

"Luciana"

HEDDA HOPPER

MGM usually has its leading ladies at their own premieres. You still pretending Isabelle's in Europe?

TOM

Isabelle is in Europe, on a USO tour.

HEDDA HOPPER

For three months? What kind of trouble this time? Drugs again? Syphilis? Or just man drama?

TOM

You got a real active imagination, Hedda. You should consider writing for the movies.

(starts off, then stops)

Come to think of it, I got a story you might be interested in.

HEDDA HOPPER

And what would that be?

TOM

Truman announced on the radio, now that our soldiers are done with the Nazis... they're coming after you next.

INT. GRAUMAN'S CHINESE THEATER - LOBBY - NIGHT - LATER

Cocktail hour. Sipping champagne, Tom notices, under a staircase, the Cute Latina Girl who escorted Freddie Ziegler. She's flustered, fumbling with the neckline of her blouse.

TOM

You misunderstand the job description?

She looks at him, one hand holding a loose button, the other hand covering the skin exposed by her plunging décolletage.

CUTE GIRL

What? Oh God no --

TOM

I'm teasing you. What happened?

CUTE GIRL

This damn button. This is my first job out here and this happens --

(CONTINUED)

1/9

Paradise Pictures Pilot

I
START

TOM
Lean your head forward.

Puzzled, she leans forward. Tom plucks a BOBBY PIN from her hair, takes the button and slides the pin through, attaching it to the blouse, then pops the button through its hole.

TOM
Edith Head taught me that. So...
what do they call you?

CUTE GIRL
My name's Luciana Delgado.

He looks at this fresh-faced 20-year-old. LUCIANA DELGADO.

TOM
That's a mouthful, and it'll be the
first thing you need to change.

LUCIANA
Luciana's my grandmother's name.

TOM
My point exactly. So where are you
from, Luciana Delgado?

LUCIANA
Marfa, Texas. I'm sorry, I didn't
catch your name, sir...

TOM
Tom Kirby. And I hate to think I'm
old enough for you to call me sir.

LUCIANA
Did you work on tonight's picture?

TOM
I'm the Head of Production at the
studio that made it.

LUCIANA
So you're in charge. In that case,
Mr. Kirby, what else do you think I
should change?

TOM
Oh, I don't know if that's a --

LUCIANA
Please. I'm an actress. At least
I want to be. You can be honest.

TOM

All right, for starters, thin out those eyebrows and straighten your teeth. But you want honest, I'll be honest. There aren't a lot of people starring in movies who look like you, Luciana.

LUCIANA

What about Dolores del Rio?

TOM

Dolores was a knockout, but she had to go back home. Now, do you know the story of Margarita Cansino?

LUCIANA

I can't say that I do.

TOM

Margarita was a Spanish dancer who could move her hips and ass like no other. But to become a Hollywood star, she had to lose weight, dye her hair from black to red, and use electrolysis to raise her hairline. Then Margarita Cansino became Rita Hayworth. Now, that was a drastic change. Wouldn't be one with you.

As this lands on Luciana, Tom takes a small leather notebook out of a pocket and scribbles down a thought...

TOM

Speaking of Rita...

OLD MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Tommy...

STANLEY WHALON (60s) shuffles over, in a fraying tuxedo, wiping sweat from his brow. Tom's about to say something, but stops when he sees... GRETCHEN WHALON (30s). Not a glamour girl, but very pretty with warm, intelligent eyes.

STANLEY

I call your office, and Olive never puts me through. But my niece here, now she gets a ticket. Look at that. I need a ticket just to see Tommy Kirby. Who would've guessed that?

TOM

Luciana Delgado, this is --

ABERDEEN

I'll do what I always do. I'll
make it disappear.

INT. TOM KIRBY'S PACKARD CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT - LATER

Tom drives. Luciana Delgado sits in the passenger seat.
She's been cleaned up, face and hair washed, wearing a coat.

TOM

You hungry? Want something to eat?

LUCIANA

No thank you.

A silent beat between them as Tom drives. And then...

TOM

Why didn't you call the police?

LUCIANA

Because I know Mr. Ziegler works for
you, and you seemed like the kind of
man who would help me.

TOM

I'm glad you called. I'm glad you
let us take care of this, Luciana.
And we are gonna take care of this.
(a long beat, and then)
Hey, what was your favorite picture
when you were a kid?

She's surprised at the question, thinks about it for a moment.

LUCIANA

"Poor Little Rich Girl."

TOM

Shirley Temple.

LUCIANA

The movies always make me happy.

TOM

Me too. Growing up they were all I
cared about. I went to church,
but...

(a beat, and then)

Now when I went to the movies... when
the lights went down and the screen
lit up? That's when I knew there was
a God.

II
START

LUCIANA
Where did you grow up?

TOM
A smaller town than you. And it
took me a long time to figure out
this town.

Tom pulls in front of SCHWAB'S DRUGSTORE on Sunset Boulevard.

TOM
Movies are dreams, Luciana. And
this town is a dream machine.
That's why we all came here in the
first place.

Tom pauses. Lights two cigarettes. Hands one to Luciana.

TOM
But the people who make the
dreams... they're not as funny or
as charming or as heroic as the
people in the dreams. Not a single
one of them. Do you understand
what I'm saying?

LUCIANA
I think I'm beginning to.

TOM
So you have to decide. Does a
young girl from Marfa, Texas,
really belong in a place like this?

Luciana doesn't answer him. Instead, stares out the window.
A long moment. When she turns back, Tom hands her some cash.

LUCIANA
What's this for?

TOM
A ticket home.

She takes it, reluctant but grateful. Several \$100 bills.

LUCIANA
Can I ask you a favor?

TOM
Anything.

LUCIANA

Before I leave... can I visit the
studio? I've never been to one...
I might never get another chance.

Tom doesn't think it's a great idea. But he forces a smile.

TOM

Come by whenever you'd like.

← STOP

And as he resumes driving, PRE-LAP BEBOP JAZZ MUSIC...

INT. NIGHTCLUB AT THE DUNBAR HOTEL - NIGHT - LATER

A hopping, upscale JAZZ CLUB with an African-American crowd.
In the day, hosted greats like Lena Horne, Cab Calloway, Louis
Armstrong. Tonight's stage is filled with a young group of
musicians, fronted by the handsome ALDO BOYD (30) on the sax.

Tom enters as Aldo finishes a rousing solo. Aldo spots Tom.

INT. NIGHTCLUB AT THE DUNBAR HOTEL - PRIVATE TABLE - LATER

Tom and Aldo sit in the back of the dark club, with drinks.

ALDO

You have no shame, Tom Kirby.
You're really gonna walk into the
Dunbar Hotel and ask me to do that?

TOM

You think I wanna ask you to do
this?

ALDO

I don't care if you want to or not,
you are asking, Tom.

(a beat, then)

You know in this very hotel, they
held the first convention for the
NAACP. Know what that stands for?

TOM

C'mon, Aldo, of course I do --

ALDO

National Association for the
Advancement of Colored People.

TOM

I need Charlie Sanders. If I don't
get him, this picture's gonna bomb
and take my career with it.

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(CONTINUED)

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III
START

WYATT

Now it might not seem like it, but this is the most amazing street in the whole world.

LUCIANA

How so?

WYATT

Last week, it was New York. Two weeks ago... Buenos Aires. Next week, it'll be London. The week after that, Paris.

LUCIANA

That's a lot of cities.

WYATT

That's the magic of the movies.

LUCIANA

You lied to me, Wyatt. You said you know every inch of this lot... but I think you know every centimeter.

They smile at each other. It's a nice moment.

WYATT

I've worked here since I was fifteen. Started as an office boy. Now I'm a writer. Before too long, I'm planning on being a director.

LUCIANA

Wow, you've got it all mapped out.

WYATT

Don't you? I mean, from where I'm standing, you were born to be in front of the camera.

LUCIANA

What? Oh, please, stop.

Luciana blushes. Then, they both see... FREDDIE ZIEGLER exiting the Studio Hospital, arm in a sling, bruises on his face. Luciana goes white, immediately tries to turn around.

LUCIANA

Wyatt, why don't we go back to --

But Wyatt is distracted by Freddie Ziegler, one of his idols.

(CONTINUED)

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WYATT

Mr. Ziegler, Wyatt Osborne. Don't
wanna bug you, sir, but wanted to
say congratulations on "Heart of
Darkness."

FREDDIE

Thank you, young man.

WYATT

What happened to your arm, if you
don't mind me asking?

FREDDIE

Oh, just a little accident. They
happen from time to time, I find.

Freddie Ziegler looks at Luciana. A beat, then he says...

FREDDIE

Hello, sweetheart.

WYATT

You two know each other?

LUCIANA

Just a little...

FREDDIE

Rubbish. We know each other quite
well, don't we, Luciana?

An awkward beat, and then Luciana quickly covers, saying...

LUCIANA

I escorted Mr. Ziegler at the
premiere for "Axis Powers" the other
night.

(a painful beat, and then)

So... you're still directing the
new movie, Mr. Ziegler?

FREDDIE

Now, why would that have changed
since we last saw each other?

Another tense beat between Freddie and Luciana, and then...

FREDDIE

Wyatt, is it? You're a lucky young
man. Now, if you two'll excuse me.

Freddie walks off. Wyatt watches him go, grinning, oblivious.

WYATT

Freddie Ziegler, huh? He's gonna be one of the greats. Hey, let's head to props, I can show you how --

LUCIANA

I'm sorry, Wyatt, but I'm feeling a little tired all of a sudden. I think I'd like to go home now.

STOP

EXT. GRETCHEN'S HOUSE / BEVERLY HILLS FLATS - NIGHT

Tom exits the house and makes his way to his parked Packard.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

I was wondering who was in there. Shoulda known it'd be you, Tommy.

At the sound of this voice, Tom stops in his tracks. He slowly turns and sees a scowling man (late 30s), wearing an Army dress uniform. There's a green duffel bag at his feet. This is DEAN MADDOX. And Tom is shocked to see him right now.

DEAN

What's the matter? You look like you've seen a ghost.

TOM

Dean, I thought you were...

DEAN

Still in Europe, keeping the peace? No, the Army sent me to Washington, D.C. And then, this morning, after Stanley, they sent me home.

Tom takes a moment, lights a cigarette. Dean shakes his head.

DEAN (CONT'D)

You always smoke when you're caught doing shit you shouldn't be doing.

TOM

I've got nothing to hide, Dean. I'm just surprised to see you is all.

DEAN

You're surprised to see me? You got any idea what it's like to come home from the war... and see another man walking out of your house? Did you just have sex with my wife, Tommy?