

Bouncy House

By

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An Original Screenplay

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EXT. BACKYARD-LATE AFTERNOON

Late afternoon sunshine and blue sky. The sound of an air compressor, children laughing and shrieking fills the air.

A large inflatable bouncy house in the form of a castle with attached slide takes up a large part of the backyard. Children are playing inside the castle and going down the slide.

Their parents are on the patio, some sitting at a table and others standing in small groups drinking and talking.

A young girl BETH (8) is standing at the entrance to the bouncy house. A younger girl PAGE (7) is facing her. Although we can't hear the conversation, by the Beth's facial expressions she appears to be saying something very mean to Page. Page turns away from her, bends down and tries to enter the bouncy house. Beth grabs her shirt, pulls her out and pushes her to the ground. Beth smiles, bends over and crawls into the bouncy house. Page gets up and runs toward the patio, crying.

EXT. PORCH-LATE AFTERNOON

The sound of an air compressor, children laughing and shrieking fills the air.

Two women KATE (30's) -Page's mother- and ELLEN (30's) are standing off by themselves talking.

Page rushes up and wraps her arms around Kate's legs. Kate kneels down and Page buries her face on her mother's shoulder. Kate pulls her away and uses a napkin to wipe her tears. Page is talking animatedly and pointing at the bouncy house. Kate listens, nods, and walks over to the table that is laid out with a birthday cake and presents. A woman, EMILY (30's) -Beth's mother- is putting candles on the cake. Kate and Emily exchange words. Emily shakes his head in apology and then nods.

Emily walks over to a group of four men (30's) and pulls ERIC (30's) -her husband- aside. Their conversation becomes a bit heated. He points at the bouncy house. Eric throws up his hands. Emily returns to Kate and says something.

Emily returns to putting candles on the cake and glances over at Eric. He is still talking with his buddies. She throws down the candles and walks over to the bouncy house. She leans inside for a moment, then backs out. Beth scurries out. Emily begins to sternly talk to her. Beth spins and tries to crawl back inside the bouncy house. Emily grabs her

ankle. Beth kicks out at her, gets loose and disappears into the bouncy house.

Emily, obviously angry, returns to the candles.

EXT. BACKYARD-DUSK

Sun is below the horizon. Gone are the parents with their laughing and shrieking children. The air compressor is now silent. The castle, now deflated, is being folded up by two Hispanic men (20's).

Emily, obviously distraught, is frantically searching the backyard while talking on a cell.

Eric comes from the house. He looks at her. He shakes his head.

INT. HOUSE-DAY

Loud rock music is playing in the single story house. Through a family room sliding glass door we see a inflatable castle with attached slide on the grass in the backyard. Children are laughing and running outside, playing on the bouncy house in the bright sunshine.

The brightly lit, open kitchen is crowded with parents, drinking beer and blended drinks, eating snacks, laughing and talking in small groups.

A young dark haired boy NATHAN (8) approaches the slider from outside. He opens the door and enters, leaving the door open. He sits down on the floor, a huge pile of new toys, games and clothes around him. He begins to inspect the loot.

Nathan's father, Steve (30's) is tending bar behind the granite island, talking to a few other men.

A dark haired woman JAN (30's) -Nathan's mother- is talking to a blond woman (30's) in the open kitchen. Jan looks over at Nathan.

Jan, pointing at the open slider, hollers over the music at Nathan,

JAN

Honey. Close the door please.  
You're letting the flies in.

Nathan looks up for a brief moment, then continues to inspect his toys, ignoring his mother.

Jan, her face full of irritation, hollers again at Nathan.

JAN CONT

I'm not playing games today. I know  
you can damn well hear me. Now  
close the door, please.

Nathan glances up at his mother, scowls, and then throws the toy violently to the floor. He gets up, walks over and slams the slider shut.

Nathan turns and sarcastically smiles at his mother. Jan scowls back at him.

Jan, disgust showing on her face, turns to the blond woman.

JAN CONT

I swear. If they ever bring back  
stoning, I'm all in.

The blond woman laughs.

Nathan goes back to his toys. A young boy (8) is holding one of the games, looking at it. Nathan snatches it from his hands and shoves him away.

The young boy, lips pursed, eyes narrowed, says something back to Nathan.

Nathan pulls the boy close and whispers something into his ear. The boy's face is shocked. He begins to cry. He turns and runs to the slider, opens it, goes outside, closing it behind him.

EXT. BACKYARD-DUSK

The sun is nearly down. The noise of the air compressor is loud in the quiet early evening.

Jan is picking up discarded paper cups and plates. Steve, hands on hips, is looking at the bouncy house.

STEVE

Did Nathan even set foot in this  
stupid thing? Cost me a small  
fortune. Sometimes I think we spoil  
him too much.

JAN

We? Do you you have a mouse in your  
pocket?

STEVE

No. I'm just happy to see you.

Jan laughs.

JAN

And the bouncy house was your idea.

STEVE

The other kids seemed to enjoy it.

JAN

Well, I don't think he even went outside for more than thirty seconds.

STEVE

He's probably mad because I didn't buy him the stupid motor scooter.

JAN

That was really stupid of you to promise him one without consulting me. For heaven's sake, he's only eight.

STEVE

A moment of paternal weakness. Won't happen again. And next time it's Chuck E. Cheese. Let them clean up the damn mess.

Steve does a tipsy walk and disappears around the back of the inflatable castle. A moment later the compressor stops.

Jan, bends down and picks a cup off the ground and almost falls.

JAN

(To herself)

Whoops. I guess I shouldn't have had that last Margarita.

The silence is complete. Steve returns, his walk still slightly wobbly.

STEVE

Man that noise was irritating. I'll be hearing that in my sleep for a week.

Jan comes up behind him and wraps her arms around his waist.

JAN  
I've got just the thing to take  
your mind off it.

STEVE  
Ooo...I think the mouse is  
stirring. Does it involve  
strawberry jam, whipped cream and a  
riding crop?

Jan giggles, moves around in front of Steve and hugs him  
tightly.

JAN  
Let's get the little monster washed  
up and ready for bed. I've got  
plans for you.

Steve raises his eyebrows.

STEVE  
Maybe we could just drag him out  
here and hose him down.

INT. FAMILY ROOM-DUSK

Rock music is quietly playing in the background. The family  
room is in shadows, only the ceiling lights in the kitchen  
are on.

Nathan is sitting cross-legged on the family room floor  
playing with a plastic Pirate sword. He looks through the  
slider and watches his mother and father embracing. Behind  
them the castle slowly begins to deflate, appearing to  
almost melt.

INT. NATHAN'S BEDROOM-NIGHT

The room is dark and quiet. Only the light from the digital  
clock on the dresser and the faint sound of Nathan's  
breathing can be heard.

His eyes pop open. The steady drone of the air compressor  
easily penetrates the walls of his room. He reaches under  
his pillow and pulls out the plastic Pirate sword. He pulls  
the covers up over his nose, only his wide eyes exposed. His  
eyes dart around the room. He sees the clock. It's midnight.

A look of fright on his young face, he throws off the covers  
and rushes through the door, sword in hand.

## INT. HALLWAY-NIGHT

With no windows to even soften the gloom, the hallway is darker than his bedroom. He freezes just outside his bedroom door. The sound of the compressor not nearly as loud, but enough to effectively block out any other sounds.

He silently counts to himself.

NATHAN  
(mouthing)  
One...two...three...

He bolts down the hallway, slides in front of a door, and instantly enters.

## INT. MASTER BEDROOM-NIGHT

The room is lighter than the hallway, but the noise is louder than even his room. He shuts the door behind him and with back pressed against the door tries to calm his breathing.

He takes three steps and is standing inches from his father. Steve is snoring softly. He reaches out and shakes him. Steve doesn't stir. He shakes harder. Still he doesn't stir.

He hurries around to the other side of the bed and instantly realizes why the sound is so loud now. The bedroom window is open. His natural curiosity takes over, he looks out the window.

Perched on all four corners like a shadowy quartet of nuclear missiles, the castles minarets slowly rise from the darkness reaching up towards the velvety black sky as if preparing to be launched into orbit.

A look of pure terror on his face, he turns from the window and begins to shake his mother, but she won't wake up.

He turns to the window again and watches as the castle reaches full height.

## INT. FAMILY ROOM-NIGHT

The family room is in semi-darkness due to the sliding glass door. The sound is loud enough to mask his footsteps as Nathan dashes from the hall to a safe position behind the couch.

Suddenly the compressor stops.

The muted sounds of children laughing and shrieking can be heard from outside.

He peeks over the couch and looks out the sliding door to the backyard.

The bouncy house appears to be shaking, as if people are inside jumping around. The muted shrieks of laughter seems to be coming from inside the bouncy house.

Anger replaces the frightened face of only moments before. He stands up and walks determinedly to the slider, unlocks and opens it and steps onto the porch.

EXT. BACKYARD-NIGHT

The laughter and voices of children coming from within the bouncy house can be clearly heard.

Straightening his spine, he marches straight for the small opening into the castle, plastic sword leading the way.

He reaches out and lifts the flap.

Instantly there is silence. No children shrieking, no laughter, not even a single cricket to challenge the perfect quiet.

He lets the flap drop.

Suddenly a noise comes from within.

The sound of a single person jumping up and down inside.

The rage that is building in Nathan shows on his face.

NATHAN

(Angry)

This is **my** bouncy house. My daddy got it for **my** birthday. Now get out.

The single bouncing inside continues.

NATHAN CONT

I'm going to call the police and they'll lock you away forever until you rot. And I'll make sure all you have to eat is dog turds and pee.

The bouncing continues.

Nathan grunts angrily. He lifts the flap and crawls inside.



## INT. BOUNCY HOUSE-NIGHT

Inside is pure darkness. He struggles to his feet, the floor wriggling beneath him. The bouncing stops. Suddenly he is pushed from behind. He stumbles forward, but manages to stay on his feet.

A young boy's laughter comes from the darkness. Someone grabs his hair and yanks him almost off his feet. He shrieks with pain. A young girl's giggling comes from the darkness this time. Suddenly his body is being shoved, kicked and spun around in all directions as the laughter of what sounds like dozens of children fills the dark space.

## INT. FAMILY ROOM-NIGHT

A high pitched child's screaming breaks the silence.

Through the sliding glass window we see the castle slowly begin to deflate.

## EXT. BACKYARD-MORNING

The sun is shining. The sky is blue and cloudless.

Two Hispanic men (20's) are rolling up the bouncy house.

Through the sliding glass door we see Steve and Jan sitting on the couch. Jan's head lowered, obviously weeping, two uniformed police officers standing in front of them.

As the two men lift the rolled up bouncy house, a small plastic Pirate sword tumbles to the grass, the morning sun glinting off its shiny edge.

FADE