

The Means, Act One

Zorina E. Jerome

FADE IN

EXT. - SOUTH BEND, IND. - INTERFAITH BAPTIST CHURCH
- DAY

ORGAN MUSIC plays. Autumn-colored trees envelope a quaint church.

PREACHER

(v.o)

Marriage. Marriage is a sacred thing. The union between two people. Spirit, soul and body. Marriage is a compromise. A sacrifice. It is a lifetime commitment.

Yellow cab pulls up. LEXIE CUMMINGS gets out of a cab and walks hastily into the church.

INT. - INTERFAITH BAPTIST CHURCH/SANCTUARY - DAY

Lexie quickly finds a seat in the back of the church. At the alter, stand the PREACHER and WINSLOW STANDFLECK who is holding a very beautiful and pregnant MONET SPADER'S hands.

Standing behind Winslow is the best man, WAYMON STANDFLECK. He notices Lexie. The camera focuses on ALIYCHA ANDREWS sitting in the fifth pew folding her arms and staring at Waymon with jealousy.

Waymon smiles at her. Aliycha's stern face softens. Sitting next to Aliycha is MAITRON who is text messaging through his top-dollar cell phone.

PREACHER

(CONT'D)

It is also a dying of one's self. It's the resurrection of something new. Something beautiful...(pause)

The Preacher looks at the bride-to-be.

PREACHER

Life.

Monet and Winslow exchange smiles.

PREACHER

If there is anyone today who does not believe that Winslow Standfleck and Monet Spader should be married, let him speak now or forever hold his peace.

WAYMON

Now.

The guests GASP.

WINSLOW

What?

WAYMON

Forever is a long time, Bro. I can't let you do this.

WINSLOW

What? This? I love her. Why are you freaking out, man? This is my wedding day.

WAYMON

I can't let you do this. She's not right, Win. Look, just trust me on this. She's not the one for you.

WINSLOW

Hey, there's no cameras on today...

WAYMON

This isn't about the damn show...

WINSLOW

You know you're a real piece of...

WAYMON

Would you just listen to...

WINSLOW

Bad timing, bro. I'm kind of getting married right now...

WAYMON

She's not pregnant, Winslow!

The guest murmur. Monet rolls her eyes.

MONET

This is ridiculous. Father, please continue.

PREACHER

Let us..

WAYMON

No, let us get to the bottom of this. Have you gone to the doctor with her? As a matter of fact, who is her doctor? Is he here? Surely, you've invited him to such an occasion as this, Monet.

MONET

I can't believe you would do this to your own brother.

WAYMON

Do what? Fake a pregnancy just to...to...

MONET

To what, Waymon? To what? You've always been jealous of your brother and I don't know why. He loves you. He'll do anything for you. You haven't been right since our engagement.

WAYMON

Don't do this to him.

MONET

(disgusted) You're the one doing this to him. Winslow places his palm on Monet's back to calm her.

WINSLOW

Can we just continue? Our plane leaves at midnight. I'd like to enjoy the reception.

WAYMON

Did you hear anything I said to you? Monet isn't pregnant!

WINSLOW

How would you even know something like that? She's my wife.

MONET

Thank you.

WAYMON

Not yet. Look Winslow, you know me. Would I ever lie about something like this? Am I lying now? (pause)

PREACHER

Excuse me, but we need to know. Will there be a wedding ceremony today?

Monet and Waymon answer together.

MONET

Yes.

WAYMON

No.

Monet and Waymon look at Winslow.

WINSLOW

I...I don't know.

More MURMURS from the guests.

MONET

Sweetie, don't let him get to you. I love. You love me. Let's do this.

WINSLOW

Are you pregnant? Monet steps back with her hands on her stomach. She is speechless.

WINSLOW

Monet? Are you pregnant? Monet remains silent. She is about to cry.

PREACHER

Monet, this is very serious. Are you pregnant with Winslow's child?

MONET

(in tears) A few minutes ago, you were about to pledge to God, to me, to everybody that you would trust and honor me...

WAYMON

Jeez, give me a break.

MONET (CONT'D)

...and now, you question the woman whom you are to spend the rest of your life with? Maybe I need to second-guess my decision. I certainly don't want to be with a man who doubts me.

Monet turns to the audience. She wipes her tears and places her hands back on her stomach.

MONET

I'm sorry everyone. I'm sorry you had to see this.

Monet turns to leave. Winslow grabs Monet's arm.

WINSLOW

Monet. Baby, no. I...don't go. I love you. Let's do this. Let's get married.

Waymon yanks Monet away from Winslow. He pulls at her ruffled dress.

WAYMON

Oh hell no. Look! There's no baby in there! It's just a pillow. Here! Look!

Winslow, Monet, Waymon and the preacher struggle.

MONET

(screaming)

Let me go! Winslow! Waymon, stop it. STOP!

WAYMON

Feel the baby kick, bro! Feel the pillow baby kick!

Winslow punches Waymon to the ground and snatches his ring.

WINSLOW

Show's over.

Winslow and Monet turn to the preacher. Waymon stands to his feet and proceeds to exit down the center aisle of the church. The camera follows Waymon out.

PREACHER

(o.s.)

Uh...Ah yes. Marriage is love. Love is trust...AND
THE DEVIL IS A LIAR!

Waymon leaves. Lexie follows him out.

INT. - INTERFAITH BAPTIST CHURCH/FOYER - DAY

As Waymon attempts to open the main doorway of the church, Lexie opens her mouth to call out to him.

ALIYCHA

(o.s.)

Waymon!

Lexie quickly steps out of sight.

ALIYCHA

What was that about?

WAYMON

Not right now, Aliycha.

ALIYCHA

Right now is as good a time as any.

WAYMON

(yells)

I said not right now!

Aliycha is stunned. Waymon calms down and comforts her in a softer tone.

WAYMON

Not right now, OK? I promise I'll explain everything.

ALIYCHA

Waymon, you've got to talk to me.

WAYMON

I will.

Waymon showers Aliycha with kisses.

WAYMON

I will. I promise. You gotta trust me.

MAITRON

(o.s.)

Everything alright?

WAYMON

Not really, Maitron.

Speaks to Aliycha.

WAYMON

Go with Maitron. I'll call you.

Aliycha is hesitant.

WAYMON

I'll be fine. I just need to be alone. Go to the reception. Have a goodtime. Maitron, take care of her.

MAITRON

You got it.

Aliycha reluctantly enters the sanctuary with Maitron.

WAYMON

I'll call you.

Aliycha and Maitron disappear into the sanctuary. Waymon leaves the building.

EXT. - INTERFAITH BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

Light breeze. Autumn leaves scurry about the ground. The trees rain more leaves. A bruised Waymon heads towards his vehicle. Lexie runs out of the church after him.

LEXIE

Robin!

Waymon stops instantly and turns around walking slowly toward Lexie.

WAYMON

Batman?

LEXIE

(laughs)

In the flesh.

Waymon cautiously pulls Lexie aside.

WAYMON

(sarcastic)

It's refreshing to put a face to my little Internet buddy who gives inaccurate information. (pause) Who are you?

LEXIE

I'm Batman. Your Robin. It's all very simple.

Waymon becomes frustrated and grab Lexie's arm.

WAYMON

This isn't a joke. I just lost my brother and probably my reputation.

Lexie fearlessly snatches her arm away.

LEXIE

Aw, Goldenboy's got a boo-boo!

WAYMON

Exactly how much do you know about me?

LEXIE

Are you serious? Aside from the fact you, Monet and Aliycha's faces are plastered on every supermarket stand? Your reality show airs every Thursday. Or did you forget?

WAYMON

You know what I'm talking about.

LEXIE

You're wasting time on irrelevant questions. What you need to do...

WAYMON

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CUMMINGS gets out of a cab and
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*Lexie quickly finds a seat in the back
of the church. At the alter, stand
the PREACHER and WINSLOW
STANDFLECK who is holding a
very beautiful and pregnant MONET
SPADER'S hands.*

*Standing behind Winslow is the best
man, WAYMON STANDFLECK. He
notices Lexie. The camera focuses on
ALIYCHA ANDREWS sitting in the
fifth pew folding her arms and staring at
Waymon with jealousy.*

*Waymon smiles at her. Aliycha's stern
face softens. Sitting next to Aliycha
is MAITRON who is text messaging
through his top-dollar cell phone.*

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(CONT'D)

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(pause)

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WAYMON

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Monet turns to the audience. She wipes her tears and places her hands back on her stomach.

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Monet turns to leave. Winslow grabs Monet's arm.

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Winslow, Monet, Waymon and the preacher struggle.

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WAYMON

I will.

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WAYMON

I will. I promise. You gotta trust me.

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(o.s.)

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Speaks to Aliycha.

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Go with Maitron. I'll call you.

Aliycha is hesitant.

WAYMON

I'll be fine. I just need to be alone.
Go to the reception. Have a good-
time. Maitron, take care of her.

MAITRON

You got it.

*Aliycha reluctantly enters the sanctuary
with Maitron.*

WAYMON

I'll call you.

*Aliycha and Maitron disappear into the
sanctuary. Waymon leaves the building.*

EXT. - INTERFAITH BAPTIST
CHURCH - DAY

*Light breeze. Autumn leaves scurry
about the ground. The trees rain more
leaves. A bruised Waymon heads
towards his vehicle. Lexie runs out of the
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LEXIE

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WAYMON

Who are you to tell me what to do? Look where your little "Batman" information got me. Waymon points to his swollen eye.

WAYMON

(CONT'D)

My brother still married her. I can't wait till he finds out she's not pregnant. I hope...

LEXIE

That's where you're wrong, Robin. (pause) I was hoping with your help, we could've prevented this marriage. That's why I contacted you through the Internet.

Lexie digs in her purse and pulls out a cigarette.

LEXIE

(CONT'D)

I never intended to meet with you face to face but I could tell through your emails you were getting desperate.

*Waymon takes a lighter out of his pocket
and lights Lexie's cigarette.*

WAYMON

You don't strike me as the type to
smoke.

LEXIE

I knew you were going to do
something stupid today. That's why I
showed up. You smoke?

*Waymon frowns as he passively waves
Lexie's smoke away from him.*

WAYMON

No.

LEXIE

Then why do you carry a lighter?

WAYMON

In case a beautiful woman needs
one.

*Sounds of APPLAUSE come from the
church.*

*Waymon and Lexie start walking toward
the back of the church building.*

WAYMON

You a reporter?

LEXIE

Something like that.

WAYMON

For who?

LEXIE

For me.

*Waymon takes a piece of bubble gum
from his pocket and pops it into his
mouth.*

WAYMON

What's it to you if Monet marries
into my family and takes over the
business?

LEXIE

I have my reasons. Bubble gum?

WAYMON

Winslow thought it would be a nice
gimmick for the show. Now it's a
habit. Want some?

LEXIE

No thank you. I've got my lollipop
in the car. Look, you've gotta get
back in that church.

WAYMON

For what?

LEXIE

How else are we going to know what
Monet is up to?

WAYMON

You're the one with all the dirt on
her. You tell me.

*Lexie takes one last puff of her cigarette
then drops it to the ground, mashing it
out with her pink pumps.*

LEXIE

Everything's changed.

*A few people trickle out of the church.
Maitron and Aliycha are among the
small crowd.*

EXT. - INTERFAITH BAPTIST
CHURCH/FRONT BUILDING
- DAY

MAITRON

What's wrong?

*Aliycha scans the parking lot with a look
of concern.*

ALIYCHA

Waymon's still here. His car hasn't
moved.

MAITRON

Why do you suppose Waymon
could believe Monet's pregnancy to
be false?

*More PEOPLE spill out of the church.
A WOMAN prances about holding a
basket with a yellow bow. She passes
out little white sacks of rice with a
yellow ribbon tightly sealing its contents.
Aliycha and Maitron each receive a sack
and fumble with the yellow ribbon.*

ALIYCHA

He probably thought she faked it just to spite him for choosing me as his fiancée instead of her. She even turned down half a million to stay on the show and for the chance of Waymon choosing her. She was rejected and broke. I just don't know why Waymon wouldn't just tell me.

MAITRON

Why would he?

ALIYCHA

I'm his fiancée.

MAITRON

Only on television.

ALIYCHA

He chose me!

MAITRON

Only on television.

ALIYCHA

We love each other!

MAITRON

Only on television.

Maitron wraps his arms around Aliycha's shoulders. They proceed to walk further down the line of guest awaiting the bride and grooms departure.

MAITRON

(CONT'D)

If you can marry Waymon, do it. If it doesn't work out then #1 Bachelor will just be one more thing you can put on your resume.

Winslow and Monet step out of the church. Everyone applauds and throws rice.

MAITRON

(CONT'D)

You actresses take your jobs too seriously. Julia Roberts, Lopez, Meg Ryan, Nicole Arie-Parker...Don't let Waymon's family entanglements distract you from advancing your career. When Hollywood calls for a black actress, you better jump, girlfriend. You could be the next Halle Berry. I can make it happen.

As Winslow and Monet step down closer to Maitron and Aliycha, Aliycha starts aiming the rice at Monet. A grain of rice hits Monet in her eye. She shields herself from the rest of the "rice tossing".

ALIYCHA

The only thing that's going to happen is my becoming Mrs. Waymon Standfleck.

As Aliycha throws the rice at Monet she says:

ALIYCHA

(CONT'D)

We'll-all-be-one-big-happy-family!

*EXT. - INTERFAITH BAPTIST
CHURCH/BACKSIDE OF
CHURCH - DAY*

*Lexie peeks behind the church building
spying on Aliycha and Maitron.*

WAYMON

Lexie! What's changed?

*Lexie snaps out of her infatuation with
Aliycha and Maitron's conversation.*

LEXIE

You have to go back.

WAYMON

To what?

LEXIE

To making nice-nice with Monet.

WAYMON

So I can...?

LEXIE

Know what Monet is going to do next.

WAYMON

She's gonna sink her claws in Standfleck Communications. That's what she's gonna do. She's a Standfleck now. It's a done deal.

Silence. Lexie paces.

LEXIE

(grins)

The hell it is. You're going to goto the reception sloppy drunk and apologize to the newlyweds. Admit to your jealousy towards Winslow...

WAYMON

But I'm not jealous!

LEXIE

and congratulate them on their new baby.

Waymon spits his gum out and pops a fresh piece of bubble gum in his mouth.

WAYMON

Why would I want to do something crazy like that?

LEXIE

Because you're on a roll. You need to be one step ahead of your sister-in-law. You're no longer a threat to her. To everybody, you're pitiful, pathetic and insanely jealous.