

"THE FINE PRINT: CHRISTMAS TREE DAY"

Written by Danielle Kreger

Danielle Kreger
Peachandmgnoliaproductions@gmail.com

EXT. NEW YORK CITY, SIDEWALK - DAY

Outside of Tom's apartment, a heavily bundled MEVISH (late 20's, Indian female) chats with a PRETZEL VENDOR by his CART. As she talks, she gestures with a mustard-coated PRETZEL.

MEVISH

So I was lookin' at this foot in my
tuna salad and -

Suddenly, TOM (mid-30's, male) jogs around the corner and Mevish instantly spots him.

MEVISH (CONT'D)

(chewing)

- oh that's the guy. See ya!

Mevish intersects Tom's path as he slows to a walk in front of his apartment. She holds out her pretzel to him.

MEVISH (CONT'D)

Pretzel?

Tom pushes it away.

TOM

Isn't the first rule of stalking
not being seen.

MEVISH

Yeah, yeah. Come on.

She walks down the block, but stops when Tom doesn't follow.

MEVISH (CONT'D)

Tom, it's freezing. Let's go!

Tom starts for his apartment building so Mevish RUNS and THROWS her body in front of the door blocking his entry.

TOM

Mevish, move.

MEVISH

The good ones are all gonna sell.

Tom tries to pull open the apartment door, but Mevish presses her full weight into it so he can't get it open.

MEVISH (CONT'D)

(fighting him)

C'mon Tom! It's Christmas tree day!

He stops pulling as understanding creeps over him.

TOM

I don't want a Christmas tree.

MEVISH

Well you're getting one anyway.

TOM

No, I'm not.

They lock eyes in a stalemate until suddenly, Mevish drops open her jaw and lets out a long, high-pitched SCREAM.

PEDESTRIANS on the sidewalk pause to stare for a moment before moving on. The Pretzel Vendor is unfazed.

TOM (CONT'D)

Scream all you want. This is New York. Nobody cares.

Tom waits, but Mevish doesn't stop screaming. Finally, anxiety creeps over him and he moves to put a hand over her mouth, but as soon as he gets close -

- Mevish GRABS his wrist and SLAPS a handcuff on it!

MEVISH

Gotcha!

She holds up her wrist revealing the other cuff is already wrapped around it. Tom PULLS on the cuffs, but they hold.

MEVISH (CONT'D)

Police grade, buddy.
Indestructible. So, tree time?

TOM

Mevish, I don't want a tree.

Mevish SIGHS.

MEVISH

Agree or I swallow the key and you
have to be my best bud till it
comes out.

She pops the KEY into her mouth and smiles, revealing it clamped between her front teeth.

TOM

You wouldn't.

MEVISH

(garbled)
Wouldn't I?

She pulls a WATER BOTTLE from her coat pocket and raises it to her lips to take a sip. Tom STARTS.

TOM

Wait!

MEVISH

Yes! C'mon. We'll have fun.

With that, she sets off tugging Tom down the street.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY SIDEWALK, TREE VENDOR BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

They come to a CHRISTMAS TREE VENDOR set up on the sidewalk.

MEVISH

Ah, look at these!

Mevish KICKS the base of one of the TREES. Tom YANKS on the handcuffs forcing her backwards.

TOM

You can't kick the trees.

MEVISH

Gotta check if it's sturdy.

She gives it another kick.

MEVISH (CONT'D)

Plus it scares off the rats. So, you want six feet or taller?

TOM

I want no feet. I don't want a tree, I -

MEVISH

(gingerly)

Tom, you keep telling me all the things you don't want. When are you going to realize -

(flips to smiling)

I don't care.

Mevish calls to the VENDOR (40's, Eastern European, male).

MEVISH (CONT'D)

Sir! What can you tell us about this beaut?

He comes over and appraises the tree in question.

VENDOR

It's a six foot, blue spruce.

MEVISH

Love a blue spruce. And what would you say its soul feels like?

VENDOR

Uh...?

TOM

Ignore her.

MEVISH

If this tree came to life as a human, would you be its friend?

VENDOR

I don't want to be your friend.

MEVISH

Ok, wow. Who hurt you? Was it your mother?

(whispers to Tom)

It always starts in childhood.

TOM

I'm sorry. We're going.

Tom starts to pull her away, but sees the Vendor tearing up.

VENDOR

It's such a hard time of year.

Mevish wraps him in a big hug forcing Tom's hand to awkwardly drape over the man's shoulder because of the cuffs.

MEVISH

There there, let it out.

VENDOR

I'm allergic to sap! And all day long, it's just sap, sap, sap. And it never comes off!

MEVISH

(nodding into the hug)

That must be hard.

VENDOR

It is! I wanted to sell hot cocoa, but no! My papa said cocoa is for weak men. Trees are for real men!

MEVISH
I like cocoa.

VENDOR
Everyone does...except papa!

She pulls away from the hug, but holds the Vendor's arms.

MEVISH
How about we go get you some hot
cocoa?

VENDOR
That'd be nice. With the tiny
marshmallows?

She gently wipes a tear from his face and nods.

MEVISH
Sure.

Meanwhile, Tom is staring open mouth at them.

MEVISH (CONT'D)
(to Tom)
Close your mouth before someone
spits in it.

Mevish SQUEEZES the Vendor's arms.

MEVISH (CONT'D)
We'll be right back.
(to Tom)
C'mon.

Mevish pulls Tom away down the sidewalk.

TOM
That was...interesting.

MEVISH
Some people have access to their
emotions, Tom.

They pass a STARBUCKS and Tom pulls Mevish to a stop as she seemingly intends to march on down the block.

TOM
Let's just get it here.

MEVISH
Get what?

TOM

The cocoa?

MEVISH

I'm not getting him cocoa. He didn't want to be my friend.

TOM

But, but, the sap!

MEVISH

Trees have sap, Tom. He needs a new job, not hot chocolate.

TOM

But his papa!

MEVISH

Sounds like a real dick.

TOM

Mevish, you made him cry.

MEVISH

I'm sure he needed to - people don't just crying on the sidewalk if they don't need to. Plus it's good for the soul.

TOM

We're bringing him cocoa.

With that, Tom pulls Mevish into the Starbucks.

LATER:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY SIDEWALK, TREE VENDOR BOOTH - DAY

Tom and Mevish round the corner with a STARBUCKS CUP. The Tree Vendor sees them and joyfully gets off his little SEAT.

VENDOR

Oh thank you! Thank you!

TOM

No problem.

VENDOR

So kind! Truly, so kind.

MEVISH

So, how much for the tree?

VENDOR
For kindest girl in world, free.

TOM
Oh she couldn't -

VENDOR
Yes, please, I insist.

TOM
It's too much! And, she's been
dying to buy me a tree.

Mevish shoots him a thinly-veiled, angry look over a smile.

MEVISH
Tom, he wants to give us the tree.

VENDOR
Well, to be honest, I don't really
want to, buuut it feels like right
thing to do.

TOM
That's it. We're paying. Mevish,
give the man your card.

MEVISH
I didn't bring my wallet.

TOM
What?

MEVISH
Why would I bring a wallet? It's
your tree.

TOM
That I don't want!

Tom YANKS on the handcuffs in frustration.

MEVISH
Hey! Buying a tree's your tradition
not mine!

VENDOR
Beautiful tradition.

MEVISH
Or, technically, I guess it was
your ex-wife's tradition. You were
just kinda there.
(to Vendor)
(MORE)

MEVISH (CONT'D)

She always bought a tree on the first day of November.

TOM

She's not my ex-wife.

MEVISH

But she did ex herself.

(to Vendor)

From life.

(back to Tom)

So again, technically, an ex.

TOM

That's not funny.

MEVISH

Oh come on. If Laura would have laughed at it, then it's okay.

(to Vendor)

And she would have. Very dark sense of humor that one.

TOM

Stop talking.

He pulls a CREDIT CARD out and hands it to the Vendor.

TOM (CONT'D)

Here.

MEVISH

Wait, why are you upset? It's a joke.

The Vendor swipes the card then hands it back to Tom.

TOM

Good luck with the sap.

Tom picks up the tree so it's between him and Mevish, then he marches off down the road making Mevish bob after him.

MEVISH

Tom! Don't you joke about Laura?

TOM

No.

MEVISH

How's the possible? Laura was one of the funniest people. Even dead, she's still funny.

TOM

Don't talk about her like that.

Mevish studies Tom as they hustle down the sidewalk.

MEVISH

(investigating)

Talk about who, Tom?

He resolutely marches on ignoring her.

They get to his apartment and he sets the tree down to unlock the front door.

MEVISH (CONT'D)

Who, Tom? Say her name.

TOM

No.

MEVISH

How long's it been since you said
it? A couple months?

Tom gives Mevish a hard look, but is distracted when an
ELDERLY LADY comes out of the building with her tiny DOG.

ELDERLY LADY

Oh what a gorgeous tree.

As she passes, her dog PEES on the tree, but nobody notices.

MEVISH

No! Since she died? Really?! The
whole year?

They enter the building -

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

- and climb the stairs in tandem up to Tom's apartment.

MEVISH

Oh man! I thought you'd be way
further on your healing journey by
now.

Tom gets to his apartment, unlocks the door, and enters.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

MEVISH
Wow, I'm shocked.

Tom leans the tree against the living room wall while Mevish pulls a BOX OF ORNAMENTS and a STAND from a nearby cabinet.

TOM
How'd you -

MEVISH
- please. Laura was a creature of habit. Of course they're in here.

Mevish pulls the KEY from her pocket and unlocks her cuff.

MEVISH (CONT'D)
I think you've got it from here.

She TOSSES Tom the key and heads for the door.

TOM
Wait, what?

She pauses by the doorway.

MEVISH
Yeah, I need to reformulate my entire plan given your complete lack of healing. Plus, I'm exhausted. It's draining to emphasize.

TOM
What about the tree?

MEVISH
Decorate it. Consider it the first step in my official healing journey plan for you.

With that, she leaves without shutting the door.

MEVISH (CONT'D)
I'll let you know when I've decided on next steps.

TOM
I don't want next steps!

MEVISH
(from hallway)
Can't hear you!

Tom turns to look at the tree taking up most of his living room and lets out a big SIGH.