

Third Wheel Blues

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A skiing holiday with your best friends sounds great, unless you end up the third wheel

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Snow crunched under the tyres of the four by four as Tim pulled up onto the driveway outside the chalet. "Here we go," he said. He leaned over to Fiona in the passenger seat and kissed her on the cheek before they both giggled and flung the doors open. In the back seat Lilly pulled her shawl closer around her shoulders. Why had she even bothered to come? She was selfish, that's what it was. The boot flew open, letting in a gust of crisp, alpine air and she gasped. "Come on Lil," Fiona said, over their bags. "It'll be warmer inside." With a rustle of fabric, a dark puffa jacket hit her in the face. She clawed it off and bundled up her shawl so she could put the coat on. Then she stepped out of the car onto the thin layer of snow outside the chalet. The resort nestled in the lea of a white frosted mountain. Pale sunlight lanced down from a blue sky dusted with a few high clouds, and turned the snow on every surface to a coating of diamond dust. Further down the mountain's slopes the lower part of the resort disappeared in a blanket of low cloud tumbling off the adjacent peaks. "Wow." "I know, right?" Fiona appeared by her side. A few strands of her blond hair had escaped her braid and tickled her face in the light breeze. "You can't possibly be sad here. I don't want to hear another word about that asshole Greg. The three of us are going to have the best time ever." "You really don't have to worry about me." Fiona put an arm around her shoulder and gave her a squeeze. "Nonsense. You're my best friend. It's my job to cheer you up and make you feel better." Lilly forced a smile. *** Her boots clicked into the binders on her skis and Lilly slid uncertainly onto the icy ground at the base of the ski lift. "It's okay guys, really. I'll be fine on my own in the class. You go and have fun." Her feet started to slide away from her and she dug her poles into the ground. With a few deft motions Fiona swung herself around in front of her. "Oh don't be silly. I'm not leaving you with a bunch of strangers. We'll teach you, won't we, Tim?" Tim cast a longing gaze at the ski lift disappearing up into the low clouds, but nodded. "Sure. You'll pick it up much faster with one-on-one tuition." "But you've been looking forward to this trip since the summer." "Looking forward to spending time with you. Now come on." Fiona held her hands out and Lilly took hold. "Turn your toes in like a V-shape and bend your knees slightly." Fiona pulled her forward towards a tiny, ten meter slope. Her

instincts told her to back away and, as she picked up speed, she straightened her legs and leaned back. "Lean forward, forward," Fiona said trying to hold her steady. With a swoop in her stomach the skis lifted at the front and she tried to back pedal. One ski shot forward between Fiona's legs, the other twisted around and she ended up in a crumpled heap on the ground, still holding Fiona's hands. "Sorry," she muttered, pushing her dark hair back from her face. "Oh don't be silly. You're supposed to fall your first time, it's how you learn. Come on." Fiona and Tim helped her to her feet. "Let's try that again." *** After an exhausting few hours on the ski slopes, Lilly, Tim and Fiona dropped their skis off at the chalet and returned to the little town to pick up some supplies. "You did really well today," Fiona said as they drove back up the hill. "At this rate you'll be – ohh!" She jumped as her phone rang in her pocket. "Hey little brother, everything okay?" Lilly tuned her out and curled up on the back seat. By the end of the session she'd managed to make her first run down the beginner's slope without falling over but she felt sore all over and had blisters on both heels. The idea of more difficult slopes was not appealing. And, while it had been just over two months since she split with Greg, watching Tim and Fiona flirt and tease each other just reminded her that she was on her own. The chalet rolled into view and drew closer. Someone sat on the steps in front of the door with a pair of skis propped against the porch. He dropped the fur lined hood of his cream jacket back as they climbed out of the car. "Hey," he said as he got to his feet. "Umm, hi, can we help you?" Lilly asked. Fiona pushed her way past. "Aidan, how are you?" She gave the newcomer a friendly hug. "Not bad, Fi. You guys are okay with this, right? Jace said you had a spare room but I wasn't sure he'd actually checked." "You guessed right. He just called me to let me know you were coming. But it's cool. Are they your skis?" "Yep." He hefted his bag onto one shoulder. Lilly stood baffled as they disappeared inside Tim struggled past with two arm loads of groceries and she snapped out of it. "Wait, let me help." She took half the bags out of his hands and followed him in. "I'm afraid Jace had it a bit wrong," Fiona said. "We are a person short but we only have the two rooms." Lilly cringed. Aidan glanced over at her and smiled. "Do you think if I ask nicely she'll let me share?" Fiona gave him a sisterly cuff on the arm. "Ow. I'm happy with the couch, so long as you guys are happy for me to be here," he said, rubbing his arm. Lilly stood uncertainly in the hallway with her shopping bags still hanging from her hands. "Here, let me take those." Aidan eased the bags off her fingers. "Umm, sure." "Looking forward to hitting the slopes tomorrow?" he asked. "Umm, I guess. I'm not all that good." Oh God, another one who wanted to go adventuring on the snow. Maybe the three of them would arrange to take turns babysitting her. Could this get any worse? *** Lilly escaped to her room to unpack her things and then Tim ordered pizza and they each had a few beers. When Fiona and Tim retreated to the kitchen to wash up, Aidan dropped onto the couch next to her. "So, can I ask what happened with the fourth guy?" "Um, sure. Not much to say really. Greg and I were dating, now we're not." "Who ended it?" "He did. He started seeing someone else. I suppose I should be grateful he didn't do it behind my back for very long." "Shit, I'm sorry." "Oh don't be. I'm over it." "Still sucks. Good on you for getting on with your life though. Better to be here than sat at home eating ice cream, right?" He offered her his bottle. She clinked hers against it and smiled. He was right; she had every right to be here, enjoying her holiday. None of this was her fault and she should be grateful her friends cared

about her enough to worry about her happiness. "So how come you're here?" "My mother's French, and I'm studying here. Not, you know, here here, but in France. And Fiona's brother Jace said there was a free holiday going." "What are you studying?" "French. Language and culture." "Cool, say something in French." He took a swig from his bottle then looked her in the eye. "Vous avez les yeux plus beaux que j'ai jamais vu" Lilly giggled. "What did you say?" He smiled. "I said you have the most beautiful eyes I've ever seen." Her cheeks heated. "Can you say anything less corny in French?" He shook his head. "French is made up of corny lines, you didn't know that? And they sound so much better in French. Vous faites battre mon cœur et ma tourner la tête." "Stop it." He winked at her and took another slurp from his bottle. *** As the evening went on Aidan seemed to flirt with her at every opportunity. She couldn't tell if he was doing it just to be friendly or because he was genuinely interested. Was she interested? She definitely had a warm glow inside which he had everything to do with. She gathered up a few of the empty beer bottles and took them over to the kitchen. Fiona followed her. "Tim and I are going to head up to bed." Her eyes strayed to where Aidan sat on the couch. "See you in the morning." "Sure, night." Her friends disappeared up the stairs and she poured herself a glass of water. "So, do I get to see your legendary skills on the piste tomorrow?" Aidan asked, gently nudging her with his shoulder. She jumped and very nearly smashed the glass on the tap. He chuckled. "I feel really bad you know," Lilly said. "Fi and Tim were so looking forward to this trip and now they feel obliged to babysit me on the kiddie slopes." "How about I babysit you tomorrow?" "But, you came all this way." He put his hand up to stop her. "I'm only here because you got screwed over by your ex, who, by the way, is an absolute moron to give you up. There is nothing I would rather do tomorrow." He started back to the lounge. "I think I'm going to call it a night" Lilly wrapped her shawl around her shoulders in the hopes she could seal in the warm glow inside. "Thanks, by the way." Aidan dropped onto the couch and rested his arms across the back. "What for?" "For taking my mind off things and making me feel like I'm not a massive bitch for ruining my friends' holiday." He smiled and found her eyes with his. "Any time." A creak and a stifled groan drifted down the stairs from Fiona and Tim's room. Lilly bit her lip. "Oh god, maybe I should stay down here after all." Aidan flashed her a wicked grin that made her heart rate shoot up and slid off the sofa. "Nope, you have to go to bed." He grabbed her arms, pinned them lightly behind her back and marched her towards the foot of the stairs. The creak of the bed upstairs grew louder and Lilly pulled her hands free so she could clamp them over her ears. "Gah, no, I cannot listen to my best friends having sex." Aidan pulled her hands back behind her. "If I have to listen so do you. I've known Fiona since I was five!" She shivered as his breath tickled her neck. "Stop it, it's like listening to your parents have sex." She twisted away and he chased after her. He grabbed her wrist and she lost her balance. She tripped and toppled onto the sofa, dragging him with her. The laughter drained from her as his body pressed against hers and ignited a desire for him she hadn't realised had been building all evening. She searched his eyes for some sign that he felt the same pull that she did. He brought his lips down to hers in a soft, teasing kiss then pulled back and looked at her. His quickening breath warmed her face. The pull inside her exploded into full blown need. She lifted her shoulders towards him, desperate to taste his kiss again. Aidan groaned, pressed her down onto the cushions and

sealed his lips against hers. She wriggled under him until she could wrap her legs around his thighs and hold him close to her. She could feel him hardening against her and pressed her hips up towards him, grinding against him. He gasped and broke away. "Lilly, I..." His stubble grazed her cheek and she kissed his neck. "I need this, I need you," she moaned by his ear. He shuddered in her arms and a tingling wave of anticipation flashed through her from the tips of her toes to the roots of her hair. His lips found hers again and he ran his hand down her side, just grazing the outside edge of her breast before gripping her side with an urgency that matched her own. She tugged his t-shirt over his head and he knelt back to untangle himself from the twisted garment. She sat up with him, kissing the softly defined muscles of his chest and stomach. She'd never felt such an electric connection with anyone before. Her shirt and bra followed and he tugged her sweat pants off, revealing her silly panties covered in little smiley faces. She hid the rising colour in her cheeks behind her arm. "Those are so damn cute," he said, running his hands lightly over her body. "But I'm afraid they have to go." She held her breath as he hooked his fingers into the hem and slowly drew them down. She could hardly believe she was lying, completely exposed, on a couch with a guy she'd just met. He watched her eyes as he stroked her stomach and her hips. "Belle Lilly, votre peau est aussi douce que la soie." "What did you say?" He leaned down over her and kissed her neck, finding and teasing the most sensitive spots. "I said your skin is as smooth as silk." She arched her back, pressing her body up into him. His hand found its way between her legs and teasingly traced around her sex. He drew a finger along her slit and then raised it to his lips. His eyes sparkled with a cheeky smile as he licked her juices. "Hmm, doux comme du miel." He put on an exaggerated, husky accent that sent shivers through her. "Stop that." "You love it." He moved his hand back down her body, slipped his fingers between her thighs once more and gently massaged her clit. "Maybe I do," she gasped. "But I think I'd like it more if I understood what you were saying." He kissed her neck and slowly slid his fingers inside her. "You want me to talk dirty to you in English then?" Her cry of pleasure swallowed her reply as his fingers worked in her. "I should warn you, my English dirty talk is far less refined." He shifted back onto his knees and pulled her up so she was sitting astride his lap, supported in his arms. She could feel him straining against the confines of his jeans and squeezed her hand between them to release him. "I want to sink my cock in you so deep, Lilly," he whispered by her ear as she tugged him free of his boxers. She giggled. "I warned you." Lifting her up with one arm under her ass and the other around her back, he shifted his legs out so he could sit on the couch and she straddled his hips. The tip of his cock parted her folds and she held herself there. He threw his head back and groaned. "Aidan?" "Yeah?" "Is this going to be weird in the morning?" She tilted her hips and his eyes rolled back. He shook his head. "Not for me. I'm – oh fuck, Lilly – I 'm kind of more hoping you'll let me take you out or something." He gripped her hips, pulling her down, and she let him. He filled her with such a deep sense of satisfaction as she sank down onto him until he was fully buried inside her. He moved one hand to the back of her neck and pulled her down for a long, heady kiss that made her stomach swoop. She rocked her hips with him as he pushed up into her. Each motion sent surges of pleasure through her. She felt as though they were sealed in a cocoon where all that mattered was the soft rasping of their shallow breath, the feel of his lips and teeth nibbling at her neck and the way

the whole core of her being pulsed in time with the slow thrusts of his hips. And the pulses grew deeper and stronger, faster and longer until they merged together into one long peak of pleasure that turned her legs to jelly. Aidan's arms encircled her, holding her close, and she tensed around him, hanging on the brink of ecstasy. "That's it Lilly, come for me," he whispered in her ear. Her body wanted to convulse as her core clamped down around him but he held her tight, forcing her to ride her climax without mercy. She cried out, her toes curling. Then he pulled her down hard onto him and let out a long groan. He jerked inside her as he peaked and then collapsed back, pulling her down for a deep kiss. It suddenly clicked in her mind that if she'd stayed at home she would have missed out on all of this; never met this charming, sweet, funny guy who made her feel beautiful and sexy but comfortable being herself. She pulled back, looked into his eyes and smiled. "I didn't expect this," she whispered. "Me neither, but I like it. A lot." He stroked her cheek with his thumb and kissed her softly. Behind them a floorboard creaked and they both froze. "Jeez, you two don't waste any time, do you," Fiona said from the bottom of the stairs. Lilly gasped, scrambled off Aidan's lap and snatched her shawl to cover herself up. She caught her foot between the couch cushions and shrieked as she lost her balance and ended up in a heap on the floor by Aidan's feet. He quickly zipped up his jeans and leaned over. "Are you going to be this bad on the slopes tomorrow?" he asked with a cheeky smile.