

ICE CREAM

Written by

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INT. ICE CREAM TRUCK - DAY

JACK, a 20-something dressed in a black suit, rushes up to the steel service shelf of an ice cream truck.

JACK
You gotta hide me.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

BITNEY, a 20-something ice cream saleswoman, pokes her head out the service window and looks around as Jack runs around to the back door.

BITNEY
Why?

Jack knocks on the back door.

INT. ICE CREAM TRUCK - DAY

JACK
(urgently)
Please!

Bitney glances around her truck as if it might not be tidy enough for guests. She looks at Jack through the glass, makes up her mind, and opens the door. Jack dives in and sits, huddling with his back to the wall. Bitney peers out, looking for the threat, and hurriedly closes the door.

A WOMAN, well-dressed in a black pantsuit, teary-eyed and a little blotchy, appears at the service window.

WOMAN
Hello?

BITNEY
(casually glides over)
What can I get for you?

WOMAN
Have you seen a tall, thin guy with
a beard?

Bitney glances towards Jack. Jack, on the floor, mouths "no".

BITNEY
Nope.

WOMAN
OK, thanks.

The woman walks away, searching for Jack.

BITNEY
(stage whispering and
crouching low)
She left.

JACK
(still hiding, whispers
back)
Thanks.

A pause. Jack makes no move to leave. Bitney looks amused and sits down.

JACK (CONT'D)
(waves weakly)
I'm Jack.

BITNEY
(waves back)
I'm Bitney.

JACK
What kind of a name is "Bitney"?

BITNEY
(retorts)
What kind of a name is "Jack"?

JACK
It's short for "John".

BITNEY
(matter-of-factly)
That's not any shorter.

JACK
(confused beat)
Is "Bitney" short for "Britney?"

BITNEY
"Bitney"'s short for "There-Was-A-
Typo-On-My-Birth-Certificate-and-My-
Mom-Went-With-It".

JACK
What about your dad?

BITNEY

(beat)

You know, you're pretty nosy for a guy crawling around the floor in a suit.

JACK

(apologetic)

Yeah.

BITNEY

Who died?

JACK

(a little taken aback)

My friend Mike.

BITNEY

That sucks.

JACK

Yeah. Well, we're not, we **were** friends when we were kids, and in college, but then we fought, and that was it.

BITNEY

A woman?

JACK

Yeah.

BITNEY

(gestures towards service window)

That woman?

JACK

Yeah. Ann. Mike's wife. (frowns)
I shouldn't even have come to this funeral.

BITNEY

Interment.

JACK

What?

BITNEY

The funeral is the part at the funeral home. The interment is the part at the cemetery.

JACK
Whatever. I don't want to deal
with Ann right now.

(beat; reassesses his
situation)
You sell ice cream?

BITNEY
Yep.

JACK
At the cemetery.

BITNEY
Yep. So what are you buying?

JACK
Thanks, I'm not hun-

BITNEY
I did **hide** you from the **evil** Ann.
Also, you broke my tchotchke.
(points to Jack's
posterior)

JACK
Your -
(rolls onto left hip,
exposing shards of some
delicate thing - now
busted - along with a
colorful wad of paper and
a popsicle stick)
Oh. Sorry.

Bitney waits, hand on hip.

JACK (CONT'D)
(brushes shards off)
I'll take -
(scans around truck, no
posters in sight)
- this is easier from the outside,
with the - posters...? I'll have a
Monkey Cone.

BITNEY
Two Monkey Cones, coming up.

JACK
Two?

BITNEY
(gestures towards shards
while digging in bin for
ice cream)
Tchotchke.

JACK
(agreeing sheepishly)
Two.

BITNEY
Ten dollars.

JACK
Ten d-?!

Bitney swings an open hand and gestures to shards, tilts head, raises an eyebrow.

JACK (CONT'D)
(exasperated "tch" at
being extorted, but
resigned)
Fine.

Jack forks over a ten. Bitney hands him a cone, sits down. They unwrap and start eating.

JACK (CONT'D)
Mm. So how'd you end up in an ice
cream truck in a cemetery?

BITNEY
(singsong)
Nosy...

JACK
Just passing time.

BITNEY
How long **are** you going to hide in
here, anyway?

JACK
I don't know. Does it look like
they're wrapping up?

Bitney cranes her neck, looks out a window.

BITNEY
No, they're still blah-blahing
about how great Mike was.

JACK

Yeah, that could take a while. He
was a pretty great guy.

Bitney and Jack chew.

BITNEY

You guys were friends?

JACK

Yeah. We moved, right before high school, and Mike lived down the street from our new place. We played a lot of sports together. We ended up going to the same college, took a lot of classes together...

Jack eats ice cream and becomes melancholy as he thinks about how there won't be any more good times with Mike.

BITNEY

(suddenly, with a mouthful
of ice cream)

I dropped out of grad school to pursue my passion for the mobile-retail-dairy industry.

JACK

Oh?

BITNEY

No.

JACK

Oh.

BITNEY

(still with ice cream in
her mouth)

My mom died, we settled up her debts by selling the house, and this was all I could afford.
(takes another bite)

JACK

(a beat)

You - **live** here?

Jack takes another look around, this time noticing the bedroll, sleeping bag, toiletry kit, half-used case of bottled water, long shot of shelf containing trinkets, etc. He's embarrassed he didn't notice sooner that he's really imposing by invading her personal space.

BITNEY
Yeah. Well, it's quiet.

Quick cut - long shot of cemetery. Birds chirp. Faint intonation of things being said over Mike's casket.

JACK
So... the cemetery, hm? Not the beach...?

BITNEY
I burn easily.

JACK
Mm.

BITNEY
Everybody at the beach is already happy. **They** don't need ice cream. I do more good here. And business is good - a lot of people are emotional eaters.

JACK
Hm. I can never eat when I'm upset.

Bitney smirks as she watches Jack eat.

BITNEY
So what's the deal with you and Mrs. Mike?

JACK
Ann?
(blows out air)
I don't want to talk about it right now.

BITNEY
You're right. We should just sit here, total strangers, eating ice cream, in silence, waiting for...
(sardonic smile, eyebrows up, and gesture)

JACK
(giving up, sighs)
It's not like anything even happened. She and I were talking at their wedding reception.

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION - DAY

Jack and Ann are sitting side by side on a bench, smiling, joking, tired. Ann is in her bridal dress, her hair is a little disheveled from dancing. Jack is in his best man suit, jacket and vest open, tie loosened, cuffs and collar slightly open.

MIKE - shiny, red-cheeked, and laughing - looks their way.

JACK (V.O.)

She was drunk, we were laughing,
she put her hand on my knee. I
don't think she meant anything by
it.

Mike gets mad and approaches.

JACK (V.O.)

But Mike saw it and came over and
yelled at us. He was drunk, and he
kept getting louder and angrier.
I'd never seen him like that. The
whole party came to a halt. He
said he wanted me to leave, so I
just - left.

INT. ICE CREAM TRUCK - DAY

BITNEY

Wow. (beat) So, that was the last
time you spoke?

JACK

No - well, yeah. He called me and
left a message, after he got back
from his honeymoon, but I never
called him back.

BITNEY

No?

JACK

I should have.

BITNEY

So - why didn't you?

JACK

I don't know. We've been friends,
we **were** friends since the ninth
grade. I **introduced** him to Ann. I
was his Best **Man**.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

What they had was **great**. And he comes in, thinking I would **mess** with that? On his **wedding** day?

BITNEY

Right? What's **that** about?

JACK

I know, right?

BITNEY

Mm. Stuff happens. When I was a kid, my best friend Julie thought I stole her lunch money. I told her I didn't, but she didn't believe me, and she threw my sandwich on the floor. Later she found her money in her backpack, but she didn't apologize to me. We didn't speak again until our high-school reunion.

JACK

That's silly.

BITNEY

Yep! You know what's even sillier? (finishing her ice cream cone and standing up) Hiding inside an ice cream truck when you're supposed to be at your best friend's funeral.

JACK

Interment.

BITNEY

Whatever. (smirks and offers Jack a hand to help him stand up)

Jack realizes he's out of ice cream. He sighs, blowing out air like time is up. He grasps Bitney's hand, stands up, and looks around for something to wipe his hands on. Bitney, as if she had them ready all along, hands him a damp white tea towel, then a dry one.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Jack lets himself out of the back of the truck, straightens up his tie, and brushes off his jacket and pants. He looks around for Ann, but doesn't see her. Bitney sees him searching, and helps by flicking on the funereal ice-cream-truck music.

Ann turns at the sound of the music, and sees Jack. They make eye contact, she makes her way over. Bitney turns off the music.

Jack faces Ann as she approaches. Ann has obviously been crying - her face is pink and blotchy, her eyes are watery, and she's holding a rumpled cloth handkerchief. Bitney pretends not to watch.

ANN
There you are.

JACK
(braces by taking a deep
breath)
Hi.

ANN
(puts kerchief in her
blazer pocket, fishes
around for something in
her other pocket)
This is - Mike said - you left
these.

Ann hands something palm-down to Jack. He sees two cufflinks engraved "BESTMAN" in his hand. He recognizes them, recoils a bit. Surprised and touched, his eyes get glassy.

JACK
(with knitted brows)
Oh - I - um, thanks. Thank you.

ANN
I wish things had gone differently
for you two.

JACK
Me, too.

Ann gives Jack a long hug (with classic parting shoulder-squeeze), then walks back to the interment. Jack looks at the cufflinks, watches Ann go, and looks at the cufflinks again. Jack turns back to the ice cream truck, looks at the cufflinks, steps forward, and places them gently on the service window shelf.

JACK (CONT'D)
Here.

BITNEY
 (gently picks up a
 cufflink as if it were
 fragile)
 What's this?

JACK
 They're - um - I'm sorry I broke
 your tchotchke. Is this an even
 trade?

Bitney examines the cufflink and smiles.

BITNEY
 Why don't you keep one.

Bitney pushes Jack the other cufflink. He hesitates, then takes it, looks at it, and places it in his pocket. Jack smiles at Bitney. Bitney smiles back.

CUT TO:

Camera pans down and walks as Jack, smiling with glassy eyes, walks towards camera right, ice cream truck in the background. He's eating a blue snow cone.

CUT TO:

INT. ICE CREAM TRUCK - DAY

Close-up on the cufflink, sitting on the steel trinket shelf. Bitney lays a paper-craft flower with a popsicle-stick stem next to the cufflink, smooths out the wrinkles in the paper flower. Focus pull from near to far: there are other tiny treasures on this shelf. Bitney is smiling and is also eating a blue snow cone. Ice cream truck music begins to play.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Music continues to play. Camera slowly pulls back from ice cream truck to reveal wide shot of cemetery, Jack eating snow cone and walking back towards interment at camera right.

ROLL CREDITS.