

Back to the Drawing Board

Cast:

Angie: 50s, caricaturist

Dave: 30s, wedding guest, average guy

Tina & Viv: 50s+, aunts of the groom

Man: 50+, wedding guest

Setting:

A wedding reception

Time:

Now

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A wedding reception. The action takes place in a small alcove of the room which has been set up for the event's caricature artist. She is seated behind a small table. She is drawing TINA and VIV who are seated across from her and enjoying their cocktails immensely. We hear the sounds of the party just beyond.

TINA

"And you do the Hokey Pokey and you turn yourself around..."

TINA & VIV

"That's what it's all about!"

(They clap twice and then break into laughter.)

ANGIE

(Amused)

Okay, you two! I need you to tell me something about each other. Hobbies, interests...

TINA

Well... she plays a wicked game of tennis.

VIV

And she plays a wicked game – with the tennis *pro*!

TINA

Ha!!

(They laugh uproariously)

ANGIE

Perfect!

(Continuing to draw)

Are you friends of the bride or groom?

VIV

The groom.

TINA

We're his aunts.

ANGIE

Well then, it's a trifecta of aunts! I'm Katie's aunt. I flew in from California yesterday.

VIV

Well, you should be in there dancing with us! You're missing the whole party.

ANGIE

No, no, that's okay. I'm doing this as a favor to the kids. Part of my gift.

TINA

Well, Katie is a lovely girl.

ANGIE

Thank you.

TINA

And your whole family!

ANGIE

(Her enthusiasm fading)

Yes.

VIV

(Toasting and drinking)

To Katie & Ken!

TINA

Here, here!

ANGIE

And..... here!

(Handing them the finished work)

What do you think?

TINA & VIV

(Delighted)

Aaaaah!

TINA

She's got us riding a tennis racquet... like a broomstick!!

ANGIE

You said you were wicked!

TINA & VIV

That's so funny! Thank you!

(As they leave, they bump into DAVE who is entering)

VIV

Oops!

Well, hello.

TINA

(Gallantly)

DAVE

Ladies.

(They eye him appreciatively, laughing as they leave.)

(With some swagger)

DAVE

The older gals always love me.

ANGIE

Oh?

DAVE

Yeah, I don't know what it is about me, but...

(Shrugging shoulders)

So... caricatures, huh?

ANGIE

Yes. Would you like one?

DAVE

Sure, why not?

ANGIE

Just make yourself comfortable there.

(He sits, smooths his hair, straightens his tie. She begins drawing)

So tell me something about yourself so that I can capture your essence! Hobbies, interests...

DAVE

Well, let's see.

(An impish smile)

I collect things. Wine. Women. Song.

ANGIE

A real lady's man, huh?

DAVE

Well, you know.

ANGIE

How are you doing tonight?

Great!

DAVE

(Tweaking him playfully)

Really? 'Cause you're getting your portrait done all alone, so...

ANGIE

Hey, don't you worry about me—

DAVE

I'm just sayin'—

ANGIE

I'm doing just fine. Are you getting my good side? How's my hair?

DAVE

You're perfect. (Beat) What brings you to the wedding?

ANGIE

My Porsche 911 GTS.

DAVE

Oh, you're a funny guy. I mean, bride or groom?

ANGIE

The bride.

DAVE

She's a beautiful girl, isn't she?

ANGIE

She sure is.

DAVE

How do you know her?

ANGIE

We work together.

DAVE

In data processing?

ANGIE

DAVE

Yes. I mean no. I'm, uh, I'm in another department. Management.

ANGIE

Yeah, I didn't think data processors could afford a Porsche 911.

DAVE

GTS.

ANGIE

Right. GTS!

DAVE

How's it coming? Are you capturing my effervescence?

ANGIE

Sure am. Just give me one more moment...

DAVE

You're fast.

ANGIE

Well, I've got years of practice doing this at fairs and festivals and any other kind of event you can think of! I can do 'em in my sleep! There! What do you think?

DAVE

(Flatly)

What's with the dead woman?

ANGIE

She's not dead. You're a ladies' man. She's swooned at your feet!

DAVE

Ah.

ANGIE

(Earnestly)

You like it?

DAVE

Yeah, uh, thanks.

ANGIE

Oh good! You'd be surprised, every now and then I'll get someone who isn't happy. They'll come back after a few moments and ask me to draw them a new one. Which I do. But, the whole point of caricature is to exaggerate, to make it fun, right –

DAVE

Sure –

ANGIE

– while at the same time revealing something essentially true about the character of the subject, as I perceive it. That's what the really great caricaturists do, you know?

(Another guest, a man, has entered the alcove.)

DAVE

I didn't realize it was that complicated.

ANGIE

(Mock serious)

Oh yes. Well, thanks for stopping by. Enjoy your portrait. Go forth and conquer!

(To the man as DAVE exits)

Hi! You here for your caricature?

MAN

I sure am.

ANGIE

Great, come on over and have a seat.

(He sits and strikes a pose)

Oh, you don't need to, uh, just relax. Yeah, that's it. Now tell me about yourself. Hobbies, interests...

MAN

Let's see, I like to read—

(DAVE returns, portrait in hand. He starts out apologetically and quickly builds from there.)

DAVE

I'm sorry. Um. I don't like this.

ANGIE

What?

DAVE

I don't like this. It doesn't look like me.

ANGIE

Well, it's not supposed to look like you exactly. It's more an exaggeration.

DAVE

I know. I know. But, look, you took my best feature – my strong chin and turned it into some....
gross deformity!

ANGIE

Deformity!

DAVE

That chin needs its own *apartment!!*

(To the man)

You see what I'm talking about, right buddy?

(He thrusts out his chin for comparison)

And I don't even *know* what's happening with my hair...it's not the \$200 cut I get every three weeks! And then there's the *dead woman*...

MAN

(Craning his neck to see)

There's a – ?

ANGIE

She's not dead. She's swooned.

DAVE

Whatever! I'd just like a portrait where I'm not a freakishly big-chinned, scary-haired *assassin!*

(To the man)

You don't mind, do you? It'll just take her a moment to do a new one.

MAN

Well, I—

DAVE

(Helping him up, shuttling him to the side)

Thanks, man.

ANGIE

Now wait just a minute.

DAVE

He doesn't mind. See?

(The man is clearly annoyed. DAVE sits.)

ANGIE

I'm sorry, sir. Thank you. I'll be right with you. So I take it you want a more realist image of your face.

DAVE

Yes! Exactly.

ANGIE

Okay, I can do that.

(She begins drawing.)

DAVE

Thank you. And maybe instead of the dead woman, you could have me working out with weights. Heavy weights.

ANGIE

Sure. She wasn't dead.

DAVE

You must think I'm pretty vain.

ANGIE

Oh no. Not at all.

DAVE

It's just, the guy you see here now, this isn't who I used to be. See, I had a – a life-changing event a few years ago that allowed me to, uh, remake myself I guess you'd say. I used to be a real loser.

(Referencing the dance floor)

Like a lot of those guys out there. Couldn't get any women to even look at me. Well, there was one, but – Anyway, I changed everything about myself, and now that I'm a new man, I don't ever want to be reminded of that other guy.

ANGIE

Did *he* have a big chin?

DAVE

(*Has she not been listening? Has she not been following?*)

No!

ANGIE

Sorry, I shouldn't – I understand completely. Here you go!
(Handing him the portrait. He attempts to look.)

No! Now I don't want you to look at it *here*.
(Gesturing far)

I want you to take it over *there* – into the foyer – into the light – so you can really see it, okay?

DAVE

Yeah, sure. Thank you. I appreciate this. Sorry for being so – She's all yours.
(His confidence restored, he exits.)

ANGIE

Wow. I'm so sorry about that. Come on over now and we'll try again! Now, you were saying you like to read?

MAN

Yes, I like reading, coin collecting—
(DAVE marches back in.)

DAVE

Really? *Really??!!*

ANGIE

There's no way you went to the foyer.

DAVE

(With a nod of his head to the Man)
You know the drill.
(The man reluctantly moves. DAVE sits.)

ANGIE

What's the problem now? This looks exactly like you. I fixed your chin. I trimmed your hair. I buried Marie. What's the issue now?

DAVE

The issue is – You named her Marie? The issue is, the issue is – she married *him!*
(DAVE crosses downstage and peers onto the dance floor)

Look at him out there.
(Sneering, murderously)

Ken! And look how beautiful she is. I haven't even had the courage to say hello.

ANGIE

I don't know what's –

DAVE

It was supposed to be Katie and me. We were engaged.

ANGIE

Oh my God, you're *Dave*.

DAVE

(Surprised)

Yeah.

ANGIE

I'm Angie.

(In defensive aunt mode)

Aunt Angie.

DAVE

Oh geez—

ANGIE

(To the Man, matter-of-factly)

He came into a lot of money, this one, and apparently *changed*. Decided Katie wasn't good enough for him anymore.

DAVE

That's not true.

ANGIE

(To the Man)

Her clothes weren't good enough. Her apartment wasn't good enough. Her friends weren't good enough.

DAVE

(Pulls the Man to his side, figuratively and literally)

I wanted her to have the best! I wanted for us to get out of this shit town! To forget the bowling league on Friday nights and the 2-for-1 specials at Tony's. I wanted to take her everywhere, buy her everything. How is that wrong?

(The Man is uncomfortable. Looks to escape.)

ANGIE

But the problem was, Katie *loves* bowling and pizza and this shit town. But Dave wanted *more*.

DAVE

I thought there WAS more.

(He pushes the Man to the side, moves away from both of them)

ANGIE

So Katie broke it off.

DAVE

And now I can see that the only thing I want in this world is dancing with *Ken*.

(DAVE looks out onto the party, a miserable man. ANGIE watches with him.)

ANGIE

You blew it, Dave.

DAVE

You don't have to sound so happy about it.

(Finally the Man, with determination, takes a seat.)

MAN

(Loudly, an edge to his voice)

Reading! Coin collecting! Going to flea markets!

ANGIE

Oh, right! I'm so sorry.

(She scurries to her seat and begins to draw.)

Here we go—

DAVE

You know, it's not like you never made any mistakes, *Angie*. Katie told me about you. The aunt that couldn't get along. Always feuding. Ran off to California to get away from everyone.

ANGIE

(Haltingly, a bit taken a back that he knows this)

It wasn't like that.

DAVE

No? Then why aren't you out there with your family instead of holed up in here? Huh? You've come all this way.

(To the Man)

You know, she hasn't spoken to her father in 20 years. She never goes home for any of the holidays—

ANGIE

(To DAVE)

At least I got invited to the wedding!

DAVE

(To ANGIE)

Well, congratulations!! So did !!!!

ANGIE

Really? I just figured you crashed.

DAVE

You know Katie. She doesn't like bad karma. She wanted to make things right. "No hard feelings" and all that.

ANGIE

Huh.

DAVE

Yeah.

MAN

(Standing)

Well, she sounds like a smart girl!! You oughta listen. Both of ya!

DAVE

Who is this guy? We're trying to have a conversation, do you mind?

MAN

(Total frustration. Grabbing a canvas board off the desk)

I'll go draw myself!

ANGIE

(As he exits)

I'm sorry, sir!

(ANGIE and DAVE share the briefest of smiles. They move downstage and look out to the party)

ANGIE

Okay, you're right, I'm hiding.

DAVE

That's okay. I've been doing it all night. In the bathroom. The parking lot. The kitchen. I helped them plate 200 salads before the caterer threw me out. Look at her. I really blew it, didn't I?

ANGIE

So you'll be smarter next time.

(No response.)

You know, you said you changed everything about yourself. Maybe you changed what she loved – that sweet, vulnerable guy I captured in the portraits you hated so much. Maybe you need to find him again.

(DAVE sighs.)

Well, are you going to go talk to her? Might help you end things, so you can move on.

DAVE

Are you going to talk to your dad? Might help you start things.

(Beat. They exchange a warm smile.)

After you.

(Music for the Electric Slide begins to play. They exit.)

(Lights down.)