

Zenyatta Piñata

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Standing in his living room, RICHARD holds a baseball bat, practicing his swing. CAROL enters, on guard.

CAROL

Richard.

RICHARD stops swinging. He looks at her.

RICHARD

Carol. You here for Emily?

CAROL

Is she around?

RICHARD

She's upstairs. I'll call her down for you.

CAROL

Actually, Richard, I wanted to ask you a few questions first.

RICHARD finds this unusual. He sits.

RICHARD

All right.

CAROL

You play baseball?

RICHARD

Later this afternoon, I'm meeting with a couple of guys from the office. I'm out of practice, so I've been trying to get in a few swings. So what do you want to ask? It's not about a surprise party, is it?

CAROL

Excuse me?

RICHARD

Emily's birthday; it's in two months or something. Let me tell you right now, though, she doesn't like parties. Emily is not a party person. Especially when she's the center of attention.

CAROL

It's not a surprise party.

RICHARD

Good. Cause really, that would be something ugly. I mean, you know how she can get.

CAROL

I can imagine.

RICHARD

Right.

CAROL

I came here because I've been worried about Emily.

RICHARD

Yeah?

CAROL

She hasn't been looking well.

RICHARD

What's she been telling you?

CAROL

Nothing.

RICHARD

Ah.

CAROL

That's why I'm asking you.

RICHARD

What? You think she might be sick or what?

CAROL

She looks like she hasn't been sleeping. She's been on edge. Like something happened.

Beat.

And she has a bruise on her arm—

RICHARD

OK.

CAROL

OK?

RICHARD

Say what you think. If you come here to tell me something you might as well tell me.

CAROL

Richard, I came here because maybe I don't need to say anything. I can tell you what this looks like.

RICHARD

Uh huh.

CAROL

But that doesn't mean that's what I think, or what I want to think.

RICHARD

Emily talk to you at all about her arm?

CAROL

Yes.

RICHARD

What did she say?

CAROL

She said she hit it in a door frame.

RICHARD

She said the same thing to me.

CAROL

Yeah.

RICHARD

She's clumsy.

CAROL

I guess so. She must have walked into the door frame twice.

Beat.

She has more than one bruise.

RICHARD

Calling upstairs:

Hey Emily?

CAROL

Richard—

RICHARD

Emily, can you get down here?

To CAROL:

You want this settled, this is the way to have it settled.

CAROL

Richard, this isn't going to help.

RICHARD

I think it will.

CAROL

Richard, I know what you want from her. And I think you like how you get it.

RICHARD

It doesn't matter, Carol. What your impressions are. Or mine. You'll hear it from my wife.

EMILY

Offstage:

Richard?

RICHARD

Yeah, honey; come down here.

He shoots CAROL a look. EMILY enters. She is a piñata. Her actress wears an oversized, multi-colored, paper maché suit, but her face shows through. Her arm is covered by a bandage.

EMILY

Carol, hi. What are you doing here?

RICHARD

She was just stopping by.

EMILY

Can I get you anything?

CAROL

No, I only wanted to see how you were doing. How's your arm?

EMILY

Displaying the bandage:

Sore, tender. Nothing unexpected.

CAROL

Are you going to see a doctor?

EMILY

Oh, no; it's only a few bumps. I've been taking it slow.

CAROL

Not too slow, Emily; we miss you. You missed us for lunch last week and then you get yourself hurt like this.

EMILY

I know; I'm sorry.

CAROL

And you know April's having her shower the Saturday after next. You won't miss that, will you?

EMILY

Carol, I don't know—

RICHARD

We're busy.

CAROL

What time's your game?

RICHARD

Later.

CAROL

Well.

She stands.

CAROL (cont.)

Emily, why don't I stop by later, then? I only had time to say hello.

EMILY

OK.

CAROL

Richard.

RICHARD

Carol.

CAROL

I'll see you later, Emily. Take care of yourself.

CAROL exits.

EMILY

We look ridiculous.

RICHARD

In front of your friend? She's putting us on the spot.

EMILY

I know.

RICHARD

She should know enough to show you a little privacy.

EMILY

Sorry.

RICHARD

Because I was going to say before, since I'll be out with the guys from the office, you should get together with the girls and do your own thing. But the rest of them, if they're going to put you on the spot like Carol, then you're better off left alone.

EMILY

I understand.

RICHARD

Don't let them disrespect you. You should be better than that.

RICHARD's attention returns to his bat. EMILY takes the stopper from a decanter and pours a drink. RICHARD watches.

You want ice?

EMILY

I'm fine.

RICHARD

Go back to the kitchen and get yourself some seltzer or something. You really have to—

EMILY downs her drink.

Hey.

EMILY

Just swing your bat, Richard.

RICHARD

I don't like what I'm seeing.

EMILY

I can have a drink if I want to.

RICHARD

You shouldn't drink alone.

EMILY

Fine, I'll pour you one.

She turns to grab another glass. RICHARD grabs her arm.

RICHARD

Put the glass down, Emily.

She does.

Sit down.

She does.

I want you to tell me we're OK.

EMILY

Is that it?

RICHARD

Because the way things look to me, we're fine. But you start drinking like that and it changes things.

EMILY

No, Richard; it's fine.

RICHARD

Really fine or are you just saying that? That's what I want to know.

Beat. EMILY resets her glass and puts the stopper in the bottle.

EMILY

I'm done for the night, Richard. It's fine.

RICHARD

And we're OK, too?

EMILY nods. RICHARD walks over and puts his arms around her.

I want to hear it out loud....

EMILY

We're OK.

RICHARD continues to hold her. He kisses her on the head.

You're going to miss your game.

RICHARD

Nah, it's all right.

EMILY

Beginning to break away:

Well you should get ready.

RICHARD catches her hand.

RICHARD

Before I go, honey, how about giving me a little sugar?

EMILY

Oh. Well, OK.

She gives RICHARD a peck on the cheek. He does not respond.

RICHARD

No. Emily, you know what I mean...a little sugar?

EMILY

Richard, not now.

RICHARD

Oh, Emily—

EMILY

It makes me uncomfortable, you know that.

RICHARD

All I'm asking—

EMILY

Wait until after the game. When you come home, I'll have everything you want.

RICHARD

No, nothing after the game. I want one piece now. You can do that for me.

He stares at her. EMILY relents and reaches inside her piñata suit—possibly into her wounded arm—and pulls out a piece of candy. She places it in RICHARD's hand and withdraws her arm.

Stopping her:

Hey.

He pulls her closer and gives her a kiss. They break apart. EMILY sits while RICHARD examines his candy. He is disappointed.

Bit-O-Honey?

EMILY

Hmmm?

RICHARD

This is what you give me?

EMILY

Oh, I guess so.

RICHARD

Yeah...you guess so. You know I don't like Bit-O-Honey.

EMILY

Richard.

RICHARD

It's small, tough—it isn't even sweet. And it's just a bit? Nothing else.

EMILY

You get what comes out.

RICHARD

That's not good enough, Emily.

EMILY

Then what is good enough?

RICHARD

I don't like that tone.

EMILY

Get your own candy, Richard.

RICHARD grabs her arm, bringing EMILY to her feet.

RICHARD

I have my own candy, Emily! I have you! Husband and wife!

EMILY

I'm not a kitchen cabinet, Richard. To reach inside of myself like that, it's very uncomfortable; it's not something—

RICHARD

You can't even say that to me, Emily. I know it isn't true.

EMILY

It is!

RICHARD

I was right here! You talked to Carol. Asked, "Can I get you anything?" I know what you meant. You wouldn't give her Bit-O-Honey.

EMILY

I can't even talk to you....

RICHARD

So don't lie to me. Take another reach in. Or I'll do it.

EMILY

Stay away from me, Richard.

They stare at each other.

RICHARD

I'm putting on the music.

RICHARD crosses to the stereo and flips through albums.

EMILY

Moving to him:

Richard, no—

RICHARD

You made your decision.

EMILY

—Don't do this.

RICHARD shoves EMILY to the ground. He starts an album—"The Mexican Hat Dance"—picks up the bat and approaches EMILY.

EMILY

Getting up:

Rich—

RICHARD swings into EMILY's stomach. She falls.

RICHARD

You don't lie to me!

He hits her again.

Open up!

And again. EMILY cries out.

EMILY

Richard!

He moves to swing again.

No!

RICHARD stops. He switches off the music.

It's yours.

RICHARD

Show me.

Slowly, EMILY stands. Though she clutches her stomach, pieces of candy tumble out of her, spilling to the floor.

EMILY

Are you happy with yourself?

RICHARD shoves her to the side and scoops handfuls of candy from the ground. He unwraps a piece with his teeth, spitting out the wrapper.

RICHARD

This is a marriage, Emily. We don't keep things from each other. Remember that.

EMILY

To herself, breaking down:

I don't know why....

RICHARD

Hmmm?

EMILY

I don't know why you look at me and think you can treat me like this.

RICHARD

Get yourself cleaned up.

RICHARD takes his bat, his candy, and leaves. After a moment, EMILY rises. She grabs a newspaper from the couch. She then retrieves a jar of paste and shakes it. She regards her new tear and begins tearing strips of the newspaper, holding them in front of her wound. As EMILY repairs herself, CAROL returns.

CAROL

Emily?

EMILY

Carol, give me a minute.

CAROL

Observing the wreckage:

Emily, my God; what's this? What did he do to you?

EMILY

I'll be—

CAROL

No, Emily, you can't begin to say that. I'm not letting you spend another minute in a house with a man that would do this to you.

EMILY

I don't have to.

CAROL

You won't. Start packing, Emily. Anything valuable, sentimental, take that first. Clothes, a toothbrush, we can buy—

EMILY

Carol.

CAROL stops.

Hold this. Here.

EMILY has CAROL hold a strip against her wound. EMILY prepares the next strip. After a moment, CAROL takes a long look at EMILY's body.

CAROL

You need more than this, Emily.

EMILY

I know what I'm doing.

CAROL

I don't want to fix you up just to see Richard—

EMILY

You won't.

CAROL

Stop saying that! Richard won't change.

EMILY

I learned that last week.

CAROL

Then you know. You can't stay. Emily, let's go now. Richard won't be playing ball all night.

EMILY

Oh, Richard won't make it to his game tonight....

CAROL

Puzzled:

Emily?

RICHARD appears, silent, still holding the bat and candy. His eyes are wide CAROL sees him and gasps. EMILY meets his gaze.

EMILY

Richard's had too much to eat.

RICHARD opens his mouth to respond and blood pours out. Not only blood, but other objects, too. He drops the candy and approaches EMILY.

RICHARD

Through gurgled blood:

Emily?

EMILY

Goodbye, Richard.

Before reaching EMILY, RICHARD collapses, going silent. CAROL approaches his body. She picks up a piece of candy. Examining it, she pulls something from the candy.

CAROL

Map pins?

EMILY

Isn't that the first thing you're supposed to do? Inspect your candy?

To RICHARD:

You should have been more careful.

To CAROL:

Carol, what do I look like? A punching bag? A victim? Murderer?

CAROL

Emily. You're my friend.

EMILY faces her.

EMILY

Thank you.

EMILY leads CAROL off. The lights fade.