

"A Swift Divorce"

Writer

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A neglectful superhero learns what's truly important.

FADE IN:

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

In a small office with an oak desk, and Freudian style fainting couch sit a very unhappy married couple. The air is thick with tension.

The man CHASE INCOGKNEETOE, AKA MR. SWIFT 30, muscular, handsome and aloof, wears thick black glasses and occupies one end of the couch.

His wife MAY INCOGKNEETOE, AKA MRS. SWIFT late 20's, pretty and petite, but looking weary, occupies the other.

Behind the desk is a therapist DR. HORTOR. He examines a file in front of him, looks up at the couple and finally asks a question.

DR. HORTOR

So tell me Mr. and Mrs.
Incogkneetoe. What exactly brings
you here today?

A verbal bomb explodes. Both people start shouting at once.

CHASE

She doesn't appreciate me!

MAY

Oh you're unappreciated? I cook
dinner every night and is he there
to eat it...NO!

CHASE

You think it's easy doing what I
do? You think I want to be home
late?

MAY

Well you sure don't want to be home
early!

CHASE

Not when I'm greeted by my parole
officer giving me the third degree
every night!

MAY

Parole officer? What you think
you're in jail?

CHASE

Yeah, as a matter of fact I do.
And I want to be free.

MAY

Free? You do whatever you want and
yet you want to be free? We'll fly
away little birdie.

(waves with hand)

Fly away.

She moves to get up out of the chair when the therapist
chimes in.

DR. HORTOR

Hold on everybody! No body is
flying away just yet. Please, take
a seat.

May reluctantly sits back down, takes a deep breath and
raises her eyebrows in a signal for the therapist to
continue.

DR. HORTOR (CONT'D)

Lets take this one at a time.

Turns to Chase.

DR. HORTOR (CONT'D)

Mr. Incogkneetoe. Is it true that
you are out late most nights.

CHASE

(coughs uncomfortably)

Well...I, I mean, well you know. I
mean what I do is special. Very
unusual hours.

DR. HORTOR

Define special.

CHASE

Well it's super important.
(chuckles knowingly to
self)

If you know what I mean.

DR. HORTOR

I'm not sure I do know what you
mean.

CHASE

Ah...well, I'm a...

His voice trails off incomprehensibly.

DR. HORTOR
I'm sorry I didn't get that last
part, a what?

CHASE
A super.....
(again mumbles
incomprehensibly)

MAY
(Impatiently)
Oh spit it out already. It's not
that special. He's a superhero.

DR. HORTOR
A what?

CHASE
(irritably to May)
You weren't supposed to say
anything!

MAY
(unfazed by the rebuke)
A superhero.

DR. HORTOR
(doubtful)
Really? Which one?

CHASE
(bashfully, but with
pride)
Mr. Swift.

The therapist looks closely at the man trying to see if he
resembles the pictures he has seen in the media.

DR. HORTOR
I don't see it.

MAY
(rolls her eyes)
It's the glasses.

She turns to Chase and speaks with authority.

MAY (CONT'D)
Take them off.

CHASE
 (reluctantly)
 Fine.

He takes the glasses off.

DR. HORTOR
 (eyes wide with surprise)
 Wow! It really is you!

CHASE
 You can't tell anyone.

DR. HORTOR
 Of course not this is confidential.
 But wow! Mr. Swift! Can I get an
 autograph?

Looking exasperated May reaches into her purse and pulls out
 a glossy, signed, head shot and flings it at the therapist.

MAY
 Here. Take this. He has boxes of
 them. Now can we please get on
 with it?

DR. HORTOR
 (penitently)
 Yes, of course. So please Mrs.
 Incogknee..er Swift. Can you
 explain to me how Mr. Swift makes
 you feel neglected?

MAY
 He misses everything.

DR. HORTOR
 Let's not use always or never type
 words.

MAY
 Fine he misses 99% of everything.

DR. HORTOR
 Thank you. Like what? Be
 specific.

MAY
 How about his surprise birthday
 party last year?

CHASE
 (Incredulously)
 How was I supposed to know? It was
 a surprise!

FLASHBACK INT. THE SWIFT APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is all set up with a banner that says happy birthday, a cake with half melted candles, and several superhero guests including Dog Boy and El Fuego milling around looking bored.

May is at the door looking anxiously at the clock.

MAY
 (desperately to herself)
 He's coming, he's coming.

Abruptly one of the guests catches her attention.

MAY (CONT'D)
 Dog Boy! Put that chocolate down.
 You know it doesn't agree with you!

Meanwhile Dog Boy is looking sick and soon he heads to the couch where he surreptitiously vomits.

May rolls her eyes, and heads to the kitchen for a towel where she discovers that another hero with a Mexican style luchador mask has set fire to the something on the stove.

MAY (CONT'D)
 El Fuego! Put that fire out!

END FLASHBACK:

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

CHASE
 Whoo. Sorry I missed that one.

MAY
 What about our son's birthday?

CHASE
 What's the big deal? He's had like
 seven of them!

MAY
 Yes, but his actual day of birth
 happened only once.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

May has just given birth to a baby boy whom she is holding
 close. A NURSE enters the room to check on her.

NURSE
 (looking uncomfortable)
 Is the baby's father..coming or..

MAY
 Oh yes, he's coming, he's coming.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

MAY
 But he didn't come.

CHASE
 I was there! We have pictures of
 me holding him in the maternity
 ward!

MAY
 I photo-shopped those so our child
 wouldn't feel abandoned.

CHASE
 Really? Weird. I feel like I was
 there.

MAY
 (snorting cynically)
 I could talk about our
 anniversaries, but that's only
 minor league stuff for you.

CHASE
 (defensively)
 I made it to this didn't I?

DR. HORTOR
 Well actually this is the eighth
 time we've rescheduled.

MAY

Ninth.

DR. HORTOR

(to May)

Can I ask why you have tolerated
this so long?

May SIGHS and shakes her head.

MAY

He wasn't always like this. He
used to care. But once he started
getting noticed and the mayor gave
him that phone, it all changed.

Dr. Hortor and May look over at Chase and he is playing with
his red phone. Suddenly he senses they are staring at him.

CHASE

Oh, sorry. I uh just got a call
from the mayor.

MAY

See what I mean? Every call from
the mayor he answers. But calls
from me...

CHASE

But this is important!

MAY

And I'm not?!

CHASE

That's not what I meant...

MAY

Then what did you mean?

CHASE

I, uh...look I'm a hero and you
treat me like a villain!

DR. HORTOR

Just what does make someone a
villain Mr. Swift?

CHASE

They do everything for themselves,
they...they...never want to serve
others!

DR. HORTOR
And you are different..how?

CHASE
Because I...I...

Chase angrily gets to his feet and paces for a moment.

CHASE (CONT'D)
(wagging his finger)
Look I'm not the bad guy. I help
people. And right now there is a
fire and the city needs me.

MAY
What about firemen?

CHASE
Too slow.

With that he heads to the door, unbuttoning his shirt as he
goes, revealing his superhero uniform hidden underneath.

CHASE (CONT'D)
I'll be back in five minutes.

Before the others can react he takes off.

MAY
See what I mean?

DR. HORTOR
Let's just give him a few minutes.

MAY
He's not coming.

EXT. BURNING BUILDING - DAY

Chase arrives at the scene of a burning building in full
superhero garb, but the firemen including the FIRE CHIEF, a
self possessed, middle aged man, are already there and seem
to have everything under control.

CHASE
It's okay everyone, I'm here now!
What needs to be done?

FIRE CHIEF
Nothing really. Kind of a minor
blaze. I think we have it under
control.

CHASE

Really. Is that the sound of a dog
I hear?

FIRE CHIEF

Well maybe, I mean half the
building didn't even catch fire.

Slightly frustrated Chase see's a DISTRESSED WOMAN the same
age and build as May standing alone wringing her hands with a
look of concern written upon her face.

CHASE

Pardon me Ma'am. I couldn't help
but notice you seem distressed.

DISTRESSED WOMAN

Oh, it's just that my husband went
in after our dog Mr. Crinkles.

CHASE

But that's hero work! I'll be
right back!

Chase takes off toward the building and just as he gets to
the entrance the husband comes out with the dog in his arms.
Slightly frustrated and a little downcast Chase returns with
the man to his wife.

DISTRESSED WOMAN

(to her husband)
Honey you saved him!

The wife takes the dog and holds him close.

DISTRESSED WOMAN (CONT'D)

Mr. Crinkles! You're okay!

Husband beams at his wife.

DISTRESSED WOMAN (CONT'D)

(adoringly to her husband)
You're my hero!

The wife embraces the husband affectionately as Mr. Crinkles
is slightly squashed between them.

CHASE

(to no one in particular)
Well it looks like my work is done
here.

Chase looks uncomfortable and nonchalantly walks away from the scene of the joyful reunion.

Looking at the firemen Chase starts to raise his arm as if to hail them, but clearly they have the situation under control and do not need his help.

Lowering his arm Chase looks back at the woman, her husband and their little dog wagging its tail and envies their reunion.

Knitting his brows, his face changes and he sighs.

He has had a revelation.

He is in the wrong place.

MONTAGE

-Chase begins walking back the way he came.

-Faster and faster Chase moves until he is running through the streets at super sonic speed.

-Chase is blazing past cars and dodging through traffic.

-A newspaper with the headline "Mr. Swift, Hero of the Week" flies from the hands of a man as Chase shoots by.

-Finally Chase reaches the therapist's office where he has left his wife.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Just as Chase is dashing through the entrance he notices that May is about to head out.

He skids to a stop and turns around to confront his wife.

CHASE

Where are you going?

MAY

I'm leaving. It's over.

With that May puts her head determinedly down and heads out the door.

EXT. BUILDING ENTRANCE - DAY

May is walking briskly away and Chase exits the building after her and forces her to halt by stepping in front of her.

CHASE

Why are you leaving? I came back!
I wanted to finish up!

MAY

Did you? Then why did you leave in
the first place?

CHASE

Because I thought they needed me,
I...I...

Chase's words trail off, his shoulder's sag, and he looks down in a defeated manner.

CHASE (CONT'D)

(penitently)

I'm sorry. I never should have
left.

MAY

(cynically)

Really? Why not.

CHASE

(Raising his head and
looking his wife in the
eyes)

I...I wasn't needed there. I was
needed here.

They continue to stare at each other for a moment and May's hard countenance softens a bit.

MAY

I truly want to believe you, but
your phone is ringing.

Mr. Swift looks down and sure enough his red phone is blinking brightly from a utility belt fastened around his waist.

He debates whether or not he should ignore it, but in the end reaches down and pulls out the phone.

CHASE
(looking apologetically at
his wife)
This will only take a sec..

May looking disappointed shakes her head and starts to walk away. Meanwhile Chase answers the phone.

CHASE (CONT'D)
Mr. Mayor, I'm sorry, you need to
get someone else.

Having said this he looks longingly at his wife who is now some distance away.

CHASE (CONT'D)
(to himself rather than to
the person on the phone)
I've got something more important
to save.

Lowering the phone he crumples it up with super strength.

Dropping the crushed pieces to the ground he takes off after his wife.

FADE TO BLACK.

