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AREAS OF HEAVY TRAFFIC, players version

A full length play

by E. Macer-Story

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CHARACTERS

ZEENA. a social worker of middle class origins, 32, tailored

EILEEN, an executive of lower middle class origins, 35. blousy.

MARTA, a sometime model and office assistant, 32, fashionable.

KRISHNA PUPPET, Voice of Salesman

BILLY D, a drifter. 37. levis and ornamented shirt.

FRANK, a middle class lawyer. 35, fashionable.

BONITA. Frank's wife, a housewife, 30, ingénue.

SALESMAN, an older carnival antiques dealer.

The style of acting, within the effects utilized by the billboard movie backdrop, should be expressionist realism.

SET

Sloping ramps and backdrop connections reminiscent of traffic interchange bridges connect the levels of the stage and extend upward back of a signboard movie screen.

The general effect of this design is of large, pre-fab construction, as in parking ramps, fire escapes and apartment house balconies and patios.

Furniture and properties are brought onto these levels as needed. Visual effects on stage should not be elaborate.

At the opening of the play there is a large, white sofa on the stage left platform and no other furniture. The screen shows an abstract line drawing of traffic analysis patterns.

SCENE ONE

ZEENA enters stage left as there is a distant yell from offstage and the sound of tires skidding on concrete. She winces, then sits down on the sofa. winces again as there is another, fainter yell. Throughout the following sections there are sounds of traffic

ZEENA, to herself

Yesterday , Darling I saw a man on the bus carrying an orange crate. It must have been about ten o'clock, nine-thirty or ten o'clock. I do not remember what was in the crate. He peed on the seat and asked me whether I ran a free lance business so I got up and moved . The trouble with most people, Darling, is that they do not get up and leave. People ask me why I'm always addressing people like you. Darling, friends and strangers gone by the boards, by the

...

The telephone rings. Zeena pulls it out of her attaché case and sits cross-legged

Well, al~ right . O yes: I suppose they should have given you that promotion ,darling . I don't know . I don't know a thing about the safety regulations . All right .call me tomorrow: good bye .

She lies down on the sofa.

Good lord: as I have predicted to Marta, when I am the age of the prophets of Israeli will be living in a cheap hotel and having to eat regular breakfasts because I do not have the ambition to move around the corner to another café Where did Marta meet that guru, Darling? On a public bus?

She dozes.

A life-sized puppet of Krishna interrupts MARTA as she enters under one of the traffic ramps with a suitcase.

KRISHNA

I beg your pardon

MARTA

Yes.

KRISHNA

But are you ... familiar with Krishna, actually: you remind me of my sister ...

MARTA

In China?

KRISHNA

India O

MARTA

Your sister in India?

KRISHNA

Yes. O yes my sister in India, I'm sorry to say. I hope I'm not intruding .

MARTA

O, no ... no, you're not intruding .I just don't understand ...

KRISHNA, suavely

Certainly: we have often discussed Krishna .

MARTA

No I (she laughs) Yes: I suppose we might have discussed you...but I...

KRISHNA, laughing

Sorry ... no ... with my sister I have discussed myself as Krishna with my sister Bonita. You do actually resemble Bonita. Did anyone ever tell you that you resemble my sister?

MARTA

Yes. You did.

The puppet turns away from Marta and remains onstage leaning against the traffic patterns on the screen.

MARTA

Hello this may shock you but they have told me just exactly what was intended: a cat appeared at my window.. a cat belled in red leather . I must leave I must leave this city,.

ZEENA, sitting up

Leave? .o no: where would you go then?

MARTA

Go? Not like that. Not like a refugee. no,. that's been planned. My itinerary has been planned

(She laughs

So to speak.my itinerary has been planned .

ZEENA,

Fumbling, reaching into her attaché case:

Marta .o. here ,Marta ... before you go here: there's something I'd like you to see in this newspaper.

MARTA, walking up the ramp

May I use your cell phone?

ZEENA, leafing through the paper as Marta takes the phone

Certainly: go ahead ... o yes :there was an article in the paper, Marta ... something you ought to ...yes ... that I'd like to show you, if I could find it

MARTA, on the phone

Hi ... I'm going to be a little late. Sorry ... I'd say about Eight or so...

ZEENA, as Marta listens on the phone

yes ... all right .. all thumbs and stumbling here ... I suppose it was probably in another paper ... I suppose I threw. it out.

MARTA,still on the phone

No, no: nothing . No emergencies or "stalking" and all the rest of /

it ...

She laughs

Wouldn't you like to know little lover? Wouldn't

you like to know? .

ZEENAs as Marta clicks off the phone

Who was that? Eileen?

MARTA

NO: Franklin Wharton: don't you like that name?. "Franklin Wharton"? that name has a power vibe. I'd better go.

ZEENA. lying back down as Marta leaves

Yes, yes, I think you'd better go. I can't ...I can't actually offer you much entertainment, just that eternal screaming down in the alley .

MARTA. laughing as she leaves and a canvas chair is set up beneath

yes,. o yes. just that eternal screaming... one of the ramps

EILEEN strides onstage, glances up at the picture of the laughing Krishna with some distaste, and sits down in the canvas chair

EILEEN. confidentially

I have discovered that under certain Circumstances Marta claims to have connections in heaven. This is usually at the time she attends or picks up these discussion groups or strangers ... strangers on the street usually. Personally, I prefer to shop at *Federici's* . I have often told Marta or Krishna or whatever she's calling herself these days that I am not an insensitive person. I do not consider myself an insensitive person. Basically, it does resolve itself into a matter of sensitivities .

ZEENA has gotten up from the couch. She takes her attaché case ,and begins to walk slowly down the ramp toward Eileen through the traffic ramps.

SCENE TWO

EILEEN, looking back over her shoulder

"Federici's"?: isn't that what they called it? Isn't that where we're going ? It used to be Federici's, but they changed it when they installed those the swinging doors and hardwood tables •••• EI Ranchero, isn't it now?

ZEENA, sitting down at the end of the ramp

El Hanchero ••• yes: it's still EI Ranchero •••

ZEENA, indicating the attaché case

I wont put this down, since we're leaving •••

EILEEN, rising from her chair impatiently

All right ••• if you say so ••• I ••• I'd brought you something from workto show you this time I thought you might like to see a safety manual._

ZEENA

Safety! 0, my god! What is safety, darling?

EILEEN. holding out the notebook

Who knows, Dahlink? But I thought you might like to see my safety manual

ZEENA, taking the book

Certainly ...

She leafs through the manual as Eileen watches.

So:isnt this interesting? .. what do you call these pictures?. What are they?

EILEEN, peering down at the book

Efficiency diagrams.

ZEENA

well, yes ... but they're ah .. actually "traffic patterns" it says here: aren't they?

EILEEN, formally

That is the word we use for these efficiency diagrams: yes..:

"traffic patterns" ... really, Zeena: it would help out a lot if you read the text not just the labels.

She leans over Zeena's shoulder~and turns over the pages of the bbok to a different section, then~impatiently to a series of illustrations at the back.

EILEEN

these're not ... they're just lines and waves and blocks nothingg

you know! absolutely unintelligible without the information ..

if you are at all interested in information, as versus just handling

my folders socially to be polite .

ZEENA. closing the book and staring at Eileen

O well, perhaps if you could indicate which ... ah ... which

sections are the most informative .. the key sections, I might ...

EILEEN,

taking the book and pacing out to the edge of the stage

yes, ,you might ... "might" understand key sections ... exactly ...

exactly: yes ... but not very important except...All right! Try

following the little blue arrows round to the UP side

when you want to go down and the downside when you want to go up~ ..

that is: disregarding our periodic elevator adjustments , it's all a

matter of the traffic of the shoppers: traffic on a particular day,

you know the stores wiII always be there when you want them, won't

they? .. every six months or so when you stop by for your extra pair

of panties ...

There is a silence as Eileen sits down regally in the canvas chair.

ZEENA

Ellie: you are over-reacting

EILEEN

Certainly: I know that have you bought any new clothes recently?

ZEENA

Eave I bought new clothes?!

She looks sarcastically overhead.

Billy Darling, have I bought new clothing?

EILEEN

Why do you always say: "Darling"

ZEENA

Ellie Darling, it's just an expression

EILEEN, getting up impatiently

Honest to god, Dahlink?

ZEENA

I just do not have time to buy new clothes.

EILEEN

Don't discuss this with me. I'm tired of your social discussions ..

ZEENA, with deadly calm

Social work discussions about the "tra-jeek" lives of people who have nothing to discuss but their own "tra-jeek" lives ... and now: here I am with your "safety" manual or whatever it is right down here in my lap

EILEEN, taking the book

All right: let me relieve your lap of my traffic patterns..

ZEENA

Did I show you this postcard?

EILEEN, accepting the card

O yes: Marta-Krishna where is that? Arizona? California? ... what is this? She writes: "pursuing it as usual", .. -. "what does THAT mean?

ZEENA

I suppose that means that she is pursuing it as usual.

EILEEN

Yes: but what does that actually mean, Zeena? Mine was from Santa Barbara.

ZEENA

Yes ... o. well.o.in the course of my social work employment we do discuss all sorts of abnormal behavior

EILEEN

I'm sure that you do. What the hell was she doing in Lake Tahoe, do you know? •• I thought for some reason that Franklin Wharton business took her to Texas and I don't know: so what?

ZEENA

I'm sure she's fine.

EILEEN

What? Who? Marta-Krishna?

ZEENA, nodding

Marta-Krishna.

EILEEN, handing back the postcard

O yes: she's fine .I'm sure she's fine. She's always fine

ZEENA, formally picking up her case so: pulling ourselves together, why don't we just get out of here and get a drink at El Rancho and in the process of that perhaps we can discuss your traffic safety manual, or whatever else is on the menu .

There is a silence as Eileen stares at Zeena.

EILEEN

I am not an insensitive person.

ZEENA

No: you are not an insensitive person, Eileen. I find your deep concern for Marrta-Krishna quite touching if a bit abnormal.

EILEEN, taking the book from Zeena

Yes •• well, all right: let's stow this. I have a concern about irregular behavior.

ZEENA, philosophically

If you say so, darling. There is an irregular man in
my office.

EILEEN

Yes.

ZEENA

He has a scar on one cheek.

EILEEN, laughing

This isn't your "Billy D". Darling?

ZEENA

No! ••• no: there is no actual "darling". It's just an affectionate expression.

EILEEN

All right: so he has a scar on one cheek.

ZEENA

Shall we continue this at El Rancho?

EILEEN

why not? Why not continue this at EL Rancho?

ZEENA, as they leave by the lower stage
leve

Actually, his name is William Darling, Ellie .He's had that scar for years now.

EILEEN, patiently

Really? I guess he must want it that way. Zeena

SCENE THREE

MARTA'S VOICE

You go so fast when you drive! ... I It frightens, me to go so fast:
MARTA enters onto the lower stage area. followed by BILLY D.

BILLY D, catching her
elbow

o so little lady: does it really frighten you?

He kisses her briefly. She returns the kiss, then pushes him away O

MARTA

No: actually ... it does not frighten meo .. I'm just afraid that I might be killed: that's all

BILLY D, laughing

O:I see.

MARTA

Quite a nice view of the landscape here.

BILLY D

Landscape!. .That's just the desert. honey.

MARTA

Is that what it is? .Certainly a nice view you've got here of the desert .

BILLY D, taking her hands

You've got fire in your veins.Did you know that?

MARTA. pushing him away

The fire's up in heaven, baby.

She brushes the sweat from her face and feels her head.

Don't you think we ought to get going now? Don't you think we ought to get out of the sun?

BILLY D,

catching her hand and putting it against his cheek

Can't you feel that ice water coming out on my forehead?

MARTA

What? ice water?

BILLY D

Let's get over in the shade here, and I'll cool you down

MARTA, laughing

o my god: Do you carry a fan?..., ~ Do you carry a fan in your pocket or what is the problem? O • • O my god ••• Eileen •••

BILLY D. laughing uncertainly

Eileen?

MARTA,

sitting down and taking a postcard out of her shoulder bag

Do you have a pen?

BILLY hesitating, puzzled

In my pocket!

MARTA v taking the pen and writing a
quick message and address on the card

Thanks. I_ said I'd le~ her know where I was going

As Billy D sits down beside her:

Is India like this? 9 c0 Do you think?

BILLY D

India? No: I think there's a lot of mud in India . Looks like
You've got your crazy moods!

MARTA

No crazier than your driving, Buddy. 0 0

BILLY D

Billy 0 the name is Billy •• Billy D •••

MARTA

Billy D~ what?

BILLY D

Billy D nothing ••• until you get to know me, baby.

MARTA

Marta.

There is a short silence

MARTA

SO: how far are we from Phoenix?

BILLY D

Not too far: a couple of hours ; give or take a few rest stops .

MARTA

I'm going to visit Bonnie Wharton. Frank always said that

Bonnie and I looked like identical twins, you know. O O

There is another short silence.

BILLY D, putting an arm around her shoulders

Did my driving scare you?

MARTA, getting up and walking away evasively

yes: it was like something out of a video game when we spun
around like we did when we stopped.

BILLY D, throwing up his hands in a humorous gesture

A video game! That's for carnivals.

MARTA

well: I'm used to city driving.

BILLY D, snapping his fingers in her fa~

Are you? •• everything's a game, sweetheart ••• even being so
particularly careful that it's not a game .

MARTA

How far did you say you were actually going?

BILLY D, laughing

Phoenix .before I drop you off: maybe we could have a little
a dinner in Phoenix. •

MARTA

I think not I'm going to be visiting some friends in

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Phoenix, and I think I'll be having dinner with my friends.

BILLY D

Well, everybody's got friends in Phoenix .At least where I come from they say they've got friends in Phoenix.

MARTA, slowly

At least where you come from.... Do you know where I come from? Did I tell you?

BILLY D

No. .

He laughs.

BILLY D, repeating her words

Do you know where I come from? Did I tell you?

There is a silence.

BILLY D. very gently taking Marta's hands

Do you know where I come from? Did I tell you?

MARTA, with a sudden
sadness

No. You never told me.

BILLY Do still holding her hands

I dunno, actually.

MARTA

India? Did you say you came from India?

BILLY D~ dropping her hands abruptly

I may have a little Indian blood.

He slaps his thigh:

I come from the place where we all come from .That sound like a little Indian wisdom?

MARTA, seriously

Yes: like a little popular Indian wisdom.

BILLY D starting off toward the car

Come on: let's get going. I cant give a kid a ride but they start talking about popular Indian wisdom.

MARTA

Well: I'm not a homeless kid you're giving ice water to, mister

BILLY De sarcastically

O that's right: your legal car broke down and there's an address Connected with the license.

He takes her by the shoulders and caresses her back. pressing her body close to his chest and hips without being explicitly sexual.

How recent that address is I don't know.

MARTA, kissing him and then breaking away

Legally recent.

BILLY D, catching her hand

When do you think she'll get that card you wrote?

MARTA

0₀ •• I don't know ... two ...two or three days from now if I find a mailbox in Phoenix near the bus station. Why?

BILLY D, leading Marta off stage

Never ask "why": that's bad luck, dear.

SCENE FOUR

ON THE SCREEN, the traffic analysis pattern disappears and the view of dark wrought iron grillwork steps appears at an angle. These steps lead nowhere.

BONITA enters onto the upper ramp level She is talking on a cell phone.

BONITA. in mid-conversation

well, all right: you check the schedule and call back and let me know, ••

FRANK enters into the lower level ramp area as she clicks off

FRANK

Who was that?

BONITA

No one that you know.

FRANK

I wouldn't bet on that •• somebody's coming here: is that it?

BONITA

I don't know. I'm not sure. She says she'll call back
Later.

FRANK

About what?

BONITA

About the schedule.

FRANK

Her schedule?

BONITA

No: the bus schedule ••• whatever it is. I don't know
which bus.

FRANK

well, then if she wants the bus schedule ,she must be coming here
.

Who is it?

BONITA

Probably. Probably she is definitely coming here But we will
not know for sure until she calls. It's my friend Marta .

FRANK, startled

Marta? All right

He sits down in the canvas chair.

What's the matter? She down on her luck or something?

BONITA

No: Marta's never down on her luck. It's just a matter of
the timing. It bothers me.

FRANK, looking at his watch

What? What time is it? Seven-thirty or so? I think it's a
perfectly reasonable hour now Of course, she won't be arriving
at this exact hour if she doesn't know the schedule yet.

BONITA⁹ angrily

She 's calling me back about the schedule.

FRANK

So what's your problem all of a sudden?

BONITA

O:l don't know •••. I never could understand her appointments.
she was always going somewhere. But Zeena and Eileen were
too fastidious... mostly about her borrowing clothing.

Would you care if Marta wore my clothes?

FRANK , laughing

Here we go: the oblong view of reality. yes! Yes, of course I would care if Marta wore your clothes .Is she going to need new clothes? listen: if she's down on her luck, Bonnie, you can tell me. I'm going to find it out at any rate when she gets here on her now unknown bus schedule .

BONITA ,snapping back

I don't care if she wears my clothes.

FRANK looks at his watch, then gets up from his chair

FRANK

let's see: it's seven-thirty. I'm thinking that gives us about forty-five minutes until the scheduled moment of arrival.

BONITA

I did most of my thinking a long while ago in the City. You know: sometimes I think I'm hearing them scream outside, in the streets outside like Zeena says in her social work emails.

FRANK, startled
T thought you stopped writing to Zeena

BONITA, pulling him down beside her on the couch

well, I did ••• I stopped writing, but I keep her letters. I'm talking about email. Some of her messages don't make much sense, you know.

FRANK

I suppose not.

He stands up abruptly.

FRANK, sitting down

Or well no. I don't know. You say the messages don't make much sense. But then: what makes much sense beyond this place? I don't know.

Regular oblong streets? I thought that at first: that regularly planned

out oblong streets might make some sense .

Embracing and fondling Bonita, Frank stares as if out of a window blankly

Sensible safe lights regularly in the night, and then beyond that nowhere. I used to try whatever it was that I was trying and then I stopped trying actually whatever it was I stopped trying creatively to do: in a non-oblong sort of a way .

BONITA, coldly

Squarely, I might ask: what's the matter with you this evening?

FRANK, numbly releasing her

Safe neighborhoods: I don't know. When did we say Marta was arriving?

He looks at his watch.

BONITA

A long time ago.

FRANK

What*?

BONITA_p .curling up with her back to him

We all used to be arriving in various places a long time ago I'm cold. Hold me :I'm cold. Frankie.

FRANK, turning to embrace her

all right, sweetheart: why not? You're cold, but the rest of the neighborhood is safe oblongs. The rest of this place is really quite safe . That's the problem, isn't it? That the R9oman Praetorians believed they were safe?

SCENE FIVE

As FRANK and BONITA lie huddled together on the sofa, The image of wrought iron steps on the screen shifts abruptly to become the entrance sign of a small antiques store. BONITA rises, leaving FRANK asleep . A bell jingles. She walks around to the flat area between the ramps where a sensual, heavysset man has sat down and is reading a newspaper.

SALESMAN

May I help you, miss?

BONITA, nervously

No thanks: just browsing.

SALESMAN, bowing elaborately

o well then: go right ahead: just browse .

He settles back into his chair with the paper •.

But do let me know when the.. ah... swallows come back to Capistrano, won't you?

There is a strained silence as Bonita is staring at the antiques sign.

BONITA

I'm not exactly sure what you have here.

BONITA, suddenly, to the salesman

Do you have anything at all ... Indian?

SALESMAN, carefully folding his paper

American Indian or do you mean: Eastern Indian?

BONITA

It's a present for a friend. I know she likes Indian things. I don't

think it particularly matters: whether it's really Eastern or Western.

SALESMAN

Ecumenical, eh?

BONITA t panicked

What?

SALESMAN? peering up at her from his chair

I said: the swallows this season seem to have an ecumenical

cultural attitude •

FRANK, in his sleep

Bonnie ... Hey, Bonnie! Is that doll flying? Are those the eagles of the Imperial Empire?

BONITA ,turning suddenly away

What? ... O...I... suppose that Marta might understand ecumenical culture but I don't ...I'm not...looking for a gift for myself..

SALESMAN t patiently

Seasonally... the swallows return to Capistrano...

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BONITA

I know that too. It was the "culturally ecumenical "...

SALESMAN, surveying her

O :well, forget the "culturally ecumenical", lady. Forget the

ecumenical, and concentrate on the merchandise.

He goes to a shelf and takes down a heavily-embroidered puppet doll. The doll appears to be Spanish or Eastern Europeans.

SALESMAN

Would your friend like this, do you think?

BONITA, taking the doll

I don't know: It looks Greek.

SALESMAN hanging over her shoulder

I'm not sure ... I thought it looked Indian, Miss. We do get these things secondhand ...

BONITA

IT's the mirrors in the skirt ... the sequins ...

SALESMAN, Talking away, affected

O, yes: of course. The mirrors in the skirt ...

BONITA, searching for profundity

Mirrors in the skirt are usually Greek aren't they?

SALESMAN

I don't know. Is your friend Greek? I don't really know, miss. Frankly, I'm not much on the Europeans , p although as a boy I did

have a Polish neighbor once, a very affectionate woman. Yes: a very affectionate woman as I recall About your friend...

BONITA

Yes?

SALESMAN ,suggestively

Is she unusually affectionate with you?

BONITA. coIdly

Where is Capistrano exactly: do you know that?

There is a silence as the Salesman watches Bonita put the doll back on the shelf and straighten its skirt.

SALESMAN

I think it's in Italy.

BONITA, conversationally

The swallows coming back to Capistrano: that's just an expression to me, you know. I have no real idea about the swallows.

SALESMAN, suddenly efficient

All right: let's find Capistrano. Let me see here: I think they brought in a world globe yesterday morning .

The SALESMAN strides offstage as BONITA suddenly wakes from the memory and returns to FRANK .

BONITA

The eagles of the Imperial Empire? What's the matter with you, Frank? Nothing's flying.

FRANK, pulling her onto the sofa

Come back to bed.

They sleep while BILLY D and MARTA talk between the traffic ramps.

BILLY D, throwing down an Indian blanket

Now: why didn't you ask me about my background? You haven't yet asked me about my background.

MARTA

I didn't think that it was any of my business : your particular background O • •

BILLY D

Not the type of business that you would just quit, eh?

MARTA, laughing and pushing him away
who do you take me for? Someone like Eileen, I suppose ...or Zeena.

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BILLY D, confused

Zeena? She... o that's a common name: Zeena.

MARTA. defiantly

Also "Eileen". O yes: that's a common sort of a name, "Eileen" isn't it?

BILLY D

Sorry: I'm afraid I don't come from the same sort of social background that •••

MARTA

Social background? Then do you assume that I come from some sort of a social background?

BILLY D

We all do: at some point we all must come from some sort of social background. Even being an orphan, you know, is a social background of some sort.

MARTA

You're an orphan then?

BILLY D, bitterly

No. I am not an orphan. Just the hungriest member of my Family. I decided just to take a leave of absence from

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that particular beehive and fill my belly.

MARTA, with an appraising
gaze

"A leave of absence from the beehive" .

BILLY D,
owing

You might say that.

MARTA

I don't know. I'm not sure what I might say. Which beehive exactly did you mean? New York? Los Angeles? Do you come from Los Angeles?

BILLY D

No ... no: I meant my family not the beehive of my family: a lot of people. you know: in my family in Utah, all swarming in and out of the family place that's just one cell in the larger hive but I suppose that's not right ... I suppose I dont have the right words to tell you.

MARTA, affected

maybe .

There is a silence.

BILLY D

I worked at a service station once in Salt Lake City.

MARTA

Yes . I called Bonnie in Phoenix when we stopped back there. I've got to call her back.

BILLY D

No, you don't You don't "got to" .That's "hive" talk. Do whatever you want and behind whatever you do there's really nothing but escaping the swarm, if you know what I mean.

MARTA, laughing

No: your swarm is not my swarm, if you know what I mean.

BILLY D, teasing

Who is this girl that you call out to? "Eileen"? Isn't that her name?

MARTA

"Zeena"! Actually, it's Zeena that would understand your beehive, your swarming, screaming beehive •••

BILLY D. carefully

"Zeena" I like that name: I knew a "Zeena", Miss. People are people: swarming and screaming everywhere.

There is a silence.

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BILLY D

"Zeena" and not "Eileen", eh? I think I had better get you over to that bus depot in Phoenix.

MARTA, bitterly

Phoenix rapid transit! O yes. Phoenix or back East from the same depot. I think you guess you had better get me over to the depot so I can make that decision. You sweet talk very well, Billy, about the bees: too bad you didn't mention the birds.

BILLY D9 haltingly

It's easy to sweet talk a pretty girl.

MARTA, striding away

If you want to sweet talk a pretty girl, then you better find one.
Eh.? I know I look weird.

BILLY D, catching at her arm, and following

Weird out East. You look weird out East.

ZEENA and the SALESMAN, enter center stage

ZEENA

Do you know? It's like vegetarianism: sexual preferences. It's a
lot like vegetarianism, if you understand me.

SALESMAN

Do you enjoy natural foods? I was at one of those natural foods
places around here once.

ZEENA

where?

SALESMAN. jovially

Where on the globe? I don't remember exactly. Somewhere in this
vicinity. Maybe down this block.

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ZEENA, as they hesitate

I don't think it is this block, Darling. You may remember the
wrong intersection.

FRANK sits up on the sofa, opening a gift-wrapped world

globe BONITA has handed him with assorted travel brochures..
As the following scene between Zeena and the Salesman continues
below, he consults the brochures, turning the globe and
occasionally looking at his watch.

ZEENA

Speaking of vegetarianism, I do have a friend who once served me green noodles in a casserole. I thought they were pea pods.

SALESMAN, looking for the restaurant sign
Well, I am culturally ecumenical

ZEENA, as they walk on down the street
The natural foods restaurant: was that Hungarian?

SALESMAN, stopping once again
No: not Hungarian.

He looks around desperately.

Let me see. I think they do have Middle Eastern cuisine somewhere around here. There's a Greek place!! No: here! This's it! Over there! With the globe! It's a culturally ecumenical natural foods store!

He dashes into the audience aisle, then signals to Zeena.
Here! This's it! This's the place. It seems popular.

When Zeena does not follow him,, he dashes back through the crowd impatiently.

SALESMAN
I said: that's the place over there. They've got Shepard's pie from Indonesia.

ZEENA, staring into space
Where? Where's Indonesia? I forgot that I'd already eaten. Actually, I've already eaten. This traffic confuses me.

SALESMAN

OK: if you don't want to eat anything, there's a café here. Just coffee and a few pastries: no shepherd's pie.

ZEENA, pulling the Salesman off through the audience

About the espresso: We've got to discuss this, Darling.

SCENE SEVEN

FRANK, awake

What time is it?

He drapes himself toga-like in a gold-embroidered white satin bed cover and spins the globe.

All watchmen to bed! Call all the chauffeurs and watchmen to bed!

never, of course, into your beddy-bye, darling Marta : that's none of my

business: in which bed most recently and: when are you coming?

He gives the globe another spin.

Princess Marta, are you coming to visit us after all ? But, in

that case, we will get the message when get the message that you

have not come here after all... probably in two weeks. "Sorry folks, I could not

make it. I just remembered Krishna's happy warships..."

He spins the globe again, and puts his finger down at random, stopping it and singing to the tune of "Lili Marlene":

In the infernal lamplight

With my toga just right/

We wait for the right ride

To take us out to tea.

He salutes the globe, then puts an index finger down at random on the globe, spinning I, stopping it with his finger and spinning it again.

When was my kingdom? Let me see now. It must have been quite definitely in the third century A.D. when t had my kingdom because wasn't that when the barbarians over-ran Rome?

Ah, yes, .Marta, my dear and you...aren't you now or I actually

was some sort of a barbarian. Wasn't I? so actually we are

barbarians now together, aren't we? prefabricated

barbarians...barbarous in our oblongs ...

He becomes lost in thought, standing with one index finger on

the globe and staring into space. BONITA walks up to him and stares briefly into his staring face .

BONITA

Are you high, or what's the matter? What is the matter ?

As Bonita looks at her cell phone, searching for a music file.

FRANK

Yes. Barbarous in our circular oblongs .When will she get here?

Or don't you know?

BONITA

Who? Marta? I haven't heard back yet.

As a wailing, dissonant jazz comes out of the cell phone:

FRANK

I was remembering a certain painting ... I believe it hangs in a loft somewhere .

BONITA, with well-modulated irritation

a...loft...somewhere?

FRANK

Yes: it must have been a loft. I never went into any of the smaller galleries .

BONITA

Here? Where is that? Do you mean in Los Angeles?

FRANK

No:O in New York. I meant: in New York Will you turn that down?

BONITA O stopping the music

OK: I'll turn it off if you yell at me I can't enjoy it anyway . I don't enjoy...o

FRANK, interrupti

ng

What was it? What is that music?

BONITA

Jazz Legacies

FRANK

What?

BONITA

The soundtrack to Jazz Legacies: it's a documentary.

FRANK, sitting down heavily

A doc-U-mentary!!! A jazz documentary!... and here I had resigned myself to the third century B.C. Or was that A.D.: the third century A.D.?

There is a silence.

BONITA

So...would you like me to turn it on again?

FRANK

No! Why? Jazz is not allowed in the Roman Empire.
There was no jazz in the Roman Empire.

BONITA

I thought you might want to know what's going on out there
in the contemporary world.

FRANK

The sound track to Jazz Legacies? Is that what's going on? .. ah ... god!
Ye gods! My kingdom for a time machine! You know: In my previous
lifetime I do believe that I may have been a Roman aristocrat: a Roman
aristocrat, Bonnie !. You know: I do sometimes have memories .

BONITA. interrupting

I have no idea...

FRANK

I know you have no idea: at least not of my personal memories ...
my personal memories before we became acquainted ,which must've
been about the third century A.D. prior, at least, to the oblongs.

BONITA , furiously humoring him

I know. "Prior at least to the oblongs."

There is a loud knocking offstage.

BONITA. rushing off

I'll get it!

FRANK

Yes, why don't you do that? You get it. A quiet and a safe
neighborhood .

yes: a quiet and a safe neighborhood of pre-fab oblong tombs .

Bonita enters with MARTA. who is disheveled and a bit wild-eyed.

T>1ARTA

Hello Frankie.

FRANK walks up to Marta and shakes her hand

FRANK

O..well, Hello there. However did you find us?

BONITA, as Marta sits down silently

She had the address, Frank.

MARTA, sarcastically

That's right: I had the address . I did have the address .

FRANK, angrily, then trailing off

Are you...are you in the ...ah ... the habit of...?.~0 :I don't know.

BONITA

Frankie was about to say something nasty .

MARTA

O:that's all right: go right ahead.

BONITA

Don't. Have you heard the soundtrack to Jazz Legacies, Marta?

MARTA

Jazz Legacies?

BONITA

The movie: Jazz Legacies

MARTA,as if waking suddenly

No, I don't believe I've heard that soundtrack .

She glances at the cell phone as the others watch in silence.

I don't believe I've heard that soundtrack.

BONITA

Well.all right I guess we can postpone this anyway. You must be tired.

MARTA? bewildered

Tired? No. I...

FRANK

She's tired' Marta is tired' O well if these were the days when I still had my villa...

BONITA

Frank!

FRANK

My villa, I say! My barbarous villa! I'd fix you up with a few quarts of wine and some absolutely delectable Callboys, Marta but you know: that was a long time ago, my dear and ... ah ...we have had to fire the slaves: they were a tax liability.

BONITA~ with an impatient gesture

I...Ignore this. He likes to go crazy.

MARTA

Tax liabilities: no. It was just a matter of backgrounds..

Backgrounds: that was all.

BONITA, suddenly sympathetic

Marta ...I ... I don't actually know what he means. Would you like an iced drink? some sort of cold cocktail or chilled wine?

FRANK

Certainly! Bonnie does not know anything about the villa and while we are on the subject: how did you get here, young lady?

MARTA

Oh! I just got a ride from where my car broke down: that

was all.

There is a pause as Frank and Bonita stare at Marta.

MARTA

o my god...the car!

FRANK

What car?

MARTA

My car: I forgot my car. The water was blue! Blue water, you know, pouring out from under the radiator.

FRANK

Are you on something now, or what?

BONITA, sarcastically

You should be the one to ask that.

FRANK

I should; I should be the one to ask that.

MARTA

No:I'm not on anything. B0nnle!...I have actually forgotten my car!.

She slips sideways in the chair, laughing hysterically.

I forgot my car!

FRANK

What's the matter?

BONITA, giggling reluctantly

You heard her: she forgot her car. You heard her. What else?
She forgot her car.

Bonnie abruptly breaks off giggling, running from the room.

FRANK, following

Bonnie!!

MARTA, catching at his arm
Hey! Leave her alone. She's all right. I brought some rice as a bread and butter present.

FRANK, as she takes the rice out of her bag

Do you eat bread and butter as a part of what you practice?

MARTA

Do I practice what?

FRANK, desperately

Vegetarianism perhaps! O, I don't know. In Rome, we simply skewered the slaves on a sort of sheesch-ka-bob and left it at that, you know ... no vegetarianism was allowed in Rome during the third century A.D.

MARTA

O yes: I see: no vegetarianism in third century Rome. How very interesting!... if that sheesch-ka-bob could be historically documented.

FRANK

Probably not, but at least you have not left the room yet, Marta: I count that as one of my triumphs, a minor triumph of course .

MARTA

She begins to giggle and then to laugh:

How many sides do the cells of a hive have?

FRANK, coldly

Five or six, I think: why?

MARTA, still laughing

I don't know. Just that if it's not the oblongs, it's the beehives...people swarming from the six-sided cells of the beehives...

FRANK

All righto •• yes: I'm sure that the bees need their
Vacations from the six-sided cell .Marta: just tell me one
Thing: where is it that you lost your car?

MARTA sobering up with difficulty

O well. I don't know: I suppose I could find it if
I retraced the route. It was in actually near heavy
traffic one of the interchanges near Globe outside of Phoenix.
All right: I'm sorry. Frankie. I'm all right now. Where did
Bonnie go?

FRANK spins the globe with a wicked intensity.

FRANK

All right! All right! Highways sixty and seventy near Globe,
Arizona! In the areas of heavy traffic !
He stabs his index finger down and stops the globe.

Here. Here, Marta: would you say this was an area of heavy
traffic? It looks to me like ...yes? ••• Marta?

MARTA, bewildered and sleepy

What?

FRANK

Here. Here: you have just won the Bering Straits, Marta .Would
you say this is where you left your car?

F~RTA. snapping awake

What? What is? In the Bering Straits? Do you know, Frankie: you
look positively regal in those robes.

Upset, FRANK breaks away from the globe .

FRANK

So "regal" in this quilt?

He makes a sweeping bow , as Bonita enters with a tray of coffee cups.

BONITA, brightly. ignorin~ Frank

O well: I thought it might be nice to start off with an espresso
for a change before we switch to the Margaritas.

FRANK, to Marta

Why did you say that?

BONITA, offering Marta coffee

About the Margaritas: well, if you want something else to drink now, just have to...

FRANK, interrupting

No! ...

He takes a coffee cup.

No~ not the coffee. Marta called me "regal".

BONITA puts the tray down ,confused.

BONITA

What? Regal?

FRANK holding his coffee in one hand, spins the globe .

FRANK

Regal ... o yes: in relationship to this second hand world globe: absolutely regal.

BONITA, with a vague gesture
I thought... I thought ... we could all have our iced coffee outside...if you wanted.

FRANK, to Marta socially

So: we must be just one stop in your schedule on your way to Los Angeles? Is that it?

MARTA

No. that's not it, not quite. I have no schedule, actually. The car, as I recall it, Bonnie, is somewhere near ... actually sixty or seventy miles between Inspiration and Globe. Isn't that a funny name: Inspiration? You wouldn't think it was a real town, would you?

BONITA

O: I know that junction: Inspiration and Globe. It's real enough I'm sure: it's real enough. We were just talking in terms of schedules.

FRANK. clearing his throat

Yes.

He points to the Globe.

There is a Northern route ,a Northern route here which does not take the unwary traveler anywhere near the traffic area between Inspiration and Globe .I can deduce from your Southern route that that you must not be in any hurry.

BONITA

All right. Why don't we all drop the subject and just go outside.
There's a patio outside.

FRANK, bowing regally

After you, my dear...

BONITA, as they straggle offstage

There's always plenty of room to sit, plenty of room to sit on
the patio if you like to sit outside .

FRANK and MARTA exit, talking as BONITA watches.

MARTA, laughing

Check the map: it exists . There is a traffic interchange between
Inspiration and Globe and it gets hot there under the ramps.

FRANK

o~ I know it gets hot under the ramps. Inspirations also
exist. They exist in their oblong manifestations. As a matter
of fact: I had a beer there once, just outside of Inspiration
in a six-sided cell, one of those padded booths.

MARTA, laughing

In a hive? Did you have a beer in a padded bee bar?

FRANK

I do not actually remember, my dear. Let's go find that car.

SCENE EIGHT

Bonita looks around wildly and then listens. There is the sound of
a car starting. She kneels in front of the globe and takes it in
both hands.

BONITA

Ecumenical culture! I should take this back to the store.

She puts an index finger on the globe after spinning it in
imitation of Frank.

The Bering Straits! That's where they're headed or there's

something wrong with this globe. It always stops in the same place.

I suppose that's why it ended up in a second hand store. There's

not too much traffic in the Bering Straits. That's for sure.

There is the sound of a car stopping. Bonita peers over the
audience as if out a window. BILLY D enters onto the lower level o~
the stage below her and looks around uncertainly. He takes a folded
piece of paper out of his wallet and sits down to look at it.

BONITA

But someone has found his way into the oblong drive. What's the secret there? A love note? Street directions? Arson?

She embraces herself and sways slightly.

I saw a spark in the bushes: one bright fleck then the wink of a lightning bug perhaps, just once: something that came into into the yard then, really uninvited.

She drops her arm. rubs her eyes and then her cheeks and the flesh of her face.

Wild eyes, maybe. I'd imagine the eyes of the wildcats but it was actually, a firefly, wasn't it?...and not wildcats at all...no: not wildcats all: just someplace outside the traffic safe and sound, safe and familiar with no accidental damage.

BONITA

Let's try for a "regal" toast!

She deliberately and calmly picks up a coffee cup and drops it.

The cup shatters. She pushes at the fragments gently with one foot.

So, I suppose I did not even break this with the proper barbarian ceremony Maybe I should throw a piece outside!

She picks up a shard of the cup and throws it upstage toward the traffic ramps. It shatters.

BONITA

Into the fireplace!

She deliberately picks up another cup then ,holds it high over her head ceremonially and drops it. It shatters .

Success! A royal success for the Empire!

BONITA Squats delicately and touches the mess with tender fingertips, sifting chips and coffee grounds8

Broken! Lovely! No sugar, all coffee... coffee with cream and no sugar... where's the sugar?

She stands and reaches for the sugar bowl! pouring sugar elaborately over the pile of broken pieces as if decorating a piece of pastry.

Sugar next! Sugar.

Then she holds the sugar bowl high over her head and drops it on to the pile .It bounces but does not shatter.

Housekeeping does not even break things correctly. I suppose I'm Going to have to clean up this mess after all. After all, who always orders the steak and potatoes? Sometimes the barbarians .. Sometimes used cars to go ...

She picks up the sugar bowl, and, holding this, stares fixedly at Billy D, who has snapped a dollar bill out straight and is idly folding it down the center.

All right: you can afford a plastic cup. Why don't you go home now? Where are they?

She sits down casually in the canvas chair.

It's getting light now~ isn't it? Actually , I do think pizza is best in the early hours of the morning . I'd forgotten I ordered pizza. Are you the pizza delivery?

BILLY D stands up. stretching.

BONITA

Why don't you go away? In these safe neighborhoods it is now the third oblong century A.D. Were you smoking a cigarette? I saw the light from the cigarette. Do you hear me? It is now the third oblong century A.D and you are loitering I will have to ask you to leave my premises:

BILLY D , holding a teacup shard

Sorry, lady, that I'm on your premises, I don't smoke. But I guess you must've been hearing the early bees...

BONITA, distracted

Bees? I thought you said: bees...

BILLY D ,with a vague gesture

Buzzing around when they wake up in the morning.

BONITA turns her back as if slamming the door on Billy D and speaks to herself sarcastically.

Hello: And aren't we always glad to see you, Marta

BILLY D sighs, shakes his head, and sits down with his head resting in both hands, listening.

And: yes, please tell me what happened to that interesting blue water. I suppose that I will never even break anything again., Those were valuable antiques, weren't they?

A VIDEO FLASHES ONTO THE BILLBOARD SCREEN: Eileen and Zeena are sitting at a small white table in a restaurant with tables which overlook a crowded sidewalk. They speak the following dialogue intensely. and then flash abruptly off the screen ZEENA speaks on screen as Bonita is sweeping the broken cups into a pile with her hands onstage.

ZEENA

Do you still have that report?

EILEEN, laughing

On the traffic patterns ? .No: I don't, not with me.

ZEENA

I thought ...

EILEEN ,t teasing

You thought, Dahling?

ZEENA, stammering

now .. yes, now that I've got some time, time to spare, I thought I could take a look at your traffic safety patterns. If you don't mind.

EILEEN, laughing sarcastically

Mind? Those are out of date. When they close the old stores, and when they raise the rent, we have to make new traffic patterns.

THE VIDEO flashes abruptly off screen as Bonita drops the pieces of broken cups she has been gathering:

BONITA, running offstage

I will never even break these things correctly! So safe: So peacefully safe, aren't you? On the regular highway with your lost car.

THE VIDEO abruptly flashes back onto the screen as BILLY D squats down with his back to the audience, carefully arranging the mess into a neat pile.

ZEENA, on screen, speaking slowly and carefully:

When...the... escalators stop ...

EILEEN, laughing

I beg your pardon.

The image of the cafe is replaced by moving escalator steps .

ZEENA'S VOICE

When the escalators stop, Eileen: I mean: when all of the escalators and elevators lose power: what happen?

EILEEN'S VOICE, behind the moving escalator

We... of course: everyone has an emergency plan of some sort to

reroute the customers to the stairways if the stairways still exist . What did you mean by asking? Is this some surreal work agenda from Social Services?

There is a low buzzing sound which grows in intensity as the escalator steps on the screen come slowly to a halt. As they stop, the buzzing grows louder as BONITA enters beside the screen and sees BILLY D arranging and rearranging the pieces of tea cups so that they form a neater pile.

ZEENA'S VOICE, as the escalators vanish

I meant exactly what I said: when the escalators stop, what happens?

BILLY D, looking up at Bonita

All right so you think nobody knows, but I can hear you, little lady and I don't care. This doesn't bother me. I hear you going in and out like wasps and hornets and bees : little hornets building their mud nests. I have been watching those for awhile.

BONITA. dashing offstage

You don't have to watch!

BILLY D, standing up carefully

Wasn't it two of them I watched at first?

He rubs his arms.

The swarm ... swarmed up all over my arms, and we never could figure that out: why those damn bees swarmed all over my arms.

Wasps, they were. Why the wasps swarmed up over my arms.. just that one time .

He rubs his arms and shudders.

It was almost death. Death, I suppose: it's like that. It made me think of the worms of death. Do the worms swarm? Ah, I don't know. Do they? What's the matter with me? The bees at a death: they say they swarm! At either death or a strange thing happening I don't know: they feel the change, changes in things happening. I thought maybe they loved me, to swarm down my arms ...

He laughs ruefully and fingers the small medallion hanging at the open collar of his shirt.

Yeah: maybe they loved me. Maybe, I know. One lady, she give me this.

He holds out his medallion and looks down at it.

Q yeah: she give me this on La Cienega boulevard in L.A., you

know. I forget exactly how we got together or.. no: we met at a flea market and handicrafts bazaar.

He laughs again and lets the medallion drop.

O my god, yes: Barbara: Mrs. Don M. Boltzmann. O, I don't know.

He rubs his arms.

Maybe they do find something on me like sugar. I don't know.

Hive sugar: I suppose . He laughs.

BONITA'S VOICE

Frankie, I...

BILLY D, startled, as Bonita enters behind him

What!

BONITA

O, I'm sorry. I thought you were Frank.

BILLY D, with an impatient gesture

So: what's that address for the car?

He takes his wallet out of his back pocket and begins to sort the contents.

I hope I didn't get to the wrong place here, ma'am. Where is that address ? Fool! You're a fool at the end of it, Billy . So: here 's the note, ma'am.

He reads from a small piece of paper.

" Twenty-nine-Forty-two Franklin Delano Roosevelt Parkway in the Qld Methodist Hills Encampment" "Is that the address here?"

BONITA

That's the address here. You don't have to say: Old Methodist Hills Encampment.

BILLY D

Well, I don't know, ma'am ••• they do have a wall around this development, don't they?

BONITA

Yes: but there are no walls at the post office . There is no wall around this cell phone.

BILLY D, confused

Well, anyway: this whole place is Phoenix .

BONITA, formally

Yes: they had zoned us into Phoenix.

BILLY D, starting to repeat her words
automatically

"Yes they had zoned us into ..." What the hell?

BONITA

Certainly: what the hell ... ?

BILLY D

Excuse me, ma'am, but I don't care about the zones of Phoenix. I am
looking for a Miss Marta...ah..

He looks at the piece of paper.

Marta Whitman .

BONITA

Whitman!! That this's her address and that her name is: "Whitman"? Is
that what she told you?

BILLY D

That's what she told me when she took the bus. She left
her car back there on the highway.
...

BONITA, coldly, with suburban formality

O I know she did. This is strictly for your information , but
she and my husband have gone out to the Globe junction to get
that car, Mister...what is your name?

BILLY D

Just Billy D. Forget that last name, ma'am

BONITA

Well, Mister Billy D : Marta's not here right now.

BILLY D

Excuse me.

BONITA

What should I excuse you for, Mr. Billy D. Nothing?

BILLY D

Bothering you, lady. I was bothering you. Excuse me for bringing
this up to you.

BONITA

Not at all.

BILLY D, embarrassed

Thanks . I could leave a note for her, I guess.

BONITA

I suppose you could.

BILLY D, pointing to the pile on the floor

Yeah: I suppose that I could but that doesn't mean I will. Say:
do you usually scatter all that stuff around here? all that
sugar and stuff?

BONITA

It just occurred to me, Mr. ... ah ..Nothing .. that you are
standing right here on my patio: how do you account for that?

BILLY D

It's just that I am in the habit of going pretty much exactly
where my feet take me, as long as it is not particularly illegal
...and you sure have made a mess here, lady .

BONITA, confused

You mean... the sugar ?

BILLY D, holding out both arms

Yeah...yeah, the sugar, lady .I'm just a piece of sugar and
all the little insects they come up around me like... like ...
He breaks off. confused.

BONITA

Like what? O.' well, you must know Marta: that's for sure . I thought
you were referring to my genuine Mexican crockery, the ones I broke
last night... last night!

She kicks Billy D's neat pile, rescatterlng the pieces.

BONITA

O yeah! And weren't we in the Homan Empire last night? Weren't
we also losing our cute blue water all over the highway?

She aims a final kick at one of the broken cups.

There: I guess I must really have broken it right this time:
Tell me, Mister Nothing: how much did she pay you?

BILLY D ,wearily

Lady? you want sugar ... I got sugar: but it ain't your kind of sugar
...

BONITA ,freezing

I don't believe this! What're you doing on my patio?

BILLY D, patiently

Lady, I just come to tell her that we forgot to get the car.

BONITA

All right: why not?. You forgot to get the car. Where did you

leave it?

BILLY D

She stalled it? lady. I picked her up.

There is a silence. They look at each other.

BILLY D

She didn't lend me nothing, lady. I picked her up.

BONITA

I thought you said that was your name.

BILLY D

what?

BONITA

I thought you said that your name was nothing.

BILLY D

You think a lot. Don't you, lady?

BONITA

No! No, actually I don't think at all. That's why..

Her voice breaks .and she claps one hand violently over her mouth.

I let vagrants come to my house and sleep on the patio.

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BILLY D. gently

She left the car near Globe.

BONITA

I know that!

BILLY D

She stalled it near Globe, just after you hit the highway near the Inspiration junction. I picked her up right after I made the usual turn there. Say: what is this? Some sort o~ investigation ?

BONITA_g she Dicks up the cell phone

Investigation? I haven't been asking any questions. The truth seems apparent. Anyway: have you heard the soundtrack to Jazz Legacies?

BILLY D sits heavily down in the canvas chair as Bonita activates

the music.

BILLY D

Jazz Legacies ? Maybe over the speakers at a convenience store. Maybe at a truck stop.

As the dissonant jazz begins coming from the cell phone.

It does sound familiar ••.

BONITA, switching off the cell phone

Q ,well, just forget it: "nevermind nothing", as we used to say.

BILLY D, taking her by the arms

HeY! Wait a minute now! Knock it off!

BONITA t slipping away

All right, Mr. Nothing: I will knock it off. I will certainly turn this jazz right off. Didn't you say that jazz was only worthwhile in the areas of heavy traffic?

BILLY D, wearily

I said I might have heard that jazz at a truck stop.

BONITA, wildly

Anything! Jazz! Anything else is more worthwhile, you know where there is no calm, where there is no peace!

BILLY D

I can see there's no peace in this place. sc. what're you going to do with that mess, sugar?

BONITA

What? These shards of my genuine Mexican junk?

BILLY D. squats to pick up a piece of a teacup

BILLY D

Really? El Cheapo Mexicali ?

He stands, brushing his hands off.

What did you want to go and do that for anyway? Those from your husband, or what?

BONITA

No: Frankie never gave me anything but his paycheck,

Mr. Nothing. Aside from his job with insurance, He does not live in our modern world.

BILLY D

Is that so? Well, I never enter into an argument between legal husbands and wives. No, sir! Or no, ma'am: it's Just that simple.

Each little insect has got his own arrangement. ma'am, and you Don't want to interfere with that arrangement, or you're liable to disrupt the entire hive.

BONITA ,levelly

Please go away. Mr ...O... nevermind your name: this is my patio, you know ,mess or no mess. I am sorry that I offended you.

I must have offended you while you were deciding.

BILLY D

Deciding what, Ma'am?

BONITA

Whether or not to wait for her in the yard: weren't you?

BILLY D

I don't know, lady. I'm tired, but I do know what you're up to and, actually I just don't qualify for the insurance business.

BONITA

Qualify !

She slaps herself lightly on one cheek, then looks straight at him calmly.

So: who does qualify?

BILLY D, s:tarlng at her

Sorry.

BONITA

That's all rlight.

BILLY D

You know : you look _a lot llke your sister.

BONITA

My sister! You've never met my sister. Oh. You mean Marta. She's not my sister. I'm the flawed ltem here: the girl with the frayed edges. It used to be a joke that we looked alike.

BILLY D

OK. Those pieces of Mexicali tea cup you've got there? Do you know anybody who can use them?

BONITA, surprised

What?...No: ••• I just..

Suddenly shrewd:

What sort of a use did you have in mind?

BILLY D

I'm up on broken pottery, lady. You will not believe this, but I had a job once smashing pots, smashing 'em and then throwing 'em into the fresh cement just like you mix up, you know, chocolate chip cookies ... god. that was a crazy job! ...

He begins to laugh:

We built a wall around a motel, lady : a stucco wall around a motel! I was twenty-four.

BONITA, nodding

A wall of broken pots. Yes: I do know what you mean ,stucco with ...

She makes a vague gesture •

... stucco with pottery inlay.

BILLY D

I guess that must be the fancy name.

BONITA

I don't know: I don't know what else to call it...

BILLY D, laughing

I call it chocolate chip ce-ment.

BONITA...mused in spite of herself

yeah: chocolate chip ce-ment ... that's what to call it all right

I'd like to serve Frankie some chocolate chip ce-ment.

BILLY D, suddenly businesslike

So: you say they've gone to get the car ...

BONITA. grimly touches the broken crockery with her foot

BONITA

o ... except that these particular chips have not yet made it into the motel wall.

BILLY D, understanding

That's all right, honey: I got some chips on my shoulder here that ain't going to make it into no wall no WHEBE ... and that is regardless of the weather ...

He laughs and walks away from Bonita, then looks back and winks:

You understand me?

BONITA

Do you go around just doing this ? I mean: like with Marta?

BILLY D

Just doing what with Marta did you have in mind?

BONITA

I used to live with Marta. I know what she does. It's a form of hypnosis.
You came here to tell her she left her ear?

BILLY D

Near Globe, Ma'am: that's right. We just got to talking at the bus depot,
and I came here to tell her she forgot her car at the junction.

BONITA

Near Globe: I know that .That's where they've gone: out near
to Globe-Inspiration junction to get the ear.

BILLY D

Yeah: that's where I picked her up all right.

BONITA

I'm sure it has to be all right.

BILLY D, once again taking Bonita's hand

OK: sit down now and let's get to the heart of this situation .

Bonita sits down mechanically beside Billy D. but pulls her hand
away abruptly.

Now: who is it you say has gone out to get the ear?

BONITA, averting her face, as Billy D
smoothes back her hair

Frankie: Frankie and Marta ... who else? Q shortly after something about
having a beer in a hive ... If you will believe that..

BILLY D, quickly

A hive?

BONITA

Yes: isn't that ridiculous?. "a beer in a hive:" He does not begin to
live in this modern world!

BILLY D. carefully

OK ... now ... who is this Frankie then, who is currently not living
Here in this modern world?

BONITA

My husband! He's living here all right: here in this
house in the third century A.D. Wherever that is!

BILLY D

I get it. Who is he?

BONITA

My husband! My husband. the oblong barbarian!

BILLY D

Hey: now exactly what did you say he was?

BONITA, laughing

What? That's a good question!

BILLY D

I thought you said he was in insurance.

She runs to the Globe and spins it violently:

BONITA

Somewhere on here! That's where he lives! Somewhere on this
Globe! Anywhere that is not in this house.

BILLY D, whimsically

Anywhere?

BONITA

Anywhere that is not particularly in the twenty-first century!

BILLY D. taking her by the shoulders

Look, lady: I don't know much about barbarians, but I know I'm right here:
wherever that is.

BONITA, reciting up into his face

Twenty-nine. forty-two Franklin Delano Roosevelt Parkway ;

BILLY D, interrupting and then embracing her

Now , come on: that's right .That's exactly where this is in the
actual twenty-first century. So: what exactly is it that's
the matter with you at this address ?

BONITA, turning away from Billy bitterly

Sorry. I don't know: motivations, dimensions, about reincarnation, you know:
living again and it's all expanded. I don't have any of those motivations:

BILLY D

Could I use your phone, Ma'am

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BONITA, sarcastically withholding the phone

Not yet! Does she owe you money: is that it?

BILLY D, abruptly

No. she don't owe me money, lady . I just come back here to remind her that she had forgotten the car .

He takes a crumpled slip of paper out of his pocket and reads it.

To remind Marta Whitman that she had forgotten the car.

BONITA, subdued

I thought that maybe she might owe you some money .

BILLY D

Nobody owes me money, lady: I just came to remind her about the car . But I can see that her car is already being taken care of by ... ah .. As Bonita makes a quick, interruptive move:

sorry to cause you any trouble, lady, but it's your husband Frankie that's now taking care of the car? Is that it?

BONITA. quietly. as the screen grows dark

That's it, Mr. Nothing: exactly. Frankie is now taking care of the car.

There is an interval of uncomfortable silence as BILLY D walks away downstage. He scuffs at one of the pieces of teacup with his foot, and then stares into the middle distance. Bonita regards him with fury.

BILLY D

Sorry.

BONITA

What?

BILLY D, whirling

I said: sorry. Lady.

BONITA

No, well: why should you be sorry, Mr. Nothing? I'm used to it.

She offers him the cell phone. He waves it aside.

BILLY D

I don't quite remember at this point who it was that I wanted to call. I've got a couple of errands to do in Phoenix, and I should be moving on here.

BONITA, interrupting

So you decided not to call on my phone because you might leave the bad lady's number in my program.

BILLY D, sighing deeply and folding his arms

So: have I told you about the bees yet? I can't remember.

BONITA, with a high, satiric laugh

The birds and the bees? The famous birds and the bees?

BILLY D

No. ma'am : not the famous birds and the bees. My vision ...

Be corrects hlmslf:

...private version of the birds and the bees .

Be kicks at the broken crockery

...during which we skip the birds entirely:

BONITA pushes Billy D away as he attempts to take her hands

Really, I don't think I'm ready for any more sugar, if
that's what you mean .I'm sorry .

BILLY,D

Sorry you what?

BONITA. laughing

Broke the tea cups, I guess . I'm sorry I broke these. I have broken
all of these so unsuccessfully .

BILLY D

I think that you have broken this genuine Mexicali crockery
very well .

He picks up a piece of the broken crockery and holds it out.

Very good. All right: why'd you do this anyway. lady? Just
because they went out to fix the car together?

BONITA

No! there was something else. I just don't understand things the
same way!

She starts to run back into the house. Billy D restrains her.

I just don't understand things the same way!

BILLY D

The same way as what?

BONITA calms down as Billy D caresses her shoulders.

BONITA

The same way as the rest of those people. They 've got some sort of an "understanding".

BILLY D

Who doesn't? Who doesn't have some sort of an understanding?

BONITA

I don't know . I can't... cant understand what they agree on.

BILLY D

This's what I have been trying to tell you about the bees: they don't. ..they don't "understand" anything: the bees in the hive, you know ...There's too many of them usually ... they just go on about what they're usually doing there, you know ...building new cells.

He Dushes her away.

It don't build .

BONITA

Yes! It does it builds something from down in the ...

She hesitates.

Down in the gut somewhere .I think it does build something, you know.

BILLY D

Like throwing Mexicali tea cups, you mean? Building up to throwing tea cups?

BONITA

You know: sometimes I can feel it. I think I can feel it build.

BILLY D laughing bitterly

What? Build up to sex, you mean?

BONITA

No! ... No, building up to understanding international ideas, you know: about the third century or other ecumenical, cultural.. and I can't ...can't do it like that ...I don't know how .

BILLY D, in despair

How what? how what? Honey, now: how what?

BONITA

I can't be in the third century. This is the twenty-first century.

Tell me: what's your real name?

BILLY D

Billy... Billy D in case you meet somebody else by that first name, Miss .
BONITA

Do you have any ideas?, Billy?

BILLY D, laughing

One or two, one or two ideas . I get ideas mostly with my hands .Now,,,

He begins once again to gather the pieces of crockery.

Let's just neaten this up a bit.

BONITA, running out

Is that why you came here? Is that why you came here, Marta's boy? To clean up all the trash I can't break right?

BILLY D, standing up slowly and looking after her

All the trash you can't break right Yeah, lady: all

right .All the trash you can't break righto .

Billy takes a slip out of his wallet •

I guess I had better buy my own phone

BONITA, entering quietly

I'm sorry . I don't know how to be cool. I only lay the jazz. I don't know how to be cool.

BILLY D

How what" sweetheart? You know: you can sure screw up a man's day.

Do you know that?

BONITA

What do you want? You can tell me, can't you? O: I'm not a good hostess. I'm sorry I ran away just now, Mr. Nothing . That was very immature. I'm sorry that I have screwed up your day .

BILLY D

Don't mention it.

BONITA, as they embrace

No: no; actually, I feel that I ought to mention that I am not a cool person.

BILLY D. takes her hand and lightly hits himself in the face

BILLY D

Slap me: why donteha? Me and not the tea cups.

BONITA, slapping him hard

I'm sorry. Is this what you wanted?

BILLY D

Sorry I can't break into chocolate chips like the tea cups. I told you: there ain't nothing fancy to understand :

He runs his hand down the front of her body. around the breasts and over the hips.

nothing but building new cells and, lady if you understand how those bees know how to build new cells, then you are God . Let me tell you..

BONITA, caressing his cheek

I hurt you.

BILLY D

Well, sure! Sure, you hurt me! It's not bad though .A little red? don't you think?

BONITA, touching and then kissing him

A little red, but not much.

BILLY D, leading her into the house

I guess I should wait to buy that phone.

SCENE NINE

The screen-billboard shifts to the image of a still. darkened highway superimposed behind a tawdry Grade B movie "Roman" emblem.

FRANK~S VOICE~ fuzzily amplified

I don't know: You know her. Do you think it's perverse to stay with a kid like that when there's no hope of any return, you know, on any real level of appreciation?

MARTA'S VOICE, very clear

I don't know: I am actually more interested in your concept of twins. I can't judge whether Bonnie's a kid mentally. I haven't been with her that recently.

FRANK'S VOICE

Physically. I meant the concept of physical twins.

They enter onto the upper ramp platform talking, and sit on the large white couch.

FRA~K. continuing as they enter

Whereas, mentally no two people can be alike. Mentally, there are no twins. Physically, you do resemble Bonnie.

MARTA, abruptly

So, you're in this insurance business solely for ... not on any real level geared to your own appreciation of your place in history.

She laughs.

Not according to your own choice at any rate. Is that it? What I mean to ask is : you're just making money?

FRANK

No! Absolutely not according to my own choice! Absolutely not! And I am not making very much money, comparatively speaking, not according to the amounts that I would choose to make on my personal memoir of the last days of the Roman Empire.

MARTA

That wouldn't sell unless you had photos.

FRANK, catching at the tips of Marta's fingers
Sit down with me.

MARTA, sitting down stiffly
The twins shared together: did you know that? ...briefly...

FRANK

You and Bonnie, you mean?

MARTA

Yes

FRANK

Of course I know that: at your place. That's where I met Bonnie. We were guests at a party, or...

MARTA. vaguely

I suppose .Yes. We were guests at Bonnie's Internet "friends" party about curios, or something.

FRANK

you know: the wind does get hot here. It's actually like something out of a blast furnace.

MARTA. laughing abstractedly

O, yes. It is like a blast furnace.

FRANK

Yes: the blast furnace, and coffee. Brands of liquor. There's nothing else to discuss! ..Except perhaps the more colorful Arabian conquests, the ones with a bit more pageantry and rugs. Yes: I always have enjoyed the patterns in the rugs .

Sarcastically:

Have you always enjoyed the patterns in the rugs?

There is a slight pause as Frank stares at Marta, who is staring into space.

MARTA, as if waking from trance

Sorry . I'm sorry .I was actually, you know, remembering a walk

I took with an Indian. He told me that I reminded him of his sister in India. I'm always reminding people of their twins or their sisters. Actually: I do enjoy the patterns in the rugs. You mean: oriental rugs?

FRANK

No! I'm tired of your oriental philosophy: It does not prevent oblongs,

MARTA

What philosophy? I actually took a walk with ...

FRANK, interrupting

Zen meditation and the art of puppy raising .. Zen meditation while on vacation at the bargain basement resort...

There is the light sound of finger cymbals.

Illuminating conversations with some illiterate vagrant!

MARTA

Do you hear the bells?

FRANK, listens. There is no sound.

No, actually. I do not hear the bells .

MARTA, definitely, in a soft voice

I thought I might be perceiving dance to Shiva. I think it was described in something I read somewhere. And then on the street corner later on. It's light brass, you know, the finger cymbals light brass with the drum and sometimes, sometimes a purple dancer.

FRANK, touching her face gently

Is that so?

MARTA

And sometimes a dancer in black or turquoise. They dance. They actually dance with bells in purple or whatever color but I don't suppose you..

FRANK, desperately

Suppose what? Suppose that I am not familiar with such cultural events? Perhaps one should live, you know, be fully resident in some more trafficked and heavily-traveled cosmopolitan area . I suppose that's what you're driving at. I was in my past life actually a participant in cosmopolitan conversations.

MARTA

You mean: in Rome?

FRANK

No, not in Rome: in New York City during my previous non-oblong existence at the time that we were switching roommates .

MARTA

That's not previous to NOW. I thought you meant Third Century Rome.

FRANK

What's the difference? Time has no value.

MARTA, carefully

What does have value, Frankie? This parking lot, or the oblongs? Certainly not any sort of physical affection.

FRANK, interrupting

Are you saying that my touch has no value? You don't want that, do you? I see! I am no better than a Roman candle in your estimation!

MARTA.. turning away from him

Were there fireworks in Third Century Rome? So: maybe you lived then Right now, I'm living in a motel in the desert.

FRANK. walking away from her. disgusted

Aren't we all?

He gives a snappy, mock salute.

Ten/Four: You're not a whore. I'll be right over to give you a magic feather but first a word from our sponsor Who is that? My company? YOUR insurance company on the car? Who is it that supports this fiasco? Roman black shirts from the Twentieth Century ?

MARTA

That's not the point. Frank •••

FRANK

All right, all right : that's not the point . So: what is the point? Why are we wandering around here?

Sarcastically:

So, maybe I lived during the last days of Rome, but now I'm living in an oblong. yes! With all the best-seller jazz sound tracks in a pre-fab antique oblong. !

He salutes again:

Hallelujah! Kiss the hills! Kiss the hills and tell me if they are talking to you, because I would be very interested to know ...Yes, indeed! I would be very interested to know what you hear from the hills these days.

MARTA, after a pause

Not much, at this period in my development since we happen to be here with a view of the desert. I am mainly into the memory of dancers and bells, real dancers and bells, Frankie. Although they are not here now, I do remember them.

FRANK

o really? You remember real dancers and bells. ?What a memory!

MARTA

There is also the desert at night, shadows on the desert at night.

FRANK

The desert at night? !Well. since the dawn has just come up here on the outskirts of our motel, please tell me what you remember about the desert at night because I have absolutely no memory of the desert at night: aren't we all dressed and ready to go here?

MARTA

What is it exactly that you do remember?

FRANK

Checking in at the desk: that's what I remember, and then it skips to the third century A.D.

MARTA • snapping back

I have no memories of the third century A.D. Maybe that's why you should live in some place more ... what did you say? "Cosmopolitan"? Don't you need some sort of parade of all the Christians to the lions, or whatever it is that you think you remember.

FRANK, mockingly, with one hand over his heart

Marta. I am here to tell you that we were not together in third century Rome .

MARTA, shoving him playfully

Cut it out. I know that.

FRANK, saluting importantly

We were NOT together in third century Rome. We have been, however, together here in Twenty-First Century Phoenix, Arizona.

MARTA, laughing

What is it that you have against the military, Frankie?

FRANK

I have nothing against the military, Marta. That is your name. isn't it? I was once the worst of military heroes myself and now, in this capacity of aging oblong, it is perhaps my destiny to tell you that I do not feel particularly destined to be here in this motel at this particular time. I feel "attracted," shall we say "compelled" but not particularly "destined".

MARTA

Why not?

FRANK

"Destinies are grand destinies, Marta. I have no grand destiny.

MARTA

Did you really forget my name?

FRANK

No, my dear, I did not forget your name. I was simply reassuring myself that you were real. It's quite difficult to be sure who is real and who is not-real, these days. Some have taken ritual names at the Turkish Baths.

MARTA

Do non-real people have names?

FRANK. instantly regretful

I do see quite a few people with ritual names on the basis of insurance agreements. I assist them in buying their oblongs.

MARTA vaguely:

I just work awhile, and then I travel: short trips usually I keep up my service in New York. And then I travel and I come back and take different apartments because the same place is not always available.

FRANK. slowly with suspicion

You keep up your service. What service?

MARTA

My answering service. Didn't you know you were nothing without a front office, Frankie? Only, there's just one thing: you have

got to know my actual name to search for the Service, if you don't know the number.

FRANK

Yes! Exactly! The numbers! The actual numbers of our accounts!.

MARTA, shaking him

I've got my social security number and my service and that's all.

FRANK, breaking away from her

Really? You must actually have more numbers. Let's see.

There's my insurance policies and the Diner's Club and the American Express and Bonnie's long distance charge account at, Niemen Marcus and many, many more numbers in my drawer than I can possibly possibly tell you offhand. It has been several months since I actually examined my numbers in any detail. Tell me: do you still model?

MARTA, standing and posing humorously

No. It's just a physical angle, the angles of the camera. My body's not that great, you know...if you look at it objectively, as you must have noticed before we began discussing the numbers.

She smooths her hands over her breasts and along her hips, finally resting them against her stomach

I've got a belly right here whatever I do. dear

FRANK grabs her hips and pulls her onto his lap.

FRANK

all right. mommie: and now, if you would kindly tell me how you manage to do this particular traveling that you have been doing. I would be very grateful.

He kisses her.

How do you manage that?

MARTA, getting up and walking away

Not through an agency. It's just an occasional temporary job. and then consulting for some personal development groups. If you are looking for an

Imperial Escape agency, I can't help you.

She is suddenly vague and formal:

I should not have brought you out all this way after the car.

FRANK, businesslike

I don't mind the distance. It's just a favor to Bonnie. You are, after all, Bonnie's guest here in Arizona.

MARTA, fighting tears

Not quite! Not just a favor to Bonnie. I love you. I love everybody. I can't help that It's just how I feel at this stage in my development: that's all.

FRANK

Where would you say I was at this stage in my development, Marta?

MARTA, stricken

I don't know: I can't be sure.

FRANK. catching her arm. suddenly affected

No, please! You stop that, Marta! I've got nothing to offer you, nothing but my numbers and my oblongs and my Insurance and something I learned out of the latest sexual surrogate manuals. You do read those, don't you? Sexual psychology began to be issued after the Fall of the Empire.

MARTA

Occasionally: I find those sex history books on the coffee table at a guest house. Now, don't you think we should report the car?

FRANK. puzzled for an instant

Why? There is no car. It was an illusion, Marta.

MARTA

The car is not where I left it, Frankie. Don't you remember? That's why we came here: to get the car.

FRANK, catching her arms again

NO! I do love you at this stage in my development, actually..

MARTA. laughing

Why on earth at this stage in your development? I don't have enough numbers in my background to really interest you .

FRANK

O yes! Yes, you do!

MARTA, still laughing

And now I've actually got no car! No license plates!

No additional numbers!

FRANK , embracing her

Certainly! Yes, you do! You have got additional numbers. You just do not know where they are! These are celestial numbers: as studied by the astrologers toward the beginning of the infidel conquest.

MARTA. struggling

No! Not celestial numbers! there is just ..

FRANK, as they tumble~ back onto the couch

Just the objective view of the physical body: your unique physical body in the process of development.

MARTA, fighting him playfully

No, absolutely not: this is a duplicate physical body. a physically duplicate body. Of course, Bonnie and I are not exactly twins mentally. At least not by the standards of ancient Roman astrologers.

ON BILLBOARD SCREEN, as the lovers continue to kiss onstage, BILLY D comes up behind Bonita at the window. He kisses her neck and stands close beside her looking out the window.

BILLY D. on screen

Do you order all this stuff wholesale or what?

BONITA, laughing gently on screen

No: I just..

BILLY D, kissing Bonnie's neck again

Just what...?

BONITA, as Billy D is nuzzling her neck

No...I just... Actually I just go through those catalogs and dog-ear the pages as I go. That's the way I decide.

BILLY D, facing her closely

O sure .

BONITA

Really. I do go through the magazines like that sometimes just to look. but I always listen to the news broadcasts . I think that keeps me informed... informed enough to function. I like to keep my head clear. O, I never read the articles . It's just nice to know what everyone is buying. even though I do suppose there's some merit to everything.

She turns her head slightly, looking at Billy D, who looks away:

Do you know anything about reincarnation? Does that mean: "to be born again?"

BILLY regretfully

Yes, ma'am: that's what it means.

BONITA

Marta once talked a little about her East Indian incarnation as the twin of a guru's sister but my husband Frank... he's so..

She laughs ruefully:

He's a little crazy over his lifetime in Rome .He says he used to be some sort of barbarian emperor. I don't know what to think.

BILLY D, interrupting

I've heard that kind of reincarnation talk in bars where I learned a couple of words: that don't mean much, lady I thought maybe my friend the Indian rug dealer might be able to get you some of this fancy stuff wholesale.

BONITA, abruptly

No. I think I might already know him. He's culturally ecumenical.

BILLY D

Really?

He caresses Bonita's cheek and she follows him away from the empty window, which remains on the billboard.

FRANK, fumbling at Marta's clothes

Llberte! Equality! .Fraternity! I have got to see the numbers.

MARTA

That's from the French revolution! Right?

FRANK, with a mock accent

In EEEEtaleee Vee are International .Vee are International:
Parlay vous? In EEEtaleee...Vee have all sorts of International
revolutions. This's the only way that I can tell the difference between
you. and Bonnie, by checking the numbers tattooed on your ass.

MARTA

Well, why not? But if you're desperate ,there's always the policy of
universal love. But I don't have a tattoo. This's crazy

FRANK. caressing Marta's face

Yes, actually ,I am desperate. I am desperate. But that revolutionary
policy tattooed on your rear end actually does have a number, Marta. So
if you will just please close your eyes I will be able to inform you
confidentially of your identity.

MARTA, pulling away from him

Confidentially of what?

FRANK, pulling her back, insistent

Confidentially of your exact coding number, which you cannot see directly.

MARTA. laughing

I thought you meant something political.

FRANK., taking her hand

Now, don't go loco on me . I get enough of that at home .Really, Marta: what's the matter? You don't believe you were tattooed as an infant ? You were given a number at birth.

MARTA. meeting his eyes ,yet sneaking vaguely

I can't see it. Someone would have told me to look in the mirror if there's any tattoo.

She laughs.

But with my eyes closed, sometimes it seems like there's a party going on upstairs.

FRANK, throwing himself onto his back

Upstairs! O yeah! Quite a lot of traffic up there in those starry regions. This is a one story building, sweetheart

Still lying down, he reaches out for Marta's hand

FRANK

Come on now: come back down here and hold me ...

MARTA

No .

She points upward:

You know: there is absolutely no privacy. People in the stars see down where where we are absolutely naked everywhere. It doesn't matter where the roof is.

FRANK

I don't know: we're pretty much alone... unless you were hearing some sort of cat burglar.

As on the billboard screen the curtain continues to shift in the deserted window.

MARTA

Maybe. I don't know. It's not the soundproofing. Conversations, you know: conversations. I can just hear them up there going on: debating about the state of the alleys, so socially-concerned, you know, while they...

FRANK

No: I do not know actually.

MARTA interrupting

Forget it. Let me finish.

FRANK, getting up and bowing elaborately

Madame...

MARTA, standing on the couch

Upstairs on the roof or inside the closet, those social workers who create the traffic patterns, you know, they are dynamite when they talk to you, baby... but that's only for a limited amount of time.

Her inspiration spent Marta stands uncertainly on the couch:

FRANK, glumly, as Marta jumps off the couch

That's why I went oblong.

MARTA

Is it?

FRANK

For awhile it seemed, actually, that the oblong housing developments were preferable to your dynamite conversations. Tell me again: how do you get your money?

MARTA

I work at whatever and then I travel. I take off and I travel:

Areas Of Heavy Traffic

a play

by E. Macer-Story

73

and then I work again.

FRANK

In this economy? How much longer do you expect you can...? Actually, this's none of my business, Marta. I was actually going to become concerned. Jesus Christ, and dynamite! Wow! It's the city again. I can

actually hear the traffic!

He stands with his hands over his ears:

Do you know that I can actually hear the traffic? O holy Jesus! Jesus Christ! I can actually hear the traffic, Marta! But we're out in the desert, aren't we?

MARTA

So? I told you. It doesn't matter where the roof is; as a matter of fact. We're all naked here, Frankie, after all.

Sarcastically

You have evoked the name of Christ.

FRANK

O. yes: certainly:. But I have not actually seen a Christian in the arena since the good old days in Rome. Do you hear me?

MARTA, looking upward and crossing herself

Right down to the skin, dear. The very edges of my tattoo are vibrating.

FRANK

Where there are so many people, you have got to "care". You have got to care,. Marta: it's not a matter of hiding on the roof to watch the traffic. It is simply a matter of survival.

MARTA. suddenly sober

I hear you.

FRANK, gesturing elaborately

It is the unintelligent person who does not realize that compassion is a matter of survival. Sensual distraction can kill you because the distracted citizen is not the same citizen: he, she OR it is not the citizen who survives... at least not in the areas of heavy traffic.

MARTA, glumly agreeing

Sensual citizens do not survive. That's why I am learning Sanskrit.

FRANK, sympathetic

Now tell me: why Sanskrit?... ah , forget it Tell me :why can't you find your car if it was definitely somewhere around here yesterday?

MARTA

I don't know. I didn't... Billy didn't have the keys, I don't think. he ...Wait a minute! O yes, I might have given him... Yeah: that's it, I suppose or: if I did actually leave them in the car some compassionate cat burglar could have made repairs.

FRANK darkly

All right: who is Billy?

MARTA, vaguely

The kid who dropped me off at your place.

FRANK

I see, the kid. Did he provide you with privileged services?

MARTA , angrily

What '?

FRANK. as if explaining to a child

Did you make sweet love to the kid who dropped you off, or was
it a pickup that involved plain downhome country manners?

MARTA

What?

Frank

Plain downhome country manners? Marta: that is the plan where the
lady uses her pay pal charge account.

MARTA slapping him

How much do you make?

FRANK, feeling his cheek

How much do I make? O: you mean: how many oblongs per year?

Sarcastically:

O, I don't know . I work. and then Bonnie goes shopping, and then
I work again.

He takes Marta by the chin and looks deeply into her eyes:

You must've made sweet love to that kid.

MARTA. Breaking away from him

He's not a kid. I felt compassionate, like a Christian surviving
the arena. Now sanely, let's just check out here. Let's just
check out here and locate the car.

FRANK gesturing melodramatically as he follows her offstage

SO you no like a zee iced wine at this Imperial villa ...is that it?

SCENE 10

BILLY D and BONITA enter hand in hand. He nuts his arm around
her shoulders briefly, then walks to the opposite side of the stage.

BONITA

Where did you learn to make love that way? I mean it.

BILLY D, with his back to her

By not calling it love. Lady.

There is a nausea. Billy D frowns uncertainly as Bonita smiles brightly and formally at his back.

BONITA

Really? I know. Love's just an expression in tennis: in tennis: it means "you're even".

BILLY Do laughing

Yeah. That's right: you're even, lady.

He turns around:

For what that's worth. I give us one more night I give it, to be fair, you know, .a maximum of three nights each time. I see myself as the distributor, the worker-distributor.

BONITA, laughing brlttlely

You see yourself as the what?? The "worker-distributor"?

BILLY D

BEE. I dlstribute the pollen, and that's about all I do, sugar. Other bees in this hive have their more specialized functions: the money, the resources... even, when you get right down to it, the life insurance .

BONITA, beaming

Sugar in your coffee and all that "pollen" didn't you say it was?

BILLY D

Yeah: groceries and all the rest of it. Lady, I give us exactly one more night. I do not have one thing: no life insurance,

no income, no nothing: I just take what's to hand from place to place. and then I leave . I leave well enough alone . I just can't handle the rest of the complications .

BONITA

What's so complex about this arrangement?

BILLY D

It's going to get complex. Lady. Just take it from me and I certainly would like to prevent that happening.

BONITA, brightly

How did you arrive at the figure of three, three nights as the limit?

BILLY D

O, it's just a number that occurred to me lady/

He comes toward her. awkwardly reaching for her hands:

Listen: you don't do that crazy act very well.

BONITA. letting him take her hands

I don't? No: I know that I don't do much well: That's for sure.

BILLY D

Say: now: don't hurt yourself. I have got to be honest.

BONITA

Yes. I suppose Haven't we all? We have all got to be honest.

BILLY D

Yeah. like in tennis: when you win, you win. When you lose, you lose. .There aln't no halfway about it, lady, and I have got to be honest.

He slaps his chest.

There aln't nothing here for you, dear: just my good intentions.

BONITA, vaguely

Your good intentions... O, terrific !

BILLY D, rhetorically

That's why I say there aln't no last name, no last name at all:
just Billy D Nothing .And what happens when you finally get out
of bed'? What happens when you finally crawl out of bed and look
around. sugar? Nothing! Nothing happens: I have got to be
honest.

BONITA

Honest? •• what do you mean by honest?. All right: I'll be honest:
I'd like to go to Mexico. Billy.

BILLY D

Mexico!

BONITA

I've never made that trip before :of all the vacations I've taken with my
husband: Not that one •••

BILLY D, looking at her speculatively

Uh-huh: OK.

BONITA

I just want to get away from breaking everything, you
know. I'm sure I'd do OK in Mexico.

There is a protracted silence, during which Billy D slghs
heavily and hooks his thumbs in his pants.

BILLY D

All right, sweetheart: if you can afford it, we'll give it a try.

But I am not going to be able to afford the entire trip to Mexico. By no

means; no way... not even Mexicali teacups.

BONITA

Not for just three nights . We can split the cost of the nights.

BILLY D

OK: We'll try for five.

BONITA, abruptly clicking her cell phone

Just a second. I've got to leave a message .

BILLY Do laughing ruefully

For your husband?

BONITA

No: not for him: a message long distance.

BILLY D

All right. So, what exactly are you going to tell this entire world long distance?

BONITA

I'm leaving.

BILLY D, speculatively

Hello. New York. This's Phoenix: I'm leaving for Mexico .Sure. Lady: I love you.

BONITA, rushing off stage

Just a second. L'll be right back. You wait: you wait right here.

BILLY D

Well, all right then: you just go and do that. Ah, Jesus:. yes, Billy sweetheart. you are god's rear end, and that is certainly for sure. So: I hope they have appliance catalogs

in Mexico, because if there aln't no colored illustrations to relieve the boredom, I do not know what I am going to do with my daylight hours. I just do not know what I am going to do.

BONITA'S VOICE, offstage

Billy! Billy. come here, honey: there's something...something here with the travel instructions about proof of identity.

BILLY Do leaving

Yeah: OK: I'm coming ! But I can't guarantee you any proof. I can't guarantee you proof of Mr. Nothing's passport from hell.

SCENE ELEVEN

FRANK wanders onto the lower level of the stage with Marta

FRANK

I don't think you're going to locate the car here. Marta: there's nothing but rock .

Scuffing at the earth as Marta wanders off by herself:

And a little vegetation ...for what that's worth.

MARTA

It couldn't have gotten somewhere else by itself. do you think ?

FRANK • glumly

No Marta: maybe some party animal from the stars might've been driving it, but I doubt that, actually, the car could've detoured all by itself.

MARTA

All right: I'm sorry I brought you all the way out here. For that, you have the right to object.

FRANK

No: I'm not objecting to this trip .I am enjoying myself out here in the Desert in a very novel and unoblong way. I don't know what you eventually intend to do about this lost vehicle which is or is not yours,

or is or is not here ... but I think the fresh air is absolutely terrific:

MARTA, appraisingly

You do, do you?

FRANK

Yes I do, and completely aside from these considerations... I am sensitive to animal perfume.

MARTA

What? Where?

FRANK

The smell of the livestock in the Circus Maximus arena. I could smell

it all over you my dear, just before we departed from Bonl:ta.

MARTA

What:?.Sex. you mean? While we were having the coffee?

FRANK, taking her by the wrist

No: not while vee vere having zee espresso... zee minute zat you entered the room, my dear.

There is a pause as Marta stares at Frank. Neither makes a move.

MARTA

Well, yes: I suppose you could smell something. I've had dogs do that.

FRANK

You have? Yes, I suppose that you probably have, come to think of it .Do you find me vulgar?

MARTA

I am vulgar Frankie, because I'm not legal. I have won a medal for illegality from the Imperial rodeo.

FRANK, affected

No! Cowboys don't matter. What'd you take me for? Some relic from the cowboy movies?

MARTA

You worry about legalities, Frankie. You worry about legalities, numbers, the arrangements for all of those numbers, filed wherever they are legally filed.

FRANK

No... I was...why was I worrying, you ask me? I was not worrying. I was not pairing the world off into opposites, which are not opposites, by the way. You and my dear wife Bonnie are not opposites, not twins, and I was not worrying . I was wallowing in my animal vulgarity.

MARTA. pressing her face up close toward Frank's face

That's right

She spits delicately to the side:

Wallowing, Frankie: you were wallowing.

FRANK

All right: cut it out.

MARTA

O. "cut it out now" says the Emperor. And moral legalities, of course, are something left over from the nineteen-forty cowboy movies. You grab me a lot and fake that continental accent, don't you? You joke and you fake it .Well, that is negative! All negative! there is nothing Genuinely creative about that approach, baby .

FRANK, with a comic European accent

Neg-a-teev-m-ty! Neg-a-teev-eee-tee! Ah, red hot neg-a-teev-eee-

tee!

MARTA, interrupting

Didn't they have catacombs at your villa, baby? That great Christian martyr's no-space ,that dark hole under the tiles of the fountain , hell down there under...

FRANK. as Marta trails off

Marta, I feel all at loose ends, talking about this.

MARTA

Why?

FRANK

It's the no-space. It's oblong. I see it in the oblong shadows along my driveway. Actually: we had fun at the fountain back in the glory days...we...

MARTA

Held orgies, or did whatever you did to the people in the catacombs: didn't you?

FRANK ,evasive

Often I hear the sound of cheering ...

MAET

A

You hear the sound of cheering?

She laughs:

Really?

FRANK, morose

Cheering coming up at me out of the oblongs, out of the darkened pre-fab corners and alleyways, sounds from that party you talked about. Upstairs that celestial party: the eternal party going on upstairs or across the parking lot ...and I am no longer invited, Marta.

MARTA

certainly, you must have some friends, friends who invite you places occasionally. O, but this's ridiculous, Frankie: of course you do have friends.

FRANK

Of course.

MARTA

Do you know: I visualize you at your suburban cocktail parties but that's usually while I'm waiting for a train. I get lonely sometimes waiting ~or trains, the times...

Sh~ laughs gently:

The times when I forget my car.

FRANK

So: you fanaticize suburban cocktail parties?

MARTA

Yes.

FRANK

So...perhaps that might be, actually, the cheering I hear from invisible parties. That's the answer, Marta! It's your

imaginary cocktail parties that bother me from across the parking Lot.

MARTA

Would you like me to tell you something?

FRANK

Yes. Certainly. Whatever you like. You can tell me whatever you like. my dear. Just don't interrupt the cheering.

FRANK

Does she know? Have you told Bonnie? Does she know that we met in the city?

MARTA

Bonnie, as we have discussed, is a kid, my dear adult barbarian, the eternal kid : so I have told Bonnie just exactly what *I* needed to explain, no more.

FRANK, kissing Marta briefly

No more?

MAR.TA. vaguely

Right now, there is nothing I want to tell you. I have changed my mind. There is nothing I want to tell you.

FRANK.

Certainly: nothing. Even about your vagabond lovers?

MARTA

Why? It's all a matter of what you choose to remember, isn't it? Nothing's absolutely real Look at this place: there's

nothing here. It's all nothing but the rocks that happen to be around here, you know. That's why it gets so cold sometimes in the evenings. There's nothing else. But the empty earth here, and the sky that changes with the wind. That's why it gets so hot here, actually, you know...

Briskly:

Once it gets to be about ten o'clock in the morning, there is absolutely nothing here but the sun.

FRANK, looking upward

Or the moon: depending on your orientation.

MARTA, laughing ruefully

I'm like that.

FRANK still looking upward

Like "that" are you? Which "that"? The sun? The moon? The deserts?. The sunsets? Which of those little nature postcards are you most like? Let's get in some animated cartoons here at the invisible party:

He rises and bows elaborately in several directions:

How do you do everybody? O excuse me. I forgot to mention the hot breath of the cold breezes.

MARTA. as Frank is bowing elaborately

Forget it. I more or less get hot and cold as the weather gets hot and cold, you know, and that's why I've got to travel. I can't think very well in one place where the weather keeps changing. It changes my mind.

FRANK, conversationally

In fact, as Emperor of the Oblongs, I have not changed my mind in about four years, Marta. Such changes of identity are not allowed on the insurance forms.

MARTA

Don't you change it at all when you spin the globe that way and point to whatever?

She looks at her index finger:

I suppose that the weather can't enter your finger that way when you touch the globe without actually traveling.

FRANK, interested

I don't know. Listen, Marta, if I was at home right now and out of the sun...

He stares at his index« finger:

I would certainly give that a try. Imagine absorbing Afghanistan through the tip of your finger.

MARTA, vaguely

Is Afghanistan in India? Do you...

Suddenly urgent:

Do you happen to know if Afghanistan~ is in India?

FRANK. after a moment of thought

Afghanistan is on the Silk Road to China, I believe, near Pakistan but not necessarily within India. Never within India.

MARTA

That's what I thought.

FRANK, clearing his throat

If you could hear them cheering at the party wherever you were, you

might not have to travel, Marta But there is absolutely no guarantee that you would be invited. You can hear them cheer at the party up there in the stars, you know, without knowing exactly where to find the invisible invitation.

MARTA

I have never heard anyone cheering upstairs . Do they really cheer?

FRANK, patiently

Yes: they really cheer...but silently.

MARTA

All right: they really cheer. .Are they cheering now?

FRANK, wearily

No. they're not cheering now .I can't really hear it: right now, at this moment'

He puts his hands over his ears, then releases them and grins

There's been an intermission in the party.

He laughs:

Everyone has gone out to get Mex8icali tea.

rlhRTA. rubbing~ her arms

It's cold here now actually, Frankie. It gets cold in the desert even before sunset.

FR&NK, absentmindedly

Sorry. Sorry your car's not here. Wherever your car is, Marta: it is certainly not here.

MARTA

I probably did give him the keys.

FRANK

Yes: I'm sure you probably did and he's halfway to heaven by now.

Indicating the way offstage:

Shall we find our warm little vehicle? After you, Madame Romacita.

MARTA, taking him by the shoulders

I don't care, Frankie. I don't care. It doesn't bother me.

FRANK

What doesn't?

MARTA, floundering

The cheering you hear... the silent cheering ..or whatever.

FRANK, brusquely

Come on: I think that we had better cut the philosophy and either locate your car or do something else legal about this.. ah_ . real time dilemma in which we find ourselves right now at twilight.

MARTA. following him out angrily

I told you: he's probably taken it. I think I remember giving Billy the keys . But at any rate it doesn't make much difference , does it?, where my particular car might be. In Afghanistan? Maybe the car has been teleported to Afghanistan, Frankie. Or to a secret tunnel beneath the Grand Canyon.

SCENE TWELVE

As Marta and Frank are leaving~, BILLY D crosses the stage carrying a four-socketed tire iron. He is disheveled.

BILLY D

all right, wherever I go no matter what I take with me: something breaks down. I do the repairs and then I move on , fixing what I

don't have much of any particular right to enjoy. I wouldn't anyway
be satisfied with staying.

EILEEN enters onto the upper ramp level and sits down on the couch.
She is comparing paper printouts of traffic diagrams with images on her
cell phone and the sound of rustling paper and clicking buttons is
faintly audible.

BILLY D

I hear their homeboy conversations: Billy, I don't know where it
gets you: looking in the windows and then sometimes sitting up
in the living room waiting for the odd jobs paycheck.. and then it's
"fix this. honey " or "I'd appreciate it if you" do something more
and all the rest of it: obligations. No, thank you, ma'am. I don't
have very many obligations, never had exactly enough stuff of my own
to have too many obligations but when the machine breaks down., I'll
'bring you a little pollen, lady ...yeah...

He laughs:

I'll bring her a little pollen while, Daddy, You make her a little
Wax cell.

BON~'S VOICE, insistent

Billy: where are you?

BILLY D

Baby, if I knew that, I'd be halfway out to the coast by now
but you can't argue with a breakdown. can you? Either it runs or it
does not run .

BONITA'S VOICE

Billy ! ls something the matter?

BILLY D

Yeah: either it runs or it does not .run and, so you can never have any clear idea of where you're goings until you know pretty clearly where you happen to be starting, at any one moment.

Yeah: that's pretty clear and I have never known exactly where I happen to be coming from: I know that.

BONNIE is suddenly visible at the side of the lower stage area

BONNIE

Did you get the tire iron? Where are you?

BILLY D, walks back toward Bonita abruptly

BILLY D

I'm here. and I have got it. Yes, ma'am. Billy the fixit man is on his way!

BONITA

Don't say that about "fixit man".

BILLY D

Why not, sugar?

BONITA, as he puts his arm around her

I don't know. Just please don't say that.

BILLY D. guiding her offstage

All right: I will not say I have fixed anything. It happens! These things just get back together.

EILEEN continues to work on the diagrams. As she finishes each one , she holds the cell phone up carefully and compares it with the draft on paper.

ON SCREEN, as she is doing this there is a Quick shot of a naked Romanesque statue of a male divinity with the face turned slightly profile. Behind this image as it fades off the screen, there is the image of a highway in the dull light of early morning~ Frank's car turns off this highway into a residential area. Marta is sitting at the far opposite of the front seat. The camera shows Frank and Marta talking as the car is moving.

FRANK

Well...so here we are: back at the oblongs.

MARTA, laughing nervously

If you say so. I'm not so sensitive to oblongs.

FRANK, turning into his driveway
and stopping the car with a jerk

No? Well. that's certainly fortunate.

MARTA

Not for me. It doesn't make any difference, Frank. Fortunate or unfortunate.

EILEEN continues to work on the diagrams, comparing each scan to the others, and to the print outs in her sheaf of papers.

ON SCREEN, as Eileen is shuffling papers, Marta and Frank get out of the car, glance at each other furtively and cross the lawn to walk up the front pathway to the house. Frank raises his hand toward Marta's waist and then drops it. He unlocks the house door. The camera shows the broken crockery in a neat pile near the door. Frank, stops to look at it, then looks around and

walks out of sight down the front hallway. Marta is standing near the door

FRANK'S VOICE

Incredible! Those were the Mexicali teacups. I hope there hasn't been a robbery.

Marta walks down the hallway and out of view

MARTA

Where's Bonnie?

EILEEN's cell phone rings as the billboard view of the empty hallway remains 'on screen .

EILEEN answering gingerly

"
Hello? Who is this? How do you know this number?

ZEENA'S VOICE

Hello, Eileen: don't worry. This's Zeena.

EILEEN

Don't worry?! I'm doing my traffic diagrams on the cell phone. This's an unlisted number.

ZEENA'S VOICE, impatiently

All right. Has she called you?

EILEEN

Who?

ZEENA'S VOICE& sarcastic

The traveling guru.

EILEEN

Marta-Krishna? No.

ZEENA'S VOICE

Well, this's embarrassing, actually.

EILEEN

Fire away . As you know. I am not an insensitive person.

ZEENA'S VOICE, after a pause

All right. It's Bonne. She called and left a message.

EILEEN

Bonnie?! You mean Bonita Wharton in Phoenix? The one who married Frank?

ZEENA'S VOICE, sarcastic

Yes: exactly: the one who married Frank.

EILEEN

You'll have to excuse me, but you caught me at a bad time: I was actually drafting traffic patterns here. Now: what is it about

this message?

ZEENA'S VOICE

She...well, Hold it: this's really... Are you ready to scream?

Are you really ready to scream, Eileen?

EILEEN, grimly

Try me: I can't say beforehand.

ZEENA'S VOICE

She's ...Bonnie has run off to Mexico, Eileen, with one of
Marta-Krishna's ...How can I say this?...Festival friends.

EILEEN

"Traveling companions". do you mean'

ZEENA'S VOICE

That is the message.

EILEEN

So: what's the matter?. I do not consider myself an insensitive
person~ Zeena, but I am telling you: I do not understand what's
the matter.

ZEENA'S VOICE ,angry

It's just ...it's just that this time it's Bonnie.

EILEEN

You say: Marta's in Phoenix?

ZEENA~S VOICE

I don't know! I really don't know where Marta is at the moment.
Eileen! I assume that she has just moved on or something: I
don't know . Don't you understand? This time it's Bonnie who's running
away to a Mexican Festival!

There is the loud sound of Zeena's phone disconnecting. QN BILLBOARD

SCBEBN, Frank walks down the empty hallway and shuts the door and then walks off screen again The hallway is once again empty.

EILEEN, putting down the phone

Where was Marta supposed to be?

Eileen shuffles and stacks the print outs.

I thought she was supposed to be in Southern California.

ON SCREEN, the hallway is instantly replaced by a MAPQUEST illustration with yellow pointer indicating the intersection of two roads near a highway rotary.

EILEEN, leaving

I suppose I'll have to call later and find out...For some reason.

SCENE THIRTEEN

MARTA enters onto the lower stage area between the ramps. She sits in the canvas chair and stares into space for a moment. then crosses her legs and laughs ruefully. Frank wanders onstage and looks at her. He kneels beside her chair.

MARTA

She'll be back here, Frankie: I'm sure of it. After he gets through teaching her "what life is really like in Mexico " or: whatever that note read .

FRANK takes the note from his pocket

FRANK, reading

"What I have always missed in my life with you so far... to be specific ..." is...

MARTA, quietly

What is it that she has missed so far?

Kneeling, FRANK presses his body between Marta's legs. and rests his head on her bosom like a child. He sobs softly. catches himself, and then begins to kiss Marta's neck:

MARTA

Did she miss that. Frankie?

FRANK

She says she missed never being able to visit the Empire with me.

FRANK, sitting back on his heels

I work and then I take a little time off.. and then I work again: isn't that what you said, kid?

MARTA vaguely

You forget: I'm not the kid. I'm the traveling worker bee. Maybe Bonnie missed the drones.

FRANK

What?

MARTA. leans forward to klss the top of his head

MARTA

Drones~ •• drones in the hive: they carry a little spermy something in to the Queen Bee , and then she..

Frank interrupts, kissing her. She pushes him away

MARTA

O...she conceives or she does not conceive: doesn't she? and then We...You: you, to be specific, Frank.

Kneeling, Frank presses his body between her legs. He kisses her again, She laughs.

You go back for some more wax to build the cell...but I'm getting this mixed up. There's a lot of traffic at the hive but the worker is not the drone.

FRANK, catching un the theme

Which kind of bee are you, Marta...really?

MARTA

No one. I am exactly no one, Frankie. I work, and I travel and then I work again. Actually, I think I may have disqualified myself for Queen.

FRANK

Queen for a day?

MARTA

Queen of the hive. They don't travel. The queen of the hive gets buried alive, Frankie: that is the source of her Imperial power She just...stays there. I can't... can't do that all the time: for a day, maybe.

FRANK, bitterly

"For a day, maybe ••• ": will you stay with me now?

MARTA, suddenly distant

As a responsible adult, I would like to be of some assistance in your situation: you know. I really do have friends in Los Angeles

FRANK, in tears

So do I! So do I!

MARTA. taking him gently by the shoulders

Please! I have disqualified myself for the Queenship, and that is not to mention finding the car, finding or not finding the car. ..which probably has been sold by now.

She laughs and kisses Frank abruptly:

MARTA

She'll be back, Frankle, once she finds out that... O,I don't know.. that whatever she has been missing disappears everywhere, Frankie. It disappears everywhere.

FRANK.

She certainly did.

MARTA

For a little while. Frankie ... and then she'll be back.

FRANK

What is life really like, Marta? Please tell me because I am afraid that I don't really know.

MARTA. laughing

Life ...

With an expansive, semi-sarcastic gesture:

Life is just a mystery of disappearing people: people, cars, your life insurance. Everything just keeps on di3ap~earing. So I guess that's why I really travel. Frankie: so that I can be the one to disappear rather than the Queen Bee smothered in traffic patterns.

FRANK, abruptly

So: when will you be leaving?

MARTA. looking back at him vaguely

After a little while ..

The stage arw8 darkens as Frank and Marta stare at each other.

leaving the MAPQUEST display brightly-lit on the Billboard screen.

FRANK

"After a little while:..."when?

THE END

