

Six Flags, Red Flags

By: Anna Medley

CATHERINE, 22, is an employee of Six Flags. ROBERT, 10, is a guest of Six Flags.

A hot, July day.

ROBERT is walking through the park, head down, unattended and uninterested. CATHERINE notices him.

CATHERINE: Hello, excuse me? Where are your parents?

ROBERT: *(mindlessly gestures)* Over there.

CATHERINE: Well, where are you going by yourself?

ROBERT: *(not hard to find an excuse)* To the Batman.

CATHERINE: *(kind reprimanding)* Oooo, I think you're a little too short for that ride.

ROBERT: *(suddenly angry)* What do you know about me or my height or anything.

CATHERINE: *(taken aback)* I...I didn't mean to assume anything. I just was warning you before you went all the way over there and they didn't let you on.

ROBERT: Well, I've ridden it before, so it looks like you don't know everything.

CATHERINE: Oh you have? Well, I'm going to need to talk to Trevor then.

ROBERT: Do it!!!! See if I care.

CATHERINE: Woah there. You need to bring down your attitude.

ROBERT: Well, you're the one that stopped to lecture me.

CATHERINE: And I shouldn't be met with this attitude. Where are your parents?

ROBERT: Over there. I told you.

CATHERINE: Take me to them. I need to have a word with them.

ROBERT: *(suddenly nervous)* Well....they are eating and don't like to be bothered.

CATHERINE: Well, when they hear about how their son has been treating an employee, I'm sure they would like to listen.

ROBERT: They don't give a shit.

CATHERINE: Language! Well I don't care what they give or not. I am going to speak with them.

ROBERT: I told you they don't want to be bothered!

CATHERINE: (*starts to walk away*) I don't care.

ROBERT: Wait!....I lied. My parents aren't here. I'm here by myself.

CATHERINE: By yourself? How old are you? Like 8?

ROBERT: 10

CATHERINE: You can't be here by yourself.

ROBERT: Who says? I have a season pass.

CATHERINE: Your *parents* have a season pass.

ROBERT: Same difference.

CATHERINE: Not same difference.

ROBERT: Whatever. I'm not doing anything illegal.

CATHERINE: But you can't be here by yourself all day without a parent.

ROBERT: (*mumbles*) all summer.

CATHERINE: What?

ROBERT: (*overly loud*) All summer. I've come here every day all summer for the past three years.

(*pause*)

CATHERINE: ...really?

ROBERT: (*quiet*) yes

CATHERINE: (*cautious*) But.....why?

ROBERT: I don't know. My mom just drops me off in the morning and then picks me up at 7 every day.

CATHERINE: Oh my goodness.....what do you do all day?

ROBERT: Walk around. Ride rides. Eat food.

CATHERINE: Do you have any money?

ROBERT:.....well my mom gave me 100 bucks for the whole summer and....I already spent it all.

CATHERINE: Only 100 dollars?

ROBERT: Well that's a lot for us. It's not my fault everything here is so damn expensive.

CATHERINE: *(little chuckle)* Ain't that right!

ROBERT: What are you laughing about? I'm sure you can buy all of the stuff ten times over with your Daddy's money.

CATHERINE: excuse me?.....I'm not making any assumptions about you, so don't go start making assumptions about me.

ROBERT: Oh yeah? I saw you judging me the moment you made that double take.

CATHERINE: *(slightly embarrassed)* Well you were a kid who was alone in a large public place with ripped/ jeans and....

ROBERT: *(rising in anger)* So your judgement is justified because I look a certain way?

(CATHERINE begins to speak) No! Ms. *(reads nametag)* Catherine. You don't get to judge me because I put up with enough of that! My mom drops me off here every morning from the last day of school to the first and goes and does who knows what. When she first started doing this, I thought she had to be going to work, but then I noticed things missing from our house. The TV. My dresser. Our nice plates. Just Gone. So then I thought better than to assume the best and think she is working. The more days that pass on the more red her eyes get and the more I don't recognize her.

(Pause)

CATHERINE: Have you tried talking to her about this?

ROBERT: She doesn't know I exist. That's why I come here and steal food or cut in line or go on rides I'm not supposed to because at least someone will look me in the eyes for longer than 15 seconds.

CATHERINE:Well, you shouldn't do all those things.

ROBERT: What do I care?!?!? Arrest me if you want to so badly! Maybe then my mom will actually pay attention to me!

(pause. CATHERINE doesn't really know what to say because she hasn't experienced this before)

CATHERINE: Listen. I am so sorry that has happened to you.....I can't even imagine.

ROBERT: Yeah I'm sure you can't

CATHERINE: I can't. You're right. But I am here for you. I'm here to help you.

ROBERT: Yeah, right.

CATHERINE: No, seriously....I see you. I notice you are hurting....and if I can play some positive part in your summer here, I would love to.

ROBERT: (*hesitant*).....thanks.

CATHERINE: The Batman is my favorite ride, too.

ROBERT: I didn't say it was my favorite.

CATHERINE: Well what is?

ROBERT:the Batman, what else would it be?!

CATHERINE: It is superior.

(this is the first time you see ROBERT smile. They have a moment together.)

CATHERINE: Well, I work at Capone's Kitchen and if you ever want to ride it, just ask for Cat and we'll go.

ROBERT: Okay....thanks. That would actually be awesome.

(they smile at each other)

CATHERINE: Well, I'm sure my break is over... but I'll see you around. Keep your head up.

(CATHERINE exits. ROBERT looks after her, then lifts his head and walks off with a new spring in his step).