

Act One - Scene Eighteen

(HAROLD's Pre-Karlaboy bungalow. Dark. Someone is knocking.)

KARLA. *(off)* Harold? Are you in there?

YOUNG HAROLD. It's open.

(KARLA enters, turns on a light and gets an eyeful. HAROLD has trashed his bungalow. By the looks, sound, and smell of him, HAROLD is clearly drunk. He is sitting on the floor, holding a nearly empty bottle of booze. In the middle of the wreckage.)

KARLA. Oh my God. What did you do?

YOUNG HAROLD. Redecorating.

KARLA. Everyone was looking for you at Sam's party. You ducked out to do this?

YOUNG HAROLD. I can't sit around smiling and making small talk with the bastards who took it away from me - again.

KARIA. Oh, Harold, honey...

YOUNG HAROLD. Well, screw 'em! I got a lot of pictures to go yet.

KARLA. *(re-assuring)* You do.

YOUNG HAROLD. A lotta more pictures with "Delectable Daven." Picture after picture after picture...

KARLA. That's right.

YOUNG HAROLD. *(mumbling to himself)* Can't beat 'em join 'em...

KARLA. What's that?

YOUNG HAROLD. *(very loud now:)* If you can't beat 'em, join 'em! *(normal volume:)* You wanna get married?

KARLA. Harold, you're drunk.

YOUNG HAROLD. Come on. We never fight. We don't even disagree. We're always together, on and off the set. Let's get married.

KARLA. I always wanted to marry a gay man.

YOUNG HAROLD. Come on. It'll be fun. Enough of this rumor crap - let's be a hot Hollywood couple. We'll even stage fights, you know, in restaurants and things. You can throw wine in my face! It doesn't have to be permanent or anything. We'll play a little joke for a while. Then we'll part amicably and you can marry a real man.

KARLA. Don't say-

YOUNG HAROLD. *(almost desperately)* Please?

KARLA. Oh God. You're serious.

YOUNG HAROLD. You said yourself that you're not interested in anyone now. Can't you keep me company 'til you find someone?

KARLA. If you still want to when you're sober...I'll think about it.

YOUNG HAROLD. Are you serious? Don't kid me.

KARLA. Yes. I'm serious.

(HAROLD embraces KARLA, crying tears of joy.)

YOUNG HAROLD. I don't think my maid will ever clean this up. We'll have to get another place. Hey! Let's get a mansion! One of those big monsters! We have enough money to - screw it! Let's get the studio to pay for it. When we break it off, we'll sell it and split the studio's money! God, I'm a genius when I'm drunk.

KARLA. You really want this?

YOUNG HAROLD. *(intensely)* Yes.

(She takes a long moment to study his face.)

KARLA. Okay.

YOUNG HAROLD. (*shocked*) Okay?

KARLA. Okay.

YOUNG HAROLD. (*a pause, then:*) Why?

KARLA. Because, you idiot, marriage isn't just about sex. It's about respect and ... and being who you are. To everyone else, I'm the bad daughter, the fickle girlfriend, and now the movie sex queen. (*a beat*) You let me be me, Harold.

YOUNG HAROLD. No one defines you but you. We all say other people shoe-horn us into roles, but we're really the ones who do it to ourselves.

KARLA. Hey, look, the studio made Karla and she sells tickets. It's not like that's the way people will really think I was.

YOUNG HAROLD. It's the movies you were in that will be the history lesson. After all, you've made no close friends, besides me, to vouch for "the real Karla Daven."

KARLA. Well, then, that'll be one of your jobs as my husband. To keep the balance of real and make believe in my life. I dub thee: Keeper of The Truth.

YOUNG HAROLD. I'll wear the title proudly, my lady. You're not going to regret this, Karla. I promise you.

(A now fuzzy-headed HAROLD, lies his head down on her lap and quickly drifts off)

HAROLD. As I lay there... my consciousness blissfully drifting away... I could swear I heard Karla say something to me. Three words that she would only have dared to whisper... because she thought I couldn't hear...

KARLA. (*softly*) I love you.

(The lights fade to darkness.)

End of Act One