

WAR OR MARRIAGE

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. BEN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

A sparkling clean bathroom, modern.

At the open door ROSE, 35, is half in and half out of the bathroom. She's watching BEN, 40, on her face you can see there's a million questions racing through her mind.

Ben on the other hand looks cool, calm and collected. Taking his time as he's slowly shaving. Going from a scruffy messy beard to completely clean shaven.

He wipes his face with a soft hand towel then removes his wedding ring, handing it over to Rose who reluctantly takes it.

ROSE

And what am I supposed to do with this?

With a sardonic smile Ben shrugs.

BEN

Bin it, sell it or flush it down the toilet. I really couldn't care.

Rose watches him, emotionless. She's done all her crying and won't shed another tear for him.

ROSE

Why are you doing this now?

BEN

I've wanted a divorce for years. Now I'm finally getting what I want for a change.

She pockets his wedding ring. Stepping back and exits the bathroom.

With his beard gone, Ben now focuses on getting his hair just right. Combing it then putting in some styling gel. He wants to look nice.

INT. BEN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

A large king sized bed with his and hers wardrobes and dressers on either side.

Ben lays out an open empty suitcase onto the bed, then sets about emptying all of his clothes into it. Stuffing in as much as he can.

INT. BEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Rose looks like's she sleep walking. She stands at the counter, waiting for the kettle to boil.

INT. BEN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Ben comes down from the staircase carrying the now full and heavy suitcase down with him.

He reaches up to the framed wedding pictures of himself and Rose that are hanging up on the wall. He pulls them down and throws them against the front door. Smashing the frames. It's cruel but he's smiling about it.

INT. BEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Rose sits at the table with a freshly made cup of tea. Ben paces slowly up and down in front of her. He checks his watch a couple of times.

She looks up at him, finally needing to ask.

ROSE

What are you waiting for?

BEN

Paperwork.

ROSE

Just leave. Get it over with. Why wait?

BEN

It needs to be official.

The doorbell rings. Ben's face lights up.

BEN (CONT'D)

And there he is.

INT. BEN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Ben kicks those smashed up broken frames out of the way. Opening the front door to a PRIEST, 60, dressed in a long flowing brown gown with a large cross hanging down from his neck.

In his right hand he holds onto a folder stuffed with paperwork. But over his shoulder he has a paperboy's bag, and it's filled with flyers. Must be hundreds of them.

Ben smiles at him. But then his focus is taken up by the paperboys bag.

BEN

What on earth is that?

PRIEST

(chuckles)

Two birds with one stone.

BEN

Meaning?

PRIEST

I've been charged by our local politicians to make sure every house in the village receives one of these flyers. It appears the time has come for the young men of this country to go to war.

Ben is shocked.

BEN

War?

PRIEST

Is your wife in? I really do need to explain to her the paperwork she'll be signing.

BEN

Go back to the war. What do you mean? You can't just say that then skip past it.

PRIEST

My dear boy don't you read the newspapers, or at the very least watch the news on the television?

Ben shakes his head.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
Have you been living in a cave?

BEN
I've been focused on getting a
divorce for the last six months.
I've thought of nothing else.

PRIEST
Hard luck. I'll be praying for you.

BEN
What do you mean?

The Priest reaches into the bag, giving one of the flyers to Ben.

On the flyer it announces that every single Man aged between 16 - 45 must report to their local recruitment centre to be entered into military training.

Ben reads the information on the flyer over and over again. His eyes quickly scanning back and forth.

BEN (CONT'D)
What is this?

PRIEST
I'd be happy to read it to you.

BEN
(angry)
I can read, I just don't
understand.

PRIEST
The country is at war. Every single
man, of which you qualify. Aged
between sixteen and forty five,
which again you qualify must report
for training or be sent to jail.

BEN
And people who are married?

PRIEST
First wave of men are those who are
single. And that means you.

Ben looks crippled with fear.

BEN
Aren't you a man of God, don't you
want people to stay together?

PRIEST
(confused)
Well of course, but for six
months...

Ben shoves the Priest out of the house.

BEN
I'll be in touch.

PRIEST
What's the matter?

BEN
I need to save my marriage.

PRIEST
But...

Ben slams the front door shut in his face.

INT. BEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Ben enters the kitchen, Rose is now stood up, waiting for him. But his smile is gone, he now looks like a scared little boy.

Rose can see something has happened, she gives him a careful look up and down. He looks terrified.

ROSE
So? The person you were expecting?
(he's silent)
Are we divorced now?
(he's still silent)
Don't I need to sign something?

BEN
(shaking)
Where do you think our marriage
went wrong?

She bursts out laughing, can't help herself. Not what she thought he would be asking her.

ROSE
Where's your smile gone? You looked
like the happiest man in England
before you went to answer the door,
so what happened?

BEN

No, I'm serious. Where do you think our marriage went wrong?

ROSE

That's easy. You stopped loving me.

He's sweating, the fear in his eyes isn't going anywhere. The tension in his chest almost unbearable.

BEN

What if I told you I do still love you?

ROSE

I'd call you a liar.

BEN

Can I have my ring back?

ROSE

(quoting him)

Sell it, bin it or flush it down the toilet.

(she pretends to think)

I think I'll flush it down the toilet.

She exits the kitchen. He follows after her, his hands shaking.

BEN

Can't we at least talk about this?

INT. BEN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Rose enters the hallway, first coming across the packed suitcase. She kicks at it, pulls an impressed face.

Ben exits the kitchen, keeping close behind her.

ROSE

Well, that suitcase is packed full. I didn't know you knew how to fold clothes.

BEN

I can empty it again.

Rose now moves over to their smashed up wedding pictures that once hung proudly up on the hallway wall. She kneels down and picks them up. Careful not to hurt herself on the broken glass.

ROSE
You know, I used to love looking at
these pictures.

BEN
We'll get new ones.

ROSE
Yes, I believe so. But not of us.

BEN
I want to give this marriage
another go.

Rose grabs hold of the front doors handle.

ROSE
I think whoever has scared the shit
out of you is still out there.

BEN
Don't open that door.

She opens it. The Priest is still on the other side of it. He
smiles awkwardly at Rose.

PRIEST
Hello.

ROSE
Do you have something for me?

The Priest hands her the folder with the paperwork.

PRIEST
Just sign these and your divorce
will be final.

She takes them.

Ben comes up right beside her.

BEN
You sign that and you'll be sending
me off to war. Off to die.

She blanks him, keeping her focus on the Priest.

ROSE
Have you got a pen?

FADE TO BLACK

THE END