

Whisper

A script for a short film

By Pilliard Dickle

Cast:

Chet, Andrea and other people at a party.

2 Older adults, 2 children (boy and girl)

INT. A party, with nicely-dressed people milling about and chatting

The dialog between Chet and Andrea is whispered. There could be subtitles to the whispering. Occasionally there is voice-over narration by Chet.

Chet is making brief small talk with a couple of other guests. Then he steps away and walks around a bit. We see the party through his eyes. He looks at various women, from one to the next, all very attractive and nicely dressed.

CHET (TO HIMSELF)

Nah.

No.

Um-mm

CHET (VOICE OVER)

I thought I'd never find her.
Then suddenly, there she was.

Chet's eyes fall on a girl who looks a bit less Barbie than the others, still attractive but a bit more quirky, standing a few feet away with a glass of wine, talking with three or four other guests.

CHET (VOICE OVER)

Yes, she was the one.

She looks toward him. He motions her over as if he wants to say something to her. She steps over. Chet cups his hand, leans toward her and whispers in her ear.

CHET

Whisper.

Chet leans out. She gives him a quizzical look.

Chet leans back in, his hand cupped in a conspicuous manner, like schoolchildren telling secrets.

CHET

Whisper something in my ear.

The girl (Andrea) looks at him a moment, unsure how to react.

ANDREA

Why?

Chet whispers in her ear again, hand cupped.

CHET

Just for fun.

ANDREA

Do we...know each other?

CHET

No. That's the beauty of it.

Andrea, deciding to play along, cups her hand and whispers in Chet's ear.

ANDREA

What's the point?

Chet whispers back, still cupping his hand conspicuously, as if it's a dire secret.

CHET

Just to mess with your friends. And mine, too. Get 'em to go "What the eff are they whispering about over there?"

As the conversation continues, they continue the leaning in and the cupping of the hands, like school kids whispering secrets back and forth.

ANDREA

Well, we're already doing it.

CHET

Yes, and I've already spotted a couple of curious glances.

ANDREA

Is this a party game or something?

CHET

No, actually I dreamed it last night. I was at a party and I picked out some random stranger and we started whispering back and forth like a couple of third-graders telling secrets.

ANDREA

So I'm just some random stranger?

CHET

No, I didn't mean it that way. But, well, yeah.

ANDREA

Hey Jeremy just checked us out. He's this guy I work with. Oh and Skyler shot me a little look.

CHET

Yeah, I'm getting some action, too.

ANDREA

So tell me about your dream. What happened?

CHET

Nothing. I woke up.

At that, Andrea's eyes grow wide. She appeared taken back, her mouth agape, hand over lips, as if Chet had just said something shocking.

CHET

Oooo, that was good. You must be an actor.

ANDREA

This IS kinda fun.

In addition to close-ups of this whispered conversation, we occasionally see Andrea and Chet across the room in a wide shot, and sometimes cut to other party guests, particularly the people Andrea had been standing with. One of the men gives a slightly irritated look out of the corner of his eye (maybe her date – we don't know). And we hear among the party chatter something like: "Who's she talking to over there?"

Andrea leans in, hand cupped.

ANDREA

I think it's working. We're
getting some looks.

Chet pauses a moment.

CHET

Slap the shit outa me.

ANDREA

Yeah, no.

CHET

Too far?

ANDREA

Probably. I mean, you're here with
somebody, I'm here with somebody.

CHET

Your right. We're supposed to be
behaving like adults.

ANDREA

And here we are swapping secrets
like school kids.

CHET

I hope we get good reviews.

CHET (VOICE OVER)

I didn't take issue with her assumption
that we were both there with someone.
I just let that lie.

ANDREA

Listen, I'm gonna go back over there now.

With her finger, she gestures toward the people she had been talking with.

CHET

OK, well, I don't blame you.

She steps back toward them. Among the fragmented party banter, we hear, from one of Andrea's friends: "WELL. You two seem to be having a..."

Chet throws his hand up toward some people across the way he supposedly recognizes.

CHET (VOICE OVER)

I figured I'd better act like I know
somebody here. I didn't want anybody realizing
I accidentally came to the wrong house.
Especially HER.

Just as Chet is starting to walk over to see his fictitious friends (actually a discreet retreat to the door), Andrea steps back over and motions him over.

ANDREA

I do need to tell you one more thing.

Chet is surprised at her unexpected return, and curious about what she's going to say. Andrea cups her hand and leans toward him. Chet turns his ear toward her in anticipation.

ANDREA

I dreamed about sunflowers last night.

Chet whispers back.

CHET

I thought I'd lost you.

ANDREA

Nah. We were losing audience. I thought we needed to change up the rhythm.

CHET

Ah. So you're a musician.
Or an artist. You paint sunflowers!

ANDREA

I've always wanted a sunflower garden,
ever since I was a kid.

By this point, Chet and Andrea are no longer hamming it up with the cupping of the hands, or the leaning in. They're just talking quietly. They're standing fairly close, since they're still speaking softly. But not too close for the circumstances. This change from telling third-grade secrets to a more intimate conversation is a gradual metamorphosis.

CHET

Tell me about your dream.

ANDREA

It's kind of a recurring theme. I call it my
Dream Garden. I plant things in one dream,
and they come up in another.

CHET

And last night it was sunflowers.

ANDREA

The most brilliant yellow sunflowers
you've ever seen. Happiness on a stalk.

CHET

I want to dream that.

ANDREA

It's copyrighted. So, is this your
clever way to meet girls?

CHET

Not at all. Listen, if that were my motive – if I
were that shallow – there are plenty of better-
looking girls I could hit on. But I chose
someone who looked really...interesting.

Andrea just glares at him with a bemused expression. Hard to read. Not
shock, but you can see her wheels turning. During her ambiguous glare, we
hear Chet's voice over.

CHET (VOICE OVER)

I knew I was taking a huge risk. I was testing
the limits of our apparent fledgling rapport, and
ferreting out whether we were cut of the same cloth as
a couple of kindred-spirit smartasses. I could easily
have blown the whole thing.

Andrea cups her hand and leans toward Chet. Chet leans his ear toward her. She appears to whisper in his ear, but we don't hear anything. Then they straighten back up.

CHET (VOICE OVER)

She didn't say anything. But I could feel her breath. And I think I felt her lips brush my ear. Was that a...kiss??

Chet takes an explanatory, almost apologetic tone.

CHET

Listen. What I meant was...

CHET (VOICE OVER)

I thought I'd better do damage control.

CHET

See, I turned down the cookie-cutter Barbie dolls for somebody I thought might get it. That's what I meant by 'interesting.' See, to me, beauty is...

ANDREA

Blah blah blah blah. Shut up. I get it.

While Chet is giving his apologetic explanation about Barbie dolls (above), he randomly looks across the room toward a pretty, thin blonde girl in a slinky dress, who spots his glance and starts mussing her hair and preening for him.

CHET

What say we get engaged? Right now. Secretly.

ANDREA

The guy I'm here with might not
be too thrilled about that.

CHET

That's why I said "secretly."
We announce it to no one.

Oh, and I notice you didn't
say "boyfriend."

Andrea voice goes up in a tentative tone.

ANDREA

We're dating...

Wide shot of party. Chet and Andrea are across the room. Chet is talking.

CHET (VOICE OVER)

I told her about an episode of the old 70s sitcom
Taxi where one of the cabbies saw a girl in a bar
and walked up to her and said "What say we skip the
preliminaries, let's get married." And she said yes.
And they did. I made my case that getting engaged
was far safer.

CHET

We could call it off any time. And if we do,
it's all good.

ANDREA

We're still friends.

CHET

Of course. Its inevitable demise is part of the plan.

ANDREA

And if we...don't?

CHET

Well, we'll have a helluva story to tell our grandchildren when they ask us how we met!

ANDREA

Let's leave out the part where we had one too many drinks and made a spectacle of ourselves at the party.

CHET

Yeah, that part hasn't happened yet.

ANDREA

I think it's in progress.

CHET

And the part where I told you how much I want to kiss you.

ANDREA

Nah, that's the best part.

INT: The kitchen of a country house. An older man and woman are helping a young boy and girl make cookies. The girl is cutting the dough with a cookie cutter.

GIRL

So did y'all?

GRANDMOTHER

Did we what?

GIRL

You know.

GRANDMOTHER

Kiss?

GIRL (GIGGLY)

Yeah.

GRANDMOTHER

Not at the party. I was there with a date.
And so was your grandpa.

BOY (TO GRANDMOTHER)

What was your date's name?

GRANDMOTHER

Steve.

GIRL (TO GRANDFATHER)

What about you, Grandpa?
What was your date's name?

The grandfather falters.

GRANDFATHER

Uh...Ethyl.

BOY AND GIRL

"Ethyl"??

GIRL

Was she pretty?

GRANDPA

Well, I mean...

The grandfather motions the girl over with his hand, as if he wants to tell her something. Then he cups his hand and whispers in her ear. She looks surprised. The boy wants to know what Grandpa said. The girl turns and whispers in his ear.

Start slow pullback, indicating that it's ending.

GRANDMOTHER (JOVIALY)

Hey, no whispering. It's impolite to tell
secrets in front of people, you know.

GIRL

Hey, can we put the sprinkles on now?

They chatter about making the cookies as the pullback continues into the next room and out the window, where there are sunflowers growing. Close-ups of huge sunflowers are all around us as we pull back and fade out.

Title (in italics): *Whisper*

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