

EVERY 3RD THURSDAY

Written by

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FADE IN

INT. GAIA'S HOUSE - MORNING

A small but charming bungalow filled with tropical plants, books, and art-covered walls.

INT. GAIA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

In an equally colorful room, GAIA VALDEZ (60's) a Latin beauty with a mega-watt smile, sleeps with her cat curled up beside her.

A soft CLICK from the alarm clock on the nightstand. As the clock turns 7 o'clock, an upbeat LATIN SONG fills the room.

Gaia stretches lazily, cuddles with her cat.

She gets out of bed and salsa's her way across the room. As her hips sway to the music, her silky nightgown shows off her curves. Her dark curls, lightly streaked with grey, still have a youthful bounce.

INT. GAIA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING

Gaia stands at the sink dressed in a nondescript outfit. Her cat sits on the counter watching her.

She gathers her hair into a tight bun, then stares dismally at her reflection. All traces of the vibrant dancing woman are neatly tucked away.

Her cat meows softly.

GAIA

Yes, I know that. But boring is the preferred dress code. Otherwise, the men tend to linger. And we can't have that, can we?

INT. GAIA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Gaia stands at the counter of a bright, plant-filled kitchen.

She pours herself a cup of coffee, then wanders over to the refrigerator.

A calendar is tacked near the top.

INSERT CALENDAR: Two of the weeks are crossed off in black. The third week has a large red circle around Thursday.

BACK TO SCENE

She smiles a sweet, secret little smile, sips her coffee.

EXT. DMV BUILDING - FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

Gaia and her DMV CO-WORKERS make their morning pilgrimage up the steps of a bland gray building.

INSERT BUILDING SIGN: "DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES"

INT. DMV - LOBBY - DAY

Gaia and her co-workers sit behind the counter of their walk-up windows. No one looks particularly happy.

An equally nondescript MANAGER (ANY) plods through the lobby.

His keys jangle as he unlocks the front doors.

He turns, blandly announces to the room at large--

MANAGER

Here they come.

INT. GAIA'S WORKSTATION - DAY

An ELDERLY LATIN MAN (70's) approaches Gaia's window. He's nervous, unsure.

Gaia leans forward, gives him a radiant smile.

GAIA

(Spanish/English subtitle)

Good morning, Sir. Can I help you?

Her smile relaxes him instantly.

ELDERLY MAN

(Spanish/English subtitle)

Ah, lovely lady, this must be my lucky day.

He winks.

Gaia smiles at the compliment.

The manager frowns at the old man over her shoulder.

EXT. HEDLEY'S FISH MARKET - LOADING DOCK - MORNING

HEDLEY (60's) a craggy but handsome Scotsman, solidly built. He wears a black knit cap and work apron. He stands, hands on hips, watching his EMPLOYEES unload seafood off a truck.

INT. HEDLEY'S FISH MARKET - DAY

Typical fish market, simple and clean.

Employees are scattered around the shop, busy filling various bins and coolers with ice and seafood.

Hedley stands near the front with DORIS FLETCHER (60) a fit, super tan retiree dressed in tennis whites.

Hedley smiles politely while Doris chatters on.

DORIS

Thank you, Hedley. You always take such good care of me.

Hedley answers in his Scottish accent--

HEDLEY

My pleasure, Doris. Your family has always been one of my best customers.

Hedley turns and calls out to DAVIS (30's) male, store manager, working near the back.

HEDLEY (CONT'D)

Davis, get Miss Fletcher her crab!

Hedley shoots Davis a look, mouths "hurry".

Davis tries not to smile.

DAVIS

I'm on it!

INT. HEDLEY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Hedley walks in, still dressed in his work clothes. He pulls off his knit cap, revealing a full head of crazy hair.

He stands, hands on hips, surveying the room.

HEDLEY

(mutters)

It's always so damned quiet.

He walks over to a calendar tacked on the fridge.

INSERT CALENDAR: Two of the weeks are crossed off in black. The third week has a large red circle around Thursday.

BACK TO SCENE

Hedley takes a black marker and crosses off today's date, then counts off the remaining days.

HEDLEY (CONT'D)
One, two, three...

The hard lines on his face ease into a smile.

INT. HEDLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hedley sits in his pajamas on the edge of the bed. He stares at the framed photos on the nightstand.

INSERT: HEDLEY'S FAMILY PHOTOS

-- A B&W wedding photo of Hedley and his WIFE (20's).

-- A laughing Hedley (30) and a young BOY (9) posing with fishing poles.

-- Hedley and WIFE (40's) smiling on a sailboat.

BACK TO SCENE

He reaches past the photos, turns off the light.

INT. GAIA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Gaia stands in front of the refrigerator. She's dressed in another drab work outfit, hair pulled back.

INSERT CALENDAR: The next day shows the large red circle.

Gaia taps her finger on the circle. Her eyes light up.

INT. HEDLEY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Hedley in work clothes, hair in disarray, stands in front of his refrigerator holding a drink.

INSERT CALENDAR: The next day is circled in red.

Hedley takes his marker, crosses off today's square, then taps the red circle with his finger.

HEDLEY

Bingo.

A devilish smile flickers across his face. He sips his drink.

INT. HEDLEY'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING

An upbeat Latin song plays in the background.

Hedley stands at the sink, bare-chested, a towel wrapped around his hips. His lower face is covered in shaving cream.

Hedley hums along to the music while he shaves, shaking his hips as he rinses the razor under the tap.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Gaia stands on a street corner, waiting for the light. She looks vibrant in a purple sundress with a wrap draped casually around her shoulders.

The light changes. Gaia steps off the curb and strides across, her untethered curls bouncing as she crosses the street.

INT. HEDLEY'S FISH MARKET - DAY

Wearing his knit cap and apron, Hedley stands in the middle of his shop, hands on hips. His employees stand near the bins.

HEDLEY

Head's up, boyo's! It's the third Thursday of the month, which means that she-devil's on her way. Keep your wits about you and do not look directly into her eyes.

Laughs, shouts of approval.

Davis rolls his eyes.

EXT. HEDLEY'S FISH MARKET - STORE FRONT - DAY

INSERT: painted window sign "HEDLEY'S FISH MARKET"

Gaia stands in front of the store window. Taking a deep breath, she shakes her hair back from her face and pushes open the front door.

INT. HEDLEY'S FISH MARKET - DAY

Hedley is standing behind the front counter. He looks up when the door opens.

Gaia steps inside. She glances around, looking slightly bored, then takes her time strolling over to the counter.

Gaia acknowledges Hedley with a nod.

GAIA

Hedley.

HEDLEY

(inclines his head)

Valdez.

Hedley steps out from behind the counter, spreads his arms wide.

HEDLEY (CONT'D)

It's all yours, Valdez, anything you like. Nothing but the best in my shop. But just so we're clear, there won't be any wheelin' and dealin' today. You pay as posted, or you take a hike!

Hedley emphasizes this last bit with a quick thumb motion.

Gaia smirks, rolling her eyes at his dramatics.

Acting like she owns the place, Gaia walks over to the first row of bins and stops in front of a cooler.

JACK (40) gives her one of his best smiles, holds up a frozen crab.

Gaia purses her lips, moves on.

Jack deflates.

The next victim is MANNY (20), Hedley's youngest employee. Manny squares his shoulders, tries to look intimidating.

Gaia takes the challenge.

She surveys the contents of his bin, then purses her lips.

GAIA

I don't like their color. Are you sure they're fresh? When were they caught?

Manny looks like a deer caught in headlights.

Hedley barks from the front--

HEDLEY
They're fresh!

Gaia arches a skeptical brow.

Hedley glowers, makes a slashing motion with his finger across his throat.

Gaia laughs, enjoying herself.

From his view in the back, Davis watches the two of them with amusement.

INT. HEDLEY'S FISH MARKET - BACK OF STORE - DAY

Gaia stands at the back with Davis. Her items are spread out on the counter.

GAIA
Okay, I think that's everything.

Davis nods, then hollers to Hedley at the front counter--

DAVIS
Time to tally up!

All eyes follow Gaia as she sashays up to the front.

Davis follows with the seafood.

DAVIS (CONT'D)
(mutters)
Here we go.

INT. HEDLEY'S FISH MARKET - FRONT COUNTER - DAY

Gaia takes her time adjusting her shawl while Hedley scowls behind the register.

She finally acknowledges the items on the counter.

GAIA
One salmon, two pounds of crab, a pound of scallops, half a bucket of clams. That comes to...thirty-five dollars.

Hedley throws back his head and chortles dramatically. He makes quite a show of wiping tears from his eyes.

HEDLEY

That's funny, Valdez, really. But we best be havin' a little reality check.

Taking a pen from his pocket, he scribbles something on a piece of register tape. Then he folds it in half, holds it out to her.

Gaia takes the paper, unfolds it, looks it over.

She crinkles it up and lets it drop to the ground.

GAIA

Did you drink your lunch?

Scattered laughter.

Hedley leans forward, plants his hands on the counter.

HEDLEY

You'll not be robbing me today, woman!

Gaia leans in, her face close to his.

GAIA

Es así como usted hace su dinero ahora por robar a ancianas!

Hedley crosses his arms, stares her down.

HEDLEY

I don't know what you just said, but I know I didn't like it.

Davis hollers out from the back.

DAVIS

She says you enjoy robbing old women.

The men laugh.

Hedley and Gaia stare at each other, gazes locked, refusing to budge.

Hedley finally caves. He exhales a long-suffering breath.

HEDLEY

Were you born this difficult,
Valdez, or is it something special
you save up just for me?

Gaia tosses her curls, gives him the smolder.

Hedley shakes his head. A slight smile plays at the corners
of his mouth.

He surveys her purchases.

HEDLEY (CONT'D)

That's a helluvah lot of fish for
one person.

GAIA

I have a cat.

INT. GAIA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gaia stands at the counter, putting finishing touches on a
plate of food. She looks lovely in a yellow sundress and
flowing hair.

She turns, passing the refrigerator on her way out of the
kitchen.

INSERT CALENDAR: The calendar is filled with dates circled in
red.

EXT. GAIA'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Strings of lights crisscross a small cozy patio filled with
tropical plants and a table set with wine and food. An upbeat
Latin song plays in the background.

Hedley, drink in hand, sways his hips to the music. He wears
a colorful Hawaiian shirt, his hair is perfectly disheveled.

Gaia steps out onto the patio.

Hedley immediately takes the plate of food from her hands and
sets it on the table. Turning with a flourish, he reaches out
for Gaia's hand. When she takes it, Hedley twirls her toward
him and expertly dips her.

Gaia looks up into his eyes.

Hedley leans down, kisses her passionately.

FADE OUT.