

The Speed Date

by

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"The Speed Date"

A bell is heard as lights come up on Terri sitting at small table at a local bar.

TERRI

(on her cell phone)

...look, I don't know why I let you talk me into this in the first place. Karen, you know how much I hate all this "speed dating" crap. Everyone here is so lonely, and pathetic, and I swear that last guy they sent over to me wasn't even *straight!*

Terri receives a wave from an effeminate man from the corner of the bar.

TERRI

Hmm? I *am* giving it a chance. It's just not my style Karen. I hate sitting around in bars talking to strange men. I find it completely *low rent.*

The bell is heard.

TERRI

Hear that? That means my next Casanova is on his way over to sweep me off my feet. Hopefully this one has brushed his teeth at some point during the last century... what? Yes, yes I'll call you when it's over and if you tell *anybody* I know about this I swear I am disowning you as a sister. I mean it this time Karen! Ok, bye.

She puts her phone away. Suddenly Mike, a man in his 50's, approaches the table. Terri looks up.

MIKE

Is this seat taken?

TERRI

(shocked)

You have got to be kidding me.

Terri gets up to leave.

MIKE

Wait Terri, don't go.

TERRI

What the Hell are you doing here?

MIKE
I wanted to talk to you.

TERRI
I cannot believe this. You guys set me up?
This is incredible.

She moves away from the table.

MIKE
I had no other choice. You won't see me,
you don't return any of my calls, my letters
come back unopened...

TERRI
I'm leaving.

MIKE
We *have* to deal with this.

TERRI
What exactly did you think you were going to
accomplish by showing up here like this?

MIKE
Terri please...

TERRI
What? Did you think you would have an advantage
because we're in a public place and thought I
wouldn't make a scene?

MIKE
..just hear me out.

TERRI
I have no interest in listening to a pitiful,
middle aged man who shamelessly abandoned his
family in order to shack up with some *trollop*
from New Rochelle!

MIKE
(firm)
Terri!

TERRI
(calmer)
I'm sorry Dad, but you screwed up. Big time.

MIKE
I guess I did. Does that mean there's no hope for
us?

TERRI

I'm sorry if the consequences of your actions displease you.

MIKE

You're still angry. I can understand that.

TERRI

Then we agree on something.

MIKE

I'm not here to rehash old history.

TERRI

Then what are you here for?

MIKE

I don't know. A reconciliation? I hope.

TERRI

It's too late for that I'm afraid.

MIKE

Why? Why is it too late?

TERRI

It just is.

MIKE

Don't you want to hear what I have to say?
Aren't you the least bit interested in my side of all this?

TERRI

I already do know your side.

MIKE

Do you?

(Mike sits)

Do you realize after all this time you are the only one who still has a problem with me? Both your mother and sister have moved past this. Why can't you?

A bell goes off. Collin approaches the table. Mike remains seated in the chair.

COLLIN

Uh, hi. I'm Collin.

MIKE
She's not ready for you yet.

COLLIN
But it's my turn.

TERRI
(muttering to herself)
I'm going to kill Karen.

MIKE
Don't go blaming your sister. She was just trying to help.

TERRI
Yeah right.

COLLIN
Um, I don't mean to interrupt, but the bell went off and that means everyone moves to the next table. You're throwing off the entire rotation.

TERRI
You know, I knew that there was something shady going on but I just couldn't put my finger on it.

MIKE
Let's just talk this out...

TERRI
This is so infuriating. I feel so manipulated.

COLLIN
Uh hello? It's my turn.

MIKE
Not yet. Go away.

COLLIN
But the rotation...

MIKE
Look pal, we're in the middle of something here. Why don't you "rotate" to the next person and come back later!

COLLIN
I can't dude! She's the last girl on the circuit. I have nowhere else to go.

MIKE
(confrontational)
Then why don't you just go have a drink at the bar and she'll talk to you when we're through?

COLLIN
But...

MIKE
(in Collin's face)
When we're through.

Mike looks at Terri. Terri gives Collin a smile.

COLLIN
(reluctantly)
Fine. But I'll be back.

MIKE
Good. Oh, and *Collin* is it?

COLLIN
Yeah?

MIKE
Bring me back a Jack and Coke will ya? Thanks.

Mike hands Collin some cash and pats him on the back as he exits.
Silence.

MIKE
Why don't you sit down?

TERRI
I'd rather stand if you don't mind.

MIKE
You haven't seen me in a while. Aren't you the least bit curious to know how I'm doing?

Silence.

MIKE
Well, since you asked I'm doing well. Quite well. In fact it's been a record year for my garden. You should see it Terri it's glorious. I've covered the entire hill with Viburnum and I had the guy from the nursery move some rocks around. It looks real different since you've seen it last.

TERRI
How nice for you.

MIKE

Did you know that I have over seven varieties of Lilac now? I've completely covered the property with them. They're everywhere and thriving. When you go out the porch door on the side the fragrance is so powerful, so... robust. I'm finally beginning to figure out the land and where to plant things. It's very satisfying Terri. Very satisfying.

TERRI

Are the deer still eating your hosta?

Silence.

MIKE

Samantha had a baby this year.

TERRI

I heard.

MIKE

His name is Barnes. We call him Barney.

TERRI

(sipping her wine)

You always wanted a boy. Cute name.

MIKE

He's your brother Terri. I would love for you to spend some time with him. I would love for you to spend some time with all of us. You look very pretty.

TERRI

(dismissive)

Yeah, well it's only because I'm supposed to be on a date.

MIKE

I see that. How's it going? Have you met any interesting prospects yet?

TERRI

Not really.

MIKE

Come on. A room full of men. There's gotta be someone you've liked so far.

TERRI

Let's see, there was *Rick* the plumber who tried to disguise the fact that he doesn't shower by polluting himself, and the entire room, with his cheap aftershave. There was also *Martin* the CEO who actually showed up wearing a black, velour, jogging suit and no underwear... and oh, let's not forget *Herman* the High School Math teacher who's hobbies apparently include picking his nose and wiping it on the back of his tie during witty repartee! How these desirable men have remained to stay single all this time is a complete mystery. I don't know how I'll ever come to a decision!

MIKE

What about Collin? He didn't seem that bad.

TERRI

It's too early to tell, but trust me, there's a bombshell waiting to drop there too.

Terri begins to rummage through her purse.

MIKE

Standing there, in that light, you look a lot like your mother.

TERRI

Don't say things that aren't true. You know damn well I don't look anything like her. Karen is the one who took after Mom. Not me.

MIKE

I disagree. I see a lot of your mother in you. Especially now that you're older. We talk a lot you know. Your Mom and me? We've even shared a few laughs on occasion. She's a good woman.

TERRI

Then why did you leave her?

MIKE

I know you'd like to think it's that simple but it isn't.

TERRI

So what are you saying? You didn't cheat on her? You didn't humiliate her?

MIKE

Humiliate? What are you talking about?

TERRI

Just forget it.

MIKE

Do you think I was intentionally cruel to you mother? Is that what you think?

TERRI

I think... I think this conversation is over.

Terri gets up to leave.

MIKE

You know there's more to the story than you're willing to face Terri. Much more.

TERRI

Just what are you implying?

MIKE

Your mother isn't the easiest person to get along with. She's got a lot of problems Terri.

TERRI

How dare you come here today and try to discredit her! How dare you use your son as a pawn as a way to win points with me!

MIKE

I'm doing no such thing! Damn it Terri, why do you always want to think the worst of me?

TERRI

What do you want?

MIKE

I want my daughter back in my life. Look, I know you'd like to think that walking away from my marriage was an easy thing for me to do, but it wasn't. It was the most difficult thing I've ever had to do in my entire life.

The bell is heard. Collin returns with a Jack & Coke and glass of wine. He places them on the table.

COLLIN

Here's your drink. I got you something too.
(proudly)
White Zinfandel.

TERRI

Thanks.

COLLIN

Ok, then. I guess it's my turn to sit down.
What do you say?

(he looks at his name tag)

Mike?

Terri and Mike stare silently at each other. Collin takes out a list and begins to read it out loud. Mike and Terri continue their conversation over him.

COLLIN

Okay... my name is Collin. My personal interests include: movies, classic rock, rock climbing...

MIKE

I'm hurting too Terri.

TERRI

Spare me.

COLLIN

..hockey, football, soccer, baseball, wrestling, tennis, cross country biking, golf, swimming, any kind of sports actually...

MIKE

Why are you being so difficult? I'm just trying to have a conversation with you about my feelings.

TERRI

Your feelings?

MIKE

Is it so hard for you to believe that I have some?

COLLIN

..and, oh yeah, I own a Corvette. It's red.

Silence.

COLLIN

(continuing from his list)

I'm looking for a girl who enjoys romantic walks on the beach, good times out, science fiction...

TERRI

If you had any real feelings you wouldn't have done what you did.

MIKE
Divorce happens everyday Terri. People move on.

TERRI
Clearly.

COLLIN
(interrupting them)
Hey, do you mind?! It's my turn with Tina!

MIKE/TERRI
Terri.

COLLIN
(containing his anger)
The rotation is getting *really* screwed up now.
The line is starting to back up and everyone's
beginning to blame me for it!

Collin points behind him. Mike ignores him.

MIKE
I could understand all this if you were a child
when I left but you weren't. Terri you were
almost 30 when I divorced your mother.

TERRI
Collin? Go get me a drink.

COLLIN
But I just got you one...

TERRI
So go and get me *another* one!

COLLIN
Ah man, this sucks.

Collin exits.

TERRI
We were all supposed to stay together. We were
all supposed to be a family.

MIKE
We still are a family...