

The Choosing

Genre: Romantic Comedy

Logline: What he saw in her was good. What she finally saw in him was love

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Mickey Jacoby is a 25-year-old dock supervisor at the local transportation company called METS: Metropolitan Express and Transportation System. He found work at the company nine months ago when he and his family moved from New York to live with Mickey's uncle, (his mother's brother) in one of the lower class suburbs of St Paul after the death of his father. Although rough around the edges, he has a strong sense of duty and a big heart and is one of the best managers the company has ever seen. And unbeknownst to him, he has been slated him for a promotion after the first of the year. The oldest of five siblings, Mickey lives in his own apartment with a sarcastic, fun-loving roommate by the name of Luther, but spends most of his time with his mother and younger siblings, often taking on the role of a father figure for them.

The story begins a week before Christmas at METS where Mickey meets Michelle; a young, newly hired office manager that has come from a French based transportation company called Martinique Logistics. The French based company has been under an ongoing investigation for trafficking cocaine and recently declared bankruptcy, affecting all of their worldwide offices including the one in Minneapolis where Michelle had worked. Michelle had an affair with one of the owner's sons by the name of Jacques while in France five months earlier. Once Jacques learned she was pregnant, he dumped her as quickly as he had taken her under his charismatic spell--and then paid for her abortion. Now living in her own apartment in St Paul, she is being pursued by Jack--an older man in his thirties and one of her former managers at Martinique Logistics who is encouraging her to come with him to greener pastures in Seattle.

Having lost his cell phone days before because he often leaves it in odd places, Mickey now communicates with his mother using one of the company phones. The first time he meets Michelle is when his mother calls him at work. When Mickey comes into the office from the warehouse for his regular morning meeting with his boss, Michelle takes the incoming call from his mother and asks Mickey if he is Michael---the name his mother calls him. He says yes and she hands him the phone while the rest of the office ladies smile—having been accustomed to his mother's all-too-familiar routine these last few days.

His mother tells him if he ever gets a new phone, he needs to stop leaving it all over the apartment. and that maybe if he cleaned up the place he might find it. Then she tells him about his brother who is having trouble in school again with bullies.

When Mickey tells his mother to tell his younger brother that he needs to stand up for himself, all of the office ladies begin to laugh behind his back—all of them except Michelle.

'He needs to learn how to fight a good fight Ma and not back down.' Mickey tells her—a statement that is indicative of the fight he will need to fight for Michelle later in the story. 'I love you too Ma,' he says as the rest of the office ladies mimic his words. When he hands the phone back to Michelle, one of the office ladies introduces Michelle to Mickey as a new addition to the office. 'Hey, it's good to meet you Michelle,' Mickey says extending his hand. 'Good to meet you Michael,' Michelle replies formally. As their eyes meet, Mickey sees something tender beneath Michelle's hardened veneer –something that is good and is worth caring about

When talk of the annual Christmas party circulates around the warehouse later that afternoon, Mickey has no idea what it's all about having never attended any kind of company party in his life. "It's one you don't want to miss," his fellow coworkers tell him...just make sure you, find a date.'

Later that night at the apartment, he asks Luther about METS company Christmas party and Luther--a courier driver for another company--tells him he has heard it's a good one. When he asks Mickey if he has a date for the party, Mickey tells him not yet and Luther is quick to offer some suggestions--reminding Mickey of all the disastrous blind dates he had set up for him during the past few months. Having nicknamed Mickey the 'Ambassador of Love', Luther goes down his list of alternates on his cellphone and smiles...

'Ok this one is a little odd, but she's hot,' he tells Mickey 'Her name is Bertha... if you look past all the quirks, you'll have a great time.' He writes her phone number on piece of paper and gives it to Mickey.

'Ok,' Mickey tells him, 'I'll give her a call.'

'Call her with what?' Luther asks him, 'It's been days since you broke your cell phone.'

'I'm getting one,' he tells Luther, 'I'm just waiting for the price to go down.'

'We'll if you stopped giving half your paycheck to your mother, you might have enough to buy a new one...so what are you going to do in the meantime—call her from work?'

'No, I'll just use the payphone in front of Zips grocery store.'

'If they haven't ripped it out by now,' Luther tells him. 'No one uses payphones any more, but old people.'

Mickey then tells Luther about a woman he met at work by the name of Michelle. 'There were something in her eyes that were worth caring about,' he tells his sarcastic roommate who laughs at the notion and tells him all women have that same look in their eyes. Luther then reminds Mickey to feed the fish in his huge aquarium while he is gone on vacation to Vail, Colorado over Christmas.

The following day Mickey is standing by the payphone wearing his company uniform waiting patiently as an old lady is talking inside. She smiles at him on more than one occasion while Mickey rubs his hands in the cold. When she opens the door, Mickey thinks she is finished, but she asks him that she just remembered to call her doctor and wants to know if she can borrow 25 cents and another two dollars for the bus. Mickey digs in his pockets and pulls out some change and gives it to her. She thanks him goes back in and talks for another few minutes while he waits patiently outside. When she is done, she exits and thanks him.

'Such a fine young man,' she tells him. 'God Bless you.'

Mickey thanks her then takes his place in the booth and reaches for his own quarter and finds he has none. A bus pulls up then stops at the nearby bus stop, and the old lady waves to him as the bus doors open for her. Mickey forces a smile and waves back.

That afternoon work is hectic and Mickey is dispatching drivers across the city who are having more problem than he can handle. One of his drivers is seen from an aerial shot making a giant loop on a cloverleaf intersection joining two major highways. As he goes around and around, Mickey tries to get directions from Google on which way to go to his next pickup. Another driver calls in to describe a ferret from the company 'Labworks' that escaped when his truck swerved to avoid an accident.

'Might be injected with some rare disease,' he tells Mickey. 'Should we call the DNR? or the Center for Disease Control?'

Michele enters from the front office and asks him if he can get a full truck with air ride suspension into a company by 4 pm calling him Michael. He tells her 'no problem'. As she stands there overhearing the distress calls on the dispatch, she asks him again if he can make it by 4 pm...No problem he tells her and smiles. As she turns back to the office, Mickey hesitates then bumbling over himself, asks her if she wants to go with him to the company Christmas party. Forgetting to turn off his microphone, his invitation to her is broadcast to all of the drivers, who hoot and holler back at him with: "atta boy, Mickey"

Clearly embarrassed, Michelle forces a smile and shakes her head no.

'No?...You busy?' Mickey asks.

'I have a date, Michael' she replies then exits.

'Well that went well, he says to himself again forgetting to turn off his microphone

'Yep,' reply the other drivers, 'that went real well....'

Later that night Mickey makes a call to Bertha in the payphone near Zips to see if she can go the company Christmas party. He tells her the wrong date and she is available, then he

reads her the right date and she is available that night too. She is available any night that week and available any night for the next two months. Mickey nods.

Mickey arrives at his mother's house that night and discovers from his uncle that she has not been feeling well and is going to see a doctor. Like the father figure he is, he rough houses with his younger sibling then reprimands his younger brother from backing down from the bullies at school. Once alone with his uncle, they talk about his mother's health. His uncle is concerned.

The night of the party, Mickey picks up Bertha at her apartment and discovers she indeed has some quirks. A brick house with gaudy makeup she is as flirtatious as a woman can be, hanging on to him like they were long lost overs. When they arrive at the party, his fellow co-workers poke fun of him for wearing his company uniform. Being their manager, he tells one of them to take off his spots jacket and give it to him. He reluctantly does. Then he tells another to give him the tie he is wearing. Soon he is looking a little more respectable. Meanwhile, Bertha has found the open bar and is hitting on every man that comes asking for a drink.

Bertha continues down the intoxication road eventually drinking straight out of the punchbowl spike with vodka while people look on in dismay. Mickey continues to cover for his date, however, smiling apologetically until she finally slouches over and falls asleep on one of the sofas. Towards the end of the evening, Mickeys boss starts playing some Christmas tunes on the piano. People soon gather around him and start to sing along. Jack, Michelle's boyfriend, is over by the bar with the owner of the company while Michelle is singing with everyone else. As his boss plays *Silent Night*, Mickey and Michelle's eyes meet again.

Like a gentleman, Mickey drops off Bertha at her apartment after the party and helps her up the stairs. Beginning to wake up, she asks him to come inside. He politely refuses.

He decides to spend the night with his family since Luther has left for vacation. He and his mother talk about how they both miss Mickey's father. His mother of course starts asking him if he has met anyone. Mickey tells her there is a woman at work he would like to get to know. 'Is she is nice girl? his mother asks him. 'ya,' Mickey replies...'she's a nice girl Ma.'

The next day at work, one of the office ladies comes into the dispatch room to ask Mickey about some freight, Mickey turns of his microphone and asks her if she can do him a favor and get Michelle's telephone number for him. Minutes later she comes in and hands it to him...'you owe me, only because I feel sorry for you about your date to the company Christmas party' she tells him.

That night, Mickey decides to call Michelle from the payphone in front of Zips and ask her for a date. The same old lady is there talking on the phone then opens the door and asks him if he has another two dollars for the bus. He gives it to her and she finally finishes her

call then leaves and then waves to him as the bus pulls up. He then calls Michelle, but Jack is in the room and she tells him no.

After hanging up, Jack asks who it is and Michele tells him it was Michael from METS and that he had some questions about work. ‘The one who brought Godzilla to the party?’ Jack asks. ‘Yes,’ she replies. Jack laughs then talks about the latest lucrative offer given to them by a freight forwarding company in Seattle that is doing over 30 million dollars in revenue with China. He then tells her his divorce is going through and he will be a free man in weeks, if not sooner. ‘Yep,’ he tells her, ‘my wife gets the gold mine and I get shaft.’ He pours himself another drink and laughs.

Christmas is a busy time at his uncle’s home and the family gather around the tree opening presents. His uncle smiles having gotten every one certain gifts. When Mickey opens his box, he sees it is a new cell phone. Both he and his uncle smile.

The day after Christmas, Mickey is buying groceries at Zips and runs into the same old lady from the phone booth. He smiles at her and shows her his new phone that he got for Christmas. She smiles back and shows him the new cell phone she got for Christmas.

Later that day he calls Michelle on his cellphone from the Zips grocery as shoppers pushing carts pass him in the produce isle. Michelle is packing her things as suitcases and boxes are lined up on the floor around her. When she hears the phone ring she doesn’t recognize the call, but decides to answer it. She rolls her eyes when she hears it is Mickey and then tries to politely turn him down--but Mickey, like a boxer in a ring, keeps coming and takes rejection after rejection. She finally smiles when he tells her he broke up with Bertha. ‘You know we had this steady thing going for a couple of hours there at the Company party—you know things were getting serious between us...I mean how many women can pick up and drink out of a five gallon punch bowl and not spill a drop? Huh?’

When Michelle laughs, Mickey pours it on with more humor, then pops the question: can he at least take her to dinner. As she is hemming and hawing, he is telling her a about a great pizza place in downtown St Paul called Dino’s. ‘I used to pick up there as a driver when I first came on with METS,’ he tells her. ‘I know the owner—Jerry—he was from New York just like me...Any time you got a date, you bring her here he tells me, and we’ll treat her right....Hey you gotta meet Jerry and his brother Joe—Joe used to play minor league baseball with the METS farm team....no...not our company METS. The New York METS...yeah...like the Yankees’

Michelle finally gives in and Mickey high fives one of the shoppers who looks at him with bewilderment, then he dances down the isle throwing a few oranges in the air and catching them.

Borrowing his uncle’s car for the date, he takes it to a local car wash and when he pulls up, he has to kick his way out of the frozen passenger door. When he goes and gets Michelle, he tell her she looks great and then tells her jokingly that he decided not to wear his company uniform...its at the dry cleaners he tells her and she laughs. When he tries to open the door

for her, it is frozen shut and she has to climb in through the driver side. 'Now that wasn't so bad was it?' he asks her. She smirks.

Dinner at Dino's is a treat. Jerry and Joe come and meet him at his table and Jerry offers him a complimentary bottle of red wine...straight for Italy he tells him, then starts in on his Italian heritage. Joe comes out wearing a METS baseball cap and starts in on his minor league career. Michelle seems amused as the two brothers start to argue about certain particulars. Michelle has a good time

When Mickey drops her off at her apartment that night, Michelle slides through to the driver's side of the door. Mickey offers to escort her to her apartment, but she refuses. Persistent, he tells her his ma taught him how to be a gentlemen and he needs to escort her. She reluctantly agrees asking him what else his mother taught him 'Lots of stuff,' he tells her.

When they get to her door, Mickey shakes her hand and tells her he had a great time; she tells him she did too. Hesitant, she suddenly asks him if he would like a cup of coffee and she invites him in. Noting the packed bags on the floor, he asks if she is coming or going. 'Going,' she tells him... 'My last day at METS is tomorrow. I have accepted a position with a colleague of mine with a freight forwarding company in Seattle. 'The guy at the party?' Mickey asks. 'Yes,' she replies.

As they sit around her kitchen table, they talk about Mickey's mother and Mickey tells her about going into the hospital for some testing. Michelle tells him about her past, her boarding school days and being pushed and forgotten by her Ivy League parents. I don't know why I am telling you this she states and then feeling the hurt of her past, she gets quiet. Mickey then thanks her thanks for the time at dinner and leaves. As he departs, he sees Jack pulling up in a black Cadillac. With his own car idling, he stares up at her second story apartment window, and then drives away.

Jack comes in bearing good news and tells her his divorce is going better than expected. He takes her into his arms and she seems reluctant. 'What is it?' he asks her... 'why so cold?' 'It's nothing,' she tells him. He goes onto make himself at home describing all the benefit of Seattle and how they can finally get out of this God forsaken cold weather. She stares at the window.

That night he comes home to find Luther back from his ski vacation in Vail and is in a humorous mood. When he asks Mickey about this woman at work, Mickey tells him she used to work at Martinique Logistics and as Luther asks more questions about her, he realizes that he knows her. He used to talk to her when he delivered their courier freight to her months ago. 'Yeah, Luther tells Mickey, 'she's the one who had an abortion. Pregnant one day and expecting this baby and happy as a clam and then she's gone for a week and when she comes back she looks all normal. And I ask her about the baby and she gets all teary eyed. Then I found out later she had this abortion—had some relationship with the big wig's son in France or something...yeah crazy...so that's the woman you are talking about huh?'

Mickey nods.

The next day at work Mickey comes in to say hello, but she avoids him. When his mother suddenly calls, Michelle hands him the phone. Mickey tells his mother she can call him on his cellphone now that he has a new one, and gives her his number. As Michelle listens in, Mickey tells his mother that he can take her to the hospital tomorrow. 'I love you too Ma,' he says and hands Michelle the phone. Their eyes meet and she suddenly looks away.

After work that night, it is bitter cold and Michelle's car will not start. As Mickey drives past, he sees her and stops. 'I can give you a ride home in a car where the passenger door actually opens,' he tells her. She reluctantly agrees. During the ride to her apartment, Mickey tries to make casual conversation about Seattle, but the conversation is stilted. It's dark when they arrive at her apartment. 'Can I escort you to the door,' he asks her. 'No,' she tells him and he nods. As she is about ready to open the door, Mickey tells her: 'I hope you find what you are looking for in Seattle, if not--give me a call.'

She exits out the door.

Still sitting in his car, he stares up at her second story window and then drives away. As the camera pans up to the second story, we see Michelle looking out her window with her arms wrapped around her chest as if cold...

The credits begin to roll and half way through, they stop as the screen becomes black. Mickey's phone rings on the sofa near Luther's room. Luther, recovering from a hangover, thinks it's a doorbell at first and yells out 'come in!' As the phone keeps ringing, Luther stumbles in the dark and then finds the switch and turns on the lights. He looks awful and glances at the digital clock that reads 2:30 am then sees the phone lying on the sofa and answers it.

VOICE OVER: LUTHER

Hello?...Michael? No, you got the wrong number lady. Aint no Michael here....look lady its 2:30 in the morn---What? Your name is Michelle? Look lady, I don't care what your name is, I got to get my beauty sleep or I'll be a very grumpy camper in the morning, you know what I mean? Look, what ever your name is, there aint no—what? Oh...oh Mickey...Oh you mean Mickey...Hey Mickey! It's for you!