

Act Two - Scene Four

(Karlaboy, 1952. TONY, shirtless, well-muscled leading man type, comes thudding down the stairs with KARLA on his back Piggy-back style. He puts her down and begins to kiss her all over.)

KARLA. Let's not get started again, Tony. He's coming back tonight.

TONY. It's three-thirty in the afternoon.

KARLA That's close enough.

(TONY continues to kiss her.)

TONY. I don't think so.

(She manages to create some distance.)

TONY. Are you in love with him?

KARLA. This has got nothing to do with love, Tony. I told you that when we started all this.

TONY. It doesn't change how I feel about you.

KARLA. Look. You're incredibly sexy and a lot of fun on our "intimate afternoons"... but it'll never be more than that.

TONY. Why?

KARLA. Because I love Harold.

TONY. I don't know. There must be something... missing.

KARLA. Never mind about my life with Harold. You're in an entirely separate world. The two do not cross.

TONY. Is that what you tell yourself?

KARLA. You don't need to know what I tell myself.

TONY. I'm surprised you two ever got married. I remember when Harold was trying to come out from behind his old man's shadow -

KARLA. How did it eventually happen?

TONY. Simple: the old man told the studio he'd take a cut in salary if they let Harold write one of the "Mr. Foster" pictures.

KARLA. "Mr. Foster on Four 'Wheels'"?

TONY. Yeah, that's it. The car one. Turned out to be a big hit. The old man got Harold in the door and then keeled over right when the picture was finished. Anyway, my point is, back then, people were pretty sure which way the wind blew as far as Harold's sexual preference, which I'm sure you've been told. What did it take for you two to... straighten things out?

KARLA. You just don't get it, do you? There's a gate, Tony, and you're not allowed inside it. It's that simple. What we do here is just about bodies, nothing else. I use yours, you use mine. Period. It's the only thing I insisted on when we started this, remember? You liked the idea and said you could deal with my terms. If the terms have changed for you, I'll have to find someone else.

TONY. My God. Listen to you. You're exactly like him. "The Bride of Bachmanstein."

KARLA. If you knew Harold so well, how come you don't see much of each other anymore?

TONY. Does he see much of anyone? Harold's got no personal connections to anyone but himself... and you, I suppose, though you won't talk about it. He's in his own fucking world with an agenda that only he knows about. Even then, he was always talking, talking, talking, but nothing he ever said had any real effect on his actions. If you've been with him this long, I'm sure you know what I mean.

(KARLA has no response.)

TONY. Hey, look. The terms haven't changed. I'm still

your body to use, your body to make love to - but not to love - and your body with no mouth. There will be no more sounds from these lips that aren't completely meaningless.

(KARLA turns to him, realizing how harsh she's been.)

KARLA. Wait here a minute, okay?

TONY. I'm not going anywhere.

(KARLA disappears up the stairs.)

(TONY wanders the area. He takes a cigarette from a silver case and looks for a lighter. He finds a lighter next to a darkened archway. As he ignites the lighter, he casts a glow on a figure standing in the dark - YOUNG HAROLD.)

TONY. Harold - Jesus Christ! **YOUNG HAROLD.** One and the same.

TONY. You've been here...

YOUNG HAROLD. This whole time? Yes. *(after a moment or two)* It's amazing the stories we tell. How we choose to recount the past for others. You felt no hesitancy telling Karla about my way of life, yet you carefully omitted your own firsthand experience on the subject.

TONY. I'm sorry, Harold.

YOUNG HAROLD. A former lover apologizes for his bisexuality after being caught in an affair with the man's wife. How sophisticated. Practically one for the Noel Coward book of Butt-Fucking Etiquette.

TONY. And what about you, Harold?

YOUNG HAROLD. What about me?

TONY. Well here you are - Married. You don't come into the clubs anymore. The word's out that you turn down every pick-up that comes-on to you. That was never the Harold

Bachman I knew in the old days. Did Karla change things for you?... or have they changed?

YOUNG HAROLD. How the hell do you suppose you have the right to ask me that? Do you know where we are?

TONY. Do you? Karla just rode me piggy-back down your staircase. Most "husbands" would find the closest gun. You just stood there.

YOUNG HAROLD. Have no doubt that I'll destroy you for what I found here today.

TONY. *(amused)* You'll "destroy me"? And how would you go about that, Boy Wonder?

YOUNG HAROLD. Let's start with your dirty little secrets of days gone by.

TONY. You'd really stoop that low?

YOUNG HAROLD. You'd be amazed.

TONY. And what if I told the same stories about you, Harold?

YOUNG HAROLD. I wish to God someone would. *(a pause)* But, unfortunately, who will they believe? The Nobody? The Bachelor Actor? Or the Famous Director married to The Sexiest Woman in Hollywood?

(Just then, KARLA comes trotting down the stairs.)

KARLA. I bought this lotion in Paris when Harold and I -

YOUNG HAROLD. Ah, Karla.

(KARLA stops dead in her tracks at the sight and sound of HAROLD.)

YOUNG HAROLD. Have you met my old friend Tony? Silly me, of course you have. He was just leaving. Any objection, love?

KARLA. No.

TONY. Karla -

KARLA. Goodbye, Tony.

(TONY stares at the two of them, bowled over.)

YOUNG HAROLD. *(to TONY)* Your line is, "Goodbye."

TONY. So this is the way it is with you two.

YOUNG HAROLD. Yes, well, now that we've established that, I think it's time for you to go. I mean, now that you've made sexual conquests with both occupants of this home and been suitably screwed in return.

KARLA. What the hell does that mean?

YOUNG HAROLD. It's a private joke between Tony and me.

TONY. Why private, Harold? Come on with those "dirty little secrets of days gone by."

(HAROLD remains silent.)

TONY. I will then. You see, Karla, what you and I were doing on a "bodies only" basis, Harold and I did three years ago. Well, with some minor alterations, of course. *(He points at HAROLD.)* That man and I made love. At least I thought it was love. But for him it was just sex. Just like you, Karla, except Harold wasn't as shamelessly direct about it.

KARLA. You slept with me to get even with Harold, didn't you? You didn't feel anything at all.

TONY. Oh no, you're not gonna get off the hook that easy - I felt everything for you. I can feel love for a woman, man, black, Chinese, any 1nake and model on the planet. It's difficult enough to find someone to love; I never felt the need to limit my options.

KARLA. *(incredulous)* Are you saying that this whole thing is a coincidence??

TONY. Being married to Harold is what first drew me in... but it's not why I fell in love with you.

(TONY turns back to HAROLD.)

TONY. That's one of the things I'm pretty naked about, isn't it,

Harold: when I'm in love. *(a pause)* But you don't know how to move from sex to love, do you? Or from love to sex, for that matter. *(to KARLA)* I wonder which foot he started on with you, Karla. I wonder which foot he'll end up on... if either.

(There is a moment or two of silence in the room. Finally -)

TONY. I'm making an ass of myself.

(He grabs his shirt and walks toward the door. Before going he turns back to KARLA.)

TONY. I really am sorry.

(He leaves. The sound of Karlaboy :5 door closing is all we hear: Then silence for a few moments.)

YOUNG HAROLD. I'm sorry, Karla.

KARLA. I'm caught and you're sorry?

YOUNG HAROLD. Caught doing what? Being human? Keep- ing to the agreement we made?

KARLA. I agreed to be honest.

YOUNG HAROLD. Do you want to leave me?

KARLA. I said I'd leave you when I fell in love with someone. That's why I kept Tony a secret. It wasn't love, but ... I didn't know how you'd handle it.

YOUNG HAROLD. Maybe we shouldn't take this so seriously. After all, all we're talking about is physical gratification. There's nothing wrong with that, is there? You can continue with someone else, if you like. It's just Tony in particular I object to. *(a pause)* I mean, it's not like you're the only one in this relationship who needs to find sexual stimulation in someone else's arms. I've done the same thing. It's nothing.

KARLA. *(gently)* Do you still think I can't see through you when you're lying?

YOUNG HAROLD. Is it that obvious?

(She nods.)

KARLA. Did you leave Tony because he was falling in love with you?

YOUNG HAROLD. I don't know. Maybe. *(a pause)*
Sometimes I think I left because.. I was falling in love with him.

(After a few moments, BILL interjects, which signals the lighting change back to the Present.)