



ISAAC
By Paul Smith

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CHARACTERS

ME – 29 – smartly dressed

HIM – 29 – smart casual – looks very similar to ME – they could be twins.

HER – 32 – glamorous, artistic

An apartment overlooking the River Thames in London. Docklands. The accommodation has doors leading to the kitchen, bathroom and the front door. It is smart, modern, clean and tidy. Cranes in the distance. Large windows. Curtains open.

Neat and modern. Sideboard. Bookshelves. Large paintings on the walls – abstract.

Early evening. 5.30pm

October –Dusk.

ME is not in the room at the moment but HIM is standing by the windows looking out.

HIM And don't think you can keep this façade up for too much longer. Thirty is just around the corner and the shelf you are sitting on is getting rather dusty. Time is fast approaching where you need to shake it off and be truthful.

ME Don't you ever stop badgering me?

HIM I will badger away until you see some sense.

ME *(entering with a glass of water)* Well piss off and badger someone else. I will deal with everything in my own time.

HIM Your own time means not likely, not at all and never. In that order.

ME Oh that's crap.

HIM Methinks the dame she protests too much – or words to that effect.

ME Yea well, my life, my decisions and I will make them when I am good and ready.

HIM Oh of course you will and don't let your bitchy little sidekick get in your way, despite the fact that you know that know fully well the truth of the matter. Oh, and how long do you think you can keep fooling her with your nonsense about Sally and Amy and Lauren and Brenda.

ME Brenda? I don't know anyone called Brenda. I've never known anyone called Brenda. Brenda? Brenda? God who's called Brenda these days? Brenda!

HIM Oh you are so clever aren't you. Or you think you are, but she isn't going to be taken in for much longer. She's an artist isn't she? She knows people like you. She surrounds herself with people like you. Not just those that toady to her because she is a headline act now, but that itty-bitty little girl you had a crush on at school is a magnet for all comers of the highest order now. If she didn't suss you out many years ago then call me Brenda, bend me over and spank my sweet ass.

ME You have such a wonderful command of the English language.

HIM You'd better believe it honey.

ME For information, I have never ever told her a lie about myself.

HIM That's true. You've just withheld enormous chunks from her. You skirt around subjects as if they're plague-carrying organisms. You prevaricate and shilly-shally. You pussyfoot and equivocate. You bluff, hedge and hum and haw. Heavens it's a wonder you remain friends.

ME She doesn't pry.

HIM Unlike you.

ME I do not pry.

HIM You like to know all the gory details though don't you? You like to know what she's been up to and with whom. Where, when and what. You dig like a JCB on acid and don't know when you've got to the bottom of the particular trench you find yourself excavating. God alone knows how she puts up with it. You are a receiver and not a giver – my dearest thing, versatility is the name of the game and you have got to start to loosen up and offer a piece of yourself now and again.

ME I am private person. I can't help that.

HIM The Church of Latter-Day Saints has a lot to answer for. Who knew it would squeeze so much life and love from you at such an early age?

ME Cheap shot at my upbringing.

HIM Well it's true and you know that as much as anyone else. You can't admit it to yourself and that's one of your major issues. Look at you. 29 and uptight and dishonest and cagey. Will you be like this when you are 49 or 69? Will you reach your ripe old age and not actually lived the life you were meant to live? Will you cheat yourself out of the freedom you are so lucky to have in this world? Will you live life under cover of darkness? The time is now and now is the time to right the balance.

ME You're getting on my nerves now. I can't do anything about any of this tonight. The exhibition has to take precedence. It's so important for her and I'm not going to fuck it up by being utterly selfish. It's not all about me you know.

HIM That's the problem dear. It's never about you. You deflect like a mirror sends the rays of the sun in another direction.

ME I am not ready.

HIM Like turkey for Christmas – if we poke you with a skewer – your juices would run thick with regret for not being ready despite being at 160 degrees on the fanny for 15,000 hours. When will you wake up and smell the good vibes and the chance of a lifetime in the air?

ME I want to give Sal another chance.

HIM Oh good heavens no. You know perfectly well that she is not what you have spent your whole life leading up to. You know that you are wasting every infinitesimal moment of your life pursuing she who doesn't need pursuing and for whom it can only end in tears as you disappoint her on almost every level.

ME I'm going to see her at the weekend.

HIM No you're not.

ME Yes I am.

HIM No you're not. But if you do, don't worry, I will be there to spoil every single second of it by reminding you of all the things we are talking about now.

ME Piss off.

HIM For now I will. I can hear your host returning. Listen to what I have said.

ME I asked you politely before. Now, ***fucking*** piss off!

HIM I'm going. I'm going.

HIM leaves the room. ME sits down – uncomfortable. Then gets up again and goes to one of the paintings on the wall.

HER comes in. All glammed up.

ME Wow, you scrub up well.

HER It takes a lot of scrubbing!

HER enters the kitchen and emerges during the following with two glasses of champagne.

ME Always said you were a good little scrubber.

HER Lame.

ME I know.

 Sorry.

PAUSE

 Am I allowed to ask.....

HER You know that you should never ask about what my paintings mean.

ME I know, but....

HER No buts. I know what they mean. That's as far as I go. What you make of it is entirely up to you. What was it Picasso said once - "Everyone wants to understand art. Why not try to understand the song of a bird? ...people who try to explain pictures are usually barking up the wrong tree." Or something like that.

ME So, no questions.

HER Oh you can ask questions, but you won't necessarily get any answers and very likely not the answers you thought you would get.

ME Will that be your line at the exhibition tonight.

HER Absolutely.

ME Ok. Noted.

HER Will I do? Am I fit to meet my public?

ME You look amazing.

HER Then let's see what the evening brings. There are a few people I want you to meet.

ME Please no more matchmaking.

HER Not at all. But I want to see you blossom in the coming year and I think there are a few people out there who might be up your street.

ME I am seeing Sally again.

HER Oh that's lovely.

ME Yes, gonna give it a real go.

HER Of course you are, but it doesn't stop you expanding your circle of friends.

ME I should have asked her along this evening.

HER Maybe. Maybe not.

ME Anyway, hoping to see her at the weekend.

HER Good. She's a nice girl.

ME She is.

HER Yes, she is. Not right for you of course.

ME You've always said that.

HER I have. Mainly because I am right.

ME You are so sure?

HER Absolutely.

ME You said that about Harriet too and Susie and Ellie.