

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

The Private Investigator

Written by
Elizabeth Brigden

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University of Lincoln

27009424@students.lincoln.ac.uk

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EXT. SUNNY MORNING - CALIFORNIA

A red convertible speeds down a coastal road, CHARLOTTE KNIGHT (31), is the blonde bombshell behind the wheel blasting Madonna's 'Material Girl'. She sings along playfully; sunglasses on brim of her nose, as she pulls into a beach house construction site.

The petite Charlotte hops over her crimson door and is greeted by tanned buff men carrying slats of wood and tools, busy hard at work.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER 1
Hey, Charlotte!

WORKER 2
Morning Charlotte.

Hoots and hollers are heard all around as she struts across the lawn. Inside the frame of the future kitchen stands NATHAN KNIGHT (33), wearing beige carhartt overalls with a red flannel and a white hard hat. Charlotte skips up to him and lands a kiss on his cheek.

CHARLOTTE
Morning loser.

NATHAN
Good morning to you too Char. Glad you decided to join us.

CHARLOTTE
Hey, technically, I'm not late, boss.

NATHAN
Whatever you say kid. Oh I gotta show you something.

Nathan pops his head out the door.

NATHAN (cont'd)
(Yelling)
Hey Rocco, fire it up.

The worker sits atop a rusty sun-bleached digger trying to fiddle with a gear stick wrapped in duct tape. The engine SPUTTERS and SPATS, before purring into ignition. People cheer, Charlotte beams.

CHARLOTTE

How?!

NATHAN

What can I say, I've got the magic touch.

In the background a commotion is heard and then a loud KERRRCHUNK! The men gather around the now smoking digger, scratching their bald heads.

NATHAN (cont'd)

Ah, for fucks sake.

Charlotte giggles.

CHARLOTTE

I think your magic ran out, Gandalf.

Nathan mocks her tone with a distorted funny face and gives her a shove.

NATHAN

Oh also Char, ummm we needa talk about the company funds for a sec.

He reaches for a folder of paperwork on the kitchen counter, hidden under some blue prints.

CHARLOTTE

What about it? I've been keeping a close eye on the books, I know what I'm doing.

NATHAN

Of course, I know that, it's just.. mom and dad think we should let them take a look at it and ...

CHARLOTTE

Oh come on. Really? They always do this. Why hand us a company in retirement if they are just gonna keep meddling with it?

A worker comes in and stands to the side waiting to get a word in.

NATHAN

One second, Joe. Char, I know okay, you're right, they need to back off. But I'm just tryna look out for you and..

JOE

Nate, sorry man, the digger is leaking oil onto the driveway and uh we kinda need you.

NATHAN

(to Joe)

Okay, I'm coming. Give me one second.

(to Charlotte)

Just...

(sighs)

... use a calculator.

CHARLOTTE

Fine.

Outside Nathan lays under the digger, a box of tools at his oil stained knees. A cute brunette, ELENA (32), steps over a bush in the driveway carrying a tray of lemonade and chocolate chip cookies. The young neighbour is quickly swarmed by workers grabbing handfuls of sweets, but she slowly makes her way to the crouched Nathan.

ELENA

Hi Nathan.

Nathan quickly zips out from under the digger, knocking tools about and almost hitting Elena and her tray down. He blushes.

NATHAN

Oh my god, I'm so sorry. I..h..hey Elena. How are you?

ELENA

(laughs)

It's okay Nate, I'm doing good, just thought I'd bring the boys some refreshments.

He reaches for a cookie and takes a chomp out of it, the crumbs fall down his chin.

NATHAN

What these old geezers?

Some of the nearby men notice his comment and let out a humorous groan.

ELENA
So, how much life does this thing
really have left?

Nathan pats the digger like its a good dog.

NATHAN
She's still got some juice in her.

ELENA
I'm impressed you can even get it
started.

Charlotte sees Elena from the front steps and approaches.

CHARLOTTE
Heyy, how are you? We still on for
Thursday?

They embrace.

ELENA
Heeey, yeah of course!

CHARLOTTE
Actually, Nathan did you invite Elena
to the bonfire?

ELENA
(to Nathan)
Bonfire?

NATHAN
Oh yeah, were having a little get
together Saturday night on the beach
for my birthday if you wanna come?
You obviously don't have to, if you
don't wanna.

CHARLOTTE
(Whispers to Nathan)
Smooth.

ELENA
Aww I'd love to come. I mean we do
share a backyard and all haha

They all share a laugh as Elena walks away.

CHARLOTTE
See you!

NATHAN

Bye, see you Saturday! Or sooner!

CHARLOTTE

Could you be any more obvious?

Nathan rolls his eyes.

NATHAN

Oh shut up.

EXT. THE BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT

A sweat soaked Nathan lays under the digger with a torch light shining on his work. A menagerie of tools and mess all lay around him in a semi circle. He fiddles with a socket that wont budge and then whips his wrench across the yard in frustration.

Next door Elena peaks through the curtains from her ground floor window. She looks at a case of beer on the table and then her front door. She almost reaches for them when a black Cadillac drives up the road and pulls into Nathan's driveway. She closes the blinds.

Nathan uses his arm as a shield from the bright headlights. Two car doors open and close in the flash bang.

MRS. KNIGHT

You know if you had a wife to go home to then you wouldn't be spending a Tuesday night working on a dirty machine alone.

NATHAN

Hello Mom. I've missed you too.

She approaches Nathan and hugs him sideways. MRS. KNIGHT (64), is a short waspy woman, she wears designer clothes from head to toe and carries herself with an air similar to a Kennedy.

MRS. KNIGHT

Of course we missed you too honey. You need to come by the club more often.

NATHAN

I know mum, oh we have company...

Standing on the passenger side of the car is GRIFFIN CROSS (30), a very handsome young man sporting a suit and tie.

Elizabeth Bridgen