

"The Wedding Present"
A bitter man must learn
the power of forgiveness
to win back the woman he loves.

2013DE05
2013WP041

FADE IN:

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

The overhead TRAFFIC SIGNALS sway slightly in the breeze. One red, one green. A 4-door sedan sits at the red light, waiting for it to change. The green turns yellow.

The sound of a fast moving vehicle begins to fill the quiet night.

The lights switch and the sedan begins moving forward.

A sportier sedan careens through the red light, SMASHing into the 4-door sedan halfway through the intersection.

PIECES of car & glass tinkle to the ground as the sound of a police siren approaches.

GRFX: TEN YEARS LATER

INT. CHURCH SACRISTY - DAY

JACOB SOLUS, 20's, in a TUXEDO, stands at the entrance, looking out at a crowd of people. HARLIN, similarly attired, stands opposite RUTHIE, in a blue formal dress, both framing a PASTOR.

At the back of the church, AUDRIANNA, 20's, gorgeous, enters on the arm of her father, BRENT as the BRIDAL MARCH begins playing.

Jacob takes a deep breath and steps out into his place as groom.

As the bride and her father draw near, Jacob looks up -- his eyes not on Audrianna, but her father.

Studying Brent closely, Jacob clears his throat:

JACOB
I'm sorry. I can't do this.

Amid the gasps of the crowd, he rushes past Audrianna and her father out of the church.

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

Paramedics straddle the driver of the sedan, applying CPR.

INT. AUDRIANNA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jacob looks at the pictures of Audrianna's family displayed on her desk. He picks up the photo of her and her father, studying it.

AUDRIANNA

I can't wait for you to meet my family. I just know they'll love you!

JACOB

I hope so. I've been looking forward to this for a long time.

AUDRIANNA

Are you nervous?

JACOB

A little bit. But it's worth it.

They kiss.

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

Police officers administer field sobriety exercises to the DRIVER of the sportier sedan.

INT. MALL - DAY

Audrianna and Ruthie are wandering through the mall, more window shopping than actually actively looking for something.

RUTHIE

Sooo, you think he might be 'the one?'

AUDRIANNA

Oh, I don't think, I know.

RUTHIE

Girl, you've been dating him for what, a couple of weeks? And you're sure that this man is the one you want to spend the rest of your life with?

AUDRIANNA

When you know, you just know.

INT. AUDRIANNA'S APARTMENT - DAY

JACOB

I think I might have made a mistake.

AUDRIANNA

A mistake? Yeah, you made a mistake coming to see me again. You should be as far away from me as possible.

JACOB

I can't help it. I love you.

AUDRIANNA

You LOVE me? Is that why you ran out of the church? Why I had to apologize to everyone at the church?

JACOB

I'm sorry. It's - it's hard to explain.

AUDRIANNA

Hard to explain? Hard to explain?

JACOB

Look. You see, I --

AUDRIANNA

No. I am not listening to this.

JACOB

Please. If I can only explain.

AUDRIANNA

Explain it to my father.

JACOB

No. No, I want to explain it to you.

AUDRIANNA

No. My father. Or never speak to me again.

JACOB

I --

AUDRIANNA

No. You love me, prove it to me. Speak to my father. Explain it to him. Then maybe we can talk.

She opens the door, leaving no room for argument.

INT. THOMAS HOUSE - EVENING

Brent is standing by the fireplace, a framed photo of his family above him. He rolls a large round coin across his knuckles. The doorbell rings. Palming the 5-year sobriety chip, he drops it into his pocket as he moves to the door.

He opens to door to see Audrianna and Jacob.

BRENT

Hey Sweetie. And you must be this
Jacob we've heard so little about.

AUDRIANNA

Daddy!

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

The driver of the sportier sedan - Brent - blows into a
BREATHALYZER. It gives off a tone that rises in pitch the
more he exhales.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Jacob and Harlin are watching football, munching on chips
and hamburgers. They're finishing up a six-pack.

HARLIN

I'm just saying, when one Manning's
winning, the other's not doing well.
It's like a Highlander thing - they
only have so much good football energy
between the two of them, and --

JACOB

Look. I think I might be falling in
love with this girl

HARLIN

Huh? Wait, that's a good thing,
isn't it?

Jacob goes into the kitchen for more beer.

HARLIN (CONT'D)

Isn't it?

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

A young Jacob watches as paramedics drape a sheet over the
still form of his father, covering him completely.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Audrianna and Jacob sit at a romantic table in the corner,
eating. Their WAITRESS approaches the table.

WAITRESS

Can I interest you in a dessert to
share?

JACOB

Hm. Maybe an aperitif.

AUDRIANNA
Don't you think you've had enough?

Jacob just stares at her for a moment, thinking. Then he smiles and stands up from the table.

JACOB
Ladies and gentlemen! Can I have your attention, please!

Other diners look up from their tables.

AUDRIANNA
What are you doing?

Jacob descends on one knee.

JACOB
Audrianna, would you make me the happiest man on earth?

Audrianna is moving her lips, but no sound is coming out

JACOB (CONT'D)
Was that a yes or a no? I hope it was a yes. Please say yes!

She nods.

JACOB (CONT'D)
She said yes!

The other diners erupt into applause.

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

The police officer wraps a pair of handcuffs around Brent's wrists.

INT. AUDRIANNA'S APARTMENT - DAY

AUDRIANNA
Are you drunk?

JACOB
That doesn't matter.

AUDRIANNA
It does to me.

JACOB
Look. I know how we can make this work.

AUDRIANNA

I told you, I'm not going to discuss this until you talk to my father.

JACOB

That's the problem. Don't you understand? Look. Look. Do you remember 10 years ago. A car accident. Your father was driving drunk.

AUDRIANNA

How could you possibly know about that? Is that why things changed?

JACOB

No. No. The man he killed. The other driver. That. That was my dad.

AUDRIANNA

I don't think I understand.

JACOB

Look. I. I used you. I'm sorry. I planned all this. I knew who your father was. I sought you out. I wanted to hurt him. Make him feel even a little bit of what I felt. Your pain was just a means to an end. But. I really do love you. This is just a bump in the road.

AUDRIANNA

A bump in the road.

There is a long moment as she considers her next words.

AUDRIANNA (CONT'D)

Jacob. I forgive you. I still love you. But things have changed now.

JACOB

I'm sorry. I'm so, so sorry. But do you understand?

AUDRIANNA

You still love me, but. I want to understand this, but

JACOB

Look. I wanted to hate you. I wanted to hurt you almost as much as I wanted to hurt your dad. Until I got to know you.

AUDRIANNA

But you still left me at that altar.
And you still won't do the one thing
I've asked. Talk to my dad.

JACOB

But. This is the moment. That moment
in all romantic comedies where the
guy admits he was a moron and the
woman takes him back.

AUDRIANNA

Jacob, I. I love you, but I was
clear. You need to talk to my father.

JACOB

I can't do that! Why don't you
understand that? He's -- he's the
one I just can't forgive.

He pushes past her out the door.

INT. THOMAS HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

Jacob, Audrianna & her parents are around the table, enjoying
a meal.

BRENT

Jacob, were you born around here?

JACOB

Yeah, but I've been away for a while.
I decided after college that I wanted
to come back.

BRENT

And do your parents live close?

JACOB

Not exactly. It's just my mom. My
dad died when I was young and we had
to move in with my aunt back East.
My mom's still there.

BRENT

Oh, I'm sorry to hear about that.
What happened?

JACOB

Um. Look.

AUDRIANNA

Daddy, he doesn't like to talk about
it.

INT. AUDRIANNA'S APARTMENT - DAY

RUTHIE
I don't understand.

AUDRIANNA
I still love him, Ruthie. At least
I think I do.

RUTHIE
But he humiliated you. In front of
your family. In front of everyone!

AUDRIANNA
He had his reasons. And I forgive
him.

RUTHIE
How can you possibly forgive him? I
can't even forgive him.

AUDRIANNA
Because that's what love does.

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

A young Audrianna watches as the police officers arrest her
father for DUI, pushing him into the back seat of the cruiser.

INT. CLUB - DAY

Jacob sits on a bar stool. As Harlin approaches, he tosses
back a shot.

JACOB
You've got some catching up to do.

HARLIN
It's 2-o'clock in the afternoon.
What do you need to be drinking for?

JACOB
Seriously? First Audrianna, now you
too?

HARLIN
You saw Audrianna? How is she?

JACOB
How is she? Still in love with me.
I think. Won't take me back.
(beat)
At least not until I talk to her
father.

HARLIN

So why don't you talk to her father?

JACOB

Why does everyone keep harping on that? Not going to happen.

HARLIN

Dude, what changed? One minute you're madly in love with her, now you hate her?

JACOB

Nothing's changed. Nothing. Everything's the same as it's always been. That's the problem.

HARLIN

What do you mean?

JACOB

Look, I don't want to talk about it, okay? I don't know why I even bothered to call you.

He moves towards the door.

HARLIN

Hey, are you sure you're okay to drive?

JACOB

I'll be fine. Now leave me alone, already, will you?

Jacob stumbles out the door.

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

The police bring Jacob's mother, crying, over to him. He hugs her tightly, comforting her.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Jacob's car is flying down the streets, the gears squealing in protest.

JACOB

Nobody cares what I want. What I need. I got it, and he got what was coming to him. Why doesn't anyone understand that?

EXT. INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

Jacob's car flies around the corner, barreling towards the 4-way stop. At the last minute, he looks up, seeing the stop sign and a pickup truck halfway through the intersection.

Jacob slams both feet down on the brakes.

Jacob's car spins out, screeching to a halt sideways at the stop sign. The door opens and he lurches out, unloading the contents of his stomach, barely able to breathe. He manages to stand next to the car, still heaving as he looks up.

A little girl in a car seat inside the truck waves at him as her mother presses down hard on the gas pedal.

INT. THOMAS HOUSE - LATER

Jacob bursts through the front door.

JACOB
Brent! Mr. Thomas!

Brent steps out of the next room, staring venomously at Jacob.

BRENT
What do you want?

Jacob falls to his knees, staring at the floor.

JACOB
Forgive me, sir. Forgive me for hurting Audrianna to try and hurt you. Forgive me for hating you for all these years.

Jacob kneels there for a long moment, waiting for a response. Finally he raises his eyes to see tears streaming down Brent's cheeks.

BRENT
Of course I forgive you, Jacob. Of course I forgive you.

Brent reaches down and pulls Jacob to his feet, hugging him intensely, as Audrianna and her mother look on from the doorway.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - DAY

Ruthie and Harlin stand as before, with the Pastor. The Bridal March begins playing. As everyone rises, Audrianna walks down aisle on her father's arm.

She's beaming.

Jacob steps into his place, exchanging a look with Harlin.

Ruthie tries, but even she can't hold her glare when she sees Audrianna's smile.

For a moment, Jacob, Audrianna and Brent stand there looking at each other. They turn to the minister.

PASTOR

Who gives this woman to be married
to this man?

BRENT

Her mother and I do.

FADE OUT