

BROKEN TEETH

A young woman is revisited by a painful figure from her past, and has to decide whether he can ever make amends for past hurt.

FADE IN:

INT - BEDROOM - DAY

Present day. ELEANOR sits on the edge of her bed. She is in her early 30s, tired but composed.

TRISTAN V.O

When Eleanor was a girl, she believed in magic.

INT - CHILD'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Image fades into Eleanor at 6 years old.

TRISTAN V.O

In her world, the tooth fairy came to visit -

Sitting on the edge of her bed, Eleanor pulls a coin out from under her pillow and grins - a missing tooth clearly visible. A puff of purple glitter floats around the coin.

INT - CHILD'S BEDROOM 6 MONTHS LATER - DAY

TRISTAN V.O

Spells were real -

Eleanor waves a stick like a wand and a pink, shimmering cloud erupts from the tip. GEMMA (10), her older sister, waves one back, pretending to cast a spell.

EXT - GARDEN - DAY

TRISTAN V.O

Animals became brave companions -

Eleanor plays on the grass with two stuffed toys wearing purple, glittery makeshift capes as her parents GRAHAM and EMILY argue in the background.

INT - KITCHEN - DAY

TRISTAN V.O

And magic was possible - if only you wished something hard enough.

Eleanor sits at the kitchen table, staring hard at a piece of paper with 'chocolate' written on it in uneven letters - Gemma comes up quietly behind her, a bar of chocolate in her hand, and puts it quietly in front of Eleanor before walking away. Eleanor opens her eyes and turns around, delighted, to grin at her mother. She smiles back unevenly, but we see she has been crying.

EXT - GARDEN - DAY

Eleanor, now 8, is playing with her toys in the garden again. In the background Graham is shouting.

TRISTAN V.O

Over time, however, her faith started to waver. Her brave companions got lost at sea -

Graham walks over and drags her away angrily by the arm, leaving one of her toys abandoned in the grass.

INT - KITCHEN - DAY

TRISTAN V.O

Her wishes stopped coming true -

Eleanor (10) sits at the same kitchen table, eyes closed and concentrating hard, a crumpled piece of paper in her clenched fist. In the background we see Gemma (14) stroking their mother's hair, glaring angrily over at their father. Eleanor opens her eyes, looks over at her father, who is rubbing his knuckles. Seeing him, her face falls.

INT - KITCHEN - DAY

TRISTAN V.O

And the tooth fairy? Well, that was the final straw.

Eleanor (15) and her mother stand protectively around Gemma (18), who is bleeding, as she gingerly eases a broken tooth out of her mouth. Their father stands in the background, fists clenched.

TRISTAN V.O (CONT'D)

After that, well. The magic was gone.

Eleanor takes the tooth from Gemma and stares at it.

INT - DENTIST'S SURGERY - DAY

Present day. Eleanor (31) is holding a broken tooth in a plastic-gloved hand. We move away to see that she is wearing a dentist's mask, standing over a patient. She drops the removed tooth into a tray.

INT - DENTIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Eleanor strips off her bloodied gloves and her mask, looking at herself in the mirror. We see her Dentistry degree in the background. She runs her hands through her hair, breathes out, then turns and leaves the room.

INT - BAR - EVENING

Eleanor sits at a table with Gemma (35). They are drinking wine.

ELEANOR
- not like you and Toby. You're practically married!

Gemma smiles, modest but pleased.

GEMMA
Well, I got lucky.

ELEANOR
No. You deserve him, Gem. You deserve to be adored!

GEMMA
I don't know about that. But I'm happy.

Eleanor smiles contentedly at Gemma and sips her drink. Quiet falls for a moment, and Gemma clears her throat to talk, then changes her mind.

Eleanor notices - glances at her sister and raises an eyebrow.

ELEANOR
What? You look shifty.

GEMMA
What? No, no. Nothing.

She drains her glass - Eleanor's is still half full.

GEMMA (CONT'D)

Another?

ELEANOR

Gemma, you're being weird now. What were you going to say? Did Toby propose? Oh my god he proposed, didn't h-

GEMMA

No. Nothing like that. It's nothing, really.

ELEANOR

It's definitely something. Tell me!

GEMMA

...You're going to flip.

ELEANOR

I am? What have you done? Eloped? Pregnant? Running from the law?

GEMMA

(smiles weakly)

None of those. I... heard from dad.

Eleanor stops smiling and goes very still.

ELEANOR

I see. And... told him to fuck off, right?

GEMMA

(uncomfortably)

I... well. It's been 10 years, El -

ELEANOR

No. No you're not telling me you saw him. You can't have done, you've still got all your teeth.

GEMMA

Look, time has passed, and people do change. He... he's trying, El.

ELEANOR

Christ, Gemma. How could you even consider seeing him?

Eleanor sits back on her chair, angry and disbelieving.

GEMMA

I get it, El, I do. We've got every reason to be angry with him. But - (deep breath) - you've got to go and meet with him. He's got something you... need to see.

ELEANOR

Like what?! Is it money? If he's trying to buy you off, I can lend you -

GEMMA

It's not money.

ELEANOR

(Getting angrier, almost in tears)
Then what?!

GEMMA

I know it sounds insane, and I know it's not that easy to just let it all go, but... I can't talk about it. I can't explain. You just have to go and see him. You have to.

ELEANOR

I can't believe this.

Eleanor stands and pulls on her coat, emotional and angry and shocked.

GEMMA

El, please -

ELEANOR

No! No.

Eleanor walks out of the bar, leaving Gemma looking sad and worried.

INT - KITCHEN - EVENING

Eleanor sits at her kitchen table, staring off into the middle distance, holding her phone, coat still on.

We see a message on her phone from Gemma:

GEMMA

(Message)

I'm sorry. I wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't important.

(MORE)

GEMMA (CONT'D)

*His number is 07700900747, call
him. Love you x*

Eleanor comes to, pushes her phone away across the table, picks up her bag and leaves the room without looking back.

EXT - STREET - DAY

Wearing a coat over her scrubs, Eleanor walks from her office into the street and pulls out her phone. Standing outside the door, she looks at Gemma's text again, hesitates, then dials her father's number.

As the phone rings, she starts breathing heavily.

INT - CHILD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Eleanor is 7, sitting on her bed crying. Graham walks up and sits down next to her.

GRAHAM

Don't cry. There's nothing to cry about. It's just your mum is making all kinds of problems and we have to sort them out. But it's grownup stuff.

Eleanor nods, eyes streaming.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

You have to do something though. You have to promise me you won't tell anyone what happened. Not your friends, not your teachers, not granny and grandad, no-one. Ok? They won't understand, and they'll try and tear us all apart.

Eleanor starts sobbing harder.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

Do you understand me, Eleanor?

Eleanor looks at him, eyes full of tears, unable to speak. Graham's face hardens.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

Say it.

Eleanor sniffs and hiccoughs, can't get the words out.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
 Eleanor, don't mess around with me.
 You are *forbidden* from telling
 anyone, do you understand me?

Eleanor nods, still crying.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
 (shouts)
 SAY IT.

Eleanor tries to speak, but the words come out fuzzy. Graham stares at her, suspicious and angry.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
 Are you playing games with me? I
 forbid it, you understand? You tell
 anyone and I will know about it.

Eleanor, still crying, looks terrified. Manages to get out -

ELEANOR
 Yes, daddy.

She tries to reach to him for a hug, but he pushes her away and stands up.

GRAHAM
 No more games. Forbidden,
 understood?

He walks out of the room, leaving Eleanor sobbing alone on her bed.

EXT - STREET - DAY

Present day. Eleanor is still breathing hard, listening to the phone ring. Graham picks up.

GRAHAM
 Hello?

Eleanor is silent, closes her eyes, shocked at the sound of his voice.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
 Hello?

Eleanor takes a deep breath, steels herself.

ELEANOR
 I'm just calling to say, stay the
 hell out of our lives.
 (MORE)

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Mine, mum's, Gemma's. If I hear
you've been talking to her again, I
will call the police.

GRAHAM
Eleanor?

ELEANOR
(Voice shaking)
Just go away, ok?

GRAHAM
Eleanor, I can help. I want to
help, I want to fix everything,
and... I know how to do it. I've
already helped your sister. Just
let me try.

ELEANOR
You can't do that.

GRAHAM
I can. Really, I can. I can't tell
you how right now, but I can help.
Let me help.

Eleanor is crying, shaking. Her desire to believe him
conflicting with her anger.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
Come and meet me. I promise you,
you won't regret it. Come to The
Holly Oak - the one in Hampstead. 2
o'clock tomorrow. I'll be there.

Eleanor takes the phone away from her ear, unable to reply.
Scene fades out.

EXT - PUB - DAY

Eleanor walks slowly up to The Holly Oak, clearly conflicted
about being there. She hesitates, then reaches for the door.
As she does, she catches her finger on a protruding nail.
Exclaims and sucks the injured finger - we see it is
bleeding. She turns her attention back to the pub, takes a
deep breath and walks in.

INT - PUB - DAY

Eleanor looks around the room, and sees Graham sitting at a
table with JANINE, a woman in her 60s.

On seeing him, she freezes, fighting the impulse to leave, but as she wavers, he turns and looks at her. Stands, waits for her to walk over and join them.

GRAHAM

Eleanor.

Eleanor nods stiffly at him. After a moment, she sits down, still holding her bag and coat, perched on the edge of the chair.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

Eleanor, this is Janine.

She smiles tightly at Janine then looks back at Graham.

ELEANOR

So. Tell me this magic solution.
How exactly do you plan to make
amends for being an abusive
asshole?

Graham looks levelly back at her, ignoring the insult.

GRAHAM

Magic is a good word for it. Me and
Janine, we've been working together
to find something... powerful.
Something special, to help people.

Eleanor stares at him, disbelieving.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

And we did it. We can do important
things, that other people can't.

ELEANOR

Hang on, so you're saying your
magic solution is... magic? I knew
you were an asshole, but what kind
of a sick joke is this?

GRAHAM

I know it sounds out there, but
it's true. Look.

He gestures to Janine, who closes her eyes. Around her, items begin to rise from the tabletop, hanging in mid-air. Eleanor stares in shock at them, then leans forward and passes a hand under and over a hovering wine glass, searching for wires but not finding any. The objects slowly return to the table.

ELEANOR

Right so... so you can do party tricks. Great. You're still wasting my time.

GRAHAM

Oh, Janine can do a lot more than this. We just don't want to attract too much attention.

ELEANOR

I see. And what magic can you do exactly, dad?

Graham pauses for a moment, surprised by the word 'dad', but leans in towards her.

GRAHAM

I can heal.

Eleanor bursts out laughing.

ELEANOR

Really? Really, you're going with that? You - **you** - are trying to tell me you can heal? That's not even ironic, that's just... cruel.

Graham's eyebrow twitches, and he reaches out for her hand. She flinches instinctively, but resolutely doesn't move away. He gently touches the cut on her finger and her breath catches. The cut closes and heals, until it is invisible. She stares at it in disbelief.

GRAHAM

Eleanor, I made some bad choices when you and Gem were young - I was in a bad situation that didn't bring out the best in me. But I can make amends - I can heal it all.

Eleanor, still amazed, looks hard at him, trying to understand.

ELEANOR

Ok, you have some kind of crazy power. Great. And it's great that you'll share it with me and Gem. But what about mum? Will you heal her too?

Graham's face closes, hardens.

GRAHAM

No. You were too young to understand, but it was your mother that made me act like that. She always had a problem, she never let things go. I've changed now, but I'm not having you running to tell her. She'll ruin it all.

Eleanor looks at him with disgust and disappointment. Graham sees this, grabs her hand.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

She doesn't matter, though! Let me help you. I can cure anything. Do you understand that? Anything. What if you get cancer? Or... or your husband has a stroke? Or when you have kids of your own one day... I can help them. Keep them safe.

Eleanor is lost, conflicted. Searches for something to say.

ELEANOR

...How did this even happen, anyway? Can anyone do it?

GRAHAM

Yes, but the knowledge is... forbidden. We had to do a lot to get it.

Eleanor stiffens at the word.

ELEANOR

Forbidden. I see. By who, exactly?

JANINE

By the people who control it. There's a lot of magic in this world, Eleanor, but they hold it back for themselves. We found a way to get access.

ELEANOR

And how many people did you hurt to become part of this exclusive group?

GRAHAM

(beat)

We did what we had to do. They can't forbid people from knowing.

ELEANOR

What, like you forbade me from telling people about our bruises and broken teeth? I can't believe I fell for this, I can't believe I'm here.

(to herself)

God, what an idiot.

You know, you've said a lot of stuff here today, but not once have you said sorry. And you know what? I'd rather take all the chances life throws at me than owe you anything.

She stands to leave.

JANINE

Eleanor, you're making a mistake.

GRAHAM

It's ok, Janine. It's what I thought, she's just like her mother after all.

ELEANOR

Thank you. Honestly, that's the biggest compliment you could give me.

She picks up her coat, and walks out of the pub. As she does, she's stopped by TRISTAN, a beautifully dressed man in his 40s.

TRISTAN

Sorry to bother you darling, but I'm looking for Graham Shaw. Do you happen to know if he's here?

ELEANOR

Um, yes. He's at the table in the corner. Can I ask... why are you looking for him?

TRISTAN

Oh, we need to have a word. I'm afraid he's been upsetting some very important people.

ELEANOR

I... see.

Eleanor looks suspiciously at Tristan, who smiles sweetly back - he has very clean, white teeth, ever so slightly pointed. There is a faint shimmer of pink and purple glitter in the air around him.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
Can I... ask who you are?

TRISTAN
(Laughs gently))
Don't worry, Eleanor. You're going to be fine. This one, however -
(He jerks his head towards Graham's table)
- well, I've been waiting to meet him for a long time.

He squeezes her arm, and walks away, leaving Eleanor looking after him in shock. Inside, he walks purposefully towards Graham and Janine. Tristan makes a small gesture with his hand as he walks, and the door snaps closed behind him.

FADE OUT.