

Sweet Resolve

by

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EXT. GOLDERS' GREEN / TERRACED STREET - DAY

There's a hint of autumn to the scene; leaves surrendering the last of their green, yellow tinges creeping in. People hurry along the street, minding their business, against the chill.

EXT. FIRST-FLOOR FLAT / WINDOW LEDGE - DAY

The old, heavy, sash window remains propped open a few inches - stained concrete ledge, paint flakes. The interior of the room beyond is bright, but indistinct. A BUMBLE-BEE plummets, out-of-control, onto the ledge. He rolls a little, bouncing to a stop. Now motionless. After a moment he manages an exhausted flutter of wings. A frail BZZZ, before reverting stock-still again.

From the room inside begin signs of movement. The unfocussed blur of a redhead busies by - MIRANDA (early 20s): beanpole thin, angular, but vibrant with youth. Still distant, she approaches some equally indistinct furniture - from the outline perhaps a desk, a chair. Her figure stoops to reach something there. BA-HUMMMMG. A Mac computer chimes into life. Straightening up, Miranda CHATTERS loudly at the cold. She collects a brightly patterned hemp cardigan from the back of the chair... amusing herself as she does...

MIRANDA

Brrrrrrr. Brrr. Brrr.

Putting the cardigan on whilst she navigates forward, Miranda strolls to the window; finally revealing herself clearly. Her hands grab the underside of the open frame and heave. The window barely budes. She makes a second attempt... halting suddenly when she spies the motionless Bumble-bee outside. She squints and murmurs.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Hmmm!?

Miranda eyes the window up and down - checking it won't now fall closed on top of her - before removing her hands from it. She drops to her haunches, level with the Bumble-bee, albeit with the lip of the window-frame between them; she inside, he outside. Her head tilts from side-to-side, investigating for signs of life. Not satisfied either way, Miranda commences to move her finger over the threshold. At the last moment, she defers, though. The finger pulls back. She disappears from the window again.

She reappears - sheet of paper and a pencil in hand; the pencil proudly professing a vegan slogan along its ridges: "Eat Fruit Not Friends".

The eraser end gently nudges the inert Bumble-bee. He BUZZES weakly in response. At that Miranda nods. The paper is thrust forward and the Bumble-bee delicately scooped up.

INT. FIRST-FLOOR FLAT - DAY

By the window, along the same wall - and level in height - is a radiator. On it, balances a china saucer.

RADIATOR

Miranda carefully transplants the beleaguered Bumble-bee from paper to saucer. The window is left open as she dashes away to the...

COMPUTER DESK

Miranda appears at the desk with a restless urgency. She leans over the chair, stretching to reach mouse and keyboard; too hurried to sit. It's an awkward pose - craning to read the screen. The mouse is moved. A button CLICKED. With a single finger, Miranda starts to type. TAP-TAP-TAP-TAP-TAP. TAP-TAP. TAP-TAP-TAP-TAP. Then a reprieve. Evidently satisfied, she nudges the mouse again and CLICKS with a flourish.

COMPUTER MONITOR

A webpage returns; Miranda scanning the words. "It's true, a simple solution of sugar and water helps revive exhausted bees", "RSPB suggests", "white, granulated sugar", "tablespoon of water".

A beat.

"only ever offer white granulated sugar - never offer demerara"

BREAKFAST BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Tea, Coffee, Sugar jars are pulled forward. The top is POPPED off the sugar - revealing it empty. Miranda shakes it futilely and reacts with a THROATY GROWL.

UNDER THE SINK - AN INSTANT LATER

Miranda jerks the cupboard doors open, peering inside. Items start to be pulled out, working her way to the back.

MIRANDA

Ha!

She retreats from the cupboard, a package in hand.

KITCHEN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

In better light the package is regarded: its tell-tale brown colour, fair-trade and Vegan logos prominent - demerara sugar. Miranda's shoulders slump. She releases a DISAPPOINTED SIGH.

She turns, looking thoughtfully towards the distant radiator, sugar still in hand. Pondering silently to herself for a second, she bites her lip. Suddenly - with a nod - a decision is reached. The sugar is thrust back into the cupboard. The doors are slammed shut.

RADIATOR

The Bumble-bee remains limp. Inert. In the background Miranda can now be seen rummaging frantically about for a jacket. The additional layer is found. Some KEYS and CHANGE are LOUDLY rounded up - thrust into her pockets. The front door opens, SLAMMED shut behind her. Miranda - though light - THUNDERS down the stairs, off-screen. The warming Bumble-bee manages a weak flutter as if in response.

EXT. GOLDERS' GREEN / TERRACED STREET - DAY

Miranda is still negotiating into the jacket as the door to the street opens and she emerges. The bright red hair distinguishes her from the other, dull, foot-traffic... even once the rest of her nimble frame is engulfed in additional clothing. She steps out, visibly feeling the cold. A quick look up / down the street - breath misting a little - before setting off at a good trot.

EXT. GOLDERS' GREEN / "DON'T PANIC, IT'S ORGANIC" - DAY

The tidy shop-front, dark green decor, and signage make it clear this is a specialist health-food store. Miranda arrives, still all a-flutter in a rush.

INT. GOLDERS' GREEN / "DON'T PANIC, IT'S ORGANIC" - DAY

The store is practically empty, staffed accordingly. One solitary CLERK (male, early-thirties); currently milling about behind the counter. He's tall, with sculpted beard, and radiates Hipster 'health' even at a distance.

COUNTER

BELLS JINGLE as Miranda enters - dashing confidently, with familiarity, into the bowels of the shop. The Clerk looks up, recognises her: there's an enthusiastic smile, and a wave.

CLERK

Hi Mir! And how are you today?

Miranda raises her hand in a distracted wave as she steams past, her pace not waning, not missing a beat. The Clerk's face falls a bit. He looks awkwardly at his own raised hand.

AISLES

Well in the heart of the store now, Miranda comes to a halt. Her eyes scan the particular aisle she's in, and the signage for others nearby. Reading the signs, she MUTTERS to herself, barely audible.

MIRANDA

Lentils. Coconut milk. Seaweeds.
Ah...

She cuts herself off. Points. Smiles. Speeds away in that direction.

SUGAR AISLE

Miranda taps the first offering of sugar with familiarity - the same brand and packaging as that found under her sink. She starts to pull at the others, searching in vain for any granulated white sugar. The search grows increasingly more frantic; realising the likely futility each failed investigation implies. Suddenly, she stops - a potential result spied - tucked away at floor level. Dropping to her knees in front this column of sugar / sugar alternatives, Miranda reaches blindly: groping towards the rear. Her fingers touch something. She beams and retrieves it from the darkness.

Kneeling back, she lifts the pack to her face and keenly regards the label.... flour. The pack is dropped; falling from her hands to land on the floor, between her knees, with a small powdery puff.

Miranda's hands rise to her face in despair, where they stay for a moment. They're drawn slowly down, eventually resting under her chin. She looks skywards. Still on her knees, hands clasped under her chin, she could easily be mistaken as praying.

EXT. GOLDERS' GREEN / "MCDONALD'S" - LATER - DAY

The iconic Golden Arches loom above the modern fit-out this particular franchise enjoys; the electronic ordering stations within visible through its large glass frontage.

ELECTRONIC ANNOUNCEMENT (OS)
Order number six-hundred-and-sixty-
six.

Miranda steps onto the scene, uneasily eyeing up the arches. She steels herself and heads for the door.

INT. GOLDERS' GREEN / "MCDONALD'S" - DAY

It's busy. A stark contrast to the previous location. Despite the electronic ordering stations, there are still three sizeable, uneven, queues to the counter.

DOORWAY

Miranda enters a few steps, intrepidly, then comes to a sudden halt. She scans nervously around; uncomfortable in the unfamiliar terrain. An overweight, BURLY MAN (30yo, or so) enters. He collides straight into Miranda.

BURLY MAN
Watch where you're goin'

Miranda shrinks away to the side, the Burly Man paying her no more attention; satisfied at her cowed reaction. He waddles towards the queues and counters. This alerts Miranda to the queues, and - after a moment - she too sets off, albeit warily, in that direction.

QUEUES

Joining the rightmost queue, Miranda tries to peer left and right over the patrons in front - hoping to glimpse either a condiment dispenser or some helpful staff ahead. Politely tapping the customer immediately before her, Miranda motions silently could she get through. The customer accedes. This is repeated on the next in line, who likewise obliges. At the third - still some way from the counter - Burly Man reaches over from the queue immediately to Miranda's left. His big sausage-fingers easily root her to the spot. With the other hand he jerks a thumb over his shoulder.

BURLY MAN (CONT'D)
Oi! There's a queue.

Miranda's gaze probes the customers around her for support - apparently all struck with a sudden blindness; now intent on phones, their hands, the floor... anything but the confrontation. Miranda hesitates for a moment, about to argue her case. But with another glance at the unpleasant Burly Man, the impulse dies. Resigned, she walks sadly back towards the doorway.

DOORWAY

Noting the long queues ahead again, the passing time, Miranda's shoulders slump - now utterly defeated. A beat. Then a squint in the direction of the counters.

ELECTRONIC ORDERING STATIONS - MOMENTS LATER

Like a silent-movie-villain, Miranda tip-toes through the stations: circumventing the queues entirely.

COUNTER

Miranda arrives, surreptitiously, at the counter - in front of a closed till, of course. To her left are the three working registers, still serving away. But she seems happy by her achievement. She waves a hand to attract the nearest staff member. It's ignored. A beat. Another wave, rising up on the balls of her feet to be seen. Ignored again. She splays both hands out on the counter in frustration, shaking her red-topped head.

It's in this stance, through a break in the queues, she spots her holy grail - a dispenser between tills: straws, salt, ketchup and... sugar! Reinvigorated by the discovery, she eyes the activity of the nearest queue - timing for a gap. Then, with a Frogger-like hop, she squeezes through: hop-hop - to the front of the middle queue. The SERVER (teenage) turns to make eye-contact and take Miranda's order.

SERVER

Hi. What can I get you?

Miranda throws a witheringly, mute, smile at the Server; plunging her hand into the sachets of sugar as if in reply. The hand returns... brimming full with little individual white packets. Miranda stuffs the fistful of saccharine into her jacket, turns, and flees.

QUEUES

Miranda sprints towards the door, inadvertently collecting the corner of the Burly Man's arm in the process - he ostensibly lumbering his way to a table now. The collision spins Miranda like a top, forcing her to stop, catch her balance, and reassess her bearings. She looks to Burly Man, still nearby. The impact has done him no damage whatsoever. His collected order still sits neatly on his tray, not a fry out of place. Nevertheless, he steps forward a pace and squares up to the comparatively tiny woman. In a heartbeat, Miranda throws both hands up - flipping the Burly Man's tray and its contents high into the air: milkshake, fries, burger. She bolts for the door before any of it lands.

DOORWAY

The tinny CLATTER of tray hitting the floor arrives just before the more substantial CLATTER of doors - Miranda's flight from the scene. There's stunned silence now from within.

ELECTRONIC ANNOUNCEMENT (OS)
Order number one.

Another moment expires. Miranda's head and shoulders reappear into the restaurant. A vigorous yell -

MIRANDA
You're murdering the planet!

She vanishes again.

EXT. FIRST-FLOOR FLAT / WINDOW LEDGE - DAY

Faint sounds make their way through the open window. Miranda SPRINTING up the stairs. The door OPENING. SLAMMING closed. A tap RUNS. A spoon STIRS. A pause.

MIRANDA (OS. CLOSE, THOUGH)
Here you go little guy.

INT. FIRST-FLOOR FLAT - DAY**RADIATOR**

Miranda carefully pours a dribble of the sugar-mixture out; onto the saucer, right in front of the immobile Bumble-bee. A tense second passes. Then, his little red tongue slowly extends - into the water. He gives a faint, still exhausted, BUZZ and flutter. Before spearing his tongue into the drink a second time.

COMPUTER DESK

Miranda returns to her desk. At the computer, she halts. She looks back to the window - and smiles - before sitting down.

RADIATOR

The Bumble-bee lances enthusiastically away at the drink now, his tongue a rapid red flash. He gives a satisfied BUZZ. In the distance, back in the room, the CLATTER of Miranda typing begins.

THE END