

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

CANDY (15) sits on the edge of her bed in an immaculate TEENY BOPPER bedroom. A calendar reads "AUGUST - 1958."

It's perfect. Her 45's are stacked neatly behind a portable record player. Crinoline skirts poke out of her closet.

Baby Blue and Bubblegum Pink are the dominant colors. Along with one other thing, which can't help but pull focus.

The posters of COSMO LAMB. He's what everyone means when they say "Good Looking"...or "Beautiful."

Blonde, blue eyed, tan, muscular - all facts Candy is completely familiar with. He's everywhere around her.

She's very pretty, wearing a gingham dress and a makeup job she probably copied from a magazine.

A radio from way before the 50's sits on a vanity. She leans toward it with every word.

ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO)

And here it is, ladies and gentleman,
the moment you've all been waiting
for. Thousands upon thousands of
devoted fans have crossed their
fingers and kissed a horse shoe, and
it all comes down to this. One lucky
fan will win a date with Cosmo Lamb.

The studio audience goes insane. Or a recording of a studio audience goes insane. Either way. It's loud.

Candy leans farther forward, barely on the bed anymore. The audience hushes. Paper CRINKLES on the radio.

ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO)

And the lucky girl is -

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The contrast between Candy's bedroom and the rest of the ramshackle farmhouse couldn't be more pronounced.

If things aren't gray they're brown. The furniture is from the depression. It's tidy, but that's the only positive.

PA (70), a wiry old man with the course skin of a farm hand, dozes on a sofa made mostly of exposed springs.

MA (45), a thick armed woman, dozes upright in a well made and extremely CREAKY rocking chair.

Candy's SHRILL SCREAM fills the small room. Her parents stir. Eventually. They're apparently used to her enthusiasm.

She bursts out of her bedroom. The bright light spills around her in the doorway and lands on the dim floor.

CANDY

I won. I won. I won I won I won. Me.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Candy sits with very proper, Emily Post posture at the kitchen table. Farmland stretches out the busted window.

Pa leans on the sink. He pours himself a drink. Ma sits across from her, wearing an idiot's sneer.

CANDY

I'm going to Los Angeles. There's nothing you can do to stop me.

PA

Girl, you better mind yer manners.

MA

Why would a big ol' movie star like that want to take you out anyway? Yer nothing special and you know it.

SMACK. Candy's hand shoots across the table and slaps Ma in the face. Hard. Pa moves forward, his fist raised.

Candy hops up. She's a full head taller than him. And has a hell of a lot more vitality. Her hands ball into fists.

CANDY

Don't you even think about it, you dirty old crow. I told you we were done with all that and I meant it. I'm going and I'm getting away from this nightmare life you all have made. I don't want none of it.

She lifts herself to her full height. Pa backs up, his fists still clenched. Ma pours a drink.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

COSMO LAMB (20) sits at a vanity in a lavish hotel room. A sleek, modern radio glows with soft light.

The sound of SCREAMING TEENS fades as the announcers voice comes on clean, without a crowd behind it.

ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO)

And that was the word on the street
just two months ago when we announced
the name of the lucky girl who won -

CLICK. He turns off the radio. He may be the best looking man alive. His smile could blind whole crowds of people.

Clippings of his career are taped around the mirror. One headline reads "What's a Cosmo Lamb?"

Another shows him with his twin brother at his twin's high school graduation. He gazes at a specific unframed one.

It's of Cosmo and MONTY (55) on the set of a film. They're mid song & dance routine. Their eyes lock to each others.

FOOTSTEPS approach. An automatic smile crosses Cosmo's lips as LAZLO GANT (33) enters, in a dandy pinstripe suit.

LAZLO

Why aren't you listening to the
radio? It's all about you, you, you.

He moves to tape a new headline to the mirror. Cosmos stops him. Politely, but firmly.

COSMO

It's enough. Isn't it?

He turns his smile to the mirror, surrounded by photographs of the exact same smile. It fades a little.

Lazlo turns Cosmo to face him.

LAZLO

This is going to take you to the top,
you wait and see. The ink's drying on
your studio contract as we speak.

Cosmo nods. He's excited.

COSMO

OK, OK. You're right, you're right.
This is good.

(MORE)

COSMO

But no radio, OK? I still can't stand the sound of that name. What is a Cosmo Lamb?

LAZLO

It's a star, that's what it is. What was the name you wanted again?

COSMO

Hunter Harvey.

LAZLO

Nicky, my boy, that would have been all wrong. Hunter is dark. Hunter is swarthy. Hunter...hunts.

COSMO

What does Cosmo do?

LAZLO

Make the studio a boat load of money, hopefully. You got any booze?

Cosmo motions around the room.

COSMO

I'm sure you'll dig something up.

Lazlo looks for - and finds - a drink.

LAZLO

Remember, you'll have to have a few drinks with dinner. Make sure the label on the bottle faces the camera's. Bear on Bear didn't sponsor this for the good of their health.

He sits on the bed.

LAZLO

You swear you're up for this?

COSMO

Yes, of course. I'm looking forward to it. Where's she from again?

LAZLO

Ohio. And let me tell you. She's ripe as a ripe peach. And that's pretty ripe.

Cosmo nods abstractly.

COSMO
Good, good.

LAZLO
You want a toot?

He holds up the bottle he found.

COSMO
No, I'm OK. My mom wouldn't approve.
It's not even dark out yet.

He fidgets with his tie.

COSMO
Is she here yet? She's already a
couple of hours late.

LAZLO
She was enroute last I heard. We
tracked her down at a book store.

COSMO
Tracked her down?

LAZLO
Yeah, she wasn't in the dining room.
Where she said she'd be.

COSMO
Oh.

They lapse into silence. Cosmo looks like he wants to speak a couple of times, but restrains himself. Until he doesn't.

COSMO
Any word on the next Jingle Jangle
picture? I know we were waiting to
hear from Monty's people...

LAZLO
We're ironing out the kinks.

COSMO
(Sedate)
Keen.

LAZLO
Hey, kid. How are you doing about all
that stuff? I mean, really.

COSMO
I'm...

He's about to tell him the truth. But he stops.

COSMO

...fine. I just want to keep the pictures going. They're a lot of fun for a lot of people.

FOOTSTEPS approach. ROBERTA (42) enters. A slim woman, you can see Cosmo in her eyes - but not in her stern expression.

She holds two shopping bags filled with books. Cosmo moves to hug her. She pats him on the shoulder.

ROBERTA

Nicholas. Straighten your tie. You're escorting a lady tonight.

COSMO

Right, Ma.

LAZLO

You should really get used to calling him Cosmo. A lot of big stars change their names. It's no big deal.

ROBERTA

No thank you. As soon as he leaves this weak tea business behind and gets himself involved in something substantial, "Cosmo" won't be anything but a strange dream he barely remembers. Mister. Gant.

She absolutely hisses Lazlo's name at him.

LAZLO

Suit yourself.

Cosmo moves between them and takes her bags.

COSMO

Watcha got?

ROBERTA

Books for your brother.

LAZLO

(Mutters)

Paid for by this weak tea biz.

ROBERTA

Harvard's literary demands are rather severe.

LAZLO
 (Mutters)
 Also paid for by -

COSMO
 Lazlo, why don't you see if we're on
 schedule.

Lazlo looks from Cosmo to Roberta, who intentionally looks
 at anything else. Cosmo's expression pleads.

LAZLO
 Sounds good, chief. I'll send Miss
 Marci up when we're good to go.

He squeezes Cosmo's shoulder on his way out. Cosmo turns to
 Roberta, glad to be alone with her.

ROBERTA
 I'm going to put my feet up for a
 while. Your brother is calling
 tonight, so I want to be sharp.

She moves in to the bedroom and closes the door behind her.
 Cosmo is alone.

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - DAY

MISS MARCI (25), a tiny beatnick of a girl, hurries Cosmo
 toward the lobby. Marci talks at a rapid pace.

MARCI
 You'll be in the limo, but, along
 with the police escort, two plain
 cars will have you in sight at all
 times. Studio dicks.

COSMO
 Great.

MARCI
 When you're at the record shop, make
 sure you have her hold up the new LP
 and a couple of 45's. If they're
 starting a record label just for you,
 they want a big bang for their buck
 out of this.

They move past a small crowd of photographers. Flashbulbs
 POP incessantly. A GROWING MURMUR sounds from outside.

MARCI

They told you about the hooch, right?
Drink, but don't get blotto.

COSMO

Got it. Half blotto, at most.

She's about to fuss at him, but then he smiles. Like everyone else on the planet, she melts.

COSMO

Marci, it will be fine. Groovy, even.

MARCI

Don't say groovy.

They reach the wide, ornate double doors to the street. The MURMUR is louder, like a river. She adjusts his tie.

COSMO

How do I look?

MARCI

You're kidding me, right?

The sound of his name can be heard in the MURMUR.

INT. LIMO - BACKSEAT - DAY

Candy peeks out a tinted window on to a huge crowd of TEENY BOPPERS mobbing the front of the hotel.

It's a Beatles level mob. The girls scream and cry and chant "Cosmo" over and over. Some hold signs.

Lazlo nudges Candy back into her seat. He sits across from her, flanked by two EXECUTIVES, one ANXIOUS, one BORED.

LAZLO

Nervous?

CANDY

Why on earth would I be nervous? I've been dreaming about this day since... gosh. Since forever.

LAZLO

Hrm.

The crowd GOES NUTS. Candy presses her face to the window.

LAZLO

Try to stay out of sight until we get to the record store.

CANDY

Oh hush.

Lazlo grins. The Anxious Executive doesn't. The mob parts and moves forward as a single unit. It's unsettling.

Candy gasps. Cosmo appears on the steps of the hotel. I swear to god the sun moves just to shine on him.

It follows him down the steps, too. Once he hits the edge of the barricade two SECURITY GUARDS rush him forward.

Before she can gasp a second time the door opens, Cosmo hops in, and the engine starts. They're on the go.

SUPER: THE FIRST DATE - DINNER & A MOVIE

COSMO

Candice? What a treat it is to meet you. I'm Cosmo.

LAZLO

Call her Candy. It's what we put in all the magazines.

He extends his hand. She faints. Only she knows it's on purpose. The world goes black when her eyes flutter closed.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS - DAY

The limo drives through Los Angeles. Cosmo holds a glass of water in front of Candy's mouth. She sips with shaky hands.

CANDY

Could I trouble you for something a little stronger? For my nerves.

Lazlo reaches for the bar. Cosmo stops him.

COSMO

She's only eighteen. Water will do just fine.

CANDY

Gosh, I'm sorry. I've never fainted before. Not even one time.

(MORE)

CANDY

Well, once when I was five I held my breath until I passed out because my Ma wouldn't take me to the movies, but that's different. That was on purpose. And it was Bogie and Bacall in Key Largo. What else was I supposed to do?

Cosmo cocks an eyebrow before he and Lazlo chuckle. She looks at Cosmo.

CANDY

Do you know them?

COSMO

I'm afraid not. I met Miss Bacall at a premier once. She's terrific.

CANDY

I've never missed one of her pictures.

LAZLO

Well try not to mention that tonight. She's with a different studio.

CANDY

Well, if someone asks me about my favorites, I'm going to go ahead and tell them about my favorites. I don't see why I shouldn't.

Cosmo is amused. The Anxious Executive nudges Lazlo.

LAZLO

That reminds me. There are a few ground rules we need to cover before we really get going.

ANXIOUS EXECUTIVE

(Stern as hell)

Do not mention any films from any studio other than Cosmo's. Do not mention any recording artists other than Cosmo. Do not use brand names unless specifically told to do so. Do not make untoward advances toward Mister Lamb or his physical person. Do not -

Cosmo catches the distressed look on Candy's face.

COSMO

OK, boys. That's enough. I'll take it from here.

He takes Candy's hand and settles them back in their seats.

COSMO

It's all going to be fine. It's really big and a little scary, but we'll have a blast. OK?

She nods.

COSMO

Try not to make eye contact for too long with anyone right up front. Smile but keep your distance. If you get overwhelmed, I'll be right there next to you.

CANDY

I won't be overwhelmed. This is all I've ever wanted. What you have.

Cosmo studies her face, a little concerned. Lazlo taps him on the leg with his foot. Go on. Say the right thing.

COSMO

Well great. Then you'll be just fine and dandy.

She links her arm in his and props her cheek on his lapels.

CANDY

Oh I know it.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD - JOEY STATS RECORDS - DAY

The limo winds through a more controlled crowd than at the hotel. Barricades keep the fans across the street.

A red carpet backdrop stands next to the entrance to the store. Reporters and photographers wait, unimpressed.

The limo pulls to a stop at the curb. Cosmo gets out first. The crowd goes banana's. He smiles and waves.

Candy gets out next. Boo's and hisses pepper the cheers. It catches her off guard. Cosmo puts his arm around her.

EXT. JOEY STATS RECORDS - RED CARPET - DAY

Bulbs POP and reporters fire questions at a polite but rapid pace. Candy shades her eyes from the explosions of light.

FIRST REPORTER

And what do your parents think about you being on a date with the most eligible bachelor in Hollywood?

She looks for the source of the question. She can't find it.

SECOND REPORTER

Cosmo, what do you think Miss Johnny Swell will have to say about you having another gal on your arm?

Cosmo answers without hesitation. He's a natural.

COSMO

She'd be over the moon to have a day off from staring at this jerks mug.

He points at his face with his thumb.

CANDY

(Quiet)

Don't say that. Everybody loves your mug. Especially her.

SECOND REPORTER

Don't you ever think about marriage?

COSMO

All the time. It's what keeps me single.

FIRST PHOTOGRAPHER

Candy, can you put your hand down, please? I want to make sure to get a shot of your pretty face.

She lowers her hand but it goes right back up again when the flashbulbs POP POP POP. Cosmo pulls her in tight.

Her hand lowers again. Slowly. Her eyes drink in the scene. Hundreds of people fill the crowd across the street.

They all look at her.

SECOND REPORTER

What do you think of Hollywood so far? Does it hold a candle to Ohio?

Her shoulders straighten. Her grip on Cosmo loosens.

CANDY

Ohio is wonderful, just wonderful.
But we only make corn. Hollywood
makes dreams.

THIRD REPORTER

Cosmo, what have you got planned for
the rest of the day?

Cosmo opens his mouth to speak. Candy beats him to it.

CANDY

We've only got just the best day
planned, that's all. You'll have to
wait and see.

FIRST REPORTER

Cosmo, will you and Monty be making
another Jingle Jangle picture anytime
soon?

Again Candy beats him to an answer.

CANDY

You don't have to keep your fingers
crossed for that. I heard Cosmo and
Mister Gant talking about it in the
limousine. They're just waiting for
the ink to dry on the contracts.

Lazlo shoots to the edge of the backdrop. Far enough away
that he won't be in any of the pictures.

Close enough to shoot Cosmo a look that would melt the ice
caps. It's unnecessary. Cosmo knows to end the Q&A.

He holds up a hand and pulls Candy close.

COSMO

Alright, gents. It's been a gas, it's
been a riot, it's been as thrilling
as a hot dog without mustard, but we
have to get going. Those Cosmo Lamb
records aren't going to buy
themselves.

The reporters laugh through puffs of cigarette smoke.

SECOND PHOTOGRAPHER

How about a kiss for the road?

He holds up his camera. Cosmo turns full profile and puckers up for an innocent lip-to-lip kiss.

Candy throws her arms around his neck and plants one on him.

INT. JOEY STATS RECORDS - DAY

A STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHER snaps posed shots of Cosmo and Candy in the empty store.

They hold up his LP. They make eyes at each other over a rack of his 45.'s. They read the liner notes, captivated.

STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHER
Could you turn to look at each other again? That looked great.

CANDY
Sure. Only. Is this my best side? Should we switch?

STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHER
That could work. Or, you know what? Cosmo, why don't you take five and we'll get some of Candy loving the hell out of your records.

Cosmo looks at Candy.

COSMO
Is that OK with you? You don't have to be in any by yourself if you don't want.

CANDY
I want. I want.

She kisses him on the cheek.

CANDY
Shoo.

Cosmo wanders over to the -

INT. JOEY STATS RECORDS - COUNTER

- to join JOEY STATS, the proprietor. He's skinny, nose like a beak, and the kind of hip other people want to be.

JOEY STATS
She's kind of brutal, man.

COSMO
She's a kid. A kid-kid, you know?

JOEY STATS
Still. I'd watch myself if I were
you. Which I know I am not.

COSMO
Oh yeah? What else would you do if
you were me?

JOEY STATS
Sell this dump toot-sweet and hop on
a plane to Europe. Which reminds me -
I got a new batch in from Storyville.
Primo. Secundo. The tops.

They watch Candy pose. And boss the photographer around.

JOEY STATS
Bru.Tal.

COSMO
I don't know. You think maybe we set
her up for this?

JOEY STATS
We?

COSMO
Us, here. In this town. The image.
The scene. We make it and we sell it.
All gals like her do is buy it.

JOEY STATS
I know what you meant, friend. I
meant "we" as in - I drove a bicycle
built for one to work today, and even
that ran out of gas because I
couldn't afford the gas.

Cosmo playfully shoves him. They're pals.

JOEY STATS
Give it to me straight and give it to
me narrow. How's tricks with Monty?

Cosmo makes a so-so gesture.

COSMO
There might be a new flick, there
might not be a new flick. You catch
my drift?

JOEY STATS
You should catch hers.

They look over at Candy, who holds the latest Cosmo LP at arms length then kisses it SMACK on the picture of him.

INT. JOEY STATS RECORDS - JAZZ SECTION - LATER

The Studio Photographer packs her things. Lazlo stands outside. There's still a crowd but it's thinner.

The sun goes down. Cosmo looks intensely through the Jazz imports. Candy walks next to him, giddy.

CANDY
Turner?

COSMO
Not really.

CANDY
Crawford?

COSMO
Not even a little bit.

CANDY
Lake?

COSMO
Never even in the same room.

CANDY
Oh, oh...Stanwyck?

COSMO
Nope. Sorry.

CANDY
Do you know any famous people?

He laughs.

COSMO
I only just got my foot in the door.
It takes time and a lot of hard work
to swing it open on the party.

CANDY
Foey.

COSMO
So, are you looking forward to Autumn
in Ohio? I bet it's gorgeous.

CANDY
It's a chicken coop and I hate it.
There's no light when the sun goes
down. Everything's so empty.

COSMO
I thought you said you loved it?

CANDY
I didn't have something nice to say,
so I made it up.

He takes out a jazz album that's a year old and studies the
back. She glances over at it.

CANDY
The drums on the American pressing
are much better. Get that instead.

He's impressed.

COSMO
You like jazz?

CANDY
Of course. You only talk about it in
every interview ever. I ordered a
catalogue you mentioned and got
practically every album in it. I know
you love, love, love Coltrane, but
Yusef Lateef is my favorite. Jazz
Mood? It sounds like a whole movie
trapped in wax.

He's more than impressed.

COSMO
I don't even have that one.

CANDY
I don't like any of them as much as
your records, though. Naturally.

She gazes out the window at the diminishing crowd as they
stroll to the next batch of records.

CANDY
How many of those girls do you think
entered the same contest I did?

COSMO

I couldn't guess. A whole lot, I'm betting. You want to know a secret?

She turns and presses herself into him immediately.

CANDY

Tell me, tell me.

COSMO

Sometimes these contests are rigged a little. The studio picks who they want to win, but this time they did a real, honest injun blind drawing, like they said on the radio. Since I have twelve singles, they picked the twelfth name. Yours was actually the thirteenth. The twelfth was a man. A middle aged man to boot. From right here in town.

He can see by her face that he said the wrong thing.

CANDY

You mean I didn't really win? I've never won anything in my whole life. And now I didn't win this?

COSMO

Aw, I'm sorry kid. Really. You did win. The rules said you had to be between eighteen and twenty one to enter.

CANDY

But I wasn't the twelfth.

COSMO

You were the twelfth girl.

CANDY

Who cares if it's a boy or a girl. Someone else should be here right now, right? Not me?

She looks like she's about to cry.

COSMO

He broke the rules. See? So you won. You really, really won. I only told you so you'd know something no one else did. Promise.

CANDY

...well. It did say in the rules how old you had to be. And I was picked right after him?

COSMO

Right after him.

She considers. It's good enough for her. The potential tears disappear and she moves happily down the aisle.

A bell TINKLES on the door. The sound of the crowd comes in when Lazlo enters. He gestures at Cosmo.

INT. SODA SHOP - NIGHT

The two sit on high stools in the window of a gleaming-clean soda shop. It's empty except for a cook in a greasy apron.

Lazlo and the PR team stand outside. Cop's man a very animated crowd behind a barricade. It's small but fervent.

The table is loaded with American Diner food. Ice Cream Sundaes, Burgers, Turkey Clubs, French Fries, pie, cake.

A pristine chocolate shake sits between them. Lazlo motions at it through the window. Cosmo nods.

COSMO

Photo op.

He slides the straw out of it's paper wrapper and sticks it in the shake, already posing.

She blows the paper off the end of her straw and sticks it in. POP POP. The shutterbugs get their moment.

She tucks into the Sundae first. Pretty messily.

COSMO

Dessert before dinner, huh?

CANDY

Did you know we only have Sundae's because of god? It's true. Some state in the old days outlawed ice cream soda's, so a bunch of soda shop owners started putting the syrup directly on the ice cream. Isn't that wild? It's the same thing in a different way. How is that better?

COSMO

Wow, yeah. It isn't, I guess.

She grins at him, sundae all over her mouth. He hands her a napkin. She wipes her mouth.

CANDY

Everything's so wild.

She takes the contents of her turkey club off the bread, shoves the bread away, and eats the insides with her hands.

COSMO

You got something against bread?

She CRUNCHES into a piece of bacon with real delight.

CANDY

It got in the way of what I was after.

He watches her eat. Kind of like a sloppy, kind of like someone that hasn't had decent food before. It's endearing.

COSMO

Now that we're alone, can I ask you a question?

She nods through a mouthful of food.

COSMO

You're not really eighteen, are you?

She answers without hesitation.

CANDY

Nuh-uh. Fifteen.

His brow furrows, then he smiles.

COSMO

That was surprisingly honest.

CANDY

I don't lie. The only lie I ever told was on the entry form. And letting people say I was eighteen and not correcting them, I guess. But. Is that lying? Not correcting people?

He really thinks about his answer.

COSMO
I don't know. Maybe?

CANDY
If you find out for sure, let me know.

She wipes her mouth with a napkin. Lipstick and fudge come off in equal measure. She takes out a lipstick to reapply.

CANDY
How'd you know, anyway?

COSMO
Little things. You said you were five when you saw Key Largo, which came out in forty eight. Stuff like that.

CANDY
I did, didn't I? Drat.

COSMO
So, wait. You came out here all on your lonesome and your parents were OK with it?

CANDY
To hell with my parents.

COSMO
Candy. That's not a very nice way to talk about your parents.

CANDY
My Pa's an ol' grandpa. A real bird dog, too, who does whatever he wants with girls - some of them my age. My Ma's a big jerk who lets him get away with it. Not one of them talks very nice about me, so why should I return the favor?

She wraps a smile around the milkshake straw and drinks. Cosmo regards her with a mix of concern and admiration.

COSMO
You're a very unique girl, you know that? Real savvy. It must be kind of hard for you back in Ohio.

CANDY
Oh gosh, it massively is. All I do is read and go to the movies.

(MORE)

CANDY

Boys follow after me since I got my - since I became a lady. So they're useless. Girls just tease me and ask why I'm reading whatever book I'm reading. Imagine that. Why am I reading a book? I never even bothered to think up an answer, it's so darn silly.

He takes her hand across the table to comfort her. She doesn't need comforting. She's fine.

COSMO

I'm glad you won the contest. You're pretty easy to talk to.

They look at each other. A moment starts. Lazlo ends it when he KNOCKS on the window. He holds up his watch.

Cosmo looks nervously at the crowd, then back at Lazlo. He shakes his head. Lazlo nods.

A fresh wave of SCREAMS tears through the crowd. The cops struggle with the barricade. The girls push through.

They rush the door. Cosmo grabs Candy and heads for the back. The crowd gets to them first. It's a frenzy.

They tear a sleeve off his jacket, they rip her dress. The kitchen door opens. They make it through.

The crowd funnels after them. Outside Lazlo approaches four older girls that were at the back of the crowd.

They were the first ones screaming. He slips all four of them a fifty dollar bill

INT. SODA SHOP - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Cosmo leads Candy through the kitchen, dodging around counters and deep fryers. The crowd surges forward.

Marci opens a side door. Cosmo pulls Candy through it.

INT. SODA SHOP - BACK HALLWAY - NIGHT

Marci points Cosmo to the end of the hall, where three BEEFY SECURITY GUARDS block an exit door to an alley.

They part when Cosmo approaches, then reform immediately. The crowd surges past Marci and halts.

There's no way they're getting past the Guards.

EXT. SODA SHOP - ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Cosmo pulls Candy into a narrow alley with a single entrance. A limo and a shabby sedan point toward it.

Lazlo and the Studio Executives wait by the sedan. An ASSISTANT is ready with a brand new jacket for Cosmo.

No dress for Candy, though.

LAZLO

How'd it go.

COSMO

I really wish you wouldn't arrange things like that. My heart is going a mile a minute. And Candy -

CANDY

That was absolutely thrilling.

Lazlo offers Cosmo a "see, I told you?" look.

COSMO

At least give me more warning. We were having a nice chat.

LAZLO

No dice. We're running behind as it is. Tux is in the limo. Candy, you're with us.

CANDY

What do you mean?

COSMO

I have to put on a tuxedo for the premier. They'll take you to get a pretty dress.

CANDY

This is a pretty dress.

COSMO

And then we'll walk down the red carpet together. You and me, arm in arm, cheek to cheek. The whole nine yards.

Her eyes widen. She throws her arms around him and kisses him a good one. His body goes a little rigid.

The back door to the limo opens. MONTY BIGGS (55) Pokes his head out, a bleary look on his face.

Candy see's him over Cosmo's shoulder.

CANDY

Oh! It's Monty.

She claps her hands together. Cosmo doesn't look behind him. He keeps his eyes on Candy.

COSMO

I'll see you at the theater. OK?

She nods. Vigorously. Monty speaks with the remnants of a heavy Brooklyn accent.

MONTY

Chop chop, kid. As in now.

Cosmo offers Candy a salute and heads for the limo. Lazlo takes Candy's arm.

CANDY

But...isn't he British?

Lazlo guides her into the back seat of the sedan. The car doors close at the same time.

EXT. FAMOUS HOLLYWOOD THEATER - NIGHT

A limo door closes behind Cosmo and JOHNNY SWELL (25), a tired, sharp, acerbic peroxide blonde.

The premier circus is in full swing. Monty gets photographed ahead of them with KARINA (35), his dark haired wife.

Cosmo looks around. No Lazlo. No Executives. No Candy. Swell pulls him - forcibly - onto the red carpet.

The smiles never leave their lips. POP POP POP.

INT. FAMOUS HOLLYWOOD THEATER - NIGHT

Lazlo stands by a bank of pay-phone booths with Candy, swimming in an expensive red dress, a size too big.

She's upset. Monty appears in the lobby with Karina. He saunters over to Lazlo.

MONTY

So this is the lovely young lady that beat out all the rest of the screaming masses. My dear. A pleasure.

His accent's British now, that's for sure. He's perky. He either had another drink or didn't have another drink.

He kisses Candy's hand. She pulls it away and wipes it on her dress. Monty doesn't notice. Karina does.

KARINA

Well you've got a head on your shoulders, I can tell. I have that same reaction nightly, dear.

She winks at Candy as Monty leads her into the theater. Candy calls after them.

CANDY

You're better than Joan Crawford.

Lazlo laughs.

LAZLO

You better hope none of Crawford's people heard that. You won't be able to get arrested in this town.

CANDY

Why would I want to get arrested?

LAZLO

The publicity. Natch.

Cosmo and Swell walk in. The second they're out of sight they pull apart from each other.

Candy freeze's in Swell's presence. Swell SNAPS her fingers at Lazlo. He hands her a flask, almost reflexively.

LAZLO

So. Change of plans. The Tyrant hollered at me for a while when he heard the two of you weren't sitting together. Now you're sitting together.

Swell looks into the flask. Cosmo looks upset.

COSMO

That wasn't the deal. I won't let
Candy sit alone. It's not fair.

Swell notices Candy staring at her. She offers her the
flask. Candy takes it.

LAZLO

Nothing to be done, kid. They loaned
our Johnny out for pennies on the
dollar. We've got some backs to
scratch here.

COSMO

Absolutely not. I'm sore enough she
didn't get to walk down the red
carpet. This? This just stinks.

Swell stares at Candy and the flask impatiently. Candy swigs
quickly and hands it back. Swell keeps staring at her.

LAZLO

This is no time to stick your chin
out, Lamb.

A LOBBY BOY scuffles by. Swell SNAPS at him.

SWELL

Clear the balcony.

LOBBY BOY

Miss?

She ignores him and turns on Lazlo.

SWELL

You tell that Tyrant that I'm the one
that decides who I sit with.

She slaps the flask to his chest and strolls into the
theater. The Lobby Boy doesn't know what to do.

INT. FAMOUS HOLLYWOOD THEATER - BALCONY - NIGHT

The entire balcony is empty except for Cosmo and Candy. They
sit right up against the railing.

The dolled up Hollywood crowd sits below them. Candy reacts
when she recognizes someone.

COSMO

Is this OK? I know we were supposed to sit up front.

CANDY

This is perfect. More perfect than perfect. Thank Miss Swell for me when you get a chance.

COSMO

Sure thing.

CANDY

What's she like? I mean, what's she really like?

COSMO

She's swell, of course.

CANDY

Are the two of you really in love?

COSMO

Sure, when the lights go down and the projector kicks in. We're in love for everyone in the crowd.

The lights dim. The voices hush. Candy sits back.

CANDY

I'm fit to burst. I've never seen something before anyone else before.

He catches a whiff of her breath.

COSMO

Jeez. When did you sneak a toot?

CANDY

In the lobby. Miss Swell shared.

COSMO

Well. OK. Just take it easy.

CANDY

Oh, I know we're only supposed to have good, clean fun. Don't you worry. I'll make sure it's all Disney, Disney, Disney, Christmas when there are other people around. Mister Clean Cut.

COSMO

I'm not that clean cut. I'm just private, that's all. And careful. You're only fifteen.

CANDY

Hush. The picture's starting.

The lights dim completely. The orchestra starts. The title card appears - "Candy Colored Clown."

The credits roll over the dance routine Cosmo looked at a still of back in the hotel.

He leans over to whisper. Candy shushes him. Sternly. The lights SWELL on her face as the opening song ends.

INT. MESSINA'S - NIGHT

A crowded Italian restaurant, dense with celebrities and cigarette smoke, BUZZES with life.

Cosmo leads Candy to the coat check and takes her coat. Her dress sags off her shoulders. She tugs at it.

Lazlo motions them to a two seater-booth between the bar and the dining room. A Single Photographer drinks at the bar.

He's pretty engrossed in his whiskey. An Executive nudges him. He snaps a few candids.

LAZLO

Good crowd. Some old timers, some up and comers. We even cut the other shutterbugs loose. Don't need 'em. Just that louse.

COSMO

Great. Now hit the bricks. The young lady and I want to have something that resembles a real date. Right?

CANDY

For sure.

She scans the room and takes note of every face, every gesture, every detail.

LAZLO

Sure, sure. You're good in here. Just. You know. The bottles.

He motions at their table. There are three bottles of "Bear On Bear" liquor - scotch, schnapps, and gin.

CANDY

Oooooo. Gin.

They sit. Lazlo scampers off to a table, smile first.

COSMO

No gin for you. You can have one schnapps with seltzer. After we eat.

CANDY

Ok mom.

Her eyes are glued to a table not far from them. An ACTOR more famous for his lechery than his talent stares back.

COSMO

What did you think of the flick?

CANDY

It was brilliant.

COSMO

Come on. It's a marshmallow to make people feel good about themselves.

She gives him her full attention.

CANDY

No way. Cosmo, it was the bee's knees. Maybe it was a little fluffy, but why shouldn't it be? It was like looking at a perfect meal before you eat it. Maybe it repeats on you later, but that doesn't take away from how hungry it made you when it looked all pretty on the plate. You make everyone hungry.

COSMO

Gosh. Well. Jeez. Thanks, Candy. That's...that's a compliment, alright. All anyone in town ever talks about is the numbers. No one ever tells you what they thought of the show.

CANDY

What about the reviews?

COSMO
They're usually written before the
director says action.

CANDY
No.

COSMO
Sometimes, yes.

CANDY
That's miserable.

The Lecherous Actor leans over his table. He's been staring
at Candy the whole time.

LECHEROUS ACTOR
Hey, sweetie. Why don't you come have
a sit on Uncle's lap?

Cosmo spins around, protectively. He opens his mouth. Candy
speaks before he can.

CANDY
If I wanted to know what a tootsie
roll felt like pressed on my hind
quarters, I'd go trick or treating.

A WRITER at the Lecherous Actors table does a bona fide spit
take. All over the actor.

Karina appears at the Actor's shoulder and turns him around
before he gets worked up. She winks at Candy.

COSMO
Who writes your dialogue? It's not
someone from my studio, boy howdy.

CANDY
Poo on that man. His movies are so.
So. Soviet.

COSMO
Karina's taken quite a shine to you.
You're making some pretty lofty pals.

CANDY
Really? That's great. What a great
leg up for my career.

COSMO
Your career?

CANDY

Well sure. I didn't come out here just to help out with your publicity. I'm going to stay and do what you do. I read all the how to's, all the interviews, all the scripts, all the rags to riches stories. It's perfect.

COSMO

Oh, Candy. You can't stay. You have a family. A home. Don't you want to finish high school?

She looks at him like he's nuts.

CANDY

Why? So I can study things I'll have no earthly use for and go to the prom? Why go to one prom when I can go to a dozen that will last forever on film? Don't be such a square, Cosmo. I'm starving. What should we get to eat?

She waves down a waiter. Before he can get to them a small kerfuffle kerfuffs at the entrance.

Two Photographers back through the doors, popping flashes left and right. Candy looks. Cosmo looks.

HUNTER HARVEY (19), a dark, swarthy, lean man walks into the room with BEATRICE (18), a rube in a pretty dress.

Hunter wears a jacket but no tie. His shirt is unbuttoned. He's got a swagger that makes itself known in advance.

The room takes a second to check him out and decide if they're impressed. They're all impressed.

CANDY

Who is that?

Lazlo appears at their table, lightening fast.

LAZLO

On your feet, bright eyes. We just hit pay dirt.

CUT TO:

INT. MESSINA'S - BAR - NIGHT

A space has been cleared in front of the bar. Cosmo, Candy, Hunter, and Beatrice pose in front of it.

Lazlo stands next to SHEA (40), another pinstriped, dandy-fine agent.

SHEA
Think of the headlines.

LAZLO
Double Date. Stars on the rise, out on the town.

SHEA
Stars on the grow.

They watch Beatrice and Candy pose. Candy is better.

SHEA
You got lucky. Yours is in it to win it. Ours is dull as a window.

LAZLO
I completely forgot you guys ran the same contest. Didn't the Tyrant hand pick that one himself?

Shea makes a "What are you gonna do?" gesture. Cosmo whispers to Hunter through a clenched smile.

COSMO
Hunter Harvey? Hunter. Damn. Harvey?

HUNTER
Quiet sweetie. Not in front of the birds.

STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHER
Ok, let's get a kiss. Girls in the middle. Great. Turn profile. Perfect. On three.

Candy leans up and plants a frozen kiss on Cosmo. Beatrice does the same to Hunter.

Cosmo and Hunter lock eyes over the girls. POP.

INT. MESSINA'S - PRIVATE BAR - NIGHT

A narrow, less crowded room has a one-way mirror that looks down on the main floor.

Candy and Beatrice sit at one end of a long bar, a plate of hamburgers and fries in front of them.

Cosmo and Hunter sit at the other end. Hunter hunches over a scotch on the rocks. Cosmo sips at a gin.

Lazlo, Karina, and a few other recognizable faces litter the room. No press. No photographers. No executives.

BEATRICE

Aren't we just the luckiest girls in the world? It's all so keen.

Candy has her eyes on Cosmo. She wants to be where he is.

CANDY

Yeah. Keen. Peachy even.

BEATRICE

Where are you from? I'm from Hoboken. My folks near fainted when I told them I was coming to Hollywood. To meet the newest rising star? They couldn't believe it. Wow.

CANDY

He hasn't even been in any pictures.

BEATRICE

Not yet. Haven't you seen his picture, though? That one of him in his undershirt?

CANDY

Nuh uh.

BEATRICE

Hoo boy. It's hot, hot heat, is what. Ohmygoshohmygoshohmygosh.

She freezes up as Karina approaches their end of the bar.

KARINA

Go powder your nose.

Candy and Beatrice get up.

KARINA

Not you.

She lowers Candy back to her seat. Beatrice rushes off, a collection of awkward movement and giggles.

KARINA

Here. Date's almost done. Might as well have a hangover to show for it.

She hands her a drink. It's all gin. Candy takes a hefty swig. Karina motions at the bartender for more.

Candy stares at Cosmo and Hunter.

KARINA

Don't pout. Boys always like to compare racket sizes when they get together at places like this.

CANDY

That guy gets under Cosmo's skin. I can tell.

KARINA

You can, can't you?

Hunter puts his arm on the bar and tries to get Cosmo to arm wrestle him. Cosmo waves the arm away. It doesn't move.

CANDY

Will you excuse me a moment?

Candy gets up.

KARINA

Take the gin.

Candy grabs the glass and slides it down the bar. She doesn't lift it a single time until she reaches Cosmo.

Cosmo laughs at something Hunter says.

HUNTER

Ronnie Reagan? That guys a goof. My old man said he was a goof as president of the S.A.G. No one needs that kind of goof. He wouldn't arm wrestle me either.

He notices Candy before Cosmo does. Cosmo only sees her because he turns to follow Hunter's look.

CANDY

Hi.

COSMO

Hey. Hi. Did you get enough to eat?

He looks at the end of the bar where her food is. Karina tears ass into her hamburger.

CANDY

It's almost midnight.

Cosmo checks his watch.

COSMO

Oh drat, Candy. I'm so sorry, I lost track of time. Hunter, shouldn't you find Beatrice?

HUNTER

Nah. No point, you dig?

A heavy silence crash lands between them. Cosmo looks at Hunter through the mirror behind the bar, then Candy.

COSMO

So I'll tell you what. We can ride home in the limo. Just me and you. Lazlo will pitch a fit, but we'll go right ahead and let him. OK?

CANDY

Just us. You promise?

COSMO

Honest injun.

A smile spreads across Candy's lips and she nods.

COSMO

Great. Let me just get our coats. Meet me at the back entrance.

INT. MESSINA'S - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Candy walks through a maze of short hallways. She's lost in thought. Waiters breeze past. She doesn't notice them.

She turns to the back exit when she notices she still has a glass in her hand.

INT. MESSINA'S - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Candy trots up the back stairs to the private bar. She gets more and more excited as she climbs.

She turns on to a platform and stops dead. Hunter shoves Cosmo against a wall. He both kisses and gropes him.

Candy disappears before Cosmo see's her. And before she see's Cosmo return Hunter's advances.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Cosmo stares out one window, a goofy grin on his face. Candy stares out the other, biting her lower lip.

COSMO
(To himself)
I can't believe that jerk stole my name.

CANDY
What?

COSMO
Oh, nothing. How are you? I hope Karina's gin didn't sucker punch you in the gut. Bear on Bear is potent stuff.

She chews her thumbnail. He leaves his personal moment and returns to their mutual one.

COSMO
Hey. Are you OK?

CANDY
I saw him. I saw what that man tried to do to you.

Cosmo freezes. All the color leaves his face.

COSMO
Oh.

CANDY
Why did you let him do that?

COSMO
I didn't let him do anything. He just...did it.

CANDY

But we're on a date. And what about Johnny Swell?

A frozen smile crosses Cosmo's face. His eyes dart from side to side as he tries to think of the best lie to tell.

He can't think of any. He exhales one long breath.

COSMO

Look. Things are complicated. They're not always what they look like up there on screen. You dig?

CANDY

Don't say "you dig."

He gets as annoyed as he gets, which isn't very annoyed. His voice is sterner than it's ever been with her, though.

COSMO

If you can't wrap your head around the fact that things happen in between the shots they cut together and polish and fill with perfect music and perfect takes, then this town's really not for you. You're sharp and gorgeous and way too old for your years. For a second there I almost thought the picture business would be a perfect fit. But what you want isn't what you want, see? You want to live in one of your favorite flicks. Not be part of making one. Go back to Ohio. Get out the right way. It won't be hard. Not for you.

She stares at his mouth until he stops talking. Then she throws herself on top of him & attacks his mouth with hers.

She puts her whole body in to it. She lifts the hem of her dress up as high as it will go. She reaches for his fly.

He grabs her by both the shoulders and pushes her back. Her lipstick is smeared. Her desire very apparent. It's lust.

COSMO

You don't want this either.

CANDY

Don't you? Isn't it what everyone wants when the lights go off with a girl in the room?

COSMO

No.

He slides her off him. She looks out the window, biting her lower lip. He moves to touch her but stops himself.

The limo comes to an abrupt stop. Candy looks out the window. They're in front of a house in the Hollywood hills.

CANDY

Why are we stopping? This isn't the hotel.

COSMO

I'm not going to the hotel yet.

He opens the door.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

The limo sits in front of a comfy but large house at the top of a steep flight of steps. The lights are off.

Cosmo gets out and leans in to look at Candy.

COSMO

It's been a heck of thing to meet you, Candy. Truly. I'm sorry I got a little drunk. I didn't mean to tell you about yourself. I'm no expert. About anything.

She keeps quiet. A light flickers on above the front door. Cosmo glances at it.

COSMO

I have to go now. I really wish I didn't, but I do.

The door opens. Monty stumbles onto the landing. His shirt is unbuttoned. He sways and swigs directly from a bottle.

Candy and Cosmo lock eyes. She darts forward and grabs his hand. She kisses it and holds it to her cheek.

He can't bring himself to pull it away. They stay like that long enough that Monty goes back inside.

She cries on his hand. He lets her. He's about to say "I'm sorry" but she talks first.

CANDY

Thank you. Thank you, thank you,
thank you, thank you. Thank you a
million times for giving me the best
night I've ever had in my life.

She pulls away quickly and SLAMS the door. The limo pulls
off a second later. Cosmo watches it go.

Once it's out of sight he starts a slow climb up the steps
to Monty's front door.

INT. LIMO - TRAFFIC LIGHT ON HOLLYWOOD BLVD - NIGHT

The limo sits at a long red light. The DRIVER knocks on the
window before he rolls it down.

DRIVER

You want to make any stops before
going back to the hotel?

The window CLICKS down all the way.

DRIVER

Hey kid, is there anything else you
want to do in Hollywood before you go
home?

He adjusts the rear view mirror. Candy is gone.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - PRE-DAWN

Cosmo lets himself into the empty, dark room. His clothes
are all akimbo. He's exhausted.

Faint blue light presses through the open windows.

COSMO

Ma?

Nothing.

COSMO

Lazlo?

Nothing. He sighs a huge sigh of relief and sits at the
mirror. He notices different things than he did earlier.

CLICK. He pulls the chain on a desk lamp. The beam of light
spills past him down the hall into the next room.

It lands just shy of the bathroom door, open a crack.
Roberta's hand hangs limp out of the tub.

A single drop of blood PLIPS on the tile.

CUT TO BLACK: