

Red Sneakers

By Jonathan Lawton

FADE IN:

INT. - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

A woman's hand unscrews the lid off a bottle of Bacardi rum. She pours into a glass perched on a dirty sink. Mabel Burns is a pretty woman, but wears no makeup and her hair is short and tangled. She is twenty-five years old, but seems at times to be much older or much younger. She picks up the glass of Bacardi and takes a sip.

EXT. - NEVADA/CALIFORNIA BORDER - NIGHT

A large sign on a quiet stretch of desert highway says: "Welcome to California." insert of a hand brake pulling. We hear the sound of a car braking and pulling off the road. A small, red, beat-up 1956 Porsche skids a little on the gravel as it comes to a stop in front of the sign. Leaving the engine running, Billy Mallory, twenty years old with sad blue eyes and an innocent face, steps out of the car and walks to the sign. He touches it. He turns and looks back to the car with pride.

BILLY

We made it!

He runs back to the car and hops in. He takes off.

INT. - NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Mabel sits on a high stool in the center of a small stage, illuminated by a track lighting mounted on the ceiling. She is dressed in dull green men's clothes: baggy pants, a shirt, vest, and bright red tennis shoes. The shoes are made of a metallic fabric that flares hot red whenever the light hits them. She lights a cigarette. After a long drag, she climbs off the stool and limps forward to the microphone, one of her legs stiff and rigid. She stares at the audience and speaks with intense seriousness.

MABEL

(dramatically)

Women's lingerie.

We see the audience over her shoulder: couples sitting with drinks at small tables in a dim nightclub. Mabel rolls her eyes off to the side and a strange expression comes to her

(CONTINUED)

face.

MABEL

What? What!? Women's lingerie?

(beat)

I wanna know who thought that up. Any guesses? It was either a monk living in a men's-only monastery or a woman with a hell of an ironic sense of humor.

She takes a drag from her cigarette.

MABEL

Let's be honest here. Women are messy creatures. I mean, I'm a woman, I know. I'm messy. Once a month, or thereabouts, I dribble bright red and off-red gook all over myself. I'm not ashamed of that. They explain that in the Bible, I think. It has to something to do with the moon and the wrath of God or something. Women pissed God off so he makes them dribble once a month. Alright, I can handle that.

(beat)

That's the obvious one. But on a day-to-day basis women have ... what's the polite term they use on TV? Feminine discharge. Feminine discharge! I love that. It sounds like something they'd say in a John Wayne war movie.

(in a macho voice)

Ready the feminine discharge, men!
Fire!

(beat)

Or that's what they do to drag queens who enlist in the army.

(deep voice)

Bruce!

(high, flowery voice)

Yes, sir?

(CONTINUED)

(deep voice)

Bruce, we found women's lingerie in your footlocker. I'm afraid we're going to have to give you a feminine discharge.

There is loud laughter. She takes another drag from her cigarette. As Mabel's monologue continues, we move across the room to the front door. Two people have just entered: David, a proudly gay man in his late twenties, and Billy. David gestures at the room.

DAVID

This is it!

Billy nods, glancing about uncomfortably. We notice that most of the couples at the tables are boy-boy and girl-girl. This is not a typical nightclub. It's not what Billy is used to. David, however, is perfectly at home. He knows everyone here. As he leads Billy between the tables, David waves and chats excitedly to people. Billy follows quietly behind, uncomfortable, but a little curious.

MABEL (O.S.)

The point of all this is that women are messy, right? So when whoever it was -- and I'm sure it was a guy -- decided to invent women's underpants, what did he decide on? Huge stain-resistant diapers? Nope. DuPont heavy duty rubber overalls? Nope. Cheap disposable paper by-products? Nope!

(beat)

He decided on lace and silk. Lace and silk! The two most delicate, expensive, and stain-prone materials ever invented.

David picks a table not far from the stage and they sit down. Immediately, two of David's friends, Chuck and Mark, rush over to the table.

MARK AND CHUCK

David!

David jumps to his feet and the three hug. Billy stands

(CONTINUED)

slowly. As Chuck and Mark turn their attention toward Billy, David introduces them.

DAVID

Chuck, Mark, this is Billy.

Chuck takes Bill's hand and shakes it. Mark steps forward and takes his hand.

MARK

Billy?

BILLY

Yes. Hi.

Chuck whispers to David with suggestive curiosity.

CHUCK

Billy, huh?

David elbows Chuck sharply. As the other men talk, Billy's eyes focus on Mabel.

MABEL

Alright, so I understand economics. There was a glut in lace and silk, so some business whiz kid comes up with an idea: "Hey, boss. Let's convince women to buy it; they'll get it all messy, throw it away, and buy more." OK, I wish I had stock in that company. But instead of taking a huge clump of silk and lace and building some nice thick diapers, these guys come up with little ... panties.

Mabel reaches into a pocket of her vest and tugs forth a pair of teeny white silk and lace panties. She holds them out at a distance and looks at them with a mixture of curiosity and repulsion.

MABEL (cont'd)

Panties?

(pause)

Who thought up that one? These things are totally useless. I mean,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(cont'd)

who's supposed to buy them?

(beat)

Oh, I know what you're going to say. They're sexy!

Mabel glances at the panty dangling from her hand and stares at it as if trying to understand something.

MABEL

Sexy? Sexy?

She holds it between her fingers.

MABEL (cont'd)

Well, I guess it does have a kind of fragile charm. But who can wear these suckers without a clump of paper by-products stuck between their legs? Now is that sexy? A little delicate piece of lace and silk with a huge Super Strength Super Absorbent New Active Woman Maxi-Ultra Pad? Sexxxxxyyyyy.

Billy's eyes are transfixed on Mabel, fascinated. He and the other men are seated at the table.

DAVID

Billy is my cousin. He's visiting from Iowa.

MARK

A farm boy?

BILLY

Not really. My father runs a dry cleaning business. But it's a farm town.

CHUCK

What brings you to California?

BILLY

Just visiting. Came to see the sights.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Well, you started off at the right place.

Mark and Chuck giggle. Billy watches Mabel out of the corner of his eye.

BILLY

It's interesting.

Mark follows Billy's eyes and glances at Mabel.

MARK

Oh, her. I don't like her. She's a weird bitch. There's a girl who sings after her. She's wonderful. Gorgeous.

CHUCK

And there's dancing upstairs.
(standing)
David, let's go dance.

DAVID

Well ... David glances hesitantly at Billy, who is clearly nervous. Mark stands and saunters over to Billy.

MARK

You want to dance, Billy?

BILLY

I don't think so.

MARK

Oh, come on.

DAVID

Billy's straight.

MARK

So what? I just asked him to dance.

BILLY

I'd rather watch the comic. You all go ahead. I'm OK.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

You sure?

BILLY

Yes. I'd like to just sit and watch.

DAVID

(standing)

OK, we'll catch up with you later.

MARK

Have a drink. The margaritas are great.

Mark, David, and Chuck wander off through the nightclub. Billy remains at his seat. Mark glances at David as they reach the stairs to the second floor.

MARK (cont'd)

Straight? He's a closet case if I ever saw one.

DAVID

(annoyed)

How would you know?

MARK

I can tell. I can always tell.

DAVID

Just leave him alone. He's only going to be here a week and I don't want you giving him a complex.

They disappear upstairs. A Waitress crosses to Billy's table.

WAITRESS

Would you like something?

BILLY

A margarita.

The Waitress nods and leaves. Billy turns his attention back toward Mabel as she finishes her routine.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

You've been a great audience. Julie will be out in a few minutes to sing. Have another drink. Enjoy yourselves. I'll be here tomorrow if you care. 'Bye.

There is warm applause. Mabel limps away from the mike. As she does, she loses her comic persona, becoming quiet and frail. Walking from the stage she glances in Billy's direction. Does she see him? It's hard to tell. Once she exits the stage she disappears through a door leading into the back of the nightclub. Billy watches her go.

INT. - NIGHTCLUB - LATER

We hear a beautiful jazzy torch song in the background. Billy stands by the cigarette machine. He plugs several quarters in and debates what kind to get. He makes a choice and pulls the lever. A pack falls down. He picks it up and opens it. Billy lights a cigarette. He doesn't cough or make a face, but we can tell from the way he holds it that he doesn't smoke. He looks back toward the stage. On it is Julie, a stunningly beautiful young woman with a haunting voice. She is accompanied only by a piano, played by another woman. Billy wanders back across the room to his table. His margarita is waiting for him. He sits down and takes a sip. He finds an ashtray and tries to look casual. Mabel sits alone at the table next to him. She is drinking a gin on the rocks. Billy glances over at her. Mabel stares ahead at the stage, but she doesn't seem to be watching anything. Billy takes another sip from his drink and fiddles with his cigarette. Finally getting up enough nerve, he leans over toward Mabel's table and speaks to her.

BILLY

Hello. I really enjoyed your act.

Mabel doesn't look at him, but she is aware of his presence. She sips from her glass.

MABEL

No one laughed.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

Everyone was laughing.

MABEL

Only the drunks.

BILLY

I laughed.

MABEL

You're drunk.

BILLY

No I'm not.

Mabel looks at him for the first time, somberly.

MABEL

Doesn't matter. You didn't laugh
loud enough, anyway.

She leans toward him and holds out a hand.

MABEL (cont'd)

Can I have a cigarette?

Billy hands her a cigarette and lights it for her. They both
smoke silently for awhile. Billy gets up the nerve to speak
again.

BILLY

Would you like to dance?

MABEL

I can't dance. I have a wooden leg.

Billy instinctively glances down at her leg. Mabel stares
straight ahead, taking a careful drag from her cigarette. In
the faint light of the nightclub we see for the first time
the plastic and metal artificial leg that extends from under
her pants and is tucked into her red sneakers.

BILLY

I'm sorry.

MABEL

There's nothing to be sorry about.

Mabel takes another drink from her glass.

MABEL (cont'd)

Why don't you dance with one of the guys?

BILLY

I'm not gay?

MABEL

Oh. Well, this is a gay bar. Try Westwood.

BILLY

I came with a friend. My cousin. He's gay. I'm visiting from Iowa.

Mabel looks at him with a hint of amusement.

MABEL

Cute.

BILLY

(innocently)

Are you gay?

Mabel takes another drag from her cigarette.

MABEL

Yeah. Sort of. I'm sleeping with the manager and she's gay, so I guess I am, too.

BILLY

Oh.

MABEL

It's not like I'm compelled either way. I've slept with a lot of guys.

Mabel finishes off the last of her drink. It's becoming obvious how very drunk she is.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

But I've been kind of steady with Toni for awhile. I was really into some bad stuff and she helped me out of that. But I like guys.

She seems weary. She rests her head on the table and stares at Billy.

MABEL (cont'd)

I guess I haven't been laid by a guy in about a year.

Billy tries to change the subject. He gestures toward Julie on stage.

BILLY

Do you know the singer? She's very good.

MABEL

I hate her.

(beat)

It's not that I don't want to make it with guys. But I feel uncomfortable around them.

BILLY

Why?

MABEL

(her voice softens)

Because of my leg, or absence of one. Guys look at me funny when I walk. And they act real strange when they sleep with me.

BILLY

You shouldn't feel so self-conscious.

MABEL

I can't help it.

She turns her face away from him. She sounds as if she's about to cry.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL (cont'd)

I never know what someone is going to think about me.

BILLY

Most people don't care about things like that.

Her voice echoes through the plastic table top.

MABEL

Most people do care. Especially when you're having sex. You'd be surprised how important legs are in sex. Guys are always disappointed. Like "she'd be a good screw if she had both her legs." Women aren't hung up about things like that. Guys want your body to be perfect.

BILLY

Not all guys are like that.

Mabel slowly lifts her head off the table and stares at him dizzily.

MABEL

Can I have another cigarette?

Billy hands her his own. She takes a drag from it.

MABEL (cont'd)

Are you like that?

BILLY

Like ... that I want women to be perfect?

MABEL

Yes.

BILLY

Yes. No! I mean, I like you the way you are.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

It wouldn't bother you to screw me?

BILLY

... No ...

MABEL

OK. Let's try it.

Billy looks around the room nervously. Things are moving too quickly for him.

BILLY

Well, how would we ... arrange it?

MABEL

What's to arrange? We just go back to my dressing room. Could I have a sip?

She points to his half empty margarita. He hands it to her.

BILLY

Go back to your room right now?

Mabel takes a long drink from his glass.

MABEL

Sure, why not? What is that stuff?

BILLY

It's a margarita.

MABEL

It tastes like urine.

Mabel stands up and stumbles to his table. She clutches his hand and tugs on it. He rises to his feet. She leads him off. They pass the bar and exit through a back door.

INT. - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mabel leads Billy down a small hallway with pipes running across the walls.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

Won't your girlfriend be upset?

MABEL

It's none of her business.

She opens a door and leads him inside.

INT. - MABEL'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

They enter a tiny dressing room. On one wall is a cot with several stuffed animals piled on it. Across the room is a large mirror and a dirty sink with a bottle of Bacardi on it. Billy hovers near the open door. Mabel picks up the bottle of Bacardi and takes a long swallow. She sets it down and it falls into the sink and nearly cracks. She fumbles with the buttons on her vest. She can't seem to get them undone. She limps over to the cot and gently moves aside a stuffed green turtle. She plops down and struggles again with the buttons.

MABEL

Could you help me get this off?

Billy debates for a moment and then closes the dressing room door. He walks to her side and sits down. Mabel turns her chest to him. He unbuttons the vest. They get the vest off, and as Billy undoes her blouse Mabel taps him on the shoulder.

MABEL (cont'd)

Could you get the bottle?

Billy stands slowly and walks over to the sink. He fishes the bottle out. When he turns back, Mabel has passed out. He lingers by the sink for a moment, somehow both disappointed and relieved. He takes a sip of the Bacardi. He sets the bottle back down in the sink and walks to her side. He gently lays her out on the cot, picking up her legs and setting them down. We see a flash of metal and plastic from her artificial leg. He carefully rearranges the stuffed animals around her. He goes to the door and exits.

INT. - NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Billy is back at his table, smoking a cigarette and sipping on a new margarita when David shows up. David's forehead is

(CONTINUED)

beaded with perspiration from dancing. He looks at Billy with annoyance.

DAVID

Since when do you smoke?

INT. - DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Billy wakes up in a makeshift bed on the couch of David's living room. David wiggles by in a pair of red briefs.

DAVID

I hope you're not planning to take a shower because I'm about to use up all the hot water.

Billy blinks sleepily.

BILLY

No. That's OK.

DAVID

I'm very serious about my showers.

David disappears into the bathroom. Billy sits up and tosses off the covers. He yanks on his pants and puts on a shirt.

INT. - KITCHEN - MORNING

David and Billy eat cereal at a table in the kitchen.

DAVID

I'm sorry I can't take the day off and show you around. If you had given me a little more notice that you were coming I could have made some plans.

BILLY

I'm sorry. I didn't really know I was coming until I left.

DAVID

And you're going to stay a full week?

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

A week or so, if it's all right.

DAVID

Sure, it's all right.

Something in his voice indicates that it isn't all right.

BILLY

You're the only relative I have in California. I hate to put you out.

DAVID

You know, my sister Mary is in Washington. Maybe you should visit her while you're traveling.

BILLY

Well ... Washington ...

DAVID

I know. You want to see the big city. Maybe I could get you a place in San Francisco. I know lots of people there.

BILLY

I'm only going to stay a week.

DAVID

No! I'm not trying to get rid of you. You're welcome to stay. I'm just sorry I can't show you around more. I'm not good at the tourist thing.

BILLY

It's alright.

DAVID

I'm sorry about last night. I can't believe Mark, trying to hit on you.

BILLY

It was OK.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

I probably shouldn't have taken you there, but the singer is really good and it's the only club I go to.

BILLY

I liked it.

(beat)

Who was that comedian with the red shoes?

DAVID

Mabel? She's the owner's girlfriend. She's kind of strange. She's funny, though.

BILLY

I liked her.

David detects something in Billy's voice.

DAVID

She's gay.

BILLY

I know. I just thought she was funny.

DAVID

Funny and sad. She's crippled, you know.

Billy nods silently. David finishes his cereal and stands.

DAVID (cont'd)

I've got to go to work. Make yourself at home.

David moves toward the door and hesitates.

DAVID (cont'd)

We'll talk later about how much you should chip in for groceries and stuff while you're here.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY
(nervously)
Yeah, I want to pay my own way.

DAVID
Fine.

David ducks out. Billy returns to his cereal, lost in thought.

INT. - TONI'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Mabel sits hunched over the kitchen table, holding a cup of coffee. She looks terrible. Her eyes are swollen and her hair is a tangled mess. Toni is cooking something on the stove. She is in her mid-thirties, plain, somewhat motherly, but with intelligent eyes and a rock firm steadiness of character.

TONI
You should eat something.

MABEL
... No.

Mabel drags herself up from the table and goes to the sink. She leans into it and gags. She straightens up, swaying dizzily.

MABEL (cont'd)
I want to throw up, but I don't
have anything to throw up.

TONI
Then eat something.

MABEL
No.

TONI
I don't know why you do this to
yourself every night.

MABEL
(pompously)
Because I'm an artist!

She plops back into her chair and stares at her coffee.

(CONTINUED)

TONI

That's a great excuse.

MABEL

Then because I'm a cripple?

(bitterly)

How's that? Better?

TONI

You wore that one out a long time ago.

MABEL

Is this a fight? You want a fight?

TONI

(giving in)

No.

MABEL

Maybe you'd rather I switched back to heroin.

Toni sets the pan down and quickly crosses to Mabel. She grabs her hair and pulls her head back. She speaks with a fiery intensity.

TONI

Don't you even joke about that!

Don't you even think it!

Toni lets go of her.

MABEL

(not without respect)

Yes, Mom.

Toni goes back to the stove and dumps the food she was cooking into the sink. She isn't hungry anymore.

TONI

I don't know why you torture me with threats like that.

MABEL

I'm sorry. No lectures, please.

(CONTINUED)

TONI

What's with you these days? You've never been Little Miss Sunshine, but ...

MABEL

Maybe I'm tired of feeling like I'm living with a full-time nurse! Let's help the poor orphan. Let's help the poor cripple. Let's help the poor drug addict. Let's put the mixed-up comic on stage so she feels like she is somebody when everyone knows the only reason she's there is because her nurse owns the club.

TONI

That's not why I let you go on stage. You're very talented.

MABEL

You're the only one who tells me that.

TONI

The LA Weekly thought you were great.

MABEL

Some lesbian said I had promise in two lines and then drooled over Julie for the next page and a half. "Oh, she's so beautiful, her voice is so sweet. God I wish I could sleep with her!"

TONI

What is it with you and Julie? You're not in competition. You told me to hire her.

MABEL

The only reason I wanted you to hire her is because I wanted to sleep with her.

(CONTINUED)

TONI
(amused)
You didn't.

MABEL
Yeah. I got turned off by all the
bulldyke groupies who trail after
her.

Toni's smile weakens.

TONI
Who was that guy you took into your
dressing room?

MABEL
What guy?

TONI
You think I'm blind? I saw you
across the room.

MABEL
I don't remember. Was he cute?

TONI
Did you sleep with him?

MABEL
(casually)
I don't remember.

TONI
What were you trying to prove?

MABEL
I don't have to prove anything! I
was just drunk. OK!?

EXT. - DAVID'S HOUSE - DAY

Billy is stretched out on the hood of his beat-up Porsche,
gazing into the sun, thinking about life.

EXT. - NIGHTCLUB - DAY

Billy stands in front of the nightclub. He examines the
photographs in a glass case mounted on the wall. There is a

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picture of Julie and a picture of Mabel. The caption under Mabel's picture reads: "The Comedy of Mabel Burns." Billy stands for a while in front of the club, debating. He walks away.

EXT. - SANTA MONICA BLVD. - DAY

Alone, Billy wanders down Santa Monica Boulevard, watching the sights. He has nothing to do, nowhere to go.

EXT. - OKI DOG - DAY

Billy eats a burrito at a picnic table near a fast food restaurant. He watches the other people around him. A group of strange punks sit down near him, laughing and talking.

EXT. - FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Billy walks past a flower shop. He pauses, and a thoughtful look crosses his face. He goes inside.

INT. - FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Billy is in front of a counter, talking with a woman Cashier. We see huge displays of flowers behind them.

BILLY

How much to have a dozen roses
delivered?

CASHIER

Within five miles?

BILLY

Yes.

CASHIER

Long stemmed or baby roses in a
white vase?

BILLY

Long stemmed?

CASHIER

Thirty dollars.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY
And baby roses?

CASHIER
Twenty.

Billy opens his wallet and shuffles through his money. This is tough for him.

CASHIER (cont'd)
Get the long stemmed. The baby roses don't cut it.

BILLY
(quietly)
Thirty dollars?

CASHIER
Send nine. That's only twenty.

BILLY
Nine?

CASHIER
It's better than the baby roses. She's not supposed to be counting them anyway.

BILLY
OK.

CASHIER
She will count them, though.

BILLY
How about six?

CASHIER
Fifteen dollars.

Billy hands her a twenty-dollar bill.

CASHIER (cont'd)
Baby's Breath is a dollar extra.

BILLY

What's Baby's Breath?

She holds up a sprig of Baby's Breath.

CASHIER

These little white flowers. It's worth it, trust me. I'll pack a lot in and maybe she won't notice that there are only six roses.

BILLY

OK. She hands Billy back three dollars and some change.

CASHIER

... 'Til she counts them. Fill out one of these cards for her. Billy picks up a pen and writes on a card.

INT. - NIGHTCLUB - LATE AFTERNOON

The woman bartender and manager, Monica, is counting money into the cash register. Toni strolls into the club with Mabel limping after her.

MONICA

Hi, Toni, Mabel.

TONI

Monica.

Toni looks around the club, checking whether everything is in place. Mabel pulls a chair down off a table and eases into it, resting. One one of the tables sits three vases of roses: white, yellow, and red.

TONI (cont'd)

More flowers for Julie?

MONICA

Florists have been in and out all morning. Julie has a lot of admirers.

(CONTINUED)

TONI

I'll take them back to the dressing room.

MABEL

No, I'll take them back.

Mabel pulls herself up from the chair and limps over to the roses.

MABEL (cont'd)

Thank God I'm not allergic to flowers. Sharing a dressing room with Julie is like living in a funeral parlor.

Mabel fills her arms with vases of flowers.

TONI

Can you handle that?

MABEL

Oh, sure.

Mabel limps across the room with the flowers and exits through the back door. Monica glances at Toni.

MONICA

She took two full bottles last night.

TONI

(upset)

Two! You gave her two?

MONICA

You know I can't talk to her.

TONI

No, I'm sorry. She's my problem.

MONICA

She's going to kill herself if she keeps drinking like that.

(CONTINUED)

TONI

She'll be OK. It's just a phase.
She has a tough time with things.

EXT. - BACK ALLEY - LATE AFTERNOON

Mabel stands next to the dumpster behind the nightclub. With her arms filled with flowers, she glances at one of the cards attached to the vase. She then tosses the vase with yellow roses into the dumpster.

MABEL

From Bobbi the Bull.

She glances at the next card and then tosses the white roses into the dumpster.

MABEL (cont'd)

From Denise the Dyke.

Mabel glances at the third card as she dumps the red roses into the dumpster.

MABEL (cont'd)

From...

She turns to leave, then stops. Her face sours. She limps back to the dumpster and pulls herself over the edge. She digs around until she finds the card again. She pulls it out and reads it.

It reads:

"Mabel, I'm sorry we didn't have more time together last night. I liked talking to you. I thought I'd let you sleep. Maybe we could get together sometime if you'd like to see me again. (213) 559-8828.
Billy"

Mabel goes back to the dumpster and digs out her flowers. She looks at them for a moment. She counts them. Six. Her face shows confusion. She tosses the flowers back into the dumpster and crumples the note. She almost throws it in but hesitates.

INT. - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Mabel sits alone on the cot with her legs stretched out in front of her. She smokes a cigarette. Julie comes into the room and closes the door. She wears jeans and a loose sweatshirt and carries a long dress in a clear plastic cover.

JULIE

Hi.

MABEL

Hi.

JULIE

How's the crowd?

Julie hangs the dress on a hook and removes the plastic cover.

MABEL

Good. Usuals.

Julie glances back at Mabel.

JULIE

You OK?

MABEL

(shrugging)

Yeah. Just me. Moody again.

Julie strips off her pants and sweatshirt and folds them up. She sets them down on a shelf and picks up the long black evening dress she brought with her. She unzips the dress. Julie's body shines ivory white in the dim light of the dressing room. Every curve and contour of her body is perfect. She steps into the dress and pulls it up over her panties and bare breasts. Mabel takes a drag from her cigarette. Julie turns her back toward Mabel and leans over.

JULIE

Zip me up?

Mabel holds the cigarette between her lips as she sips up the back of Julie's evening gown. Julie goes over to the mirror and brushes out her long black hair. She touches up her makeup.

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JULIE (cont'd)

How's Toni?

MABEL

Fine.

Julie's eyes glance down at the almost-empty bottle of Bacardi on the sink. Mabel sees her looking at it. Julie walks to the door and turns back toward Mabel. She holds out her arms.

JULIE

How do I look?

She looks stunningly beautiful.

MABEL

Like hell.

Julie smiles.

JULIE

I hope you feel better soon.

Mabel shrugs. Julie exits. Mabel takes the last drag off her cigarette and tosses it into a corner. She lifts her artificial leg and sets it down on the floor. Pushing off from the cot, she manages to get onto her feet. She limps over to the sink and picks up the bottle of Bacardi as if to pour herself another drink,. She abruptly dumps it into the sink.

INT. - NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

As the piano plays, the stage light come up slowly on Julie. She steps toward the mike and begins a tragic torch song. Monica mixes drinks behind the bar. In the background, Mabel stands dialing a number on the phone. The call goes through.

MABEL

Hi. Is ... Billy there?

EXT. - NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

We hear Julie's song continuing behind the scene. Mabel paces nervously on the corner in front of the nightclub. She is edgy, debating between running back into the club, or out into the street. Billy walks up. They look at each other,

(CONTINUED)

uncomfortable. Mabel suddenly flings her arms around his neck and gives him a passionate kiss. She pulls him tightly against her body as she whispers in his ear.

MABEL

Let's go to your place.

BILLY

(hesitantly)

It's not my place. It's my cousin's.

MABEL

Who cares?

BILLY

I sleep on the couch in the living room.

MABEL

Great.

She lets go of him. It takes her a second to get her balance back on her bad leg. Billy shifts uncomfortably.

BILLY

Couldn't we go ...

Billy indicates the nightclub. Mabel's voice is tense.

MABEL

No, I need to get out of there.

She glances around as if searching for a place they could go.

MABEL (cont'd)

Great. Story of my life. Boy, can I pick them.

She starts to cry.

MABEL (cont'd)

I'm sorry. This was a mistake. I don't know why I called you.

She starts to go back toward the nightclub. Billy reaches out and grabs her hand. Mabel rips her hand away from him.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL (cont'd)

Don't grab me! I hate that.

Billy backs away. Tears pour from Mabel's eyes as she looks at him.

MABEL (cont'd)

I'm sorry. I'm just very drunk and I made a mistake. Don't be mad at me.

BILLY

Maybe we could go someplace and just talk.

Mabel looks at Billy silently for a moment.

MABEL

About what?

Billy can't answer that.

BILLY

Maybe we could go to a movie?

Mabel wipes tears from her eyes. She starts laughing.

MABEL

What movie?

BILLY

I don't know. What would you like to see?

Mabel laughs hysterically. Billy smiles but doesn't get the joke.

MABEL

A horror movie!

BILLY

OK.

MABEL

(with satiric suspicion)
Dutch treat?

BILLY

No, I'll pay.

MABEL

Will you buy me popcorn, no butter?

BILLY

Sure.

MABEL

Will you hold my hand while we watch it?

BILLY

I'd love to.

Mabel limps over to Billy and smacks him on the butt.

MABEL

You've got yourself a date, slugger.

EXT. - STREET - NIGHT

Billy opens the door of the parked Porsche. Mabel stares at it incredulously.

MABEL

This is your car?

BILLY

(proudly)

Yep. Not the kind of thing you expect a poor kid from Iowa to be driving.

MABEL

Not the kind of thing I'd expect anyone to be driving. Does it run?

Billy is hurt by her comment.

BILLY

Of course it runs.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

Oh, my God! Are you pouting? Are you one of those "love me, love my car" guys?

BILLY

No.

Mabel smiles.

MABEL

Good. You know, slugger, the only sport I have is teasing poor kids from Iowa. You wouldn't want to take that away from me, would you?

Billy stares at her, unsure of what to say. Mabel pats him on the shoulder and limps over to the passenger side. She climbs in. Billy closes the door for her. He walks around to the driver's door and opens it. He leans inside.

BILLY

If you want to make fun of my car, now's the time.

Billy reaches in and pulls the car out of gear. He releases the parking brake. Grabbing the steering wheel and the A-pillar, he slowly pushes the car, steering it away from the curb.

MABEL

(laughing)

Oh, my God! You're kidding.

Billy, struggling hard to get the car up to speed, leans in and smiles at Mabel.

MABEL

You're not going to push it all the way to the movie, are you?

Billy is now running alongside the car. He leaps in, pushes the clutch, throws the car in gear, and turns it on. As he lets out the clutch, the car starts up and leaps ahead. Billy slams his door closed and they speed off.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

Some car.

BILLY

Best car I ever had.

The car drives down the street and heads off into the distance.

MABEL (O.S.)

We should go to a drive-in. This is too much fun.

EXT. - DRIVE-IN - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING SHOT

of a drive in. We hear the horrifying screams of a tortured woman coming from the film.

INT. - PORSCHE - NIGHT

Mabel's eyes are round and excited as she watches the film and munches down huge handfuls of popcorn. The woman on screen continues to screech at the top of her lungs. Billy watches the film with an odd, unpleasant expression on his face. Mabel talks to him with her mouth full of popcorn and eyes glued to the screen.

MABEL

Come on, they must show horror films in Iowa.

BILLY

Not where I lived. The theater in Ida Grove wouldn't show Bambi because it was too violent.

MABEL

Well, I've seen Bambi, and it is too violent. They hack Thumper up with a chainsaw.

She watches Billy, thoroughly enjoying his discomfiture.

MABEL (cont'd)

Scared?

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

Not scared. Just kind of sick. It's not scary at all. Just sick.

MABEL

My kind of film. I love them. Maybe it's because I'm a grotesque, chopped-up woman myself. I don't know.

Billy looks at Mabel, concerned. Mabel senses his stare. That joke didn't come out right. She turns away from him and watches the film.

MABEL (cont'd)

Anyways ...

BILLY

Is that really how you feel?

Mabel is not happy with the focus on her. She tries to steer the conversation off.

MABEL

Oh, no! Watch out, Mabel. Junior psychologist is asking probing questions.

BILLY

You just shouldn't feel that ...

MABEL

Joke, Billy. Joke. Get it? I'm a comic, right? I say funny things. Ha, ha. End of subject.

Mabel grabs a bunch of popcorn and stuffs it into her mouth. Billy reaches out and touches Mabel gently, sympathetically, on the shoulder. Mabel pushes his hand away.

MABEL (cont'd)

Cut it out. I'm not a charity case. I don't want your pity.

Mabel turns back toward the screen. Billy pulls away. There is a long, uncomfortable pause.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

Well, on second thought. Maybe I do want your pity.

She grabs his arm and throws it over her shoulders. In a flash she flops her body into his side and lays her head on his chest.

MABEL (cont'd)

OK, pity me.

Billy smiles. He hugs her shoulder. Mabel smiles and goes back to watching the movie.

EXT. - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Billy's Porsche is parked on the street in front of a small apartment building. Mabel and Billy sit on the hood, talking.

MABEL

We're like Romeo and Juliet.

BILLY

We are?

MABEL

Yeah, it's like we're from two opposing families. You're gay and I'm a lesbian.

BILLY

I'm not gay.

MABEL

Oh, well, you're male and I'm female and in West Hollywood that's the equivalent of the Capulets and Montagues.

(beat)

So how does that go? You drink poison and I stab myself, right?

BILLY

Does it have to happen that way?

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

Oh yeah. That's what makes it a love story.

BILLY

Maybe we could have a happy ending.

MABEL

Too sappy.

(beat)

Besides, you're heading back to Iowa next week.

Billy is silent.

MABEL

What day?

BILLY

I'm not sure. Tuesday or Wednesday, I guess.

Mabel slides off the hood and steadies herself on her feet. She is suddenly jittery.

MABEL

I'd better go in. Toni's going to kill me.

BILLY

Could we get together tomorrow?

MABEL

(thinks a second)

Maybe.

(beat)

Oh, hell. You're only going to be around for awhile. I'll meet you at the club at nine. Good night.

Mabel limps away. Billy sits on the car, watching her. Mabel pauses and glances back at him. She shifts around.

MABEL

Are we supposed to kiss or something? Is that how it goes?

Billy stands up, but isn't brave enough to go kiss her.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

I don't know.

They both stand silently. Billy makes a move toward her just as Mabel turns to leave.

MABEL

Forget it. We'll try again tomorrow.

Mabel walks to the apartment building and enters it. Billy stands by his car, watching her. He walks to the driver's side and opens the door. He starts to push it down the street.

INT. - TONI'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The door to the living room opens and Mabel limps in quietly. Toni, dressed in a nightgown, robe, and wearing reading glasses, sits in a lounge chair reading a book. Toni lowers the book and glances up at Mabel. A tense silence fills the room.

TONI

I was worried.

MABEL

I went out with a friend.

TONI

You could have left a note.

MABEL

Yeah.

Mabel limps across the room. She sits down in a chair with a distressed look on her face.

MABEL (cont'd)

Let's not fight, OK?

TONI

(softly)

OK.

Toni sets her book down and walks over to Mabel. Mabel stares off into space as if in a daze.

(CONTINUED)

TONI

Are you all right?

MABEL

I don't know. I'm just a little
queasy.

INT. - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mabel and Toni are in bed. Mabel is curled up in Toni's arms like a little girl. Mabel's artificial leg lies next to the bed.

MABEL

He's only going to be here for a
few days.

TONI

Does that bother you?

MABEL

No. I think I'd be more scared if
he was staying.

TONI

What's he like?

MABEL

I don't know. Kind of dumb. But
cute. Kind of an All-American kid.
Just normal.

(beat)

Is it going to hurt you if I see
him for a while?

TONI

Of course it is. What do you think
I am? Stone? But if you need to ...

Mabel starts to cry.

MABEL

I'm not very happy right now.

TONI

Will this make you happy?

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

I don't know.

EXT. - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Billy lies half under his car, working on the starter. David comes out of the apartment and looks at him.

DAVID

So is it going to run?

BILLY (O.S.)

(from under the car)

It already runs. I'm just trying to get it to start without pushing.

DAVID

And you really drove this thing all the way from Iowa?

Billy pulls himself out from under the car and sits up.

BILLY

Once it gets going it's great. Except for the brakes.

DAVID

(amused)

What's wrong with the brakes?

BILLY

They don't work very well. But I can use the emergency brake. It works fine.

DAVID

Thank goodness.

Billy stands up and brushes some of the dirt off.

BILLY

The parts are so expensive for it.

DAVID

I hope you can make it back OK. You're going on Tuesday?

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

I'm not sure yet.

DAVID

I was thinking about what we talked about -- you know, your chipping in on the food. Not that you eat much. But I figured thirty dollars would be enough to cover it all until Tuesday. Does that sound fair?

BILLY

(quietly)

Yeah. That's fair. But I've been planning to call my dad and have him send me some money. I only have twenty dollars left. I could give you that until I get some more.

Billy reaches into his pants and takes out his wallet. He pulls a twenty-dollar bill out and offers it to David.

DAVID

Twenty dollars? How ... how are you going to pay for the gas to get back home?

BILLY

I'm going to call my dad or something. Here, take this.

DAVID

I'm not taking the last of your money.

BILLY

I'll get more.

Billy pushes it into David's hand.

INT. - DAVID'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

David and Billy eat dinner at the kitchen table.

DAVID

You're not planning to go home, are you?

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

Well ... I haven't thought it out.

DAVID

But you don't want to go home, do you?

BILLY

No.

DAVID

Is your father going to send you money?

BILLY

I don't think so. I never told him I was leaving.

DAVID

You didn't tell him?

BILLY

He would have tried to stop me. I told my mom the day I left.

DAVID

I don't understand. What's this all about?

BILLY

Nothing. I just like it out here. There's so much out here. Everything is so empty back home. And my dad won't even talk about my leaving.

DAVID

So you're planning to live with me for the rest of your life?

BILLY

I want my own place.

DAVID

And how's that supposed to happen? You don't have any money.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

I'll get a job.

DAVID

It's not that easy. What are you going to live on in the meantime? This isn't fair to me.

BILLY

I'm sorry. I'll call my father and get some money. And I'll get a job and then I'll move out. OK?

DAVID

(heavy sigh)

It's not that easy.

INT. - DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Billy sits on a pile of blankets on the couch and talks on the phone.

BILLY

I know. I should have told you, but I was kind of going crazy at home.

Billy's face is tense and pained.

BILLY (cont'd)

... I thought I had enough money. I just didn't count on things. Yeah, I know. I'm sorry.

MR. MALLORY (O.S.)

(country accent)

Then get your butt back home. Your mother's hysterical.

INT. - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

We continue to hear Billy's conversation behind this scene. Mabel sits in front of the sink's mirror. She opens up several brand new packages of makeup. She takes a long drink from a glass of Bacardi.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY (O.S.)

I'm not coming home, Daddy. I like
it out here.

Mabel starts to put on the makeup. It's the first time she's ever put on makeup. She applies it awkwardly. Mascara first and then eye shadow. She smears the mascara and fights to clean it off her eyelid. She puts on too much rouge and can't seem to get the lipstick on right.

MR. MALLORY (O.S.)

What are you trying to do? Break
our heats? What have we done to
you? Are we so terrible you have to
run off in the middle of the night?

BILLY (O.S.)

It was in the afternoon.

MR. MALLORY (O.S.)

Are you taking drugs?

After awhile it becomes obvious that Mabel is doing more damage than repair, and she takes another drink from her glass. She sets the glass down and looks at her stained face in the mirror.

MABEL

So much for Marilyn.

She washes the makeup off in the sink.

INT. - DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Billy sits hunched on the bed, very depressed. David stands across from him. The phone is back on the base.

BILLY

He said he'd give me the money to
come home. That's all. Maybe that's
what I should do.

Billy looks up at David.

DAVID

Don't look at me. I can't help you.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

I'll go on Tuesday.

DAVID

(sighing)

How did I get into this mess?

BILLY

What time is it?

DAVID

Eight.

BILLY

I've got to go. He stands up.

DAVID

Go? Where?

BILLY

I've got a date, kind of.

INT. - MABEL'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Mabel sits on her cot with her hands clasped around a green turtle. She glances up at the clock on the wall. It's eight-thirty. She squeezes the turtle as if trying to get its attention.

MABEL

He's not going to show up, is he?
Why would he? I must have freaked
him out last night, right?

The turtle doesn't say anything. Mabel stares at it suspiciously.

MABEL (cont'd)

What does he want from me anyway?
He must be some kind of pervert or
something.

The turtle doesn't respond. Julie comes into the room, carrying her stage dress. She notices two vases of flowers on a table in her corner.

(CONTINUED)

JULIE

Flowers? From Bobbi?

MABEL

The red ones are from Bobbi, pink from Denise. I decided not to throw them out tonight.

JULIE

Throw them out?

MABEL

I usually throw them away. I hate flowers.

JULIE

You're joking.

MABEL

No. I threw them in the trash yesterday.

JULIE

Why would you throw away my flowers? Why would you do that?

JULIE

To piss you off, Julie.

Julie stares at Mabel, upset, but controlling her anger.

JULIE (cont'd)

Mabel, you're acting crazy again.

MABEL

Am I acting? Go ahead, Julie. You think I'm crazy, don't you? Poor Toni, stuck with that crazy Mabel. She's neurotic, you know. She fried her brain on heroin, you know. She tried to kill herself, you know!

Julie flops down on the edge of the cot and looks at Mabel sympathetically.

(CONTINUED)

JULIE

I don't care about Toni. I care about you. Why do you hurt yourself like this?

Mabel starts screaming.

MABEL

Don't fucking patronize me! I threw your fucking flowers away. Get pissed off! OK, Julie!? For once in your life stop being so perfect and get pissed off.

JULIE

(coolly)

I am pissed off.

MABEL

Then yell at me! Be pissed off at me! Stop treating me like a spoiled child!

Julie stands up, grabs her dress, and walks toward the door.

JULIE

I'm going to change in the bathroom. If you want to fight, go find someone else.

MABEL

Fuck you! Fuck you!

Julie walks out and shuts the door. Mabel jumps off the cot. She limps over to the flowers and raises her hand as if to smash them aside. She hesitates. She looks at the clock again. She looks back at the flowers -- calmer, but still annoyed with them. She smiles wickedly and pulls a petal from one. She tosses it over her shoulder defiantly. The door opens and Toni comes in.

TONI

What's going on? Why were you yelling at Julie?

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

That's between me and Julie. She can stick up for herself. You're not my mommy.

TONI

I'm your boss! And I don't want you fighting with my other employees!

Mabel pushes past her and heads out the door.

MABEL

Then fire me, boss! I don't want any special treatment.

Mabel exits.

EXT. - STREET - NIGHT

Mabel waits tensely on the street. Billy's Porsche pulls up and stops along the curb. He leaves the car running and steps out. Mabel is overjoyed to see him. They don't hug, but both fidget nervously.

MABEL

Hi.

BILLY

Hi. I left it running so we wouldn't have to push it.

MABEL

Good thinking.

(coily)

You didn't send me any flowers today.

BILLY

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't think of it. I'll send you ...

MABEL

(quickly)

No, that's OK. I was just joking. Hinting. You know ... I'm sorry.

(changing the subject)

So what movie do we see tonight?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(cont'd)

You pick it. I only want the popcorn?

Billy looks at the ground hesitantly.

BILLY

Let's not go to a movie. Why don't we go to my place. David said he was going to be out all night. We could be alone.

Mabel's excitement quickly sours.

MABEL

Why do you want to go to your place?

BILLY

I don't know. I thought it would be fun.

MABEL

Oh, so now that we've had our date, it's time to fuck?

BILLY

No. I didn't say that.

MABEL

But that's what you meant, wasn't it? Let's not waste any more popcorn on this chick.

Mabel spins and starts to walk away. Billy grabs her arm and pulls her back.

BILLY

I'd love to go to a movie with you. But I don't have any money.

MABEL

Oh.

BILLY

(angry and hurt)

You really thought I just wanted to ...? What have I done to make you think I'm like that?

(CONTINUED)

Mabel's voice softens.

MABEL

I'm sorry. I'm just paranoid.

BILLY

Cut it out.

Mabel steps in close to him and he puts an arm around her.

INT. - DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mabel and Billy lie in each other's arms on the couch. Mabel munches from a bowl of homemade popcorn.

MABEL

My mother was a heroin addict. They say that's why I was crippled when I was born. They had to remove the lower part of my leg.

(she laughs sadly)

You know, when I was a kid I kept thinking that when I was born I really was perfect, but that a mean doctor cut off my leg anyway. Crazy, isn't it?

BILLY

(softly)

No. Kids think like that.

MABEL

Sometimes I still think like that. I get weird thoughts. They get all trapped inside me.

BILLY

Let them out.

Mabel munches on popcorn. She puts some in Billy's mouth.

MABEL

You know, it's not so bad being a crippled little kid. You get a lot of attention. People think it's kind of sweet to see a little girl on crutches and all. Since my mom

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MABEL (cont'd)

was ... a druggie and crazy and all that, most of the time I was with foster parents. Some of them were real nice. They treated me real good. But my mom would dry out and want me back. Then she'd start doing it again and they'd take me away. But it wasn't so bad when I was little because everyone was very, very nice to me.

Her voice grows weaker as she continues.

MABEL (cont'd)

It isn't the same when you're a teenager. You're not cute anymore. Girls are supposed to be pretty and sexy and prom queens. And little crippled girls that get big and grow breasts are just ... freaks. Then my mother died. Oh yeah, I never had a father. Did I tell you that?

BILLY

No.

MABEL

Yeah, no father. Not even any good suspects. Probably immaculate conception.

BILLY

Probably.

MABEL

So when my mother died I decided to do heroin myself to see what the big deal was about.

BILLY

How old were you?

MABEL

Sixteen. By that time I had gotten into a lot of trouble and no one wanted to be my foster parents

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MABEL (cont'd)

anymore. I even spent a few months in juvie. So I got real mixed up for a couple years. Did drugs, dealt drugs, lived on the street. Then I met Toni.

BILLY

How?

MABEL

I don't remember. I was out of it at the time. She just kind of picked me up and decided to rescue me. She's like that. Wishes she was a mother. She'd be a great mother. She dried me out and patched me all up. I tried to kill myself twice while living with her. She stopped my both times. Billy picks up Mabel's arm and looks at it. We see needle scars along the arm and scars from wrist slashes.

MABEL

War wounds. I put Toni through hell. She saved my life.

(sad laugh)

I guess I've always held it against her.

Mabel sighs uncomfortably. She sits up, nervous about how much she's been talking.

MABEL

That's my life. Bet you didn't have any problems like that when you were a kid.

BILLY

I had problems, but not like those.

MABEL

Your problem was what kind of toothpaste to buy.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

No. But not like yours.

Mabel sits up and shifts away from him.

MABEL

(bitterly)

So what did I do to deserve your gracious attentions? What interested you in a neurotic cripple?

BILLY

I don't know. I guess you're special.

MABEL

Special. Yeah, I've heard that one. They used to tell me that all the time when I was a little girl. You like my limp, huh? It's cute, eh?

BILLY

No, I think it's cute that you eat tons of popcorn and like horror movies.

Mabel's eyes suddenly water with tears.

BILLY (cont'd)

I like you because it's easy to make you happy.

MABEL

Hah! Try telling Toni that!

BILLY

Six roses and you're a cupcake. A tear rolls down Mabel's face.

MABEL

No one ever sent me roses.

Billy sits up and puts his arms around her.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

Oh, God, what will I do when you
leave?

Billy says nothing. He wipes the tears from her eyes.

MABEL (cont'd)

Will you write me?

BILLY

Yes.

MABEL

I'd go with you, but I'd die in
Iowa. Snow would kill me.

(sad laugh)

That's silly. You wouldn't want me
to go with you. See, I have weird
thoughts.

Billy is about to say something when we hear the door open.
David has come home.

DAVID (O.S.)

Hello? Are you here?

BILLY

Yes.

DAVID (O.S.)

Struck out again. I haven't quite
figured out how to adapt to the
post-AIDs world of dating ...

David comes into the room and sees Mabel and Billy on the
couch.

DAVID

Oh. Hi, Mabel.

MABEL

(hesitantly)

Hi.

DAVID

It's David. We met at Toni's party
last year. The "No on Prop 64" one.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

Right. I remember.

David shifts around uncomfortably.

DAVID

Well, I'm off to bed.

MABEL

I was just going.

DAVID

No, stay, stay! Don't mind me. I'm going right to bed. Goodnight.

David hurries off. Mabel and David sit in silence for a moment.

MABEL

He doesn't like me, does he?

BILLY

No, he likes you. He said you were really funny.

EXT. - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Billy's Porsche is parked on the street in front of Mabel's apartment building. Mabel and Billy lean against the side of it, kissing.

MABEL

I'm sorry we didn't make love. Are you disappointed?

BILLY

No.

MABEL

I just couldn't do it with him there.

BILLY

It's OK. You don't have to apologize.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

I'm not used to guys these days.
It's been awhile. I'm a little
nervous. We'll make love tomorrow
night. Maybe we can come here. No.
Let's go ... I don't know. We'll
think of something.

She kisses him again.

MABEL (cont'd)

I'm cold. I gotta go.

BILLY

Good night. She starts to limp away
and then turns back.

MABEL

I'll get some money from Julie and
we'll go to a movie tomorrow. How's
that?

(beat)

I mean, you wanted to see me,
didn't you? Do you?

BILLY

Yes.

MABEL

I don't work during the day. You
want to pick me up at noon and go
window shopping or something?

BILLY

Yes.

MABEL

OK. 'Bye.

She limps into the apartment building.

INT. - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mabel limps into the darkened bedroom. Toni is sleeping.
Mabel shifts around on her leg, excited and full of energy.
She limps over to the bedside and sits down. She pushes Toni
awake.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

Toni? Toni? I had such a great night. He's so nice. You wouldn't believe it.

Toni rolls over and looks at Mabel with sleepy, angry eyes.

TONI

Go to hell.

MABEL

I'm sorry. I just have to talk to someone. He's only going to be here a few nights. He's going away.

Toni rolls back over and buries herself in the covers.

TONI

I think it was really shitty what you did to Julie and I'm mad at you right now. Just leave me alone, OK?

Mabel slowly stands up from the bed. She is hurt and disappointed, like a child who's been spanked for something she didn't do. She limps into the living room.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mabel sits in an armchair, alone. Her eyes glow in the soft moonlight that streams through the windows.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Billy sleeps on the couch. Through the kitchen door we can see David sitting at the table talking on the phone.

DAVID

Yeah. He needs one real bad and you were the only person I could think of. No. Well, this would give you a chance to find out. Right. He'll be there in an hour. Thanks a lot.
'Bye David stands up and marches into the living room.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID
Alright. Wake up!

Billy opens his eyes and looks up at David.

DAVID (cont'd)
You're getting a job today.

BILLY
How?

DAVID
I called Mark. He manages a restaurant and I talked him into interviewing you for a bus boy. And I don't care if you're straight, you better damn well flirt with him 'cause that's the only way you'll get the job. Right?

BILLY
OK.

DAVID
It's a gay restaurant.

BILLY
What does that mean?

DAVID
That gay people go there and gay people work there. What do you think it means?

BILLY
I wasn't sure.

DAVID
You dumped your life on me and this is the best I can do.

BILLY
No, it's great. Thanks. What will it pay?

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Shit. But you have to start
somewhere. Go get dressed. And use
my cologne.

INT. - OFFICE - DAY

Mark sits behind a desk, staring at Billy. He is confident
and firm. Billy sits nervously, trying to please.

MARK

Billy, you have the right attitude,
and that's important to me.

BILLY

I really need a job.

MARK

You'll start as a bus boy, but if I
like your work we'll see about
making you a waiter. You can make
good tips, then, especially if you
flirt. Can you flirt?

BILLY

I'll try anything.

MARK

Good. You're straight, right?

BILLY

Yeah.

MARK

You'll be the only one. That
doesn't bother you, does it?

BILLY

No.

Mark smiles.

MARK

How are your legs?

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

Legs?

MARK

The uniform is a tank top and shorts. Beefcakey, but it sells food.

BILLY

Er, they're OK. Mark smiles again.

MARK

Good.

EXT. - STREET - DAY

Mabel sits in the Porsche as Billy rolls the car out, trying to pick up speed.

MABEL

I don't know where we're going to go. I'd sure like to be alone with you. We only have one more night together.

Billy hops into the car and tries to start it. It lurches backward, but doesn't start.

BILLY

Shit. He gets out and starts to push it again.

MABEL

Are you leaving during the day on Tuesday, or that night?

Billy pushes the car and picks up speed.

BILLY

(panting)

I'm not leaving.

MABEL

What?

Billy jumps into the car and throws it into gear. It lurches, but doesn't start. Billy sits in the car for a moment, trying to tach his breath. He looks over at Mabel

(CONTINUED)

and smiles weakly.

BILLY

I got a job. I'm not leaving.

MABEL

You ... then when will you go?

BILLY

Never. I mean, not for a long time.
I'm going to stay. I got a job.

Mabel is visibly shaken. Billy is confused.

BILLY (cont'd)

I thought you'd be happy.

MABEL

No. No, I'm not. This just makes it
harder.

BILLY

I don't understand. You didn't want
me to go.

MABEL

But I didn't want you to stay.
You're just staying because of me?

BILLY

No. I mean, you're part of it.

MABEL

If I wasn't here would you go?

BILLY

What difference does it make?

MABEL

I'm not leaving Toni. I couldn't.

BILLY

I didn't asked you to.

MABEL

I can't see you forever. It's not
fair to her. I'm already putting
her through hell. I can't see you

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MABEL (cont'd)
anymore.

Mabel starts to cry.

MABEL (cont'd)
You're just screwing me all up! I
can't handle this.

She opens the car door and climbs out. She limps back toward
the apartment. Billy climbs out after her.

BILLY
It's not such a big deal. Just
don't think about it so much.

Mabel turns back toward him and starts shouting.

MABEL
Go away! Just leave me alone!
You're hurting me.

Billy stops. Mabel turns and continues on into the
apartment.

INT. - TONI'S KITCHEN - EVENING

Mabel sits at the kitchen table with Toni.

TONI
I'm glad he's not going. I know it
would have been easier for you in
the short run, but this is better.

MABEL
Why?

TONI
Because you have a decision you
have to make. You can't run away
from it.

MABEL
I've already made it.
(softly)
I love you, Toni. I don't want to
leave you.

(CONTINUED)

TONI

See how you feel tomorrow.

MABEL

I don't think he ever intended to leave. I think that was just some kind of pickup line or something.

TONI

Is he like that?

MABEL

I don't know. I need a drink.

She gets up and limps over to the cupboard. She finds a bottle of gin inside.

TONI

Don't drink, please.

MABEL

I need it. I really need it now.

Mabel pours a glass.

INT. - DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Billy is lying on the couch as David comes in. He quickly sits up.

DAVID

How'd it go? Did you get the job?

BILLY

Yeah, I did. I start tomorrow.

DAVID

Great. What's it pay?

BILLY

Four-fifty an hour.

DAVID

Oh, well.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

I thought it was pretty good. Isn't it?

DAVID

It's not enough to live on. But it's a start.

BILLY

He said maybe I could move up to waiter after awhile.

DAVID

That's something.

BILLY

Ummm...

(beat)

Could I borrow seventeen dollars?

INT. - STAGE - NIGHT

Mabel limps out onto the stage. Her face is pale and nervous tonight. It seems to take her an excruciatingly long time to reach the mike. The crowd grows quiet. She reaches the mike and speaks in a low, weak voice.

MABEL

For those of you who haven't been here before: my name is Mabel Burns and because of a birth defect one of my legs was removed from the calf down. That's why I limped out here. I have an artificial leg.

She stares out into the silent crowd.

MABEL (cont'd)

I know what you're thinking...

(beat)

NOT ANOTHER CRIPPLED FEMALE COMIC!
Geez, they're everywhere! One legged, one armed, blind ones banging into the mike, deaf ones not pausing for the laughs. These days any dame with a disability thinks she's Phyllis Diller. Any

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(cont'd)

bimbo with a bum leg thinks she's
George Burns. Look ...

She lights up a cigarette and poses with it.

MABEL

All I ask is that you evaluate me
for myself. I don't want to be
compared to all the other famous
one-legged female comics. Just
treat me as you would any other
seriously crippled comedienne.

INT. - MABEL'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Mabel sits on the cot slowly sipping from a glass of
Bacardi. Julie, dressed in another evening gown, is putting
the finishing touches on her makeup.

MABEL

You've never fucked a guy? Ever?

JULIE

No. Never wanted to.

Mabel takes a sip from her glass and thinks about that.

MABEL

Hmmm ... Seems like a healthy
attitude.

INT. - NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Toni is behind the bar helping Monica mix drinks for the
waitresses. She spots something in the club and pauses.
Monica notices and looks up. Billy is nervously making his
way past the tables toward the back door. In his hands he
holds half a dozen red roses wrapped in cellophane. Monica
glances at Toni sideways. Toni's face is tense.

MONICA

Who's that?

Toni says nothing but sets down what she's doing and hurries
around the bar into the club. Billy exits into the back
hallway with Toni close behind him.

INT. - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Billy hesitantly moves toward Mabel's room as Toni enters the hallway and shuts the door firmly behind them.

TONI

Excuse me.

Billy stops and turns, a guilty expression on his face.

BILLY

Oh. Ummm...

TONI

(in her firm bar-owner voice)

Can I help you?

BILLY

I ... I was going to see Mabel.

Toni is silent for a moment, studying Billy's youthful face and the roses he gently cradles in his hands. She adopts a softer tone.

TONI

I think she needs to be left alone tonight. She's a little upset.

BILLY

Oh. OK.

He looks at her with disappointed blue eyes. He takes a deep breath.

BILLY (cont'd)

Are you Toni?

Toni is irritated that he knows her name.

TONI

Yes.

BILLY

I'm sorry. I'm not trying to take her away from you. I just like to see her. That's all, maybe...

(CONTINUED)

TONI
(cutting him off)
It's alright, but not tonight. Call
her tomorrow if you want.

BILLY
OK. He looks down at the roses.

BILLY
Maybe you could give he these and
tell her I'll call?

He offers the roses to her. Toni doesn't move. She stares at
him, unbelieving. Billy notices.

BILLY (cont'd)
Oh. I shouldn't have asked that.
Sorry. I'll just go.

Toni shakes her head. She doesn't have the heart.

TONI
(sighing)
Hold on. I'll check if she wants to
see you.

Toni goes to the dressing room and enters.

INT. - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Toni shuts the door to the dressing room behind her and
stands frozen for a moment, thinking. Mabel and Julie stare
at her.

MABEL
What's the matter?

Toni stares at Mabel, annoyed.

TONI
Your boyfriend is outside with his
hands full of flowers.

MABEL
You're kidding.

(CONTINUED)

TONI

I couldn't make something like that
up.

INT. - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Billy is pacing in the hallway as the door to Mabel's dressing room opens. Mabel, Toni, and Julie all lean out the door and stare at him. Billy does make quite a picture, standing alone in the hallway with the roses clutched in his hand.

JULIE

(whispering)
He is cute, isn't he?

TONI

(whispering back)
I know. He's just a kid.

Billy, not happy with the attention but determined to push on, holds the roses out to Mabel.

BILLY

Hi, Mabel. I just wanted to give
you these. I'll call you tomorrow.

Mabel glances at Julie and Toni as if somehow vindicated.

MABEL

See what I'm up against? Look at
him! Look at those puppy eyes. Who
can fight that? He's not real. He's
an animated Norman Rockwell
painting. All he needs is a pink
carnation and a pick-up truck.

Billy's face is suddenly angry and hurt. His arm drops the flowers limply to his side. He turns on his heel and walks away.

MABEL (cont'd)

Billy! Wait!

Billy exits the hallway and slams the door behind him. Toni looks at Mabel.

(CONTINUED)

TONI

You can be such a shit.

MABEL

I was just kidding. He'll come back.

Mabel looks at Julie. Julie shakes her head doubtfully. Mabel's face sours. She rushes down the hall after Billy.

EXT. - NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Billy hurries away from the club, roses still dangling in his hand. Mabel comes out the front door and hurries after him.

MABEL

Billy, I'm sorry. I've been a comic for too long. I talk without thinking.

Billy doesn't say anything. He continues on. Mabel struggles to keep up with him. It's hard on her leg.

MABEL (cont'd)

I'm sorry! What do you want me to say?

BILLY

I don't even know what I'm doing here!

Tears stream from Billy's eyes. He tosses the flowers away. They scatter on the sidewalk. As she hurries after him, Mabel grabs up the roses, one by one, from the ground.

MABEL

I'm a dink. I'm sorry.

BILLY

I don't have any money. I don't have a place of my own. I finally get a job and find out it isn't even enough to live on. My father ...

(beat)

And then I borrow money to buy you

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(cont'd)

roses and you just make fun of me!

MABEL

I'm Attila the Hun. I'm Hitler. I'm
sorry.

Billy doesn't stop. Mabel is starting to fall behind. She
stumbles. Tears fill her eyes.

MABEL (cont'd)

Billy! I can't run. Please. Don't
make me chase you.

Billy stops. He wipes the tears from his eyes and then turns
toward her. His face is still angry. Mabel limps up to him,
the roses in her hand. They stare into each other's eyes for
a moment. Billy takes a long step backwards. Mabel steps
forward. Billy takes two more steps backwards. Mabel steps
after him. Billy's face softens. Mabel reaches out with her
free hand and grabs him by the shirt front. She takes a
breath. She caught him. Billy lowers his eyes and touches
her hand.

INT. - PORSCHE - NIGHT

Billy drives as Mabel sets in the seat next to him.

MABEL

Maybe you should just throw me out
of the car and run over me a couple
of times. It'd be best.

BILLY

Don't talk like that. I just got a
little upset. I'm sorry.

MABEL

Don't be sorry. I was shitty to
you. I'm always shitty to people
who try to be nice to me. I'm
neurotic and insecure and I figure
if I'm shitty to people right away
then I don't have to worry about
them finding out what a shit I am
later.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

Are we going to a movie?

MABEL

I don't know. I guess not. I didn't get any money from Toni.

BILLY

What should we do?

MABEL

Oh, screw or something. I don't know. You want to go to the Observatory? It's kind of romantic at night. Oh, skip it. That's dumb.

BILLY

No. Let's go.

MABEL

It's dumb. Make a left up there.

Billy turns the car.

MABEL (cont'd)

You think this thing can make it up the hill?

BILLY

Sure it can.

EXT. - HILLY STREET - NIGHT

The Porsche shoots up the street into the hills. It starts to make a strange sound. The engine cuts off. The car starts to roll backwards. Billy steers the car back off the road and pulls the emergency brake.

EXT. - HILLY STREET - NIGHT - LATER

The rear hood of the Porsche is up and Billy is fiddling with the engine. Mabel points to the faint light of the Observatory in the distance.

MABEL

You can just barely see it through those trees. It's pretty at night.

(CONTINUED)

Billy pulls himself away from the engine and glances up into the hills.

BILLY

Yeah. I think the gasoline lines are clogged.

MABEL

Where did you get such a fucked-up car?

Billy crawls under the Porsche and starts to search for the fuel lines.

BILLY (O.S.)

Have you ever seen that picture of the girl looking at the house on the hill with the brown grass all around her?

MABEL

No. What does that have to do with your car?

BILLY (O.S.)

It's a famous painting. Anyhow, that's how I always felt in Danbury, Iowa. Like I was trapped in a tiny gray house with brown grass all around me.

Mabel kneels next to Bill's legs.

MABEL

I've always felt like the guy in The Last Supper. You know, the one in the middle.

BILLY (O.S.)

Are you going to make fun of me again?

Billy slides out from under the car and looks at Mabel seriously.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

I only have one story. You have lots of stories and I like to hear them, but this is the only story I have.

MABEL

(smiling)

OK. Tell me your story.

Billy slides back under the car and starts working again.

BILLY (O.S.)

I spent my whole life suffocating in that town. Feeling like I was missing out on everything. And then this car broke down in Ida Grove, which is nearby. The guy who owned it was from Chicago and he decided to get rid of it and rent a car to go home.

MABEL

(whispering to herself)

Smart move.

Billy slides back out from under the car and returns to the engine compartment. He pulls one of the fuel lines and gasoline drips from it. He attaches it again.

BILLY

Bought the car from him for a hundred dollars, which was a lot of money for a foreign car that didn't work. But I wanted it. It was the only thing around that didn't fit in that town.

(beat)

Wrote away to get parts to fix it. Never could get the starter. But once I got everything else I just couldn't wait. I pushed it to see if it ran. And it did.

(beat)

I sold everything I had. Took all my money out of the bank. 'Cause I knew I could go anywhere I wanted

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(cont'd)
in this car. Anywhere.

As Mabel watches him, Billy closes the hood and gets into the driver's seat. He pulls the emergency brake and the car rolls backwards. He throws it into gear and the car starts. He drives it back up to Mabel and smiles proudly at her.

BILLY
Anywhere.

Mabel leans over and gives him a kiss.

MABEL
God, how I love a man who reeks of
premium gasoline.

BILLY
It's regular.

EXT. - GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY - NIGHT

The Porsche is parked on a hilltop, the Observatory overlooking them.

MABEL (O.S.)
This car's too small. I don't think
this is going to work.

INT. - PORSCHE - NIGHT

Mabel and Billy are locked in a passionate embrace in the front seat of the car. Mabel's vest and shirt are unbuttoned. Billy is kissing her neck. Mabel is in a cold sweat and breathing heavily.

MABEL
I'm sorry. I'm getting
claustrophobic.

She pulls away from him and yanks her shirt ends together. Billy leans back, hot and frustrated.

MABEL (cont'd)
You can't make love in a Porsche.
It's against the laws of nature.
Now if that guy had driven a
Cadillac into Danbury ...

(CONTINUED)

Billy looks at Mabel, disappointed. Mabel buttons up her shirt.

MABEL (cont'd)
Sorry. I told you to dump me.

BILLY
(sadly)
It's alright.

MABEL
It isn't alright. I don't know
what's wrong with me. I'm usually a
rabbit, you know.

INT. - PORSCHE - NIGHT

Billy is driving Mabel home.

MABEL
(softly)
I'm a virgin.

BILLY
I kinda thought so. Mabel punches
him in the shoulder.

MABEL
What do you mean, you thought so?!

BILLY
It just made sense.

MABEL
Sherlock Holmes strikes again. You
think it's easy for me to admit it?

BILLY
It's nothing to be ashamed of.

MABEL
It ruins my whole loose crippled
girl persona. I'm really frigid.

TONI
Don't you and Toni ...?

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

No. I don't know. Does that count?
I mean we don't really do
anything ... just cuddle. I'm too
tense. She's very understanding. I
don't want to go into all the
details, OK?

BILLY

OK.

MABEL

We've had oral sex, but I've never
had an orgasm, alright? I'm not
sure if she's even had one with me.
We usually only really fool around
a couple of times a month. And I've
never done it with a guy. I'm just
frigid or something.

BILLY

You're just scared. It's perfectly
normal to be scared the first time.

MABEL

How do you know? Have you slept
with a lot of girls?

BILLY

Not a lot.

MABEL

How many exactly?

BILLY

Ummm ... six.

MABEL

Six? Six! In the middle of Iowa?
What were you doing? Fucking cows?

BILLY

No. No! Six isn't that many.

MABEL

Six is a volleyball team. You
fucked an entire volleyball team. I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MABEL (cont'd)
thought this was a small town.

BILLY
Well, it is, pretty much.

MABEL
What were they, traveling
saleswomen?

BILLY
No, just girls ...

MABEL
I can't believe it. Six! And you
try to tell me that isn't a lot.

BILLY
Sorry.

Mabel is silent for a moment.

MABEL
Were they pretty?

EXT. - STREETS - NIGHT

The Porsche glides through the streets.

BILLY (O.S.)
They were all the same. Screw in
the barn on Fridays, bake pies on
Saturdays, go to church on Sundays.

MABEL (O.S.)
They went to church?

BILLY (O.S.)
Oh yeah. Worst of the bunch was the
minister's daughter. She must have
slept with every boy in town. Can't
really blame her. Nothing else to
do.

MABEL (O.S.)
God, Iowa's starting to sound like
Sodom and Gomorrah.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY (O.S.)

Not really. Fool around in high school, get married at nineteen and then life's over. Big wedding and then poof! -- fade into the corn fields. You won't believe how many times my father tried to push me into marrying one of those girls. Almost succeeded.

MABEL (O.S.)

You'd be cute in a tux.

EXT. - RESTAURANT - DAY

Billy, dressed in white shorts and a pink tank top, pushes a cart full of dishes in a patio restaurant. Around him, couples of men are eating at small tables in the peaceful garden setting. As he passes by a table, two men flag him down.

MAN 1

Excuse me, could we get some water?

BILLY

Of course. Yes, sir.

INT. - DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Billy is looking through a copy of the Recycler. David watches TV in the background.

BILLY

Echo Park?

DAVID

No.

BILLY

What about Silverlake?

DAVID

It's gay.

BILLY

Everything's gay! I don't care if it is gay. Is it a nice area?

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

It's not Westwood, but it's OK. The rent should be cheap.

BILLY

Three hundred for a one bedroom.

DAVID

Three hundred? That's impossible. It must be a dump.

BILLY

Three hundred is all I can afford. I don't even think I can afford that.

DAVID

Most people have to get roommates.

BILLY

I don't want to have a roommate.

DAVID

Oh, really?

BILLY

(smiles)

Well, I'd like to have a roommate. But I don't think she'll do it.

The phone rings. David answers it.

DAVID

(smiles)

Mr. Mallory, how are you? Yes of course. Just a second.

David holds the phone out to Billy. Billy's face is suddenly filled with panic. He frantically shakes his head no at David. David looks at him cross-eyed and holds out the phone again in a "go on, be a big boy" gesture. Billy shakes his head no with such fierceness that David is taken aback. He puts the phone to his mouth.

DAVID

I'm sorry. I guess I was mistaken. Billy isn't in.

(CONTINUED)

(hesitantly)
Yes, of course. I'll have him call
you as soon as he gets back. 'Bye.

David sets the phone down and looks at Billy, annoyed.

DAVID
What was that?

BILLY
I just didn't want to talk to him.

DAVID
I've never seen you act like that.

BILLY
He's going to try to get me to come
home.

BILLY
Well, you can't hide from him
forever.

INT. - DRESSING ROOM - EVENING

Mabel sits stiffly on her cot as Julie applies makeup to
her.

MABEL
I feel like an idiot.

JULIE
Don't be embarrassed.

MABEL
I'm sorry I asked. It's stupid.

JULIE
You have a pretty face. Why
shouldn't you wear makeup?

MABEL
Because I'm just trying to be
something I'm not. It isn't going
to work.

(CONTINUED)

JULIE
You look lovely.

INT. - RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Mabel and Billy are eating at Mark's restaurant. Mabel is half-heartedly glancing at the menu. Billy watches Mabel closely.

BILLY
You look funny.

MABEL
I was in a car wreck.

BILLY
Not funny. I mean different.

MABEL
I'm dying of malaria.

BILLY
You don't have any freckles.

MABEL
I sold them.

BILLY
(amused)
You're wearing makeup.

MABEL
Billy, just because you work here doesn't mean I won't make a scene -- a vicious ugly scene that will embarrass you for life.

BILLY
I'm sorry, you look lovely.

MABEL
Too late for me to believe that.

Mabel glances at the menu again.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

So who's paying for this? Should I order the chicken?

BILLY

It's free, 'cause I work here.

Mabel glances at one of the waiters as they pass by.

MABEL

You wear that?

BILLY

'Fraid so.

Mabel giggles.

MABEL

I'll have to come some afternoon and get a cheap thrill.

Across the room we notice Mark watching them disapprovingly from a window.

EXT. - SUNSET BLVD. - NIGHT

Mabel and Billy are strolling down Sunset. Mabel points to a pretty girl walking across the street.

MABEL

What about her? Why don't you go fall in love with her?

BILLY

I don't like her.

MABEL

Why not? She's gorgeous. I could fall in love with her.

BILLY

Too ordinary. Dime a dozen.

MABEL

So that's it! Now it comes out. You only like me because I'm unique.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

Well, maybe ...

MABEL

You just see me as a weird, one-of-a-kind phenomenon. You don't love me for myself. I'm just a unique-object to you!

BILLY

Well ...

MABEL

I don't want you to love me for my creativity and strange sense of humor. I want you to love me because of my body! Look at these breasts...

(beat)

Wait! Zelda!

BILLY

What?

MABEL

That's what we'll do tonight. Zelda. Hell, you want someone unique, Zelda's the lady. Oh, kid from Kansas, we're going to show you the time of your life. It's Walpurgis Night!

BILLY

I'm not from Kansas.

MABEL

I hope she's home.

EXT. - PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

Mabel comes out of a phone booth. Billy looks at her questioningly.

BILLY

Get ahold of her?

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

I got her answering machine.

BILLY

Then she's out?

MABEL

No, she only puts her answering machine on when she's in. Come on.

INT. - PORSCHE - NIGHT

Billy is driving with Mabel.

BILLY

Who is Zelda?

MABEL

Zelda's Zelda. She's my best friend in the whole world ... when I can find her. If I could be anyone I'd be her. Or Julie, maybe. Zelda's who you should be in love with; she can do anything.

EXT. - FORTUNE TELLER'S SHOP ON MELROSE - NIGHT

The Porsche parks in front of a brightly lit storefront on Melrose. A huge neon sign in the window reads "FORTUNE TELLER" in multi-colored letters. Various neon shapes -- half moons, stars, planets -- flash around it. Mabel climbs out of the Porsche. Billy calls after her.

BILLY

Should I keep it running?

Mabel shakes her head and moves toward the door. Billy shuts off the car and follows after.

INT. - FORTUNE ROOM - NIGHT

In a heavily curtained room, an Older Man sits cross-legged on the floor in front of a table with a large brocade tablecloth draped over it. Across the table a dozen tarot cards are laid out in a strange pattern. Red and blue lights illuminate the room and give it an eerie feeling. Exotic music plays in the background.

(CONTINUED)

ZELDA (O.S.)

You will be ill, very ill, for many
days and then ...

On the other side of the table is Zelda, a punk fortune teller with wild colored hair and offbeat clothes. She is very pretty, with fiery eyes and a Gypsy-like air.

OLDER MAN

Yes, yes?

The Older Man's eyes are fixed on the cards. Behind him, Mabel pops her head through the curtains. She signals to Zelda. Zelda sees her and nods.

ZELDA

(to the man)

That's all.

OLDER MAN

What's all? I've got to know more.

ZELDA

Come back next week. The spirits
have left me.

Zelda quickly gathers up the cards.

OLDER MAN

But... but... I've got to know what
happens.

Zelda is shuffling the cards with the expertise of a card shark.

ZELDA

Hey, I can't help it. When the
spirits leave, the spirits leave.
Write me a check and we'll make an
appointment for next week.

INT. - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Mabel and Billy wait in the front room of the fortune shop. Various metaphysical paraphernalia are mounted on the walls. Zelda hurries the Older Man through the curtains, past Mabel and Billy, and toward the front door.

(CONTINUED)

OLDER MAN

But didn't you see anything? A hint
of what might happen?

ZELDA

The spirits don't hint, kiddo. I'll
see you Tuesday. We'll find out all
about it then.

Zelda practically pushes him out the door and locks it
behind him. She turns and flings out her arms to Mabel.

ZELDA (cont'd)

MABEL!!

Mabel runs and hugs her.

MABEL

ZELDA!

Zelda picks Mabel up and swings her around.

ZELDA

You're exactly who I wanted to see
tonight! We must be in psychic
link!

MABEL

We must be. I felt compelled by
unearthly forces to come see you.

ZELDA

You want to bank for me? I'm going
to crash a pool game in Chinatown.

MABEL

Love to. Can I bring my friend?

Mabel points at Billy. Billy smiles. Zelda walks over to
Billy and examines him.

ZELDA

Wait! Don't tell. me. William, no,
Billy?

BILLY

Yeah.

ZELDA

From ... Iowa. Right?

BILLY

Yeah. How'd you know?

ZELDA

I'm psychic.

MABEL

I told her last week.

ZELDA

We've got to hurry, so we only have time for one card. Here!

Zelda fans her cards out and offers them to Billy. He pulls one.

ZELDA (cont'd)

Let me see ... He exposes it.

ZELDA

The Lover.

MABEL

You fed him that.

ZELDA

No I didn't! Here, Mabel, pick one.

Mabel carefully picks a card and holds it out.

ZELDA (cont'd)

The Death card.

MABEL

Great.

ZELDA

Not to worry. It's all bullshit.

EXT. - FORTUNE TELLER'S SHOP ON MELROSE - NIGHT

Mabel, Billy, and Zelda come out onto the street.

ZELDA

Zonkers! It's James Dean's car!

BILLY

Where?

ZELDA

There, the Porsche! It's the one that killed Dean. Well, not that one, but the same make.

BILLY

It's mine.

ZELDA

Boss. Let's take it. I'll push.

BILLY

How'd you know ...?

ZELDA

I'm psychic.

MABEL

I told her. I told her.

ZELDA

Go on, get in.

Mabel climbs into the car. Billy goes to the driver's side. Zelda stands in back and starts to push.

ZELDA (cont'd)

Get in, get in.

BILLY

I'll help.

ZELDA

I got it.

Billy jumps in and Zelda pushes it down the street. As it picks up speed, Billy kicks it into gear. It roars to life. Zelda chases after the car and leaps inside, onto Mabel's

(CONTINUED)

lap. She shuts the door and they all drive off.

EXT. - STREET - NIGHT

The Porsche speeds down Melrose.

ZELDA (O.S.)

And you replaced the ignition switch? Does it make any sound at all?

BILLY (O.S.)

No, nothing. I'm sure it's electrical, but I've already checked all the wires.

ZELDA (O.S.)

It must be a bad ground connection. These six-volt cars, you really have to watch that.

BILLY (O.S.)

Where's the ground connection?

ZELDA (O.S.)

I'll show you later.

INT. - PORSCHE - NIGHT

The Porsche speeds through downtown Los Angeles. Mabel and Zelda are in the front seat together. Billy drives.

ZELDA

Alright, Mabel. You carry the cash.

MABEL

Right.

Zelda reaches into her layers of bright clothing and pulls out a thick stack of twenty-dollar bills. She hands them to Mabel.

ZELDA

And Billy, you'll be the torpedo.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

What?

ZELDA

Just look tough and act like you know Ju-Jitsu. It's the only thing these guys fear.

Billy nods. Mabel leans over and whispers in Billy's ear.

MABEL

Just act normal, OK?

The Porsche enters the Bunker Hill tunnel.

INT. - TUNNEL - NIGHT

The Porsche zips through the tunnel.

ZELDA

Next stop, Chinatown!

EXT. - CHINATOWN ALLEY - NIGHT

Zelda, clutching a narrow leather case, leads Mabel and Billy down a dark, gloomy alley. From the entrance of the alley we can see neon signs with Chinese lettering. As they walk, Zelda pulls Mabel ahead a little and whispers to her.

ZELDA

Is he bi or what?

Mabel shakes her head.

MABEL

Straight as a railroad spike.

ZELDA

Those are hard to find.

MABEL

He's the last one.

ZELDA

So have you two done it?

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

(sighing)

Oh, you know me. I'm a mess.

Zelda slips an arm around Mabel sympathetically.

EXT. - ALLEY - NIGHT

Zelda, Mabel, and Billy approach a dark doorway in front of a heavy wooden door with a small peephole. Zelda knocks loudly. There is no answer. She knocks loudly again. Finally the peephole opens and a pair of woman's eyes peer out.

WOMAN

(in Chinese)

Yes?

ZELDA

I'm looking to get into a game of pool (Sing chow mu tu reng how chi meng shay).

The peephole shuts and the door opens. A pretty, older Chinese woman, dressed in a long red dress with a gold dragon embroidered on it, gestures for them to come inside.

INT. - POOL HALL - NIGHT

The pool hall is filled with half a dozen old pool tables and a small bar. Most of the patrons are older Chinese men in baggy pants and undershirts. They smoke cigars and talk in low voices. The pool games are quiet and sedate. Zelda, Mabel, and Billy are led into the room by the Chinese lady. Zelda strides over to an empty table, opens her leather case, and screws together her pool cue.

ZELDA

I'm looking for Wong.

Several of the older men step forward.

OLDER MAN

I'm Wong.

ANOTHER OLDER MAN

I'm Wong, too.

(CONTINUED)

ONE MORE OLDER MAN

And I.

ZELDA

Pardon me. I'm looking for Sam
Wong. I hear he's a good player.

The room goes quiet. The old men step aside. From the back of the room, Sam Wong emerges. He is about twenty-five, slim, muscular, wearing jeans, a sleeveless undershirt, and dark sunglasses. A cigarette burns between his lips. In his hand is a pool cue. Sam approaches the empty table and stares at Zelda. He takes a drag from his cigarette.

ZELDA (cont'd)

Eight ball?

Sam taps the ashes from the cigarette. He starts to rack up the balls. Zelda glances over at Mabel. Mabel nods.

MABEL

Anyone want to make a bet on the
side?

The old men in the room rush toward Mabel. They start talking to her in broken English.

MABEL (cont'd)

OK, OK. Wait a second. Twenty from
you. Alright. Twenty.

Mabel and the old men make bets. The Chinese woman holds the money.

MONTAGE OF ZELDA AND SAM

playing. Sweat beads from their foreheads as they study the balls and shoot. They seem about even. Zelda sinks a solid. Sam gets stripes. The room is filled with cigarette smoke. Balls crack against each other and roll across the table. The old men watch the game intensely, sweat beading their foreheads. Mabel, holding a pile of money, watches the game, sweat beading her forehead, too. Billy also watches, sweating. Zelda misses a shot. Scratch. She slams her fist against the table.

(CONTINUED)

ZELDA

Dammit!

Sam coolly takes a drag from his cigarette. He puts some chalk on his pool stick. He positions himself at the table. He shoots. The nine ball goes into the corner pocket. Sam shoots again. Eleven goes in. Sam shoots again. The fourteen ball goes in. Zelda's face drips with sweat and disappointment. Sam pauses for a moment. The stripes are all cleared from the table. All that is left are two solids and the eight ball. He points with his stick toward a pocket on the table.

SAM

(in poor English)

Eight ball. There.

Billy watches tensely. Sam prepares his shot. He shoots. The cue ball rolls across the table, hits the eight and sinks it. He's won the game. Zelda's face falls. Sam lights up a new cigarette. All the old men cheer happily. They rush to the Chinese Woman and collect their money. Billy goes to Zelda's side and lays a hand on her shoulder.

BILLY

I'm sorry. You played really good.

Zelda suddenly bursts into tears. She throws herself into Billy's arms.

ZELDA

I just want to go home!

Mabel limps over to them. Her face is firm and determined.

MABEL

No! Zelda, you're not going home.
You can beat that chump!

ZELDA

(sobbing)

No, Mabel. I can't ...

Mabel grabs Zelda's shoulders and looks into her eyes firmly.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

Yes you can. I know you can.

ZELDA

He's too good.

Mabel turns toward the room.

MABEL

(calling out)

I've got five hundred dollars here
saying she can beat that chump! Who
wants to bet?

Mabel throws the money on the pool table. The old men all
rush back toward her. Mabel starts making bets.

ZELDA

Mabel, don't. Please! I can't do
it.

Billy goes to Mabel's side and whispers in her ear.

BILLY

Mabel, maybe you shouldn't do
this ...

MABEL

Be quiet! I know what I'm doing.

Sam takes a drag from his cigarette and watches Zelda
emotionlessly. He flicks the ashes off his cigarette and
racks up the balls. Mabel finishes the bets and goes to
Zelda. Zelda is wiping the tears from her eyes.

MABEL (cont'd)

Go on, kid. You can do it.

Zelda takes a deep breath. She walks toward the table,
unsure.

MONTAGE OF ZELDA AND SAM

playing again. Zelda is tentative at first, but this fades
as she concentrates on the shots. She gets solids again. She
shoots and sinks the four ball. Shoots and sinks the three.
Sam watches Zelda emotionlessly. Zelda shoots and sinks the
six ball. The two is sunk. The older men's faces begin to

(CONTINUED)

sour. Zelda sinks the five. Billy glances over at Mabel, surprised. Mabel glances back at Billy, a wicked smile on her lips.

BILLY

Oh! I get it.

Mabel elbows Billy in the ribs. Billy leans over and lowers his voice to a whisper.

BILLY (cont'd)

She could have beaten him the first time, couldn't she?

MABEL

You know, Billy, there's a wonderful career awaiting you as a brain surgeon.

Zelda sinks another ball. Sam takes a drag from his cigarette and stares at her emotionlessly. The old men are worried.

ZELDA

Eight ball. Corner.

Zelda sinks the eight ball. Mabel walks up to Zelda.

MABEL

See, honey. I knew you could do it. Well, let's go.

Mabel pats her on the back. The old men stare angrily at Mabel and Zelda. Mabel quickly goes to the Chinese Woman to get her money. The Woman hands it to her curtly.

CHINESE WOMAN

Don't you come back here.

MABEL

(smiling)

Don't worry, we won't.

Sam stares at Zelda from the other side of the table, the cigarette burning in his mouth. He motions for Zelda to come to him. Zelda hands Billy the pool stick.

(CONTINUED)

ZELDA

Break it down for me, killer.

BILLY

You think you should go over there?

Sam studies them emotionlessly behind his sunglasses. He motions to Zelda again.

ZELDA

I'll be OK.

Zelda walks over to Sam's side of the table. They talk softly in Chinese. Billy breaks down the cue. Mabel comes up to him, counting the money in her hands. They watch Zelda and Sam talking intensely together.

BILLY

What do you think they're talking about?

MABEL

He probably wants another game.

BILLY

Will she give it to him?

MABEL

Maybe if he pushes her enough.

I hope not. Zelda and Sam finish their conversation. Zelda returns to them.

MABEL (cont'd)

What's up?

ZELDA

We're invited to a party!

INT. - PORSCHE - NIGHT

Billy drives as Zelda and Mabel count out the money.

INT. - UNDERGROUND PARTY - NIGHT

High-tech electronic rock music blares out from a New Wave band in the back of the room. A crowd of young people, dressed in unusual clothes, is dancing frenetically. Zelda

(CONTINUED)

dances energetically in the center of the crowd with Sam. Mabel and Billy sit together off to the side, watching the dancers. Mabel has a bottle of scotch and she refills two paper cups. She hands one out to Billy.

MABEL

What about that oriental girl over there? Wouldn't you like to make love with her? I'd like to make love to an oriental girl. They're so exotic.

She hands Billy the cup. Billy takes a sip.

BILLY

She's OK.

MABEL

Well, which one do you want to make love with?

Mabel takes a long drink.

BILLY

Aside from you?

MABEL

I'm not in this discussion.

BILLY

Well, I like that redheaded girl ...

MABEL

You're kidding! That bimbo?

Zelda comes up and grabs Billy's hand.

ZELDA

Let's dance, killer.

She drags Billy out onto the floor. Billy glances back at Mabel helplessly. Mabel smiles. Billy and Zelda dance together. Zelda's a great dancer. She moves in very close and seductively to Billy. The crowd is so packed that it is hard to tell who's dancing with whom. Sam moves in and dances next to Zelda. Zelda turns her eyes toward him and back toward Billy. Mabel sits drinking alone, but not

(CONTINUED)

unhappily. She watches everyone dancing with a vicarious satisfaction. Billy comes off the dance floor and grabs her hand.

BILLY

Let's dance.

He tugs on her, but Mabel doesn't move.

MABEL

(firmly)

I don't dance.

BILLY

Try it.

MABEL

I have tried it. It doesn't make me feel good. OK?

BILLY

I'm sorry.

MABEL

You don't have to be sorry. Alright? You go dance. I like watching you.

Zelda comes from behind and puts an arm around Billy.

ZELDA

You're not going to get Mabel to dance, Billy. I've tried. What do you say we split and go have an orgy?

MABEL

Sounds like fun.

Zelda grabs Mabel's hand and pulls her to her feet. The three of them start making their way through the crowd. Sam pushes through the crowd after them.

SAM

Wait! Zelda!

Zelda stops and turns back to him. He comes up close to her.

(CONTINUED)

ZELDA

(in Chinese)

I have to go with my friends (Mee
chee nung how guy no rai-pan).

SAM

(in Chinese)

When can I see you?

ZELDA

(in Chinese)

Give me a ring (Seeku chom yay).

Zelda grabs the back of his neck and gives him a passionate kiss. As she does, she slips a card into his front shirt pocket. She pulls back and dashes off with Mabel and Billy. Sam pulls the card from his pocket and stares at it. The card reads:

ZELDA BORSKY PSYCHIC, CARD READER,

COMPUTER PROGRAMMER. CALL ME SOMETIME:

888-8701

INT. - PORSCHE - NIGHT

Zelda drives the Porsche at breakneck speed. Mabel and Billy sit in the passenger seat. Billy's eyes are frozen in fear.

ZELDA

They don't make them like this
anymore. What a beauty.

MABEL

So we're going to have an orgy, eh?

ZELDA

Yeah, we can't let the last
straight white male in the world go
to waste. What do you think, Billy?

BILLY

I don't think I'm the last ...

(CONTINUED)

ZELDA

We'll go to my place and talk you
into it.

INT. - ZELDA'S LOFT - NIGHT

Zelda lives in an enormous industrial artist's loft in downtown. It is filled with pinball machines, nude statues, and a disassembled 1952 Studebaker. As Zelda leads Mabel and Billy through this maze of junk, they come upon a huge, unfinished mural on one of the walls. Sitting in front of the mural, on an overturned crate, holding a wet paintbrush in his hand, is Delphi, the artist. He is a small, Irish-looking man, with dark circles under his eyes and a brooding, sad face. Billy looks at the huge avant-garde mural.

BILLY

Wow.

Delphi doesn't move, he just stares sadly at the mural.

DELPHI

Zelda, it's hopeless. I don't think
I'll ever finish it.

ZELDA

That's what you always say. Billy,
this is Delphi, the artist. He's
painting a mural for me. Delphi,
you know Mabel.

DELPHI

Yes, yes. Hello, hello. Zelda,
we're out of Fritos.

ZELDA

I'll get some more in the morning.

DELPHI

Alright.

ZELDA

We're having an orgy. Want to join
us?

(CONTINUED)

DELPHI

Zelda, stop tempting me. You know how busy I am! Wait until the mural's finished.

ZELDA

Sorry.

Delphi gets up slowly and approaches the mural. He holds up the brush as if contemplating a stroke. But he doesn't do anything. He lowers the brush and stares at the mural, puzzled. After waiting awhile in breathless anticipation, Zelda leads Mabel and Billy away.

BILLY

How long has he been working on it?

ZELDA

Two years.

INT. - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Zelda's bedroom is a divided-off section of the loft. Blood red curtains with gold sashes cover a circle of flats. A huge round bed is displayed in the center of the makeshift room. Drapes of pastel-colored lace panels hang from the ceiling, outlining the bed. The bed itself is covered with a fuzzy white blanket. Billy does a turn as he looks around the wondrous room. It does look like a place for an orgy. Zelda and Mabel watch Billy with amused smiles.

ZELDA

Well, is he drunk enough for us to take advantage of him?

BILLY

We're not really going to have an orgy, are we?

MABEL

Aw, he isn't drunk enough.

ZELDA

I'll get the champagne.

INT. - ZELDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A romantic song plays through the scene. Billy holds a long, tapered glass as Mabel fills it to the brim with champagne. Zelda takes Billy's hand and lifts it toward his face. Billy takes a deep breath and starts to drink.

MABEL AND ZELDA

One! Two! Three! Four! Five!

Billy finishes the last drops and gasps for breath. Mabel and Zelda laugh. Billy smiles dizzily.

ZELDA

How is he? Check his eyes.

Mabel takes Billy's chin in her hands and turns his face toward her. She studies his eyes.

MABEL

Hmmm. I think one more will do it.

BILLY

Oh, I don't ... think ...

ZELDA

Let's get him out of his clothes first.

They both unbutton his shirt, remove it, and pull off his shoes.

ZELDA (cont'd)

Alright, go for it.

Mabel takes Billy's glass and fills it to the brim again. Billy shakes his head.

MABEL

Come on.

Billy takes the glass and downs it quickly. He hands it to Mabel. He falls back on the bed and starts to giggle. Mabel and Zelda smile at each other.

(CONTINUED)

ZELDA

He's ready.

Mabel and Zelda each grab an arm and start kissing him from the hand to the elbow to the shoulder, and finally they alternate kissing him on the lips. Billy closes his eyes in utter bliss.

ZELDA (cont'd)

Keep warming him up. I'll get his pants off.

Mabel kisses Billy on the cheeks and neck as Zelda sits up and starts to undo Billy's pants. Billy opens his eyes and looks seriously into Mabel's.

BILLY

I love you.

Mabel gazes down at Billy, her face soft and fragile.

MABEL

I love you.

They kiss. Billy puts his arms around her and they embrace tightly. Zelda struggles to get Billy's jeans off of his legs. She finally does it. Billy rolls over on top of Mabel, the two of them locked together passionately. Zelda sits on the bed for a moment, watching them. Something's not quite right here. Mabel and Billy are kissing. She lights up a cigarette and watches as Billy starts to undo Mabel's blouse. They are so intensely concentrated on each other it's as if Zelda isn't even in the room. She takes a long drag from her cigarette and exhales.

ZELDA

Well, we can't have an orgy without whipped cream. I'll go to the 7-11 and get some.

She stands up, half smiles, and walks out. Billy and Mabel continue to make love as the music plays on.

INT. - ZELDA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Billy and Mabel lie naked under the blankets of Zelda's bed. They are sound asleep in each other's arms. Mabel's

(CONTINUED)

artificial leg lies on the floor, mixed in with their clothes. Someone knocks on one of the walls. Billy and Mabel stir. Delphi stomps into the room and glares at them.

DELPHI

Where's Zelda?

Mabel and Billy's eyes pop open. They look around the room.

MABEL

I don't know. She left last night.

DELPHI

I thought you were having an orgy together?

BILLY

She ... went to get some whipped cream.

DELPHI

I hope she gets some other food, too. There's nothing to eat and I'm starved.

Delphi exits. Mabel and Billy sit up.

MABEL

What time is it?

BILLY

I don't know. I've got to work at ten. They both climb out of bed and grab their clothes.

INT. - WAREHOUSE LOFT - DAY

Billy and Mabel come out of the warehouse and find Billy's Porsche. There is a note under the windshield wiper. Mabel takes it.

BILLY

What's it say?

MABEL

(reading)

"Went after Sam. Hope you had fun.
Fixed Porsche. Zelda"

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

Fixed Porsche? Billy opens the car door and gets inside. He puts in the key and tries it. It starts.

INT. - PORSCHE - DAY

Billy and Mabel are in the Porsche as it whizzes down the street. They are unusually quiet, reflective. Billy glances over at Mabel. There's a warm smile on his face.

BILLY

Good morning.

Mabel doesn't look at him, but she smiles.

MABEL

Good morning.

INT. - RESTAURANT KITCHEN - DAY

Billy unloads dirty dishes from a cart. In the background, Mark distributes paychecks. He makes his way to Billy and hands him one.

MARK

Payday.

Billy glances at the check, obviously a little disappointed. Mark puts a hand on Billy's shoulder.

MARK (cont'd)

How are you doing?

BILLY

Fine.

MABEL

Come into my office. I'd like to talk to you.

INT. - MARK'S OFFICE - DAY

Mark sits behind his desk, talking to Billy.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

God knows it's none of my business,
but let me give you a little
personal advice.

Mark pauses, waiting for Billy's response.

BILLY

Yes?

MARK

Don't get mixed up with Mabel
Burns.

Billy's eyes widen in anger.

BILLY

Why not?!

MARK

Look, I said it was none of my
business. So if you don't want to
hear it ...

BILLY

I don't want to hear it.

MARK

(continuing)

Did you know she was a heroin
addict?

BILLY

Yes! She doesn't do it anymore.

MARK

Did you know she tried to kill
herself twice?

BILLY

Yes!

MARK

(pushing)

Did you know she used to stand on
Santa Monica Boulevard and give
blowjobs for five bucks?

(CONTINUED)

Billy didn't know that, and his face shows it. Furious, he jumps up.

BILLY

That's a lie.

MARK

She didn't tell you that, did she?

BILLY

Why don't you leave her alone?

MARK

I just think you should know the truth. You're new in L.A., and you should be careful of whom you get mixed up with.

BILLY

So ... so what is she supposed to do? Jump off a cliff? Just because she's had problems? She's not allowed to change? To try to get her life together?

MARK

People don't change, Billy.

BILLY

Go to hell. I quit.

Billy starts to walk toward the door. Mark leans back in his chair and speaks in a soothing voice.

MARK

Billy. Don't be silly.

Billy stops.

MARK (cont'd)

I've told you what I think and that's the end of it. I felt like I had to warn you. I care about you, that's all. Don't get angry and do something stupid. It's not easy to get jobs these days.

Billy takes a deep breath. He despises Mark, but doesn't

(CONTINUED)

want to lose his job. Mark stands up and strolls over to Billy. He puts an arm on Billy's shoulder.

MARK (cont'd)

You're a good worker. I've been thinking about promoting you to waiter ... in a few weeks. OK?

Billy doesn't say anything. Mark smiles.

MARK (cont'd)

OK.

INT. - PORSCHE - NIGHT

The Porsche is parked at a drive-in movie. We hear the sound of naked women being hacked apart by insane faceless killers. Mabel is munching happily on popcorn. Billy looks uncomfortable. Partly because of the film, partly for another reason.

BILLY

Mabel ...

Mabel is completely engrossed in the film.

MABEL

Yeah, babe?

BILLY

Did you ever ... a long time ago ... did you ... maybe when you were doing drugs ... did you ... on Santa Monica ...

MABEL

What? When I used to sell blowjobs?

Billy nods weakly.

MABEL (cont'd)

Yeah, didn't I tell you about that? Mostly hand jobs. It seemed like a good way to earn money at the time.

Billy stares at her, surprised, but somehow relieved. Mabel munches on some popcorn.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL (cont'd)

Yeah, that's back when I thought I was going to be the world's greatest one-legged prostitute. Oh, well. You sure I didn't tell you about this?

BILLY

(weakly)

No.

MABEL

God, it's my favorite story. I was working the street, but like, since I was frigid, I never really did anything -- not that anyone wanted to screw one-legged jailbait, but I found a need in quickies and marketed myself.

Billy stares at Mabel in silence.

MABEL (cont'd)

What? Does that gross you out?

BILLY

I don't know.

There is another moment of silence.

MABEL

I never swallowed.

Billy smiles despite himself.

MABEL (cont'd)

Hey, I told you I was fucked up.

Billy shakes his head, smiling.

BILLY

You're so weird.

INT. - DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Billy has finished folding up the blankets and bedding on the couch. He places them in a neat pile. David stands off to the side.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

Well, that's about it. Don't have much to pack. Here you go.

Billy hands David the pile.

DAVID

Keep 'em.

BILLY

You sure?

DAVID

Yes. What are you going to sleep on?

BILLY

I'll buy some blankets with my next paycheck.

DAVID

Keep 'em.

Billy sets the blankets down and he and David hug.

BILLY

Thanks for everything. I know I've been a pain.

DAVID

You sure have. But you seem happy. It all worked out. Have you told Mabel yet?

BILLY

No. I'm afraid it'll just upset her.

DAVID

Upset her? Why?

INT. - STAGE - NIGHT

Mabel is on stage. She thumps on her artificial leg.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

You know, I always wanted a peg leg. Wouldn't that be hot?
 "Artificial" legs are so wimpy, but peg legs are bad. It's like, hey!
 -- I don't have a leg, I have a peg! My doctor wouldn't go for it. No imagination. But I think it could have led to a whole new career for me. Like: pirate!

(pirate voice)

Arrggh matey. Hand over your treasure!

(parrot voice)

Pieces of eight. Pieces of eight.

(back to normal)

Actually, there are lots of job openings for people who limp. As a medical assistant, for example.

(Igor voice)

Master! Master! It's alive! It's alive.

(normal)

There are bell ringers, super spies. Unfortunately, limping women are always typecast as frail, introverted Southerners.

(Southern mom)

Dear, don't call yourself crippled. You're hardly crippled at all.

(frail young thing)

Yes, Mama.

Mabel limps across the stage, providing her own vocal sound effect.

MABEL

Thunk, thunk, thunk.

(frail young thing)

Look at the light shining through my delicate glass menagerie.

(limping)

Clunk, clunk, crash.

(frail young thing)

Oh, no! The phallic symbol has broken off the head of the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

(cont'd)

unicorn ...

(normal)

Nope. Better stay away from Tennessee Williams. I'm likely to end up in an insane asylum or just plain get horny. But of all the literary gimps my real hero is Richard the Third. Nobody messed with that dude. He knew his stuff.

Mabel suddenly slips into a surprisingly good (and serious) Shakespearean monologue from the play. The monologue ends with:

MABEL

(powerful)

"Me, of beggarly dukedom, limping and misshapen thus ... All this time I did mistake myself."

Mabel, hunched over, pauses with an intense expression on her face. The audience goes silent, surprised and somewhat awed. Mabel straightens.

MABEL

(normal)

I'd have made one hell of a bastard king!

INT. - BILLY'S NEW APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Billy and Mabel walk through a dingy hallway of a slummy apartment building. They come upon an apartment door and Billy pulls out a key.

BILLY

This is it.

Mabel surveys the rundown surroundings. Billy opens the door.

BILLY (cont'd)

Come on in.

INT. - BILLY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mabel and Billy enter a small, yellowish off-white room.

(CONTINUED)

Aside from a tattered couch and a small record-player/radio, the room is completely bare. Paint peels off the walls.

BILLY
Isn't it great?

Mabel looks around.

MABEL
It's a palace.

Billy looks at Mabel, disappointed.

BILLY
I know it's not the greatest. But it's something. I paid for it myself.

MABEL
What's the rent?

BILLY
Two fifty a month. There was a hundred dollar security deposit. I used the money Zelda gave me. You want to look around?

MABEL
There's more?

INT. - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Billy shows Mabel the bedroom. It's very tiny, and the only piece of furniture is a small double bed.

MABEL
Did the bed come with it?

BILLY
No, I bought the bed from a friend of David's. That's where I got the couch and the kitchen table. He sold it all to me for only fifty dollars.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL
(sarcastically)
Ooooh, you drive a hard bargain.

BILLY
He gave me a radio, too.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Billy turns on the radio. Music emits from two dull-sounding speakers. Billy points to a phone lying on the floor with a long coil of phone line.

BILLY
And look -- a phone! It'll be
turned on tomorrow. I already have
my own phone number.
(beat)
You've got to imagine it with some
paint and more furniture. Maybe
some posters or something. It could
be a great place.

Mabel doesn't respond.

BILLY
Don't you think? You think I'm
crazy.

Mabel looks around the room.

MABEL
Maybe with some paINT. - You could
put up posters from horror films --
monsters and women getting chopped
up.

BILLY
If I put up horror posters, would
you move in with me?

It takes Mabel a long while to answer.

MABEL
I don't think that's a good idea.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

OK.

MABEL

I mean, it'll be nice to have a place to go with each other. But I don't think we could live together. It wouldn't work.

BILLY

OK.

MABEL

Thanks for asking.

A slow love song comes on the radio. It's a classic, slow dancing song.

BILLY

Listen. I love this song.

Billy and Mabel listen to the song. It's very romantic and Billy looks at Mabel with big soft eyes.

MABEL

Stop looking at me like that. You look hungry.

Billy slides up close to Mabel. He puts his arms around her. She somewhat reluctantly wraps her arms around him. They kiss. Billy pulls Mabel in close and he starts to sway with her to the music. Gradually, they start to shift on their feet and turn in a small circle.

MABEL (cont'd)

Don't think you're getting me to dance. This isn't dancing. It's shuffling. It doesn't count.

BILLY

OK.

They continue to dance. Mabel lays her head on Billy's shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

You don't really want me to live
with you, do you?

INT. - NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Julie is singing on stage. Mabel sits by herself at a table
drinking a double gin. Toni comes up and sits down next to
her.

TONI

You OK?

MABEL

Yeah. Fine.

TONI

Why are you drinking?

MABEL

'Cause I'm a lush.

TONI

I haven't seen you drink like that
in weeks. Everything OK with you
and Billy?

Mabel looks at Toni.

MABEL

No.

INT. - TONI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Toni and Mabel are in bed.

TONI

I knew it was coming.

MABEL

Mad at me?

TONI

No. It seems right. I'll miss you.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

It probably won't work out, you know. And I'll come crying home.

TONI

I'll always be here.

MABEL

Yeah, except by then you'll be sleeping with Julie.

TONI

You're the one who wanted to sleep with Julie. Not me.

MABEL

I'll miss her, too.

TONI

Oh. You'll still work at my club, won't you?

Mabel looks at Toni quietly for a moment.

MABEL

I don't know. You want me to?

TONI

Of course.

MABEL

Really?

TONI

Yes. A lot of people come just to see you. And you've been a lot funnier since you stopped drinking so much. Don't you want to work here?

MABEL

If you want me to.

Toni and Mabel look at each other quietly for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

TONI

You would have died if I hadn't
asked you.

Mabel nods. They hug.

INT. - BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Billy is asleep in bed. The phone rings in the other room.
Billy climbs out of bed to answer it.

INT. - BILLY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The phone rings again. Billy, still sleepy, can't help but
smile.

BILLY

(thrilled)

My phone works.

Billy picks up the phone.

BILLY

Hello?

His face instantly sours. He swallows.

BILLY (cont'd)

Hi, Daddy. Where did you get the
number? It just got turned on. I
was going to call. I just --

Billy listens intently. We can faintly hear his father
screaming on the other end.

BILLY (cont'd)

It's only been a few weeks. I sent
that card. I told Mom that I was
leaving. I'm sorry.

Billy listens for a long while.

BILLY (cont'd)

I'm sorry. I don't know. I just had
to. Daddy, I'm not a kid anymore.
You can't make me come home.

EXT. - DIRTY STREET - NIGHT

Billy paces restlessly down an empty street, his face full of anger and pain. He mumbles to himself. In the gutter is an empty bottle of Thunderbird wrapped up in a paper bag. Billy picks it up. He throws it down on the sidewalk and smashes it. He kicks the broken glass off the sidewalk with his shoe. He stops at a brick wall and leans up against it. He slides down the wall until he falls into a sitting position.

BILLY

(low)

You can't make me do what you want anymore. Just leave me alone.

EXT. - FRONT OF APARTMENT - DAY

Mabel stands on the curb, waiting. The sun is shining and she is happy. The Porsche pulls up and parks. Billy turns off the engine and sits in the car, staring ahead in a daze. He hasn't shaved, hasn't slept all night. Mabel opens the passenger door and climbs in.

MABEL

I talked to Toni. I'm going to move out. I'm such a shit, but she was so nice. She's even going to let me keep working at the club. And pay me even. She ...

Mabel drifts off as she notices Billy's expressionless stare.

MABEL (cont'd)

What is it?

BILLY

I ...

MABEL

(worried)

What? Did someone die?

BILLY

I'm going back to Iowa.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

... why?

BILLY

My dad's flying out to get me.

MABEL

I don't get it. Did something happen?

BILLY

He just wants me back. He's coming to get me.

MABEL

Tell him to fuck off. He doesn't own you.

Billy shakes his head weakly.

BILLY

You don't understand my dad.

MABEL

I don't understand you! What are you telling me? That you're going back to your Papa just because he tells you to?

BILLY

He can make me do it. I know he can. I can tell when he's made up his mind. He always gets what he wants.

MABEL

Well I'm going to get what I want for a change! You're not going! I'll tell him. If you don't have the nerve to stand up for yourself then I'll stand up for you! Billy shakes his head again.

BILLY

Mabel, that's not going to help. When my father sees you ...

(CONTINUED)

He fades off.

MABEL

What? WHAT! Sees that I'm a
cripple?

BILLY

No! When he sees ... sees that
you're different. My father doesn't
believe in that. He doesn't ... he
doesn't understand why I didn't
marry the girl next door and buy a
house across the street and drive a
Chevy and live just like he does.

Billy reaches out and touches Mabel's face.

BILLY (cont'd)

Everything that I love about you is
what my father wants to save me
from. If he sees you he'll ...

Mabel slaps Billy's hand away.

MABEL

I can't believe this! This is some
kind of colossal joke. TELL ME
YOU'RE JOKING!

BILLY

I knew he'd try to stop me, but I
never thought he'd come after me. I
never thought he would. I'm sorry.

MABEL

So that's it? You're not even going
to try to fight him?

BILLY

I don't know how. All I know is he
always gets what he wants.

MABEL

You bastard!

Mabel starts punching Billy.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

I knew you were going to do this! I
knew something would happen! You
bastard! You've put me through
hell. You shit. You shit!

She smashes open the passenger door and stomps out of the car. She slams the door shut.

MABEL (cont'd)

Don't you ever talk to me again. I
hate you! I hate you!

Mabel limps away from the car. Billy sits silently in the car for a moment. He starts up the engine. Just as the car begins to pull away, Mabel runs over and pounds on the hood.

MABEL (cont'd)

No! No! No!

Billy stops the car with a jerk. Mabel kicks it with her artificial leg. Mabel rips open the door of the car and yells inside.

MABEL (cont'd)

You are not leaving me! You're not!

Mabel slams her fist down on the roof of the car.

EXT. - BILLY'S APARTMENT - SUNSET

A large American rental car stops in front of Billy's apartment building. Inside the car is Billy's father, Mr. Mallory. He glances at a slip of paper to check the address. He climbs out of the car and looks around at the slummy neighborhood. He shakes his head. He was right. He marches up the front steps of the apartment building and goes inside.

INT. - HALLWAY - SUNSET

Mr. Mallory knocks hard on the door to Billy's apartment. Billy slowly opens the door.

MR. MALLORY

I can't believe you, boy! I can't
believe you'd run out on your
mother to live in a shit hole like

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MR. MALLORY (cont'd)

this.

BILLY

(swallowing)

Daddy ...

MR. MALLORY

Are you taking drugs?

BILLY

No, Dad. I'm not taking drugs.

MR. MALLORY

Well, start packing. You're coming home.

Mr. Mallory pushes past Billy into the apartment.

INT. - BILLY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Mr. Mallory marches into the room and Billy closes the door behind him. Mr. Mallory looks around for a moment in disgust, and then spots Mabel in a chair in the corner of the room. Mabel doesn't look much like herself. She is wearing a long dress, plain Mary Jane shoes, and a bow in her hair. She looks reserved and shy. As Mr. Mallory eyes her, she slowly stands.

BILLY

Dad, this is Mabel.

Mr. Mallory studies her. Mabel takes a couple of limping steps toward him and holds out her hand.

MABEL

Pleased to meet you, Mr. Mallory.

Mr. Mallory takes her hand and shakes it.

MR. MALLORY

Hello.

He looks at Billy, confused.

BILLY

Mabel's my girlfriend, Dad.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

(the genteel lady)

You must be hungry after your trip.
Have you eaten?

MR. MALLORY

Well, no ...

MABEL

Why don't I cook us some dinner?
You both sit down. I'm sure you
have a lot to talk about.

Mabel limps into the kitchen. Mr. Mallory sees her artificial leg as she goes. He looks questioningly at Billy.

BILLY

(softly)

She's crippled, Dad.

INT. - KITCHEN - EVENING

Mabel, obviously unused to being in a kitchen, is frantically unpacking take-out food from cartons warming in the oven onto plates. A lump of butter is frying in an empty pan for sound effect.

MABEL

(calling off)

I'm just whipping a little
something up, nothing fancy.

Mabel quickly discards the packages. As she cooks, Mabel mumbles quietly to herself.

MABEL

(Southern accent -- getting
into character)

You're hardly crippled, Mabel.
Hardly crippled at all.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Billy and his father sit across from each other at a tiny dining table. From the kitchen we hear the sounds of frying and banging pans. Mr. Mallory eyes Billy suspiciously as they talk in low voices.

(CONTINUED)

MR. MALLORY

She's not sleeping here, is she?

BILLY

No, Dad. She lives with her sister.

MR. MALLORY

What happened to her leg?

BILLY

Birth defect.

MR. MALLORY

(low)

You couldn't find a whole girl?

BILLY

Dad!

MR. MALLORY

(grunts)

She seems nice enough, I guess.

Mabel carries out several plates heaped with food.

MABEL

(faintest hint of a Southern
accent)

There wasn't much in the cupboard,
but I did what I could.

It's a huge feast. Mabel sets it down on the table and starts to dish it out to Billy's father.

MABEL

Billy only told me yesterday you
were coming, and ...

MR. MALLORY

No, no. This looks fine.

Mabel serves Billy and then sits down and serves herself.

MABEL

Billy, do you want to say the
prayer?

Billy's father glances at Billy. Billy glances at Mabel.

(CONTINUED)

Mabel makes a strange face at Billy. Billy bows his head.

BILLY

Dear Lord, we thank you for the
food which we are about to eat.

MABEL

Amen.

Billy glances at Mabel. Mabel winks. They start to eat.

MR. MALLORY

Why Mabel, this is quite good.
You're a real little cook.

MABEL

Well, I don't get out a lot, Mr.
Mallory, because of my condition.
So I spend a lot of time practicing
my cooking.

MR. MALLORY

I bet you make lots of cookies.

MABEL

Oh, lots of cookies.

They all eat in silence for awhile.

MR. MALLORY

You seem like a nice girl, Mabel.

MABEL

Thank you, Mr. Mallory.

MR. MALLORY

I was worried about the kind of
people my son would associate with
in a big city. He's kind of an
impressionable sort.

MABEL

He's quite a gentleman. It's hard
to find boys like that in the city.

(CONTINUED)

MR. MALLORY

Yes, but Mabel, you're a woman. You can understand how upset his mother is. Him running out like that, without leaving any word where he was going.

BILLY

Dad, I told Mom ...

MR. MALLORY

Hush. I'm talking to Mabel. Mabel, have you ever been to Iowa?

MABEL

I'm afraid I haven't been much out of Los Angeles.

MR. MALLORY

Iowa's a beautiful state, Mabel. The people. The people are beautiful. They'd give you the bread out of their mouths.

Mabel nods.

MR. MALLORY (cont'd)

A girl like you doesn't belong in the city. Now I don't want to rush you into anything, but my sister has a spare room and I could probably get you a job ...

BILLY

Dad, Mabel doesn't want to move to Iowa ...

MR. MALLORY

You be quiet. I'm talking to her.

MABEL

It sounds wonderful, Mr. Mallory, but I'm afraid I can't travel much. I have to go to the hospital once a week for treatments.

(CONTINUED)

MR. MALLORY

Treatments?

MABEL

Oh ... didn't Billy tell you ...
Oh ...

MR. MALLORY

No, he didn't ...

MABEL

I ... well ... the doctors can't
say for certain, but ... I may
not ... be around ... for more than
a year or two ...

MR. MALLORY

Oh, Mabel ...

MABEL

(nobly)

I've made my peace with God. I have
no regrets.

MR. MALLORY

You're a brave woman.

Billy impulsively jumps in.

BILLY

Dad, me and Mabel are getting
married.

Mr. Mallory and Mabel both stare at Billy in amazement.

MABEL

(nervously)

Now, now, Billy. We've ... talked
about this. Not until I get the
word back from the doctors on the
latest tests. No point in making
wedding plans if I die before ...

BILLY

I don't care, Mabel. I want to
marry you.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

(firmly)

Billy, we'll talk about it later.

Mr. Mallory bows his head and looks down at his food. We can see he's very touched.

MR. MALLORY

That's a hell of a woman you've got there, Billy.

BILLY

I think so too, Daddy.

Billy glances at Mabel and smiles. Mabel winks.

INT. - KITCHEN - EVENING

Mabel, wearing an apron, is carrying the empty plates into the kitchen.

MR. MALLORY (O.S.)

You sure you don't need some help with those dishes, Mabel?

MABEL

(calling back)

Oh, no, Mr. Mallory. I know how to take care of dishes.

Mabel takes the dishes and throws them into the garbage bag under the sink.

MR. MALLORY

Well then, me and Billy are going to go for a little walk. We'll be back soon.

MABEL

That's fine ...

Mabel thinks for a second. Maybe that isn't fine. She runs into the living room.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Mabel rushes into the living room just as Billy and Mr. Mallory are about to head out the front door.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

Err ... the dishes can wait. Maybe I can come with you.

MR. MALLORY

No, Mabel, if you'll pardon us. This is a little father-to-son talk. We're going to work out this California thing.

MABEL

Well, but maybe I could ...

BILLY

(cutting in)

It'll be OK.

Mabel looks at Billy nervously. Billy nods quietly. He opens the door, and he and his father step out into the hall.

MR. MALLORY

We won't be too long.

Mabel watches them go, worried.

EXT. - BILLY'S APARTMENT - SUNSET

Billy and Mr. Mallory stroll up the street. Mr. Mallory sniffs at the air in disgust.

MR. MALLORY

The air is rancid here. You can hardly breathe.

(pause)

I just don't know what to make of all this, son. You run away from us. You meet a girl. Now you want to marry her. You're rushing things. You need to slow down and think a little. You let your heart rule you. I don't know where you got that from.

BILLY

I've thought about it. I've made up my mind.

(CONTINUED)

MR. MALLORY

Son ... a woman like that ... a woman who's different. She needs a lot of special care. A lot of extra love. I just hope you're up to it.

BILLY

I am.

MR. MALLORY

Not everyone is as tolerant as me of people who are ... special.

BILLY

I don't care what other people think. I love her.

Mr. Mallory nods. He stops for a moment and looks off into the sky. He just can't bear it.

MR. MALLORY

I like her, Billy. I do. But this ... city, it isn't right for you. I know it isn't. It isn't right for her. There's a very good hospital in Ida Grove. We could talk to Mabel's doctors. Work this thing out. She might live a lot longer in good country air.

BILLY

Dad, that's not the poINT. - This is Mabel's home. It's mine, too. I decided that before I met her. I'm not going back.

MR. MALLORY

Billy, you don't know how your mother is suffering ... you running away and all.

Billy looks at his father seriously.

BILLY

Dad, Mom doesn't care. You know she doesn't. It's you. You're the one who never wanted me to go. You've

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BILLY (cont'd)

never wanted me to grow up. You held me back from kindergarten. Wouldn't let me graduate early from high school. You wouldn't let me go to college. I had to run away. You wouldn't ever have let me go.

Billy's father looks at him, pained. Both of them are on the verge of tears.

MR. MALLORY

You're my only son. I don't want to grow old and not have you around.

BILLY

I know. But it's my life.

EXT. - AIRPORT - DAY

Mr. Mallory walks through the airport with Mabel and Billy. He carries a small suitcase.

MR. MALLORY

Maybe you could visit for a couple of days during the Tulip Festival. You'd like that, Mabel. Lots of flowers.

MABEL

It sounds wonderful.

They reach the boarding gate. Mr. Mallory pauses.

MR. MALLORY

Mabel, you take care of my boy here. See that he doesn't get into any trouble.

MABEL

I will, Mr. Mallory.

MR. MALLORY

You don't have to be so formal. I don't know, maybe it's rushing things, but you could call me "Dad" if you like.

Mabel stares at Mr. Mallory for a moment. He's broken her

(CONTINUED)

down with that one. She starts to cry. Mr. Mallory sets down his suitcase, takes her in his arms, and gives her a hug.

MABEL

(sobbing)

I may not die. I mean ... the doctors aren't sure ...

Mr. Mallory speaks to her in the gentle voice of someone who is certain she won't live to see tomorrow.

MR. MALLORY

I'm sure you'll be fine, Mabel.

Mabel tries to control herself. Mr. Mallory gently places her into Billy's hands. He picks up his suitcase.

MR. MALLORY (cont'd)

When's the wedding?

BILLY

Spring.

Mr. Mallory nods.

MR. MALLORY

I'll have to bring your mother out.
You both take care, alright?
Goodbye.

BILLY AND MABEL

Goodbye.

Mr. Mallory and Billy stand silently for a moment. Billy steps toward him and they hug.

MR. MALLORY

'Bye, son.

Mr. Mallory goes through the gate toward the plane. Billy puts his arm around Mabel. As soon as Mr. Mallory is out of earshot:

MABEL

What the fuck are we going to do in the Spring?

(CONTINUED)

BILLY
(smiling)
Get married.

Mabel shakes her head.

MABEL
He's a sweet guy.

BILLY
He's not so bad. Mostly.

MABEL
I almost went to Iowa with him.
(beat)
You know, Billy, I always wanted to
be normal.

INT. - STAGE - NIGHT

Mabel is on stage.

MABEL
Relationships.
(beat)
What! What! "Relationships." Here
is my thirty second re-enactment of
every relationship. Boy-girl, boy-
boy, girl-girl, girl-cat, whatever.
The thirty second relationship:
(beat)
Hmmm ... cute ... oooh ... hmmm ...
cute ... Hi. Hello. Hey. Hey. Oh.
Yes. Yes. OHHH. I LOVE YOU ... I
LOVE YOU. OHHH! Hey. Wow. Yawn.
Burp. Ick. Hi, dear. Yawn. Can't
you ever leave the lid on the
fucking toothpaste? I hate you. I
love you. I hate you. I love you.
Go away. I love you. Let's see
other people. Goodbye. Jerk.
(pause)
Now, not all relationships are like
that.
(beat)
Some last forty-five seconds.

INT. - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark but for the faint light of the city outside the window. We can hear the traffic and the other noises of Los Angeles. Billy and Mabel lie in bed, staring up at the ceiling. Piled along with them on the covers are Mabel's stuffed animals.

BILLY

Let's get married.

MABEL

I'm not going to marry you, Billy.

BILLY

Why not?

MABEL

I'm just not that kind of girl. Not the marrying kind.

BILLY

Here, I got something for you.

Billy rolls over to the edge of the bed and reaches under it. He grabs something and rolls back over to Mabel's side.

BILLY (cont'd)

Here.

He hands her a tiny box. It's obviously a ring. Mabel holds it gently in her hands, as if she's afraid to crush it. She is on the verge of tears.

MABEL

I'm not going to marry you.

BILLY

Are you going to open it?

Mabel opens it. A tiny diamond solitaire shines in the light.

MABEL

That's the most hideous ring I've ever seen.

(CONTINUED)

FADE OUT.