

THIRD WHEEL

Written by

Wayne Franklin

FADE IN:

INT. HILTON HOTEL RESTAURANT - EVENING

The restaurant is buzzing with the after-work crowd. The bar area is packed with nine-to fivers washing away the stress of the day with martinis, margaritas and glasses of scotch.

ISAAC REYNOLDS, late 30s, sits in a booth sipping an iced tea.

He is visibly nervous, staring off into space. He closes his eyes and begins mumbling to himself.

ISAAC

You just say hi, you make small talk, you eat this prime rib, you thank them for a wonderful time, you kiss her goodbye and you close the chapter. Painless.

A pretty, bohemian waitress, late 20s, approaches the table. Her badge reads DEE.

DEE

I'm sorry... Are you talking to me, sir?

Isaac snaps out of his trance and smiles.

ISAAC

No, I'm sorry. I'm talking to myself. I'm a little nervous.

Dee smiles.

DEE

Let me guess - blind date.

Isaac looks up at Dee, his face bathed in anguish.

DEE (CONT'D)

...or not. Did someone die?

Isaac chuckles.

ISAAC

No. I'm meeting the love of my life here tonight...

Dee smiles wide.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
... and her fiancée.

Her smile fades.

DEE
Shit.

ISAAC
Exactly.

Dee tucks her note pad into her apron and slides into the booth across from Isaac.

DEE
Question - does she know that she's
the love of your life?

Isaac is taken aback.

ISAAC
Um... Huh?

DEE
Forgive me. I am a romantic sap.
I'm sorry, and I don't mean to be
nosy, but does she know? I mean,
your statement "the love of my
life..." That's so bold. I'm
fascinated by the fact that you -
that anyone - would even say that
in 2017!

Isaac half-smiles. He shrugs and delves into the conversation.

ISAAC
We've known each other since we
were in the third grade. I first
professed my love to her when I was
eight.

Dee is all in now.

DEE
And nothing? I mean she never
reciprocated?

Isaac looks down at the table and shakes his head.

ISAAC
Nope, never. She's always like "oh
Ike, you're my big brother..."

DEE
...and she's the love of your
life...

A beat.

ISAAC
Well, it sounds stupid when you put
it like that.

DEE
I'm sorry. Has she seen you since
you were children? If you don't
mind me saying so, you are very
handsome. Does she have cataracts?

Isaac laughs and blushes.

ISAAC
Thank you for saying so...

DEE
Seriously - if she has a medical
condition, I completely understand.
But you have such a beautiful
spirit, to go along with...

Dee holds her hands out towards Isaac.

DEE (CONT'D)
...all of that. I just don't
understand.

ISAAC
Dee, if I didn't know any better,
I'd think you were flirting with
me.

Dee stands up and pulls her note pad back out.

DEE
If you hadn't said you were waiting
for the love of your life, we would
have had our children's names
picked out by now. I have to go
check on this table, but I'll be
back.

Isaac laughs. Dee scurries to her table.

Isaac's attention is diverted to the bar. His smile fades,
and his mouth hangs open.

BAR

Sarah stands at the bar, nursing a gin and tonic. Clad in a royal blue blouse and black skirt, Sarah is fine. Her long brown hair rests on her shoulders, her full lips perfectly painted in deep red.

BOOTH

ISAAC

Oh... Sarah.

He stands and waves to catch her attention, still staring.

She smiles and waves back.

Dee walks by, and pushes his mouth closed with her index finger.

DEE

Keep that closed - you don't want to catch flies...

ISAAC

True.

Sarah walks to the booth and gives him a hug. He kisses her on the cheek.

SARAH

(whispering)

It's really good to see you.

Their embrace breaks. Isaac holds up her left hand, admiring her sizeable diamond engagement ring.

ISAAC

He couldn't afford a ring, and had to put this doorknob on your hand?

Sarah giggles and sits down. Isaac sits across from her, never breaking her gaze.

Dee makes a bee line to the table, all smiles.

DEE

Hello, my name is Dee, and I'll be your server this evening. Can I get you anything to drink?

Sarah raises her gin and tonic towards Dee, and rolls her eyes.

Isaac reacts, confused.

SARAH

My fiancée will be here in a moment. Get him a Ketel One martini, won't you?

Dee looks at Isaac, raises her eyebrows and walks away.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Rude. So how are you Ike?

ISAAC

I'm... Uh... I'm good. What was that?

SARAH

What?

ISAAC

Why did you talk to her like that?

SARAH

The waitress? Why not? Lay people unnerve me, thinking they can just interrupt whenever they want.

Isaac is shocked.

ISAAC

Lay people? She's a waitress! She was doing her job!

SARAH

That's my Ike, always trying to save the strays...

Their conversation was interrupted by the arrival of SAM GATES, late 50s. Sam is a tall African-American man, with a full head of silver hair, wearing an expensive suit and tie.

SAM

There you are, honey.

Sam bends down and gives Sarah a passionate kiss. Isaac looks on in disgust.

The kiss ends. Sam turns to Isaac and sticks out his hand to shake. Isaac stands.

SAM (CONT'D)

You must be Ike. Sam Gates, attorney-at-law. Heard a lot bout you.

ISAAC
Isaac Reynolds. Haven't heard a
thing about you.

They shake hands. Sam sits next to Sarah. She holds his hand
on the table and beams at him proudly.

SARAH
Sam's a partner at the firm where
we work...

Disgusted with what he's witnessing, Isaac doesn't say a
word.

SAM
Now, Sarah says you draw cartoons
or something, right?

ISAAC
(stern)
I'm a filmmaker.

SAM
Oh - movies... That's right.
Anything I might have seen at the
ol' metroplex?

SARAH
No, Sam. Ike does local stuff.
Nothing major. Not like us.

Dee walks up with Sam's martini and places it on the table.
He immediately takes a sip.

DEE
Hello, I'm Dee and I'll be ser-

SAM
(interrupting)
This shit is watered down. Take it
back.

Dee stands with her mouth open, poised to strike.

DEE
Certainly sir.

She picks up the drink.

DEE (CONT'D)
(to Sarah)
And ma'am, now that your father has
joined you, will you need a table
for when you fiancée gets here?

SARAH

This is my fiancée, you rude little bitch. Go get your manager.

Dee tucks her note pad into her apron.

DEE

What did you just say?

Dee, Sam and Sarah start to argue, causing a scene. Isaac stands.

ISAAC

Hey! Hey! Sarah, you apologize to Dee right now!

SARAH

For what?

Isaac is trembling, trying to think on his feet.

ISAAC

You don't talk to my... My girlfriend like that!

Eyes wide and brows raised, Isaac looks at Dee, silently asking her to play along.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Yeah... I told Dee that I had an old friend coming to town and that we'd be eating at the Hilton... And she was like "Isaac, that's... Great! I'd love to meet your friend!" Remember, Dee?

Isaac is still trying to get Dee to follow his lead.

DEE

Yeah! I told Isaac I'd love to meet you... He didn't tell me you were such an asshole though.

ISAAC

Yeah, sweetie. She didn't used to be that way. I blame Uncle Ben here.

SARAH

Ike, I didn't know you had a girlfriend. You never told me...

Isaac stammers. Dee interrupts.

DEE

You thought he was gonna be sniffing around for you like a puppy forever, huh? Well, once he met his queen, all thoughts of you went out the window, Pocahontas. And his name is Isaac, not Ike. We don't like that name anymore.

Isaac smiles and slides next to Dee.

ISAAC

(awkward)

Yeah!

Isaac and Dee turn to one another and kiss, awkwardly at first. Then, not so awkwardly.

Sam throws a \$50 bill onto the table and grabs Sarah by the wrist.

SAM

Let's get the hell out of here, Sarah.

Sarah watches Dee and Isaac, visibly hurt.

SARAH

Gladly. Have a great life, Isaac.

Isaac is still locked in Dee's gaze.

ISAAC

You too. I'll look for Sam in the AARP commercials...

Sam and Sarah rush out of the restaurant. Isaac plops into the booth and drops his head into his hands. Dee begins laughing uncontrollably.

DEE

Well, that was fun...

ISAAC

Yeah, it was something. Thanks for playing along.

DEE

My pleasure. So what do you think of the name Tiffany?

Isaac smiles.

