

ROCKY BOTTOM

Written by

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INT. BAR #1 - LATE AFTERNOON

RYAN CALDWELL, a 21 year old college student wearing a button down shirt the top few buttons undone and a tie hanging loosely around his neck, sits alone at a bar drinking a rum and coke. He is the only person in the bar aside from the BARTENDER.

RYAN
Another rum and coke sir.

His speech is clearly slurred.

BARTENDER
How about some coffee instead
buddy? I think you've had enough to
drink.

The two have a brief stare off before Ryan jumps up from his stool.

RYAN
Who are you tell me when I've had
enough? I'm fine totally sober and
functioning.

Ryan trips over his stool as the bartender comes out from behind the bar.

BARTENDER
Thats it. I think you need to go.
Now!

Ryan gets up from off the floor and after staring at the bartender, he turns and angrily walks out of the bar slamming the door behind him.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan's phone rings in his pocket. He stops walking briefly he pulls out his phone and checks to see who is calling. It is his roommate COLLIN. Ryan answers the phone.

RYAN
Hey man whats up?.. The interview?
Uhhhh it didn't go so well... yeah
I didn't get it... whatever not
like it matters... I'm just
grabbing a drink obviously...I'll
be home eventually... See ya.

Ryan continues walking around the city until he eventually finds himself outside of "Rocky Bottom" a rustic looking hole in the wall bar in the middle of the city.

CUT TO:

INT. ROCKY BOTTOM - MOMENTS LATER

A bell above the door rings as Ryan enters, being the afternoon he is the only patron in the bar currently. The bar is simple with a few tables and booths for sit down meals, a bar, pool table, the typical bar/restaurant set up. Ryan makes his way over to the bar slumping himself down into a stool.

The sound of Ryan sitting brings out the owner and manager of the bar, CATHERINE BRONWYN, a perky 66yr old woman with short silver hair who gives off that adorable grandmother vibe.

CATHERINE

What can I get for ya?

RYAN

(slurring)

A Long Island would be great.

Catherine noticing Ryan's clearly intoxicated state picks up a glass, fills it with water and slides it across the bar to Ryan. Ryan picks up the glass, sniffs it and sets it down.

RYAN (CONT'D)

What's this supposed to be?

CATHERINE

The best drink in the world. Water

RYAN

Oh come on are you not gonna serve me either?

CATHERINE

I'll give you all the water you want but no booze. Aint no reason you should be drinking alone in the middle of the week.

Ryan begins to sip the water while Catherine watches, a smirk on her face.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Why are you in here anyway kid?

Ryan continues to sip the water as the two sit in silence for a moment. After an awkward pause Ryan finally responds.

RYAN
(mumbling)
I blew this interview for a summer
job.

CATHERINE
Sure thats the only reason?

Ryan looks away and breaks eye contact with Catherine.

RYAN
Uhhh, yeah.

Catherine stares at Ryan in silence for a moment as she cleans some glasses.

CATHERINE
I'll tell ya what, you promise to
stop lookin so glum and you can
work here for the summer.

Ryan looks up from his water caught off guard by the sudden offer. Catherine just looks at him and offers a smile.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Well?

RYAN
Uhhhh sure! But why would you offer
a total stranger a job?

Ryan begins sipping his drink out of nervousness

CATHERINE
The way I see it sometimes we all
get a bit down and its up to those
of us who can to offer a pick me up
whenever we can.

Catherine turns away from Ryan and steps into the back for a moment as Ryan continues to drink as he looks around the bar. After a moment Catherine returns to the bar.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
You do have one thing right though.

RYAN
Whats that?

CATHERINE

We are strangers. Would help if I
knew your name.

Ryan finishing his drink smiles realizing he forgot to
introduce himself.

RYAN

Ryan Caldwell ma'am

CATHERINE

Catherine. Nice to meet ya and
please don't call me ma'am.

The two shake hands as Ryan gets up from his stool.

RYAN

Well I think I should get going,
I'm having dinner with my roommate.

CATHERINE

Alright Ryan I'll see you Friday at
3:00 sharp for your first shift.
Alright?

Ryan is halfway to the door as he turns around.

RYAN

Yes Ma--Catherine! See you then.

Ryan exits the bar.

CUT TO:

INT. RYAN'S APARTMENT - LATER SAME EVENING

Ryan sits at a makeshift "dining room" table in the middle of
a cramped apartment with a small kitchen and living room that
is reminiscent of a dorm room but just a bit nicer. Across
from Ryan sits his roommate COLLIN, a 21 year old college
junior like Ryan. The two are eating a dinner of pizza.

COLLIN

So you gonna tell me what happened
with the interview? You've barely
spoken since you got home.

Ryan appears to ignore Collin as he continues to chew on the
pizza in his hand.

COLLIN (CONT'D)

Come on bro whats up with you
lately? Is it acting up again?

At the mention of "it" Ryan looks up at Collin and sets his pizza down.

RYAN

I don't know man, I was all excited for the interview and then woke up this morning feeling like it was pointless and so I blew it... I did get this job at a bar instead though!

Collin begins to get up from the table grabbing his dishes and carrying them to the kitchen.

COLLIN

Thats great! At least you'll have somethin' to do all summer. And even better I can get free drinks whenever I want.

RYAN

I'm not sure that giving out free drinks is a good way to start a job but we will see how it goes. First shift is Friday.

Collin is walking out of the kitchen towards Ryan. He pats him on his shoulder.

COLLIN

It will be good for ya. A job might help to keep you distracted. And remember that I'm here if you ever need anything, I know its been hard for you the past couple of weeks.

Collin walks away from Ryan and into his bedroom leaving Ryan alone at the table, after a moment a small tear forms in the corner of his eye.

CUT TO:

INT. RYAN'S BEDROOM - FRIDAY AFTERNOON

Ryan walks by a nightstand in his room grabbing his keys off of it. CLOSE UP of Ryan looking down at something else on the desk. CLOSE UP of a photo of Ryan and his Mother sitting on the nightstand. Ryan turns away and walks out of his bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. ROCKY BOTTOM - LATER

Ryan walks up to the bar where Catherine is standing counting cash in the register.

CATHERINE

Right on time! Grab a seat Ryan.

Catherine points to a stool in front of her which Ryan sits in. Catherine hands him a pile of paperwork she pulled from the register.

RYAN

Whats all this?

CATHERINE

Paperwork. I may have hired you on a whim but still gotta do the forms if you want to make money.

Catherine hands Ryan a pen and returns to counting cash as he fills out the forms. The two do their work in silence for a few moments.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

So whats the real reason you were in here drinking yesterday?

Ryan stops writing for a moment unsure how to respond.

Begin Flashback

INT. RYAN'S PARENTS HOUSE - MORNING

Ryan enters the kitchen and sits down at a table with his MOTHER, FATHER, and SISTER. The family is partaking in a simple breakfast of pancakes and toast. Ryan's mother eventually gets everyones attention and begins talking. As she talks tears become visible in Ryan's sister's eyes, his mother reaches out grabs both siblings hands.

RYAN

(Talking over action)

When I was home for Thanksgiving last year my mom got some pretty bad news. She had been diagnosed with some rare aggressive kind of cancer. It was really sudden, we didn't know how to react.

FADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MONTHS LATER

Ryan's mother lies in a hospital bed, she now seems frail and weak, Ryan and the rest of his family sits by the bedside.

RYAN

(Voice Over)

They tried the usual treatments for it but nothing seemed to work. Surgery wasn't an option. I spent my 21st birthday last month with her in the hospital, forced to watch as she got sicker and sicker.

END FLASHBACK

INT. ROCKY BOTTOM - CONTINUOUS

Ryan has teared up some as he shared the story. Catherine now is sitting next to Ryan on a stool.

RYAN

She passed away that same night.

The words hang in the air for a minute, neither of the two moving. Catherine eventually grabs a hold of Ryan's hand.

CATHERINE

Sweetie I am so sorry for your loss. It's never easy to lose a loved one. It takes time to work through the pain but it does get better.

Catherine stands up and begins walking back behind the bar.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

If your about done with that paperwork lets get started teaching you the trade!

BEGIN MONTAGE:

INT. ROCKY BOTTOM - EVENING

1. Ryan is behind the bar with Catherine mixing different drinks.
2. Ryan is bringing out food & drinks to customers at tables
3. Ryan is chatting to patrons at the bar and laughing with them

4. Ryan is mopping the bar floors at the end of the night and putting chairs on tables

FADE TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Collin and Ryan are sitting at a booth in a crowded restaurant eating a meal of burgers and fries. Both are dressed in attire for a night of hitting up the bars.

COLLIN

How's it feel to finally have a night off from work? I hardly see you ever you work so much.

RYAN

Yeah I guess I haven't been around much. It is nice to just enjoy a night out with my roommate though.

COLLIN

And how have you been with everything else?

RYAN

I've been feeling better. I think having something to do has kept me distracted from that.

Collin having just finished his food waves towards their server.

COLLIN

Well if distractions help I guess I better keep you distracted by taking you out for a night at the bars!

The server arrives at their table.

COLLIN (CONT'D)

(To the server)

Check please!

CUT TO:

EXT. STRIP OF BARS - NIGHT

Ryan & Collin get their IDs checked by a bouncer outside of a bar and then open the door to a bar and walk in.

CUT TO:

INT. ROCKY BOTTOM - LATER

The door to Rocky Bottom swings open and in walks a clearly drunk Collin followed by Ryan as they both stumble in. Ryan looks around the place and recognizes where he is.

RYAN

Dude this is where I work!

COLLIN

Awesome lets see if we can get a free drink!

The pair walks up to the bar and are promptly greeted by Catherine.

CATHERINE

Well who might this be Ryan?

Catherine nods towards Collin.

COLLIN

I'm Collin, Ryan's roommate and would very much appreciate using his employee discount for a free drink.

CATHERINE

Well unfortunately for you Ryan knows that I do not serve clearly intoxicated people.

COLLIN

Awww come on!

RYAN

Lets just get out of here Collin. We'll go somewhere else.

Ryan attempts to get up from his stool and ends up tripping and falling onto the ground drawing the attention of other patrons in the bar. Collin quickly hops off his stool and tries to help Ryan up.

COLLIN

Here let me help you up

Ryan pushes him away as he struggles to get up.

RYAN

I don't need anyone's help! I wish everyone would just stop trying to help!

Collin has backed away from Ryan and Catherine has come out from behind the bar to check on the boys.

CATHERINE

Come on now. No need to yell like that.

Ryan turns to face Catherine.

RYAN

Oh spare me the pity! We both know you only gave me this job here because you felt bad for the depressed kid sitting in your bar! I done need this job and I don't need you! I quit!

Ryan storms out of the bar as all eyes in the place follow him out. As the door slams shut behind Ryan Collin snaps out of it and chases after Ryan.

CUT TO:

INT. RYAN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Ryan is sitting on the couch eating a slice of pizza taken from a box on the counter. The door the apartment opens and Collin enters.

COLLIN

How did you get home so quick?

RYAN

Uber. I'm going to bed.

Ryan gets up and starts to make for his room but Collin walks over and blocks his path.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Let me through.

COLLIN

No we need to talk about what happened back there.

RYAN
We really don't.

Ryan tries to push his way through Collin but is unsuccessful.

COLLIN
We are all just worried about you Ryan. You've had a shitty year and its normal to go through a rough patch. We just want to help you through it and be there for whatever you need.

RYAN
I know I just... I don't know what I need right now. I feel like that job was helping and I just blew that opportunity just like I mess up everything else.

COLLIN
You don't know that for certain. Give it some time and talk to Catherine. She seemed like an understanding woman. Now go to bed, something tells me your gonna be a bit hungover tomorrow.

Collin steps aside and lets Ryan pass.

RYAN
Thanks. For everything. Night

Ryan walks into his bedroom as Collin walks off camera.

CUT TO:

INT. RYAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 1 WEEK LATER

Ryan is alone in the living room. He is sipping a beer and dialing a number in his phone. He sets the beer down as he puts the phone to his ear.

RYAN
Hi Catherine, its Ryan... I just wanted to apologize to you for the way I acted last week in the bar. I was wrong to snap at you and make the scene I did. I have no right to ask this but I would really appreciate a second chance if you would be willing to offer one.

(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)
I promise I won't let you down...
Either way thank you for
everything. Goodbye.

Ryan hangs up the phone and looks down to the beer on the table. He picks the bottle up and walks into the kitchen where he pours its remaining contents down the drain.

CUT TO:

INT. RYAN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Ryan is lying in bed reading a book. Just the bed side lamp is on and he has his phone next to him softly playing music. After a few moments Ryan's phone buzzes. Ryan sets the book down and grabs his phone, glancing at the screen.

Its a text message from Catherine. The message reads "Can you work a special function tomorrow morning at 10am at the bar? Need to add an extra bartender."

Ryan quickly types up a response to Catherine. "Sure I'll be there! Thank you so much!"

The icon appears showing Catherine is typing a response. "Thank you! Please wear some black pants and a nice black shirt if possible."

Ryan sets an alarm on his phone for the next morning, turns the lamp off and goes to bed.

CUT TO:

INT. ROCKY BOTTOM - NEXT MORNING

There are a few people dressed in all black setting up pictures on eagles and straightening furniture. Ryan walks in and pauses in the doorway thrown off momentarily by the scene. He walks behind the bar to the back room where he finds Catherine who is dressed in a black dress.

CATHERINE
Oh good morning! Thanks so much for
coming in last minute Ryan.

RYAN
No problem! What is the event thats
going on?

Just as Catherine is about to answer one of the women who was in the main area of the bar setting up, MRS. STONE, comes into the back and addresses Catherine.

MRS. STONE

Would it be possible to get some snacks to put around on the tables Catherine? We don't want the guests to get hungry before the other food is put out.

CATHERINE

Of course, I can have Ryan go put some out for you.

Mrs. Stone turns to see Ryan for the first time, he acknowledges her with a small nod.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

When would you like them set out by?

MRS. STONE

Now would be best. The service was supposed to end at 10:15.

CUT TO close up shot of a wall clock showing the time to be 10:30am.

MRS. STONE (CONT'D)

So the guests who weren't going to the cemetery should be here any minute.

CATHERINE

Alright guess we should get into position its show time. Ryan can you go put out some pretzels and popcorn on the tables?

RYAN

Can do.

Ryan walks out of the back room followed closely by Mrs. Stone into the main bar area. As they enter the bar area Ryan stays behind the bar and reaches underneath pulling out some wicker baskets while Mrs. Stone walks away into the main area. As Ryan pulls out a bag of pretzels from a cabinet behind the bar, the entrance door opens and a crowd of mourners from the funeral begin to funnel into the space. The sound of muffled crying and whispers about the person who died begin to fill the air. CLOSE UP on bag of pretzels as Ryan opens them with a pop.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. A DIFFERENT BAR - DAY

CLOSE UP on an open bag of pretzels being held in the hands of a BARTENDER. ZOOM OUT revealing a mass of people in the bar dressed in black. Ryan walks away from a group of elderly people and takes a seat at the bar. The Bartender slides a basket of pretzels towards him.

BARTENDER
What can I do for you?

RYAN
Whats the strongest drink you have?

BARTENDER
Do you have ID?

Ryan looks in his wallet and pulls out a poorly made Fake ID with the name Billy Watson on it and hands it over.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
You expect me to believe this is
real?

As the bartender hands Ryan back the ID. Ryan begins to raise his voice to the bartender.

RYAN
Just give me a damn drink! I just
buried my mother!

The bartender is caught off guard and just stares at Ryan.

END FLASHBACK

CATHERINE
Ryan.... Ryan.... Ryan!

Ryan snaps out of a daze. Catherine is now standing next to him trying to stop him from pouring the pretzels as the basket is now overflowing.

RYAN
Oh...uh... sorry about that.

CATHERINE
Are you ok? You said you would be
on top of your game today.

RYAN
Yeah I'm fine. It's just...

Ryan looks around and sees more of the mourners coming into the bar. Tears can be heard. Ryan begins to look very anxious.

RYAN (CONT'D)

I'm not ok. Sorry I... I can't do this.

Ryan sets down the pretzels and dashes out of the bar.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETARY - LATER

Ryan is sitting in front of a tombstone on the edge of the cemetery that overlooks a body of water. On the tombstone is some flowers and a card with "MOM" written on it. Engraved on the tombstone is "Karen Caldwell 6/23/67-4/14/17 A beloved wife & mother".

Ryan stares at the tombstone and puts his hand on his mother's name. He eventually stands up and walks next to the tombstone looking out at the water.

RYAN

She always said she wanted to be buried somewhere she could hear the water and see the sunsets.

Pan out to reveal Catherine leaning against a tree behind Ryan.

CATHERINE

How long have you known I was here?

Ryan turns around to face Catherine.

RYAN

Long enough. Shouldn't you be running that event at the bar?

CATHERINE

I had someone else take over. I had something more important to attend to.

RYAN

But how did you find me?

CATHERINE

When you left I contacted Collin since he is your emergency contact.

(MORE)

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

He said this was where you would go given what today is.

RYAN

She would have been 50 today. It's so hard to go through everyday realizing things are never going to be the same and thinking of all the things she wont get to see me do.

CATHERINE

I know how you feel Ryan.

RYAN

How do you know?

CATHERINE

Follow me.

Catherine begins walking to a different part of the cemetary with Ryan following behind. Eventually they stop in front of a different tombstone. This one reads "John Bronwyn".

RYAN

Why are stopping here? Who is he?

CATHERINE

He's my husband

RYAN

Oh uhh... I'm so sorry for your loss.

CATHERINE

Thank you but you don't have to feel sorry for me. He passed away suddenly a few years ago. It hurt for a long time but eventually I realized that being depressed wasn't what John wanted me to do. He would have wanted me to move on and be happy. I'm sure your mom would want you to do the same.

Ryan shifts uncomfortably as the thought sinks in.

RYAN

I guess your right.

CATHERINE

I'm not saying you can't miss her. Lord knows I miss John everyday.

(MORE)

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

You just can't let that loss stop you from finding the bright spots in life too.

RYAN

Like what?

CATHERINE

Well when John passed he left the bar all to me. It may seem like a burden but that bar has given me some great memories over the years and by running it I feel like I'm honoring John every day.

RYAN

I just don't see any bright spots in my life right now.

CATHERINE

They are there you just aren't looking hard enough. What about that friend of yours Collin? He seems to be there for you through thick and thin. Friends like that are one in a million.

RYAN

I guess and my dad and sister and I have grown a lot closer too.

CATHERINE

See! You just gotta change your way of seeing things. When things get rough and it feels like things can't get any worse, that's when it all changes. Once you hit rock bottom there's nowhere to go but up.

RYAN

Your right. Thanks a lot for the talk I guess I never really talked with someone who gets it.

CATHERINE

Come on why don't we head back to the bar.

CUT TO:

INT. ROCKY BOTTOM - EVENING

Ryan is seated at the bar as Catherine works behind the bar preparing him a drink. The two are chatting and smiling. The door to the bar opens and Collin enters with a GROUP OF RYAN'S FRIENDS. They all crowd around the bar greeting each other and ordering drinks. Once everyone has a drink Ryan raises a glass in a toast.

FADE TO BLACK.