

TAXI

"COME AS YOU AREN'T"

by

Glen Charles and Les Charles

Created and Developed by

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FIRST DRAFT

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TAXI

"Come As You Aren't"

CAST

ALEX TAYLOR.....JUDD HIRSCH
BOBBY WHEELER.....JEFF CONAWAY
JOHN BURNS.....RANDALL CARVER
TONY BANTA.....TONY DANZA
LATKA GRAVAS.....ANDY KAUFMAN
ELAINE NARDO.....MARILU HENNER
LOUIE DE PALMA.....DANNY DE VITO
VOICE FROM THE BACK.....
MEYERS.....
MRS. HOWELL.....
PAUL.....
RITA.....
MRS. HAZELTINE.....
MR. BRODERICK.....

SETS

INT. GARAGE
INT. ELAINE'S CAB
INT. ELAINE'S APARTMENT

TAXI

"Come As You Aren't"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. GARAGE - SHAPE-UP TIME

THE DRIVERS ARE MILLING AND THRONGING, WAITING FOR THEIR CABS. ALEX, BOBBY, TONY AND JOHN ARE SITTING AT THE LUNCH TABLE PLAYING POKER. LOUIE COMES OUT OF HIS CAGE AND CALLS FOR EVERYONE'S ATTENTION, HOLDING UP HIS ARMS.

LOUIE

Hey, you guys. Listen up. I got something important to say.

EVERYONE QUIETS DOWN AND LISTENS.

LOUIE (CONT'D)

Okay, Wally Dugan is retiring today after twenty-five years of driving a cab for this company. So with the money I collected from you guys yesterday, I went out and bought this watch.

(MORE)

LOUIE (CONT'D)

(HE TAKES A NEW WATCH OUT OF HIS
POCKET) I'd like to give it to
Wally now to show how much we...

VOICE FROM THE BACK

Wally left already.

LOUIE

He left?

VOICE FROM THE BACK

Yeah, he went home an hour ago.

LOUIE

Oh. Never mind.

HE TURNS AND WALKS AWAY.

TONY

Wait a minute, Louie. Where you
goin' with the watch?

LOUIE

I'll hold onto it till the next
guy retires. (POINTS TO A DRIVER)
Sam, you were talking about
retirement.

SAM

Yeah, but not for five years or so.

LOUIE

(WINDING HIS NEW WATCH) Yeah, I'll
let you know the exact second your
time's up.

LOUIE EXITS INTO HIS CAGE.

BOBBY

I hope that watch has luminous
dials so he can read it under his
rock.

TONY DEALS OUT THE CARDS. ALEX, BOBBY
AND JOHN GATHER THEM UP.

TONY

Five card draw, jacks or better.

BOBBY

Gimme something good.

TONY

Not if I can help it.

THEY ADJUST THEIR HANDS AND LOOK THEM
OVER.

JOHN

(AT HIS CARDS) Oh sweet heaven!

BOBBY, TONY AND ALEX THROW IN THEIR
HANDS. TONY PUSHES THE TINY POT OVER
TO JOHN.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I tipped my hand again.

ALEX

Only to the trained eye.

ELAINE ENTERS FROM THE STREET AS BOBBY
DEALS THE NEXT HAND. SHE CROSSES TO
THEM.

ELAINE

Hi, guys.

THEY ALL GREET HER.

BOBBY

You'll have to wait for the next
hand, Elaine.

ELAINE

Not today, thanks. Alex, could
I speak to you for a moment?

ALEX

(ADJUSTING HIS CARDS) Right now?

ELAINE

It'll just take a second. Please.

HE SIGHS, THEN GETS UP AND, CARRYING HIS
CARDS, FOLLOWS HER OFF TO ONE SIDE.

ALEX

I've got my first good hand of
the day, Elaine. This better be
important.

ELAINE

Don't worry, it's big. The other
day my boss at the art gallery
was designing the window exhibit
for our next show. I made a
suggestion and she loved it!

ALEX

Hey, that's terrific. Congratulations.

(TO THE GUYS) I can open.

SHE STOPS HIM FROM RETURNING TO THE TABLE.

ELAINE

There's more. She liked my
suggestion so much, she actually
asked me to do the window exhibit
myself.

(MORE)

ELAINE (CONT'D)

It's the first time I've had a chance to do anything at the gallery besides type letters and answer phones.

ALEX

Wow, hey, I'm really happy for you.

(TO GUYS) I'm in for a dollar.

ELAINE

(GRABS HIM AGAIN) Forget that silly game, would you?

ALEX

Is there more?

ELAINE

Yeah, there's more. I finished the window yesterday, and all day long I've been getting compliments on it. People who never spoke to me before have been coming up and telling me how much they like it. I feel like I'm finally accepted.

ALEX

That's wonderful. It couldn't happen to a nicer person, Elaine.

(STARTS AWAY, SEES HER LOOK AND HESITATES) There's more, isn't there?

ELAINE

(A LITTLE MAD) I really expected you to be more interested. You're the only one around here I even talk to about that part of my life.

ALEX

I'm sorry, you're right. I am being insensitive. (TO THE GUYS)
I'm out of this hand. (TO ELAINE)
You have my undivided attention.

ELAINE

Well, I was so happy about being noticed by everybody that I decided to do something. Something I've wanted to do for a long time.

(GLANCES INADVERTENTLY AT HIS CARDS)

I've just been waiting for the right time, and now... this looks like... Boy, that is a good hand. You really oughta play that.

BOBBY

Damn! John just won the biggest pot of the night with two deuces.

ELAINE

(TO ALEX) You could have beat that easy.

ALEX

That's okay. I'll get another hand like this in ten... twelve years.

JOHN

I made believe I was happier over
my hand than I was.

BOBBY

He's trying to think of a name for
what he did. I suggest bluffing.

ALEX TOSSES THE CARDS OVER TO THE GUYS.
THEN HE AND ELAINE GO TO THE COFFEE
MACHINE AND POUR THEMSELVES CUPS.

ALEX

So what's your idea, Elaine?

ELAINE

I'm gonna have all the people from
the gallery over to my house for a
party. Like the ones my mom used
to throw.

ALEX

Excuse me?

ELAINE

Oh, I was an Army brat. Every time
we moved to a new house my mom would
have all the kids over for a 'Get-
to-know-Elaine Party.'

ALEX

And I thought I had a rough time
in the service.

ELAINE

No, actually it worked out pretty
well.

(MORE)

ELAINE (CONT'D)

Mom once figured out I averaged one new playmate for every gallon and a half of ice cream.

ALEX

Well I hope you get lots of new playmates from this party too.

ELAINE

So far it looks terrific.
Everybody I asked accepted.

ALEX

Let me know how it turns out.

ELAINE

Well, I don't want to keep you in suspense. Why don't you come?

ALEX

Me?

ELAINE

Yeah, I'd really like to have one person there who I don't care about impressing. (OFF HIS LOOK) You know what I mean.

ALEX

How could I turn down an invitation like that? Does this mean I'm your date?

ELAINE

Well, no, I didn't say that.

ALEX

Then I'll bring a date.

ELAINE

No, no, don't do that.

ALEX

Why not? You said I wasn't your date.

ELAINE

You're not my date... exactly.

ALEX

This sounds very ambiguous, Elaine.

ELAINE

That's it. You're my ambiguous.

ALEX

Gee, I don't know if I'm ready for that kind of commitment.

ELAINE

I'd just like you to be at my party as a friend. I've got enough on my mind right now without trying to figure us out.

ALEX

Fair enough.

ELAINE

And just so you don't mess up... I don't want the people at the gallery to know I'm a cabbie, so I tell them I go to art school on the nights that I drive.

ALEX

Oh. How are you doing in art school?

ELAINE

Straight A's.

ALEX

Why not. (THEN) What do these people have against cab drivers?

ELAINE

They don't have anything against cab drivers. But if they knew I drove a cab at night, they'd find it... unusual. I can't afford to be unusual yet. Later, when I'm one of them, it won't matter. (OFF HIS LOOK) It's not like I'm lying.

ALEX

It's not?

ELAINE

No, I'm... fudging a little. We all do it. It's like fudging on your income tax, fudging about your age... Lying is different from fudging.

ALEX

Right. Lying is when other people fudge.

ELAINE

Oh come on, Alex, everybody tells harmless lies sometimes.

ALEX WILL NOT BE ENTICED INTO ARGUING
OVER THIS. THE OTHER GUYS WANDER OVER,
HEARING THIS CONVERSATION.

JOHN

The only person I know who never
told a lie was my dad.

BANTA

Aw, come on. Never?

JOHN

Nope. He once told me, 'John,
remember your father's words: The
liar's punishment is not that he is
not believed but that he cannot
believe anyone else.'

BOBBY

John... George Bernard Shaw said
that.

JOHN STARES.

JOHN

(BETRAYED) He did?

TONY

(PUZZLED, TO JOHN) Your father was
George Bernard Shaw?

BOBBY LOOKS AT TONY.

ELAINE

(TO ALEX) Everybody lies. Alex,
don't tell me you don't lie.

ALEX

I don't lie.

ELAINE

I don't believe you.

ALEX

Elaine, I don't wanna do this.

ELAINE

Do what?

ALEX

Argue about this.

ELAINE

We're not arguing. I just want
you to look me in the eye and say
you don't lie and I'll accept it.

ALEX

(LOOKING HER IN THE EYE) I don't
lie.

ELAINE

I don't believe you.

BOBBY

I believe him. He's weird about
some things.

LOUIE SPEAKS OVER THE P.A. SYSTEM.

LOUIE

Excuse me for breaking up this
meeting of the minds, but the cars
are ready. C'mon, c'mon. We need
some meat behind the wheels.

AS LOUIE STARTS TO READ OFF THE NAMES
AND NUMBERS, THE DRIVERS GET UP AND
PREPARE TO GO.

ALEX

(TO ELAINE) Where are you starting tonight? The airport again?

ELAINE

No, first I'm gonna take a quick trip by the gallery. I want to see how my window looks at night.

ALEX

Okay, see ya. If you want me, I'll be in my art class.

HE SMILES AND THEY EXIT. BOBBY, TONY AND JOHN ARE STARTING OUT, AS LOUIE COMES OUT OF HIS CAGE.

BOBBY

Hey, Louie, what about you?

LOUIE

What about me?

JOHN

You have any lies you'd like to get off your chest?

LOUIE

Yeah, I have a lie: I don't like you people as much as I let on.

AS LOUIE CHECKS HIS NEW WATCH AND EXITS, WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ELAINE'S CAB - NIGHT

ELAINE IS DRIVING. SHE LOOKS BOTH WAYS, SEES WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR, AND TURNS THE WHEEL TO THE RIGHT TO PULL NEXT TO THE CURB. SHE STOPS THE CAR AND GAZES THROUGH HER CAB WINDOW AT THE GALLERY WINDOW DISPLAY THAT SHE HAS DESIGNED. SHE FROWNS CRITICALLY.

ELAINE

(TO HERSELF) Well, it's... okay I guess. (THINKS) Why am I being modest? I'm alone. (LOOKS AGAIN)
It's stunning.

A DISTINGUISHED-LOOKING MAN OPENS THE REAR DOOR OF THE CAB. ELAINE SITS UP QUICKLY AS THE MAN GETS INTO THE BACK SEAT.

MAN

Metropolitan Museum.

ELAINE TURNS ON THE METER, AND TAKES ONE LAST LOOK AT HER WORK.

ELAINE

Nice window, huh?

MAN

Yeah. Great door, too. I'm kind of
in a hurry.

ELAINE BEGINS TO DRIVE. THE MAN OPENS
HIS BRIEFCASE, TAKES OUT SOME PAPERS AND
BEGINS TO READ THEM. AFTER A FEW BEATS,
HE LOOKS UP.

MAN (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

ELAINE

You said the Metropolitan Museum.

MAN

Yeah, I meant the one in New York.

Why didn't you stay on Madison?

ELAINE

There's less traffic this way, sir.

You said you were in a hurry.

MAN

You're taking a longer route than
you need to.

ELAINE

It's not any longer... Hey, wait a
minute. Are you accusing me of
jacking up the fare?

MAN

No, I'm accusing you of trying.

Unfortunately, I caught you.

ELAINE

(EMOTIONALLY) Look, I haven't been doing this long enough to even know how to cheat somebody. And I also haven't been doing this long enough to not be hurt by your saying that.

MAN

I'd enjoy your performance more if I weren't paying ten cents a mile for it.

ELAINE TURNS THE STEERING WHEEL TO THE RIGHT AND STOPS THE CAR. SHE TURNS TO FACE HIM IN THE BACK SEAT.

ELAINE

Look, sir, I swear I am not trying to cheat you. Not many cab drivers try that stuff, and I never do. Now if you want, I'll go back where I picked you up, we'll start over, and I'll take you on a different route.

MAN

Thanks but I've seen Jersey. I'll get out here. (OPENS DOOR) Next time be a little more careful who you try to rip off.

HE STARTS TO GET OUT OF THE CAB. ELAINE LOOKS AT THE METER.

ELAINE

Mister, I realize we've had our differences, but... you owe me sixty-five cents.

MAN

Try and get it.

HE GETS OUT AND SLAMS THE DOOR. ELAINE IS FUMING. SHE NOTICES HIS BRIEFCASE IN THE BACK SEAT. PICKING IT UP, SHE STARTS DRIVING THE CAB AND ROLLS DOWN THE WINDOW ON THE SIDE OF THE CAR HE LEFT.

ELAINE

(THROUGH WINDOW) Excuse me, mister.

You forgot your briefcase.

ELAINE HOLDS UP HIS BRIEFCASE. HE REACHES FOR IT. SHE DRIVES AWAY QUICKLY.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

(LOOKING THROUGH REAR VIEW MIRROR)

Gee, he's faster than he looks.

SHE TAKES THE BRIEFCASE AND GENTLY DROPS IT OUT THE WINDOW. AND WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GARAGE - EARLY MORNING

THE DRIVERS ARE COMING IN ONE BY ONE.
BOBBY AND JOHN ARE SITTING AT THE TABLE
BY THE VENDING MACHINES. TONY COMES
OVER AND GETS AN APPLE OUT OF ONE OF THE
MACHINES. HE TAKES A BITE AND MAKES A
FACE.

TONY

How come every time I get an apple
from this machine it's old and mushy?
Don't they ever put any new apples
in there?

JOHN EXPLAINS IT TO HIM:

JOHN

Yeah, they put new apples in, but
to get to the new apples you gotta
eat the old apples first. And
because the old apples are so old,
very few people eat them.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

So by the time we get to the new apples, they're old apples.

TONY

Well, then we've all got to eat more apples so we can get to the good ones.

JOHN

Except that, if we all start eating the old apples, the apple man will think we like old apples and he'll never put any new apples in our machine.

TONY

(CONFUSED) So how can we get good apples, John?

JOHN

We can't. But if you want something cold and crisp to sink your teeth into, try the coffee.

LATKA COMES IN CARRYING HIS LUNCH BUCKET. HE GOES OVER TO THE ELECTRONIC HOT PLATE AND SETS DOWN HIS BUCKET.

LATKA

I so hungry I could ride a horse.

HE TAKES OUT A PAN AND BEGINS TO COOK AN ELABORATE DISH OF NOODLES, SAUCES, AND WHAT APPEARS TO BE A CLUMP OF MOSS. HE SINGS AS HE MIXES IT ALL TOGETHER. THE GUYS WATCH, FASCINATED.

TONY

Suddenly, this apple looks good.

JOHN

I think Latka's cooking one of his national dishes.

BOBBY

I think he's cooking one of his national parks.

ALEX ENTERS, CROSSES OVER, AND LOOKS INTO LATKA'S POT.

ALEX

(TO LATKA) How do you know when you've got a bad batch?

IN ANSWER, LATKA PANTOMIMES DEATH. LOUIE ENTERS FROM THE GARAGE AND CROSSES TOWARDS HIS CAGE.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hey, Louie, I'm not going to be here Friday night.

LOUIE

(NOT STOPPING) The minutes will seem like hours.

LOUIE GOES INTO HIS CAGE AND CLOSES THE DOOR.

BOBBY

Where are you going Friday night, Alex?

ALEX

Elaine's having a party.

BOBBY

Oh yeah?

TONY

A party! All right!

BOBBY

This is kind of short notice.

JOHN

Why is she having it on a Friday night? We're all going to miss a lot of business.

ALEX

Well actually, guys, Elaine is throwing this party for the people from her art gallery.

TONY

Who cares? The more the merrier.

ALEX

You don't understand. You guys aren't invited.

ALEX EXITS INTO THE GARAGE.

JOHN

We're not invited.

TONY

How come we can't go to the party too?

BOBBY

Guess why, dummy. 'Cause we're nobodies. We're ignorant, low-life, good-for-nothing cabbies.

TONY

(SATISFIED) Oh.

LATKA CROSSES OVER TO THEM. HIS DISH HAS NOW REACHED PERFECTION, AND HE OFFERS A BOWL OF IT TO THE GUYS. BOBBY STARES AT IT DISTASTEFULLY.

BOBBY

No thanks, Latka. My doctor has told me to cut down on engine sludge.

LATKA SHRUGS, SITS DOWN AT THE TABLE, AND DIGS IN HAPPILY. ELAINE ENTERS AND THE GUYS IMMEDIATELY TENSE UP.

ELAINE

How ya doin', guys?

THERE'S TOTAL SILENCE. ELAINE STOPS SHORT AND STARES AT THEM.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

It's not a trick question.

THE GUYS, IN UNISON, MUMBLE A RELUCTANT GREETING.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

What is this, a communal pout?

BOBBY

(TRYING TO ACT BLASE) No, we're just getting ready to go home.

TONY

Yeah, there's nothing wrong.

ELAINE

How come you're not joking and kiading around?

JOHN

You just caught us between gales of laughter.

ELAINE

Tony, would you tell me what this
is about?

THE OTHER GUYS LOOK AT TONY.

TONY

It's okay, Elaine. You're allowed
to invite whoever you want to your
own party...

ELAINE

Oh, I get it. I can explain that...

BOBBY

You don't have to explain anything.
It's all right if we're not good
enough for this art crowd.

ELAINE

Guys, I'm not good enough for this
art crowd. If I had any choice, I
wouldn't invite me to the party.
Try to understand this. I'm trying
to make it in a very tough business.
I've worked damn hard for a long
time to get where I am, which at
the moment isn't that far from where
I started. Right now I don't want
any of those people to know I drive
a cab. and they're going to be a
little suspicious if they come to
my party and find cab drivers
coming out of the clam dip.

BOBBY

Elaine, why don't you just cut out all the jive and admit it. You're ashamed of driving a cab.

ELAINE

I'm ashamed of driving a cab.

BOBBY

Who isn't?

JOHN

Now admit you're ashamed of us.

THERE'S A MOMENT OF SILENCE. ELAINE HAS NO ANSWER. FINALLY:

ELAINE

Okay, okay. If it's that important that you come, if it means that much to you, if it doesn't matter to you that you could ruin what I've been working for all my life, and my chance to send my two girls to a decent school, then by all means come to my party.

TONY

What's the address?

ELAINE THROWS UP HER HANDS AND TURNS AWAY.

BOBBY

(TO TONY) I know where it is, you can come with me.

JOHN

What are you guys going to wear?

ELAINE SITS DOWN AT THE LUNCH TABLE AS THE GUYS HAPPILY DISCUSS THEIR PLANS FOR THE PARTY. THEN BOBBY NOTICES ELAINE'S EXPRESSION AND CROSSES OVER TO HER.

BOBBY

Look, Elaine, I know that was a pretty half-hearted invitation. But you don't have anything to worry about with us. I mean, we're not exactly proud of being cab drivers ourselves.

JOHN

There's no reason anybody at your party has to know we're cabbies.

TONY

Hey, that's right. (TO ELAINE)
We'll just lie like you do.

BOBBY

Sure, through the teeth.

ELAINE

Thanks, guys. It's good to know you have friends you can trust.

TONY NOTICES LOUIE.

TONY

Say, Elaine, you didn't tell poor Louie if he was invited to your party.

ELAINE LOOKS AT LOUIE IN THE CAGE.

ELAINE

Oh gosh, you're right.

SHE CROSSES OVER TO LOUIE'S WINDOW.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

Louie?

LOUIE

Yeah?

ELAINE

You're not invited to my party.

LOUIE

Thanks for clearing that up.

ELAINE

You're welcome.

LOUIE

Now I don't have to think of an
excuse.

ALEX ENTERS FROM THE GARAGE. HE'S COUNT-
ING HIS MONEY INTO HIS ENVELOPE AS HE
CROSSES TOWARDS THE CAGE.

ELAINE

Hey, Alex, we just got a great idea.
I invited the guys to the party and
they agreed not to let anybody know
they're cab drivers.

ALEX

(STILL COUNTING) Uh-huh.

ELAINE

So would you mind doing the same?
Just to be on the safe side.

ALEX

Don't worry. Nobody's gonna find
out I drive a cab...

ELAINE

Good.

HE DROPS HIS MONEY INTO THE CHUTE.

ALEX

... unless they ask me.

HE GOES TO THE EXIT.

ELAINE

What are you talking about?

ALEX

Elaine, I don't mind your telling me I have to wear a tie to come to your party. And if you tell me I have to bring my own bottle, I'll go along with that. But when you tell me I have to come up with a new career... I think you crossed over the line.

ELAINE

It's just terrible that you can't forget your personality quirks to help me out. All I've asked is a little favor -- a really little one.

SHE HOLDS UP FINGERS TO INDICATE HOW LITTLE.

ALEX

I get your point. You consider this favor small.

ELAINE

(IRATE) Don't act like you're such hot stuff. You're not. You're opinionated, defensive, and unyielding in your rigidity.

ALEX

If you don't want me to come to your party, I won't.

ELAINE

Unfortunately for me, you are the most charming person I know.

AS SHE STORMS OFF WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. ELAINE'S APARTMENT - FRIDAY NIGHT

A SIMPLE, TASTEFULLY-DECORATED, MEDIUM-PRICED APARTMENT. THERE ARE SOME FRAMED CHILDREN'S PAINTINGS ON THE WALL. ELAINE IS SETTING OUT SOME PARTY SNACKS, AND STRAIGHTENING UP THE ROOM NERVOUSLY. THERE'S A KNOCK. SHE ANSWERS AND IT'S ALEX.

ALEX

(LOOKING AROUND) Did I get the wrong night?

ELAINE

No, this is the night.

ALEX

Ah. Well don't bother to introduce me, I'll just mingle.

ELAINE

I played a little trick on you, Alex. I told you the wrong time so that you'd get here early.

ALEX

Hey, great trick. (THEN) Why?

ELAINE

Well, you're doing me a favor. Now that you're here, nobody has to go through the embarrassment of arriving first. You know how uncomfortable that can be.

ALEX

I can only imagine.

ELAINE

Besides, I'm a little insecure about this party and I wanted somebody to tell me how nice the place looks.

ALEX DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

You can start anytime.

ALEX

(LAUGHS) I was just taking it all in. Looks great.

ELAINE

I think I'm gonna be okay as long as my puffs are a hit.

ALEX

I beg your pardon?

ELAINE

My cheese puffs.

SHE HOLDS UP A PLATE.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

I make great cheese puffs.

ALEX EATS ONE.

ALEX

Um, delicious. Take it from a puff man.

ELAINE

Thank you, Alex. Now is there anything I've overlooked?

ALEX

(LOOKING AROUND) Persons.

ELAINE

They're coming. Anything else?

ALEX

Something for persons to drink.

ELAINE

Well, that's a little bit of a problem. I used a discount liquor store and I'd rather nobody saw the labels. They're kind of off-brands.

ALEX

Like what?

ELAINE

Ever heard of Reliable Vodka?

ALEX

No, but I bet you got a great price on it. (THEN) Could I make a suggestion?

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

Why don't you put the stuff in a punch bowl with some ginger ale and juices.

ELAINE

That's a great idea. I didn't think about mixing.

ALEX

In this case, it's not mixing... it's camouflaging.

ELAINE

I just hope I got enough champagne.

ALEX

How much did you get?

ELAINE

Twelve cans.

ALEX

(AMAZED) Canned champagne?

ELAINE

Oh, I suppose you're a champagne gourmet.

ALEX

Well I do happen to know a few facts about champagne: First, the best grapes always grow on the northern slopes. Second, it should be served at exactly fifty-six degrees. And third, you shouldn't need a can opener to drink it.

THERE'S A KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

ELAINE

(TENSES UP) Oh, Alex, this is it.

ALEX

Relax, Elaine. They're just people.

SHE ANSWERS THE DOOR, AND IT'S LATKA.
FROM HIS OVERALLS, WE CAN TELL HE'S JUST
COME FROM THE GARAGE.

ALEX (CONT'D)

The exception proves the rule.

LATKA

Party time for Latka?

ALEX

He wants to know if he's invited.

ELAINE

Why not. Everybody else is.

(POINTING TO HIS OVERALLS) But
you can't wear these.

LATKA

(EYES LIGHT UP) Party time for
Latka!

HE STARTS TO DISROBE. ALEX STOPS HIM.

ALEX

No, Latka. You've gotta change
into nicer clothes.

LATKA

(CATCHING ON) Ah, party clothes
in truck.

HE EXITS.

ELAINE

Do you think it's all right to have
him here?

ALEX

Are you kidding? He's my pick for
the life of the party.

ELAINE FIDGETS WITH THE PILLOWS ON THE
COUCH.

ELAINE

You're sure everything looks okay?

ALEX

Believe me, Elaine, your apartment
looks wonderful. Now just relax,
would you?

ELAINE

Okay, okay. You may not believe
this, but I have calmed down since
you got here.

ALEX

I'm glad.

ELAINE

But could I ask just one more little
favor, Alex?

ALEX

What?

ELAINE PAUSES, SEARCHING FOR WORDS, THEN
BLURTS IT ALL OUT:

ELAINE

If you tell these people you're a cab driver, they'll ask how you know me and then you're going to have to give everything away.

ALEX

Is this the real reason you got me over here early?

ELAINE

Damn it, Alex, this is a cocktail party, not a Senate subcommittee. This attitude of yours makes me feel like a heel. When did you start being so ethical, anyway?

ALEX

I'm not ethical, Elaine... I'm chicken. I don't tell lies for the simple reason that I'm afraid of getting caught. There's nothing more embarrassing than getting caught in a lie. Not even being the first person at a party.

ELAINE

(GIVING UP) Okay, okay. I certainly don't want to corrupt the only honest man I know.

SHE SITS DOWN, DEJECTED.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

If it happens, it happens.

ALEX LOOKS AT HER FOR A MOMENT.

ALEX

Okay, I'll tell you what. I'm not going to lie, but I'll try like hell to avoid telling the truth.

Okay?

ELAINE

I guess that's all I can ask.

Thank you, Alex.

ALEX

You're welcome, Elaine.

ELAINE

Anything I can do for you in return?

ALEX

Surprise me some night with a carton of scotch.

THERE'S A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. IT OPENS AND LATKA ENTERS. HE'S CHANGED INTO A CLEAN PAIR OF OVERALLS.

LATKA

Party overalls.

ELAINE

Now you're talking.

LATKA TAKES A PIECE OF PAPER OUT OF HIS POCKET.

LATKA

Latka learn party talk. (READING)

What are you drinking? Aren't there a lot of phonies here. Let's go to my place. Was it good for you?

ELAINE

You've been teaching him.

ALEX

Not me. I was going to ask for a
copy myself.

THERE'S A KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

ELAINE

I'll get it.

SHE OPENS THE DOOR AND BOBBY, JOHN AND
TONY ENTER. THEY'RE DRESSED VERY NICELY
IN SUITS AND TIES. EVERYONE EXCHANGES
GREETINGS.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

You guys look terrific.

JOHN

Yeah, we didn't want to stand out
like a bunch of hicks.

ELAINE

Well, I appreciate that.

THERE'S ANOTHER KNOCK AT THE DOOR. ELAINE
ANSWERS IT. TWO COUPLES FROM THE ART WORLD
ENTER LOOKING LIKE FARM LABORERS IN BLUE
JEANS AND BOOTS. ELAINE GREETES THEM
WARMLY WITH HUGS.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

Oh, I'm so glad you could make it.

THE GUYS STARE.

TONY

(TO ALEX) Who do they drive for?

AND WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ELAINE'S APARTMENT - AN HOUR LATER

ALL OF THE GUESTS HAVE ARRIVED, AND THE PARTY IS GOING STRONG. ELAINE IS TALKING TO A GROUP OF PEOPLE FROM THE ART WORLD. ALEX IS NEARBY. ELAINE BREAKS AWAY AND GOES TO ALEX.

ALEX

Looks like your party's a hit,
Elaine.

ELAINE

So far so good. But I'm worried
about the guys. They don't seem to
be mingling.

ALEX

Only with each other.

JOHN, BOBBY AND TONY COME OUT OF THE
KITCHEN, WALKING TOGETHER AS IF THEY
WERE SHELTERING EACH OTHER FROM THE COLD.

JOHN

Boy, that's fascinating, Bobby.

TONY

You know, I'm glad we've had a chance to talk like this. You don't really get to know a guy when you only see him a few hours every day.

BOBBY

It's your turn, Tony. How did your parents meet?

ELAINE COMES OVER AND LINKS ARMS WITH THEM.

ELAINE

Come on, you guys. I want you to meet some people.

JOHN

No thanks, Elaine. We already have.

BOBBY

Yeah, I think we're just going to take off.

THEY START TOWARDS THE DOOR.

TONY

Yeah, it's a terrific party, but we're gonna go hit a couple of bars. We got a lot to talk about.

ELAINE

Well, I'm sorry you have to leave so soon.

JOHN

Yeah, us too. See you later.

THE GUYS EXIT.

ELAINE

(TO ALEX) I guess this isn't their
kind of party.

ALEX

Guess not.

ALEX LOOKS AFTER THEM.

ELAINE

Stop envying them.

ELAINE PICKS UP A PLATE OF CHEESE PUFFS
AND GOES OVER TO OFFER THEM TO A GROUP
OF ART PEOPLE.

MEYERS

(TAKING A PUFF) Thank you, Elaine.

These are delicious.

ELAINE

Thank you, Mr. Meyers.

MRS. HOWELL STEPS UP TO ELAINE.

MRS. HOWELL

Elaine, I love your paintings.

ELAINE

Thank you, Mrs. Howell.

MEYERS

I don't recognize the artist.

ELAINE

As a matter of fact, I live with the
artist. (BEAT) It's my daughter.

THEY LAUGH.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

(THEN LOOKING AROUND) Except the one of the bunny rabbit. That was done by my ex-husband.

MRS. HOWELL

Elaine, we were just talking about the new exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art. Have you seen it?

ELAINE

Yes, I have. Twice.

MEYERS

Did you like the Magritte drawings?

ELAINE

Well, I thought... Oh I'm sorry, could you excuse me for just one moment? There's something I have to take care of.

MEYERS

Certainly.

SHE GOES OVER TO ALEX.

ELAINE

(TRYING TO CONTAIN HER EXCITEMENT)

Alex! One of the biggest art dealers in New York just asked my opinion of an exhibit.

HE SQUEEZES HER HAND.

ALEX

That's terrific, Elaine.

ELAINE

God, I wish I had one.

LATKA COMES UP TO ELAINE WITH A GIRL ON HIS ARM.

LATKA

Thank you very much. Going now.

ELAINE

(SURPRISED) Well, uh... I'm glad you could come, Latka.

LATKA

Bye-bye.

AS THEY LEAVE, LATKA TO THE GIRL:

LATKA (CONT'D)

Aren't there a lot of phonies here.

Let's go to my place.

THEY EXIT.

ELAINE

(TO ALEX) Amazing what a clean pair of overalls will do.

A MAN NAMED PAUL COMES UP TO ALEX WHO IS HAVING SOME CHAMPAGNE.

PAUL

(TO ALEX) This champagne's terrific.

I wonder what kind it is.

ALEX

(SIPS) Del Monte.

ELAINE GIVES ALEX A LOOK. PAUL IS A LITTLE CONFUSED, BUT GOES ON:

PAUL

My name is Paul. I write for 'Art
News.'

ALEX

(SHAKING HANDS) How do you do? My
name's Alex.

PAUL

What do you do, Alex?

ALEX

Oh, this and that.

PAUL

Sounds interesting. 'This and that'
what?

ALEX

Well, I'm, uh... freelancing.

SEVERAL PEOPLE AROUND THEM ARE LISTENING
IN.

PAUL

(CONFUSED) You're a freelance
painter?

ALEX

No.

THE MAN LOOKS AT ALEX, WAITING FOR HIM TO
ELABORATE. HE DOESN'T. ELAINE COMES OVER
AND TAKES ALEX ASIDE TO TALK. ELAINE
TAKES A BREATH, READY TO ARGUE THE POINT
ONCE MORE.

ELAINE

Alex...

BEFORE SHE CAN FINISH:

ALEX

(SORE) Okay, Elaine. You win.

ALEX GOES BACK OVER TO PAUL. HE LOOKS AT ELAINE, THEN TURNS BACK AND ANNOUNCES:

ALEX (CONT'D)

I put out oil fires.

PAUL

I beg your pardon?

ALEX

You know, when an oil well catches on fire, they call me to come and put it out.

RITA, A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG LADY, IS STANDING NEARBY.

RITA

Sounds dangerous.

ALEX

Well, I don't get the easy ones.

SEVERAL PEOPLE AROUND THEM START LISTENING IN ON THIS.

ALEX (CONT'D)

The main reason I got into this line of work is...

A MAN STANDING NEARBY STRIKES A MATCH TO LIGHT A CIGARETTE. ALEX REACHES OVER AND SNUFFS OUT THE MATCH WITH HIS FINGER.

ALEX (CONT'D)

(OFF HIS LOOK) Sorry, just reflex.

THE PEOPLE AROUND ALEX TALK AMONG THEMSELVES. THEY'RE OBVIOUSLY IMPRESSED.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I guess the main thing that pulled me towards this line of work is it never gets boring. All holocausts may look the same, but each has a personality of its own. (THEN)
If you'll excuse me for just a moment, I'd like to freshen my drink.

HE GOES TO THE REFRESHMENT TABLE, AND THE GROUP BUZZES EXCITEDLY. ELAINE COMES UP TO ALEX.

ELAINE

Thank you, Alex. I know that wasn't easy for you.

ALEX

Actually, I kind of enjoyed it. It's just a good thing for your party that I watch 'Search For Adventure.' You know, I've never been the life of a party like this before. I think I like... fudging.

ELAINE

Yeah, you're not doing a bad job... for a beginner.

ALEX

(TAKEN ABACK) For a beginner?

ELAINE

Well, a good lie is at least plausible.

(MORE)

ELAINE (CONT'D)

Putting out oil fires is a little
outrageous.

ALEX

My brother does it.

ELAINE

He does?

ALEX

No, I don't have a brother. I
fudged on you.

SOME OF ALEX'S ADORING PUBLIC COMES UP
TO HIM FOR MORE TALES OF ADVENTURE.

MEYERS

What's the biggest fire you ever
put out, Alex?

ALEX

I once had twelve wells go up at
once.

THE CROWD AD-LIBS COMMENTS OF AMAZEMENT
AND ADMIRATION. ALEX TURNS TO THE TABLE
TO GET A DRINK. RITA COMES UP TO HIM.

RITA

Hi. I'm Rita.

ALEX

Hello. I'm Alex.

THEY STAND THERE AS SHE STARES AT HIM.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Aren't there a lot of phonies here.

RITA

I know. Do you mind if I say something candid?

ALEX

If it's about the champagne, I had nothing to do with it.

RITA

I find you very attractive.

ALEX

I appreciate your candor.

RITA

I don't usually say things like that to guys. I hope you don't mind.

ALEX

I'll forgive you on one condition. Have dinner with me after the party.

RITA

(SMILES) Okay.

ELAINE COMES OVER TO ALEX.

ELAINE

Could I speak to you, Alex?

ALEX

Certainly. (TO RITA) Excuse us please.

ELAINE PULLS ALEX ASIDE.

ELAINE

Listen, I'm very upset about something.

ALEX

Trouble at art school?

ELAINE

Alex, I'm really sorry about the way I've been acting. But just because you're mad at me doesn't mean you have to act so childishly.

ALEX

Elaine, what makes you think I'm mad at you?

ELAINE

Why else would you be flirting with that girl?

ALEX GLANCES OVER AT RITA -- GORGEOUS RITA.

ALEX

Yeah, I guess you have a point.

ELAINE

Look, Alex, I know you and I have our little disagreements the last few days. But I want you to know your opinion matters to me. I don't want you to dislike me.

ALEX

Elaine, I don't dislike you. I like you very much. I know it might be hard to believe me these days with the wild stories I've been telling, but I really think you're

ELAINE

Well thanks, Alex. I...

SHE STOPS ABRUPTLY. A COUPLE HAS ENTERED.
THE MAN IS THE SAME MAN WHO WAS IN ELAINE'S
CAB IN SCENE B. ELAINE SPOTS HIM AND THE
RECOGNITION SHOWS ON HER FACE.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

Alex. That guy is the same guy I
had a fight with in front of the
gallery the other night.

ALEX

So?

ELAINE

In my cab.

ALEX

(WITH FULL REALIZATION) Oh.

ELAINE

He must be a friend of Mrs.
Hazeltine's. She's one of the
owners.

ALEX

Oh geez, Elaine, I'm sorry.

ELAINE .

Aw no. Aw no. Aw no, no, no.

THE NEWLY ARRIVED COUPLE SPOT ELAINE AND
CROSS TOWARDS HER. THE LADY, MRS.
HAZELTINE, WAVES AT ELAINE.

MRS. HAZELTINE

Oh, Elaine...

ELAINE

(TO ALEX) No, no.

THE COUPLE COMES UP TO ELAINE.

MRS. HAZELTINE

Hello, Elaine.

ELAINE

(A SHEEP GOING TO THE SLAUGHTER)

Hello, Mrs. Hazeltine.

MRS. HAZELTINE

I'd like you to meet an old friend
of mine, James Broderick.

ELAINE

We've met.

MR. BRODERICK

We have?

ELAINE

Haven't we?

MR. BRODERICK

I'm sorry. I don't place you.

ELAINE

Oh. Ah, my mistake. Listen, I'm
so glad you've both come. Help
yourselves to some refreshments.

MRS. HAZELTINE

Thank you.

MRS. HAZELTINE AND BRODERICK GO OVER TO
THE TABLE. ELAINE TURNS TO ALEX.

ELAINE

(ECSTATIC) He didn't recognize me!

ALEX

That's incredible.

ELAINE

He looked right into my face and
there was no sign of recognition.
He didn't know me. (STOPS, THINKS)
He didn't know me.

ALEX

Elaine, what's the matter?

ELAINE

That miserable stuffed-shirt didn't
remember me. I was nothing but a
cab driver to him. A faceless,
nameless, lackey.

ALEX

Right -- a cab driver.

ELAINE

I'll never forget him. Never. I
mean we really had a fight. I
can't believe he looked through
me like that.

ELAINE STARTS OVER TO BRODERICK. ALEX
STOPS HER.

ALEX

Just a second, Elaine. Before you
do anything foolish, I want you to
stand right here and take a deep
breath.

ELAINE TAKES A DEEP BREATH, THEN LOOKS
AT ALEX ANGRILY.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Thank you.

THEN, ANGRILY, SHE GOES OVER TO MR.
BRODERICK.

ELAINE

You really don't remember me, do
you?

MR. BRODERICK

Elaine, wasn't it?

ELAINE

You are a snob, Mr. Broderick.

MR. BRODERICK

Excuse me?

ELAINE

I picked you up in my taxi four
nights ago on Madison Avenue, and
you accused me of trying to cheat
you on the fare.

MR. BRODERICK

That was you?

ELAINE

That was me. You don't even
remember someone you insulted like
that.

MR. BRODERICK

Well I sure remember you now.

ELAINE

How can you yell in somebody's face
for fifteen minutes, and then forget
the face you yelled into?

(MORE)

ELAINE (CONT'D)

How can you do that? How can you
have so little regard for people
that you forget you can't stand?

MR. BRODERICK

You're absolutely right. I shouldn't
have forgotten.

ELAINE

(YELLING) Is that an apology,
fella?

MR. BRODERICK

I guess so.

ELAINE

Well okay.

SHE TURNS FROM HIM AND WALKS AWAY. AS
SHE PASSES MRS. HAZELTINE:

ELAINE (CONT'D)

And if you don't like what I do
nights... I'll quit.

MRS. HAZELTINE

(LAUGHS) We'll talk about it another
time.

ALEX GOES OVER TO RITA.

ALEX

Well, I guess we can leave now. I'm
pretty hungry.

RITA

Look, Alex, if that's what your name
is, I've dated cab drivers and worse.

ALEX

What's worse?

RITA

Okay, I've dated cab drivers. But I figure if a guy feels he has to cover up who he is, I don't want any part of him.

ELAINE OVERHEARS AND COMES OVER QUICKLY.

ELAINE

(TO RITA) Hey look, no, it was my fault. Really.

ALEX

It really was her fault.

ELAINE

I was so weird, I asked him to make up that story. And I'll feel terrible if he doesn't get to... know you as a result.

ALEX

'Cause he really wants to know you.

RITA

Goodnight, Elaine. Goodnight, Alex.

ELAINE

Please. I'll do anything... he'll do anything.

ALEX

Twice.

RITA

Really, goodnight.

ELAINE

He's wonderful. He's one of the most terrific guys you'll ever want to meet.

RITA

Then why don't you take him?

ELAINE

I don't date cab drivers.

ALEX

(TO ELAINE) I don't know why you feel that way. It's a wonderful job. And you know what the best part of it is? You get to go to work anytime you want.

HE STARTS TO LEAVE.

ELAINE

Alex, thanks for coming.

ALEX

It's okay. I had a wonderful time.

HE EXITS, AND WE:

FADE OUT.

THE END