door.

RACHEL  
Jessica! Where's Leah? Is she okay?

JESSICA  
I just put her to bed.

Rachel climbs to stairs to check on Leah, Jessica tags behind. Through the door Leah sleeps soundly. They head back to the living room together.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

(rambling)

Oh Rach, I'm so sorry. I know I did a bad job, I let Leah eat too much and Mason horse around, I wasn't careful enough.

RACHEL

(a little tense)

Jess, it's fine. Trust me, if anyone knows about what a handful those kids are, it's me.

JESSICA

I just wanted you and Ethan and the kids to all have a fun night. I guess I'm not cut out for this stuff. (beat) Did you at least have a good time with Ethan?

RACHEL

Yeah, it was nice. I didn't realize how much I needed to get out of the house and meet someone new and have a good time.

JESSICA

That's great, do you think you'll go out again?

RACHEL

I don't know, I rushed home so quickly he probably thinks I wanted to get away from him. He doesn't have any kids, I don't know if he would get how...

She trails off.

Rachel and Jessica look at each other, Jessica's face still droops a tad, but Rachel is no longer frustrated, just tired. There is a KNOCK on the door. Rachel turns to Jessica, confused. Jessica shrugs. Rachel gets up and opens the door. Ethan stands in the doorway, carrying a white box and Mason's Lego race car.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Oh, Ethan?

ETHAN

Hey Rachel. I'm sorry you had to leave early, is everyone alright?

RACHEL

Yeah, everything's fine, but what are you doing here? You drove all the way here?

Right then Mason walks into the room, interrupting their conversation.

MASON

Mom, I'm not feeling well.

RACHEL

Oh no, are you going to be sick too?

MASON

No, I just need a glass of water.

Jessica hops up to get one while Mason waits. Ethan crouches down next to Mason.

ETHAN

Look what I've brought you? Look familiar?

MASON

My race car! Look, it drives and everything!

Mason kneels on the carpet, driving the car up Ethan's leg and around the carpet. Ethan participates, engaged. Rachel smiles at them.

JESSICA

Mason, come on, I'll get you that glass of water.

Mason follows her out.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

(whispering to Rachel)

I got this one.

Rachel and Ethan say good night to Mason who is led upstairs by Jessica.

Rachel and Ethan look at each other. Rachel smiles.

RACHEL  
Wow, thank you for remembering  
that.

Ethan smiles back. Then he starts to extend the white box.  
Rachel looks down at it.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
What's that?

ETHAN  
Well, we didn't get to have dessert  
at the restaurant, so I thought I'd  
bring you some Zabaglione to go.

RACHEL  
That's so thoughtful, thank you!

Rachel takes the outstretched box. They stand there for a  
second. Ethan turns to leave.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Wait!

Beat. Ethan turns back around.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
This place is a disaster, but if I  
clean the glitter glue off the  
dinning room table, would you  
(beat) share it with me?

Ethan smiles. He starts walking towards the kitchen. Rachel  
smiles then turns to walk with him.

FADE TO BLACK.