

THE CHOCOLATE AFFAIR

by STEPHANIE ALISON WALKER

CHARACTERS

BEVERLY
MR. GOODBAR
M&M

SETTING

A seedy motel room.

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THE CHOCOLATE AFFAIR

[Lights up on BEVERLY (33)—well put together, slim and wearing flattering and feminine business attire. She cradles a plastic Halloween pumpkin filled with candy.]

[She looks around the room and carefully sets the pumpkin on the bed. She looks at it for a beat, then closes the blinds, shutting out any hint of the outside.]

[She sits on the bed next to the pumpkin.]

BEVERLY

This is crazy.

[She looks at the pumpkin. Then away. Then at the pumpkin. And away. At the pumpkin. Away. Then she practically lunges at it, reaches in and pulls out a piece of candy.]

[She holds the candy before her. She sniffs it, deeply inhaling its scent. She unwraps it and carefully takes a bite. Slowly. Savoring every morsel. She moans. This is ecstasy.]

[She digs back into the pumpkin and excitedly dumps all the contents onto the bed. She rolls around in the candy. Laughing. Devouring piece after piece after piece.]

[She begins to choke. And then recovers. She's silent for a few moments. Long enough for sadness to set in.]

[MR. GOODBAR appears and sits next to her on the bed. He puts his arm around her.]

MR. GOODBAR

Don't be sad, Bev.

BEVERLY

Holy crap!

MR. GOODBAR

Whoa, whoa, whoa. It's okay.

BEVERLY

Who are you? What are you doing here?!

MR. GOODBAR

You brought me here.

BEVERLY

I...

MR. GOODBAR

You brought all of us here.

[He gestures to the candy on the bed.]

BEVERLY

You're...

MR. GOODBAR

Mr. Goodbar.

BEVERLY

I've had way too much sugar.

MR. GOODBAR

Are you okay, Bev?

BEVERLY

I shouldn't be here.

MR. GOODBAR

You wanted to be alone with us.

BEVERLY

Yes.

MR. GOODBAR

Have another piece of candy.

BEVERLY

I shouldn't.

MR. GOODBAR

If you can't eat candy when you're alone in a seedy motel room, when can you?

[He hands her a piece of candy. She eats it. It makes her happy.]

MR. GOODBAR

That worked, didn't it?

BEVERLY

Yeah.

[He sits on the bed with legs outstretched and leans against the headboard.]

BEVERLY

I love chocolate and peanuts.

MR. GOODBAR

That's me. Mr. Goodbar. Chocolate and peanuts.

BEVERLY

I love you.

MR. GOODBAR

C'mere.

[She lays back against him holding the pumpkin on her stomach.]

MR. GOODBAR

Have another.

[She reaches and grabs a mini bag of M&Ms. She rips it open and pulls out an M&M.]

M&M

Stop!

BEVERLY

Who said that?

[An M&M enters in person form.]

M&M

What the heck do you think you're doing?

BEVERLY

I'm...I'm....nothing. Nothing.

MR. GOODBAR

For your information, she is giving herself a break.

Yeah.

BEVERLY

A well-deserved break.

MR. GOODBAR

Well-deserved.

BEVERLY

Hard earned.

MR. GOODBAR

I work so hard.

BEVERLY

And she never gets to eat candy.

MR. GOODBAR

Never. I never do.

BEVERLY

But this isn't your candy to eat.

M&M

Yes it is.

BEVERLY

No it's not. It's Sally's candy.

M&M

Sally?

MR. GOODBAR

Sally. You know. Ten years old. Pig tails. Pirate.

M&M

Oh, the pirate girl. *(to BEV)* Is this true?

MR. GOODBAR

No.

BEVERLY

MR. GOODBAR

Bev?

BEVERLY

It's not true.

M&M

It is true. Your daughter Sally earned this candy. She trick or treated for this candy.

MR. GOODBAR

You stole this candy from your daughter?

BEVERLY

I didn't steal it.

MR. GOODBAR

And she made such a cute little pirate.

BEVERLY

She's a pirate every year.

*[She reaches for another piece of candy and M&M fights her for it.
They fight over the candy.]*

M&M

It's not yours!

BEVERLY

Give it!

M&M

I won't let you eat your daughter's candy!

BEVERLY

But I'm helping her!

[BEV rips the candy away from M&M and eats it.]

MR. GOODBAR

You're helping her?

BEVERLY

Yes.

MR. GOODBAR

(to M&M)
See? She's helping her.

M&M

How is she helping her?

MR. GOODBAR

(to Bev)
How are you helping her?

BEVERLY

Sally's not allowed to eat candy.

M&M

Oh please.

BEVERLY

It's true!

M&M

That's pathetic.

BEVERLY

The kids at school... they make fun of her. They call her Miss Piggy.

MR. GOODBAR

Oh, that's awful. Kids are so mean!

BEVERLY

She comes home in tears some days and won't tell me why. But I know why.

M&M

Because she's fat?

BEVERLY

(softly)
Yes.

M&M

So she's a chubster, huh?

MR. GOODBAR

M&M, have some tact.

BEVERLY

She can't help it. She just loves candy so much. And tater tots. And pizza and chips. The other kids eat the same things and they don't get fat. How is that fair? It's not. Not one bit. The other day, I caught her melting cheese on a plate. To eat. As a snack. Just cheese melted on a plate.

M&M

That's disgusting.

BEVERLY

And of all the candy in the world, M&M, you're her favorite. She loves you the most.

MR. GOODBAR

That's sweet. I'm not jealous.

M&M

So Sally's a little chubby McChubster. A piggly wiggly.

MR. GOODBAR

Stop!

M&M

A roly polly pirate girl?

MR. GOODBAR

Wait a second. The pirate girl was skinny.

M&M

Right. She was a beanpole. The only pig feature about her were her tails.

MR. GOODBAR

So Sally's not fat?

M&M

Sally—Bev's daughter, the pirate girl, the rightful owner of this here candy—is not fat.

MR. GOODBAR

Bev? Is this true?

[BEV ignores the question and eats another piece of candy.]

MR. GOODBAR

It's all a lie?

M&M

You bet it's a lie.

MR. GOODBAR

I don't understand. What kind of person...

M&M

Come on Goodbar, let's get out of here.

MR. GOODBAR

Beverly... why?

M&M

Don't talk to her. She's pathetic! Help me with the candy.

[M&M starts gathering it up. MR. GOODBAR doesn't move.]

Come on, Goodbar! Help me.

MR. GOODBAR

Bev?!

M&M

Grab the candy.

MR. GOODBAR

Talk to us, Bev!

M&M

Save your breath. She's just gonna lie.

BEVERLY

I can't take it anymore!!

[M&M stops. A long beat. They watch Bev.]

I'm up every day at five. Every day. Up at five, go for a jog, take a shower, wake Sally, cook breakfast—something healthy—egg whites, flax, kale, organic coffee, sprouted wheat. Sit down with Dave and Sally for breakfast. Eat a tiny portion. Be sure to leave some on the plate. Always leave some on the plate.

Get dressed. Something feminine, flattering. Kiss Dave goodbye. Make sure to give him a little something worth coming back home to.

Check on Sally. Comb her hair. Pack her lunch. Wait with her for the bus. Hug her goodbye. Make sure that hug lasts all day long...that she feels your arms around her even at recess when the mean kids pick on her because their moms don't hug them enough. Then let go. Watch her walk away, board the bus.

Choke back your tears. Taste the salt slide down the back of your throat. Go back inside. Check yourself in the mirror. Ugh. Turn around. Turn back hoping to see someone else. Cross through the kitchen. Pause. Feel the quiet of the empty house. No one watching. What can you eat? Open the pantry, look inside. Grab the jar of peanut butter. Unscrew the lid. Take a whiff. Stick your finger in the jar of peanut butter. Lick it off. Feel someone watching you. Turn around to face them. No one's there. Put the peanut butter away. Wash your hands, careful to remove any trace of peanut butter. Reapply lipstick. Head out the door. To work. Again.

[A long pause.]

M&M

(a revelation)

You used to be fat.

MR. GOODBAR

M&M!

M&M

Oh, please. I know her type. *(to BEVERLY)* How much?

BEVERLY

My stomach hurts.

M&M

A hundred? Huh? How much?

MR. GOODBAR

A hundred what?

M&M

Pounds. *(to BEV)* Come on. How much did you lose?

BEVERLY

This isn't fun anymore.

M&M

She stole hard earned Halloween candy from her daughter, ditched work and checked herself into a seedy motel to eat it.

BEVERLY

There's something wrong with me.

MR. GOODBAR

She can't help it.

BEVERLY

I'm a terrible person.

M&M

I'd bet at least 110. Am I right? You lost 110 pounds?

MR. GOODBAR

Why 110?

M&M

She's got at least another whole person in here. *(she points at her head)* And she walks like she used to waddle.

[BEVERLY throws a piece of candy at M&M and hits her in the head.]

Ouch!

MR. GOODBAR

That wasn't nice.

BEVERLY

You're supposed to make me feel better.

MR. GOODBAR

It's okay. Here. Have a Kit Kat.

BEVERLY

I don't want a Kit Kat.

MR. GOODBAR

Sure you do. It always makes you feel better.

[She takes the Kit Kat and unwraps it. She takes a bite and disappears into her happy place.]

M&M

No amount of candy will be enough to bury it for good. To make you forget about the chubby little girl nobody loves who melts cheese on a plate and sneaks french fries when nobody's looking and eats M&Ms like we were candy coated pieces of happiness.

MR. GOODBAR

You are candy coated pieces of happiness.

M&M

Thank you. I mean, we try.

[She finishes the Kit Kat. Swallows slowly and reaches for another piece.]

M&M

You better not.

MR. GOODBAR

Yeah, you probably shouldn't.

BEVERLY

Why?

M&M

Uh, cuz you'll get fat.

BEVERLY

I'm already fat.

MR. GOODBAR

No.

BEVERLY

Yes.

M&M

She's fat on the inside.

MR. GOODBAR

M&M!

M&M

(to BEV)

Maybe you should... *(looking at the bathroom)* ...you know. *(sticking finger down throat.)*

BEVERLY

I don't do that!

MR. GOODBAR

Then what are you gonna do?

M&M

What are you gonna tell Sally?

MR. GOODBAR

She'll probably be missing her candy.

M&M

And Dave.

MR. GOODBAR

You'll just have to go back and pretend like this never happened.

M&M

Buy more candy for Sally.

MR. GOODBAR

Fill up the pumpkin. Put it back in her room. Cook a healthy dinner.

M&M

Vegan butternut squash soup and Baby Arugula salad.

MR. GOODBAR

With pine nuts.

M&M

With pine nuts.

MR. GOODBAR

Just pretend this never happened. You can do that. You're good at pretending.

M&M

Lying.

BEVERLY

I stole candy from my own daughter.

MR. GOODBAR

It's okay.

BEVERLY

She could eat this whole pumpkin and not gain a pound.

M&M

Poor Sally.

BEVERLY

I won't do it again.

MR. GOODBAR

I know.

BEVERLY

Vegan butternut squash soup.

MR. GOODBAR

And Baby Arugula salad.

BEVERLY

With pine nuts.

MR. GOODBAR

A healthy supper.

BEVERLY

We'll sit down at the table.

MR. GOODBAR

Like any other day.

BEVERLY

And say grace.

MR. GOODBAR

And it will all be okay.

BEVERLY

Okay.

M&M

And if not...

MR. GOODBAR

We're always here for you.
[A long beat.]

BEVERLY

(I wish I didn't need you)

I know.

[Lights fade to black as BEVERLY slowly puts herself back together.]

END OF PLAY