

THIRD WHEEL

Written by

Wayne Franklin

January 16, 2017
Creative Starter
Literary Techniques and Story Development
Film

FADE IN:

EXT. BUSY CITY HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

It is just past 2:00 PM. The sun is fighting to be seen through the grey clouds crowding the sky. The afternoon post-lunch rush is building on the highway.

A very clean blue Mercedes-Benz coupe speeds along the interstate, zipping in and out of traffic, ever-so-slightly exceeding the speed limit.

INT. MERCEDES-BENZ - CONTINUOUS

ISAAC REYNOLDS, mid 40s, confidently tools the Benz along the interstate, his eyes hidden behind black Wayfarers.

Blue Train by John Coltrane, which is POUNDING from the speakers, is interrupted by the chime of his phone. Irritated, he reduces his speed and answers.

ISAAC
Reynolds Film, this is Ike.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Ooh, you sound so professional.

Isaac reacts.

ISAAC
Excuse me?

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Hi Ike... Its Sarah.

Isaac's eyes light up. A huge smile spreads across his face.

ISAAC
Sarah? Whoa - how long has it been?

SARAH (V.O.)
A couple of months... You exaggerate so much.

ISAAC
You were the one who was supposed to call me back after the football game.

SARAH (V.O.)
It went into overtime, Ike. Give me a break.

ISAAC
Funny, I didn't think overtime
lasted two and a half months.

Ike changes lanes and exits the interstate.

SARAH (V.O.)
You're right. I'm sorry. I just got
busy, an-

ISAAC
Just messing with you, Sarah. Its
all good. So what's going on? How's
Memphis treating you?

SARAH (V.O.)
Memphis is great, but I'm actually
back home for a minute.

Isaac pulls onto a side street and parks. He is ecstatic, but
trying to keep it hidden.

ISAAC
You're here? We gotta get dinner.

SARAH (V.O.)
I was going to say that too. I, uh,
need to see you.

Ike beams as though this is the best thing he's ever heard.

ISAAC
Word? Is everything okay?

A beat.

SARAH (V.O.)
I'm getting married.

Isaac's smile and ecstasy slowly melt from his face.

ISAAC
Oh. Okay. Congrats.

Another beat.

SARAH (V.O.)
I should have told you before. I'm
sorry.

ISAAC
Hey, you know, life happens - I get
it.

Isaac is visibly hurt and covering.

SARAH (V.O.)

I really want you to meet Sam. We work at the same law firm in Memphis.

ISAAC

Oh, is Sam here with you?

SARAH (V.O.)

Yeah, our plane landed about an hour ago. We're staying downtown at the Hilton. Can you come for dinner tonight? I understand they have a really good prime rib.

Isaac is listening, but his mind is somewhere in the past.

ISAAC

Yeah, that's cool. Say around 7:00?

SARAH (V.O.)

That will be perfect.

ISAAC

Um, Zoey will be with me. I don't think I can get a sitter on such short notice.

SARAH (V.O.)

Okay... How old is she now?

ISAAC

Five, going on 35.

Sarah laughs nervously.

Isaac, growing frustrated, looks to end the call.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Well let me get back to the office and we'll see you two tonight.

SARAH (V.O.)

Okay - see you then.

Isaac ends the call. He sighs and slaps the steering wheel.

ISAAC

Fuck.

CUT TO:

INT. REYNOLDS FILM - ISAAC'S OFFICE - LATER

Isaac sits at his desk, skimming through a pile of old photographs of him and SARAH at football games, playing in the snow, cuddled up on a couch. Isaac is really bothered and it shows on his face.

TOM RANDALL, late 30s, stands over Isaac's shoulder, looking at the pictures. Tom is Isaac's business partner at the film company.

TOM

You did not lie. She is fine.

ISAAC

I know, right?

TOM

And you two never hooked up?

ISAAC

Nope. I really was in love with her though. She just never seemed to be... She was always like "It will ruin our friendship."

TOM

So why would she call you to meet her fiance? That doesn't make sense to me.

ISAAC

That's two of us.

Isaac checks his watch.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

As soon as Rita gets here with Zoey, We're gonna head downtown.

TOM

It's gonna be fine, dude. You guys'll get there, you'll eat, see what a dork this Sam is, and since he's a lawyer, he'll insist on paying. You and your baby girl get a free night on the town and you can close this chapter, right?

Isaac considers this perspective.

ISAAC

You're right. Thanks, man.

TOM

No problem. Now I'm gonna go to my office, because you said Rita's coming, and I do not want to be anywhere she is. No offense, but your ex is the worst.

ISAAC

I know this. Why do you think she's my ex?

As if on cue, RITA REYNOLDS, 30s, and ZOEY REYNOLDS, age 5, walk into Isaac's office. Rita wears tight jeans, a sweater, boots and an attitude. Zoey wears a pink sweater, jeans and sneakers.

Isaac and Tom's faces both fall at the sight of Rita. Tom exits the office and pats Zoey on the head. Rita rolls her eyes at Tom.

ZOEY

Hi daddy!

Isaac smiles at the best thing to come out of his marriage to Rita.

ISAAC

Hey baby. You ready to go eat?

ZOEY

Yes sir. Where are we going?

ISAAC

We're going to a restaurant in a hotel downtown. One of Daddy's friends from college invited us to dinner.

RITA

Who?

Isaac does a slow burn.

ISAAC

What?

RITA

What friend from college? We went to the same college, so if they were your friends, they were my friends. How come they didn't invite me?

A beat.

ISAAC

Sarah.

Rita reacts.

RITA

Puerto Rican Sarah? Your little...

Rita does air quotes.

RITA (CONT'D)

"Friend?"

Isaac sighs heavily and grabs his keys.

ISAAC

Come on, Zoey. Let's go.

Isaac brushes past Rita and Zoey follows him. Rita rolls her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. HILTON HOTEL RESTAURANT - LATER

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 and Zoey sit in a booth. Zoey drinks a root beer and Isaac sips an iced tea.

Zoey is blowing bubbles into her drink and giggling. Isaac is visibly nervous, anxious to see Sarah, and anxious to get it over with. He is staring into space and 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.

ZOEY

Are you talking to me Daddy?

Isaac snaps out of his trance and smiles.

ISAAC

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

ZOEY
 Why? Is it because you haven't seen
 your friend in a long time?

ISAAC
 Yeah.

ZOEY
 Was Miss Sarah your girlfriend?

Zoey giggles. Isaac reacts.

ISAAC
 No, silly, we were just good
 friends.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
 Yes Zoey... Really good friends.

Isaac and Zoey both look up. Zoey smiles wide, while her
 father's mouth hangs open.

SARAH SANCHEZ, early 40s, stands next to the booth, smiling.
 Clad in a royal blue blouse and black skirt, Sarah is fine.
 Her long brown hair rests on her shoulders, her full lips
 perfectly stained with a deep red lipstick. She smiles at
 Isaac.

He continues to stare, in awe.

ISAAC
 Wow...

ZOEY
 Hi Miss Sarah! My name is Zoey. It
 is nice to meet you!

Zoey stands up and holds out her hand to shake. Adorable.

Sarah picks Zoey up and hugs her.

SARAH
 You are too cute, Zoey! Its nice to
 meet you too!
 (to Isaac)
 She is so cute!

Zoey touches Sarah's hair.

ZOEY
 You are so pretty.

ISAAC
 She is a bit of a ham too...

Isaac stands and kisses Sarah on the cheek.

Sarah puts Zoey back down and gives him a hug. She whispers into his ear.

SARAH

Its so good to see you.

Their embrace breaks, and Isaac goes into self-protection mode.

ISAAC

OK, so where's Sam? Is he parking the car?

Sarah is trembling, nervous.

SARAH

Um... Yeah, parking the car. Listen Ike, I need to tell you something.

ISAAC

Hey, are you okay? Why are you shaking?

Their conversation is interrupted by the arrival of a WOMAN, early 40s, who could easily be an African-American super model. She is wearing a cream cashmere sweater and black jeans under a black trench coat. Diamonds flood her fingers and wrists.

She grabs Sarah by the hand and plants a kiss directly on her lips.

Isaac is stunned, Zoey is confused.

WOMAN

(to Isaac)

You must be Ike. I've heard so much about you. Samantha Payne.

SAMANTHA holds her hand out to shake, but Isaac is too stunned to move. Zoey stands back up.

ZOEY

Hi! I'm Zoey! It is very nice to meet you.

Zoey sticks her hand out and shakes Samantha's, much to her delight.

SAMANTHA

Aren't you the sweetest thing!

Isaac looks at Susan, then at Samantha. His shock is replaced by confusion and anger.

ISAAC
Sam. Samantha.

Sarah knows that look. Her panic intensifies.

Samantha picks up on the look also. She turns to Sarah.

SAMANTHA
You didn't tell him.

SARAH
No, not yet. I thought you'd be
outside longer.

Isaac stands up and puts a \$20 bill on the table.

ISAAC
Let's go, Zoey.

Zoey protests.

ZOEY
But daddy we didn't eat yet! I'm
hungry, and I want to know why Miss
Sarah kissed the other lady!

This adds fuel to Isaac's fire.

ISAAC
Now, Zoey! We'll get pizza on the
way home!

Tears fill Zoey's eyes as she stands to join her father. She looks up at the ladies.

ZOEY
Bye. You're both really pretty.

Isaac grabs Zoey's hand and drags her out of the restaurant.

Sarah and Samantha both sigh heavily.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILTON HOTEL - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Clouds have completely blotted out the sun, and heavy raindrops are pelting the cars.

Isaac is strapping Zoey into her booster seat, fumbling with the belt and getting soaked in the process. Sarah approaches the car. He sees Sarah and slams the car door.

SARAH

Ike, wait.

ISAAC

Wait for what? What can you possibly have to say to me right now? "Hey Ike, I'm a lesbian?" Yeah, I picked up on that shit when your girlfriend stuck her tongue down your throat.

SARAH

What is your problem? I told you I was getting married!

ISAAC

My problem? First problem, I just found out that my best friend of over twenty years, who I was in love with, is getting married to another woman. Second problem, I found this out at the exact same time as my five-year-old daughter. Now I have to explain why the two pretty ladies were kissing each other to her. She's fucking five, Sarah!

SARAH

Ike, its 2017 - its not that uncommon anymore.

Ike wipes the rain off his face, walks around to the driver's side and opens his door.

ISAAC

Its uncommon at our house. Thanks a lot Sarah. Don't call me anymore.

He gets in the car, starts it and drives away.

Sarah watches him drive off, the rain completely soaking her.

SARAH

You were in love with me?

FADE OUT.

END