Sidecar

by

Dan Shulman-Means
INT. LOFT ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Walter gets into an empty elevator and presses the number 6. The doors close. He stands against the wall and takes a deep breath.

INT. KAREN’S CONDO - NIGHT

With a BANG, KAREN (35) hammers an ice-filled cloth baggy with a wooden mallet.

Walter is sitting on a couch in the living room, nervously turning the pages of a large coffee table book. He looks up, starting at the sound of the mallet smacking the kitchen counter.

Karen walks over to the couch with their drinks. She’s wearing an elegant black dress – sexy, but intelligent – and hoop earrings. She hands Walter a heavy, square old fashioned glass and sits down in front of him on a leather loveseat.

WALTER
What’s this?

KAREN
Sidecar, on the rocks.

They sit and face each other for a moment and sip their drinks.

"Mmm," Walter nods his head in exaggerated approval of the beverage.

Karen nods as well, forcing a smile. She reclines in her seat and crosses her legs, then puts her hands in the air with a look of puzzlement. "Well?"

After an awkward pause, Walter finally begins:

WALTER
Alright, look. I just want to let you know that what I saw the other night – it doesn’t matter. Okay? I don't even care. It's none of my business. And all I really want is--

Karen purses her lips, “Shhhh.”

Walter looks down and frowns, running a hand through his hair. He stares into his drink, avoiding eye contact.
KAREN

Everything’s fine, Walter. You’ve been working too hard, that’s all. Why don’t you take a vacation?

There’s a pause.

WALTER

So we’re good then?

KAREN

Let’s just drop it, alright?

She gets up and walks into the adjacent kitchenette. As Walter continues to stare at his drink, Karen removes a kitchen knife from a block of wood and begins to chop up a red bell pepper at the counter.

WALTER

Karen. Did you put something in my drink?

KAREN

(laughing)

What?

WALTER

There’s- there’s powder... it’s gathering at the edge of the glass.

Walter shakes his drink a little, mesmerized.

KAREN

Well, of course I did.

Walter looks at her on the verge of panic. She lifts up a bottle of brandy and rolls her eyes.

KAREN (CONT’D)

Jesus Christ, Walter. A little paranoid, aren’t we? Can’t you even trust me— can’t you even trust me to make you a decent cocktail?

He continues to stare at his drink.

She shakes her head, puts down the knife and walks over to him.

Walter looks down, avoiding her eyes. He shakes the drink around in his hand. Then he looks at her intently.
WALTER
Okay. But last night. I know what I saw.

They exchange a look. Walter flinches. He stands up, his eyes blinking rapidly.

WALTER (CONT’D)
(voice rising)
I know what I saw, goddammit.

KAREN
Take it easy, Walter.

WALTER
You- you bitch--

Walter is teetering now, barely able to keep his eyes open. He sits back down on the couch.

KAREN
See? You’re getting worked up. Just relax.

Walter drops the glass and it catches the edge of the marble coffee table with a loud CLANK. He follows, rolling off the couch and onto the floor.

Karen walks around the coffee table to get a look at him. There’s still movement in his eyes and he manages to look at her for one moment longer.

From his POV he sees her above him, crossing her arms impatiently. Then his eyelids close and she FADES TO BLACK.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAWN

Karen exits her condo rolling an enormous black suitcase behind her. She opens the trunk of her car and has to exert all of her strength to get the suitcase in there.

She gets into the car and puts the keys in the ignition. She turns the key – the car won’t start. Puzzled, she tries again. Then she looks at the headlight switch on her steering wheel – her headlights are switched ON. She curses and gets out of her car.

INT./EXT. TRAIN STATION - MORNING

At the train station, Karen looks at the destination chart, squinting. She’s standing next to the enormous black suitcase that stands upright beside her.
With an awkward effort, she tips the case to roll it and proceeds towards her terminal. Then she comes to an elevator and shakes her head: "Out of order."

She begins one stair at a time. The suitcase takes all of her strength and by stair number five she's nearly spent.

An amiable FIDGETY GUY in a worn-out looking suit spots her from across the way. He comes over, to her rescue.

FIDGETY GUY
Looks like ya need a little help there.

Karen shakes her head. Again, she exerts all her strength and barely lifts the case up another step.

The man grabs at the handle. Karen yanks the handle away from him, looking at him intently. He backs away.

FIDGETY GUY (CONT’D)

Karen lets her guard down, lets go of the handle. The man takes hold of it and smiles, then gives it a lift -- but not nearly as easily as he had expected.

FIDGETY GUY (CONT’D)
Holy smokes. What you got in here?

KAREN
Oh it’s - it’s mostly computer equipment, actually. A bit heavy.

With both their efforts they finally manage to reach the top of the stairs.

KAREN (CONT’D)
Thank you so much.

FIDGETY GUY
Oh. Looks like you dropped your keys on that stair there.

KAREN
My keys?

She walks down a few steps and finds a keychain lying there with a yellow rabbits foot. She picks it up and examines it, puzzled; they’re not her keys. She puts them back on the stairs and walks up to meet the man.
Karen looks around. The man has disappeared -- with her suitcase.

She paces back and forth. Suddenly her awareness of the pandemonium of voices and movement in the station is devastating, and Karen's breathing speeds up with intensity. She runs back down the stairs and past the terminals, looking back and forth at the strangers and their luggage.

She stops in front of a bar; the sign outside the door catches her eye. It says:

“Drink special
$5 Sidecar”

THE END