

Bank of Love

By

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Cast of Characters

Maria: 23

Becky: 19

SCENE ONE

The Bank. London Road.

Lights off.

A sea of balaclavas enter. A loud commotion of shouting and banging. Paint brushes in hand. Brooms and dust pans. Bin bags are emptied out across the floor.

"At 5.30pm on Saturday police received a report that a number of people had entered the site of the old Barclays Bank. The Barclays branch has been closed since January 23 2015. No arrests have been made in relation to the take over of the building."

Painting. Cleaning. Sweeping.

Wooden barricade states -

'No cops, no Tories, no junk mail.'

Lights on.

Barclays is renamed as 'Bank of Love'. Officially open.

Maria and Becky are queuing for their space.

MARIA:

/Your first time?

BECKY:

/My first time.

MARIA:

Your first first time?

BECKY:

My first time.

MARIA:

Yeah, knew it.

BECKY:

Really?

MARIA:

What's your name?

(CONTINUED)

BECKY:

Becky.

MARIA:

Knew it.

BECKY:

You did?

MARIA:

Yeah, you look like a Becky.

BECKY:

I do?

Pause.

MARIA:

Well. Then. New girl. One thing you'll learn. Well, a few things actually.

BECKY:

A few?

MARIA:

The main thing...

BECKY:

The main thing?

Pause.

MARIA:

Steal your own tampons.

BECKY:

Steal?

MARIA:

Tampons.

BECKY:

Steal them?

MARIA:

You might find a Lil-let or two lying about.

BECKY:

Here?

MARIA:

And that's if you're unlucky.

BECKY:

Lil-Lets?

MARIA:

Lil-Lets. And you don't want a Lil-let up your vagina.
Believe me.

BECKY:

Believe you.

MARIA:

Believe me.

BECKY:

I do.

MARIA:

That pharmacy over there. That one over there. Stocks
the Tampax right in the corner.

BECKY:

Right.

MARIA:

So it's easy. Easier to steal.

BECKY:

I don't think that's really my thing/

MARIA:

/You look like a Tampax kinda girl.

BECKY:

I do?

MARIA:

Look like you'd want to keep it tidy, treat it with
care.

BECKY:

I never thought I gave off that kind of...atmosphere.

MARIA:

Oh yeah, I knew you were Tampax girl from a mile off.

BECKY:

And a Lil-Let girl?

MARIA:

Lil-Let shoves.

BECKY:

Oh.

MARIA:

Tampax glides.

BECKY:

I glide?

MARIA:

With your fanny yeah.

BECKY:

Oh right. I never knew...Thank you.

MARIA:

You're welcome mate.

BECKY:

I'd never really thought/

MARIA:

/People don't.

BECKY:

I just didn't think/

MARIA:

/I think they think people like us...

BECKY:

Like us?

MARIA:

Yeah like us don't have periods and that.

BECKY:

I just thought/

MARIA:

/As if it just vanishes, disappears, poof. Like that.

BECKY:

I see. That's never happened to me.

MARIA:

Nor me.

BECKY:

I should have thought/

MARIA:

/Sometimes I really, really, wonder what they must think...You know? When they put spikes in our doorways and slants in our benches. You see those arm rests on those benches. They ain't for your delicate arms to rest. Oh no. They're to stop us from sleeping. Or the bars in them corners. To stop us from loitering. Apparently. Makes you think don't it? What they must think. Retractable spikes. Hidden in plain sight. Boulders under bridges. For some of us lady women those bridges are the safest places, the emptiest spaces. With claims they ain't anti-homeless. They're anti-poor people. That is what they are, really are. Makes you think don't it. I wonder what they must think?

BECKY:

Who's they?

MARIA:

The happy people.

Pause.

BECKY:

What happy people?

MARIA:

Them happy people.

BECKY:

I don't think they're all happy people.

MARIA:

Definitely are.

BECKY:

Not all.

MARIA:

Why not? They've got everything.

BECKY:

They have problems.

MARIA:

Problems? You're having a laugh.

BECKY:

No. I just/

MARIA:

What kind of problems?

(CONTINUED)

BECKY:

All kinds. Different kinds.

MARIA:

Like when they drill spikes to our floors. Cement them into our benches. Put sprinklers in our doorways. Those kind of problems?

Pause.

BECKY:

That's not them.

MARIA:

Who then?

BECKY:

Government.

MARIA:

What those conservatories? Yeah mate, I've heard about them.

BECKY:

Conservatories?

MARIA:

The government.

BECKY:

You mean, Conservatives?

MARIA:

Conservatories, conservatives, all the same ain't they?

BECKY:

A tiny bit different.

MARIA:

Whatever. At least I know my rights from wrongs. And I recognise a lost face.

BECKY:

Lost face?

MARIA:

Yours.

BECKY:

Mine?

(CONTINUED)

MARIA:

Seen it before.

BECKY:

Where?

MARIA:

Before. Before you.

BECKY:

Oh.

MARIA:

Stick with me and you'll be fine.

BECKY:

Okay.

MARIA:

And right now we need to go and grab those sandwiches before those big blokes come and scoff the lot.

Maria shoves the world out the way.

SCENE TWO

The Bank. London Road.

Maria and Becky are squashed between sandwiches and sleeping bags.

MARIA:

I dunno. I wouldn't say I was smart, smart. Put in the smart category I guess. But not skilled smart, less book smart, more street smart. You know?

Between mouthfuls.

You. You though. You look book smart. Like you always had dinner on time and, and your parents read you stories at bed time with night lights and teddy bears.

BECKY:

Didn't yours?

MARIA:

For what?

Pause.

MARIA:

This world wasn't cut out for me. And they knew it too. So, for what? Read fancy stories with morals, for what?

BECKY:

I'm sorry.

Maria glares at Becky.

MARIA:

Sorry for what? There's nothing to be sorry about. Your parents read you stories, mine didn't and look... ain't we both here stuck in the same jam. No night lights in sight...

Pause.

BECKY:

I guess. Bit weird isn't it...

MARIA:

What?

BECKY:

Sleeping in a building that used to have all the money in the world while we lay here with...well...nothing...

Becky twists her necklace. It glitters in the light. It catches Maria's eye but she doesn't say anything.

MARIA:

See, only a book-smart-tampax-miss would say something like that.

Maria chucks the sandwich wrapper behind her.

Listen, here's some street smart for you, a proper bed time story. This side of the world will play you dirty. It will. Squash you into a pretty box, grind you down, it will and then cut you into little pieces and hold you out like a paper chain. Believe me. So, you've got to toughen up. Be stronger. Speak louder. Firmer. Stand your ground. That kind of thing. Before they spit you out. Because they will. And they'll chew you up before they do.

Becky looks petrified.

BECKY:

Are you sure?

MARIA:

Hundred percent.

BECKY:

I'd like to try and remain a little hopeful.

MARIA:

No fairy tales round here, believe me. What, you've been round this way for a couple days? Try doing 6 years like me. And still looking this good while doing it.

Maria flicks her hair.

MARIA:

Those fancy books taught you that hope shit. Because otherwise you'd just live to die, wouldn't you? Need to mess up and complicate the middle bit. Pretend there's words between the lines. Scribble it around a bit. Then, then, well you didn't just live to die. But me, well I'll live happily miserable for ever after. The end. Good. Night.

Maria tucks herself away.

Becky holds her necklace.

BECKY:

She did read stories. Stories before bedtime. To me. Every night.

Pause.

BECKY:

Of wide mouth frogs and hungry caterpillars, and hares, little hares, big hares, eggs and ham, all of them.

MARIA:

Sounds like some fucked up stories if you ask me.

Pause.

BECKY:

And then they stopped. Just stopped. Like that.

Maria turns away from Becky. Her eyes remain open. She lets out half a snore as she listens to Becky intently.

BECKY:

All of these stories just ripped away. Torn apart in front of my eyes. Shredded into nothing. I've forgotten the sound of her voice. I've been trying to remember it. I'd like to think she didn't just live to die.

Pause.

Maria listens, all is silent.

BECKY:

You know, I found this bench. Just on the sea front. So much left of the day, nothing left to do, yet I stopped. Just me and the sea...And I searched for her. I did. I looked for her in every passing face. Just in case. Although I knew it would never be her. A million miles away, I'd walk there if I could. I'd run there, so fast, if I could. But. I...I just stayed sitting. Just me and the sea. Searching. The world passing me by. I watched as all the passing faces blurred into hers. Just hers. And I heard her. I heard her laugh and all was calm, peaceful, and I remembered her, her in all of her form. I thought of all the pieces we ever shared, fixing them into memories I'll always have. The sun setting, the bench cold. Numb. I watched as she quickly disappeared and I remembered. I remembered she was never even here.

Maria, still.

Becky looks at her necklace.

BECKY:

This is all I have left of her.

Becky takes off her necklace and places it into her backpack.

She lays down in her sleeping bag and stares up at the ceiling.

BECKY:

Goodnight.

Nobody replies.

Lights down.

SCENE THREE

The bank. London Road.

A tornado of torches and Hi-Vis Jackets storm the building.

Becky and Maria are torn from their sleeping bags.

MARIA:

Oh for fuck sake.

BECKY:

What?

MARIA:

Told you didn't I.

BECKY:

What's happening?

MARIA:

Grab your stuff.

BECKY:

I don't understand. What are they doing?

MARIA:

Back to the road, kicking us to the kerb//Get off my stuff you fucking twat.

Maria quickly gathers all of her stuff. She struggles to carry it all. A few of her belongings spill over. A necklace falls from her bag. It catches the light.

Becky spots it.

She reaches for it. Maria grabs it.

BECKY:

That's mine.

Pause.

BECKY:

That's my necklace. That's my necklace.

Maria hands it back to her.

Becky snatches it to her chest.

BECKY:

Why would you steal it?

MARIA:

I didn't.

BECKY:

It was in your bag. It's mine and you took it. You stole it from me. It was in your bag?

MARIA:

I didn't steal it.

BECKY:

I thought. I thought. I thought you were my friend.

Pause.

Maria holds Becky's eyes in hers.

Maria picks up her bag and rummages through.

BECKY:

Looking for something else you've stolen from me. Huh?
I should have known. I should have thought. I thought
you were my friend.

Pause.

Maria finds what she is looking for.

MARIA:

I was making sure no one else stole it from you. I was
helping you to keep it safe.

*Maria chucks a box of Tampax at Becky. It lands at
her feet.*

MARIA:

Maria. By the way.

BECKY:

What?

MARIA:

My name. It's Maria...You never asked.

The building is left empty.

Lights out, for now.