

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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Based on short story of same title by McGuinn

Conflict Resolution

Parts: Narrator, Mother (two words), Joe, Angie

EXT. PARK BENCH - AFTERNOON

JOE is a hunk of a carpenter in his twenties wearing work clothes. He sits on a bench by a paved path through the park, BLANKET folded neatly beside him.

He's anxious: He looks down the path, notices something on his pants, brushes at it, stands and brushes more vigorously, looks down the path, straightens his clothes, looks down the path again. Sits and watches.

A MOTHER in her thirties pushing a STROLLER comes from the opposite direction. A TOY flies out of the stroller and lands by Joe's feet. He returns it to the occupant of the stroller and smiles indulgently.

MOTHER

Thank you.

JOE

No problem. I'm going to have one of my own soon.

Mother continues down the path.

FOCUS ON MOTHER'S SEXY RUMP WALKING AWAY, THEN FOCUS MOVES TO ANGIE APPROACHING.

ANGIE, early twenties, is wealthy, thin, and all business - clothing, movement, and stance - with a large designer PURSE slung over her shoulder. When she and Joe talk, the class difference will be clear.

She glances at the mother's rump after they pass each other, continues on toward Joe with a look that says she knows he was checking out the other woman. Joe's apologetic.

JOE (CONT'D)

Her kid dropped a toy. I gave it back.

Angie's face puckers in disapproval as she sees the blanket.

ANGIE

(sternly)

What is that for?

JOE

Just in case you wanted some
privacy to talk about... you know.

ANGIE

(disbelieving)
Right.

JOE

Really. If you want we can stay
here. There ain't... aren't many
people in the park this time of
day. I got off early just so we
could have some privacy.

ANGIE

Fine, so what did you want to say?

JOE

First off, I'm with you on this. I
know it's mine.

ANGIE

You weren't so sure before.

JOE

We were being careful... then I
remembered that time it broke.

ANGIE

Actually, it had to have been
before that.

JOE

You sure?

ANGIE

I went to the doctor.

JOE

(evasive)
Well, maybe one leaked or
something.

ANGIE

You never pulled it off?

JOE

(lying and not good at it)
No. No, I'd never do nothing that
stupid.

ANGIE

Anything.

JOE

Yeah, I wouldn't do anything that stupid.

ANGIE

What about Connie?

JOE

I definitely wore a condom with Connie...

A look at Angie cues him in that this is not what she was talking about.

JOE (CONT'D)

It was only just the one time, when you and me hadn't even been together that long. I told you, it didn't mean nothing. Anything.

ANGIE

You lied to me.

JOE

I didn't want to hurt you. If I'd known you knew about it the whole time, I would've said something sooner.

ANGIE

Sure.

JOE

Really. I never meant to hurt you. I'd a let you know it didn't mean nothing.

ANGIE

Anything.

JOE

Yeah. Anything. But that's in the past. We gotta look to the future.

He pulls a gender-neutral newborn-size ONESIE out of the blanket and hold it up proudly for Angie to see. She looks at it and melts, gives him a kiss on the cheek with tears flowing down her face.

ANGIE

You know, I do want to go somewhere more private.

JOE

We can go to our old spot. I won't try anything, promise.

He picks up the blanket and starts walking, reaches for her hand. Angie starts to pull her hand back, then lets him hold it. Her tears are still flowing.

JOE (CONT'D)

I'm going to be there for you, and our kid.

Angie winces.

ANGIE

Just shut up until we get there.

JOE

Hey, I'm being nice here.

ANGIE

I know. Sorry.

EXT. PARK THEIR SPOT - AFTERNOON

Their spot is out of the way where no one can see or hear them.

Joe spreads out the blanket carefully; he puts the onesie near him.

JOE

I always liked this place. Our spot.

ANGIE

And Connie's.

JOE

No way! That happened behind Ron's garage. I never brought anyone else here. Never.

ANGIE

It's probably not as private as we thought.

JOE

Sure it is...

He sits in the middle of the blanket and pats beside him. Angie continues standing, looks at the onesie, looks conflicted.

JOE (CONT'D)

You gonna sit down or what?

Angie looks around like she might leave, and then finally sits next to him, on the opposite side from the onesie. He puts his arms around her and gives her a long sexy kiss and she responds with a moan. When he ends it, she inhales sharply to pull herself together.

Joe is oblivious. He picks up the onesie.

JOE (CONT'D)

Can you believe a human being can be this little?

ANGIE

Y-yuh.

JOE

I guess you wouldn't want it bigger when it's coming out... I just want you to know. I'm in. Delivery, the whole thing... I know that's my kid in your belly and I'm going to be there for both of you.

ANGIE

Joe, you live with five other guys in a one bedroom apartment.

JOE

Maybe we could live with your parents for awhile... What did they say when you told them?

Angie pulls away from him; he puts down the onesie.

ANGIE

(anxious, scared)

I didn't tell them. I haven't told anyone! Did you?

JOE

Nah, I didn't tell nobody. But you gotta tell them soon.

ANGIE

They would disown me.

JOE

Nah. Sure they'll be mad at first, but they'll come around...

ANGIE

Not my parents.

Joe moves over and puts his arm around her again. Angie sits stiffly in his embrace.

JOE

Hey, when my parents found out my kid sister was knocked up? They were ready to kill her. But they love little Tommy to pieces and they've gotten used to his father...

ANGIE

My parents don't even know you exist.

Joe lets go and puts some space between them.

JOE

And I ain't exactly what they had in mind for you.

ANGIE

No, you're not... And you're the guy who asked if I was sure it was his...

Angie pulls her purse into her lap, between them. Joe gives it a moment, then reaches out to touch her. She pulls back. He retracts his hand.

JOE

We'll work things out. I knew it was mine, I was just scared.

ANGIE

I was scared, too... You didn't tell anyone?

JOE

No, not yet.

ANGIE

Good. That's good. My parents...

She opens her purse and rummages through it.

JOE

They'll know soon enough... Hey, if you want, I'll come with when you tell them.

ANGIE

No, that is not going to happen.

JOE

You sure? I mean, it's not exactly something I want to do, but I will. They gotta meet me sometime...

Angie keeps digging in her purse.

JOE (CONT'D)

Are you even listening to me?
What's so important in your purse?

Angie appears to find what she was looking for but leaves it in the purse and looks up and through Joe into space. She talks past him, without emotion.

ANGIE

They really would disown me. I'd never finish college.

JOE

Sure you could, later. By then I'll make enough to swing state college for you, if you still want it.

ANGIE

I'm in Wellesley, in the Peace and Justice Studies Program.

JOE

What?

ANGIE

It's about human rights activism and conflict resolution on a global scale.

JOE

So it's just something to say you went to college, not like you were gonna be a nurse or something.

ANGIE

It could lead to a position with the State Department, or the U.N., or Amnesty International.

JOE

Seriously?

ANGIE

Next semester I go to India to learn about non-violent activism.

JOE

You never said anything about going to India before...

ANGIE

Why would I? You were supposed to be a summer fling.

JOE

A fling?

ANGIE

Yes... but I fell in love with you.

Tears start running down her face. Joe moves closer to her, reaches out and gently caresses her cheek. She leans into the caress, kisses his hand.

JOE

Hey, sure our lives are going to change, and you won't get to go to India, but...

With one hand still in the purse, she uses the other to pull him into a lustful kiss. She presses him down onto the blanket, takes a moment to cast aside her purse, goes in for another kiss, ends it with a bite to his lip.

Joe puts a hand to his bleeding lip and glares at her, angry and confused. Their bodies are still close together, face to face, and the hand that was in the purse is still not visible.

JOE (CONT'D)

What's wrong with you?

Her face stiffens with pained resolve. There's a small pop.

JOE (CONT'D)

What the hell? What did you do?

He looks down at his shirt, where a small spot of blood is starting to spread rapidly over his abdomen. He looks at Angie. She's holding a tiny gun. He reaches for it and she pulls back. Her speech is calm and distant.

ANGIE

I got rid of it.

JOE
You shot me!

ANGIE
I'm sorry. I should never have told
you about it. No one can ever know.

JOE
Okay. I won't tell anyone.

He lifts his shirt. The blood is coming in spurts; a major
artery bleed.

JOE (CONT'D)
It's bad, Angie. I need a doctor.

He groans and slumps over, but manages to pull his cell
phone out of his pocket. Angie takes it away and looks at him
with a sad, loving smile.

JOE (CONT'D)
Why? I won't tell anyone.

ANGIE
(sad but detached)
Maybe, but I'd always come back to
you. I came back to you after
Connie, and today... You're poison.

JOE
(gasping)
Call 911. Please.

ANGIE
I love you.

She caresses his face.

JOE
(whisper)
Please.

He shudders with the cold of shock. Angie continues to gently
stroke his face as he loses consciousness. When he appears to
be gone, she clinically checks his neck for a pulse and finds
none. She gives the body a gentle kiss on the forehead.

ANGIE
I'll always remember you as my
first love.

She pulls a plastic bag out of the purse, drops the gun into
it and then into her purse, stands, looks around, gives Joe's
still body one last lovingly sad look, sighs, and walks away.