

THE KANDINSKY TANGO

Cast of Characters

GUY: Mid 20's

GIRL: Late teens early 20's

Setting: The elevated front porch of a house with steps leading down into the front yard. On one side of the porch are another chair and a small table with a potted plant. Inside there is a party with loud music and chattering people having a good time.

Period: The Present.

Scene 1

AT RISE: A GIRL is seated on the steps, dressed in provocative party clothing. She is crying. After a few moments a GUY comes out of the house, walks over to chair and table, and sits. He deliberately takes no notice of GIRL. GUY is dressed in jeans and an unimpressive shirt. He carries a jacket over one arm that he lets drape over the chair back. He lights a cigarette and pulls a dime novel out of his back pocket. He reads and smokes. GIRL looks over at GUY and pauses her crying. GUY takes no notice. She looks at him and makes some louder sobbing noises. GUY turns a page in his book and flicks ash from his cigarette while taking no notice.

GIRL:

(Sighs.)

You must think I'm a dog.

GUY:

(Finally looking up.)

Beg' pardon?

GIRL:

Here's a girl crying all by herself and you don't even bother to ask..

GUY:

I'm sorry. Are you all right?

GIRL:

No.

(GUY nods and then goes back to reading his book.)

GIRL:

Men SUCK!

GUY:

(Without looking up.)

No argument.

GIRL:

(Stands, walks over and takes the book from GUY.)
Argument!

GUY:

Jesus!

GIRL:

What's your problem?

GUY:

My problem?

GIRL:

Don't repeat me. It's a sign of a dull mind.

(Reads the book cover.)

Oh dear, you have horrible taste in literature.

GUY:

Would it be possible for me to have my book back?

GIRL:

(Holds book away from GUY.)

No-

GUY:

(Stands, takes two steps after the book but sees
it is useless.)

-Give it back.-

GIRL:

-Believe me you're much better off-

GUY:

-That book's a gift-

GIRL:

-I said you're much better off. Tell me, does your mother
know that you read such tripe? I mean, if I had off-spring
I'd have them reading something good.

GUY:

My mother gave me that book for my birthday! It was on the
New York Times Bestseller list.

GIRL:

That's how you know it's bad. If everybody's reading it, it's tripe. Don't you want to ask me why I was crying?

GUY:

Man, when you want attention...

(Puts out his cigarette in the potted plant.)

I hate parties.

GIRL:

Really! Me too! I loathe them, that's, in fact, why I was crying if you really want to know...

GUY:

And I don't.

GIRL:

Well, there's no reason to be all snotty, Elliot.

GUY:

(Pause.)

Do I know you?

GIRL:

(Pointing into the house.)

They introduced us, remember? You came in with that blonde girl with the hooked nose and the host couldn't remember my-

GUY:

Hey! That's not a nice thing to say.

GIRL:

What? About the hooked nose? I didn't mean anything by it. She's got a nice top shelf and everything else. I congratulate you, tell me, are they real?

GUY:

I beg your pardon!

GIRL:

Well look at you, speaking like somebody in an old movie. I BEG YOUR PARDON... I'm just asking if your girlfriend's tits are genuine... Mine are. Go ahead, give 'em a feel.

GUY:

I'll take your word for it.

GIRL:

Oh, I see. She's a beard then, huh?

GUY:

A what?

GIRL:

A beard. You're gay and you don't want people to know about it. I understand. Believe me, I've played the beard before. Nice guys. Always had me home on time. So is anal sex as difficult for you as it is for me? I've always had...

GUY:

I'm not gay!

GIRL:

(Looks down at her chest.)

Then why don't you want to play with them?

GUY:

Did it ever occur to you that you're not my type?

GIRL:

Type? What are you a serial rapist or something? Unidentified man attacks women at local college. Victims are young women, blonde with hooked noses and fake tits, usually malnourished and affecting a knowledge of modern art which they do not actually have.

GUY:

You're very rude, you know that.

GIRL:

She couldn't tell it was a Kandinsky even when his name was right across the bottom of the poster. She must give great head considering the brains she's not carrying. How often do the two of you do it? Is she experimental? Who's usually on top? I bet it's her right? You have this air about you that shouts, submissive! She's not even a real blonde, did you know that?

GUY:

Yes, I know. She keeps the dye bottle next to my aftershave in the bathroom.

GIRL:

Oh. (Pause.) So, the reason I was crying was because I felt lonely and useless. Ever feel that way? People died by the thousands today, from cancer, floods, earthquakes, from running with scissors. I didn't do anything to help them, you know. I put on a party dress and went out trawling for man-love. I could have sent 85 cents to Ethiopia or Borneo, to help a starving refugee baby experience the rapture of his first Hershey's bar. Instead I'm here feeling pathetic.

GUY:

Aren't you here with friends?

GIRL:

No. I was just walking by when I saw the lights and heard the music. I walked in and they gave me a cup for free. I was sober and horny so I thought I'd stick around and see if I could find someone to help me solve those problems. A lot of them seemed up for it too. I guess I just didn't really want what I thought I wanted.

GUY:

Forgive me. You remembered my name but I seem to have forgotten yours.

GIRL:

What's it matter? I'm just a party-crasher, your friends in there don't know me, you'll never see me again.

GUY:

They aren't really my friends.

GIRL:

What?

GUY:

Jessie, my girlfriend, she dragged me here. I've never seen half those people before in my life.

(Takes out a second cigarette and lights up. He offers one to GIRL who shakes her head and makes a face.)

GIRL:

That will kill you, you know.

GUY:

I make up for it. I don't drive a car so the odds even out a bit. Seems to me your name was something like Emma, wasn't it?

GIRL:

Bethany.

(Runs her hands over her arms.)

It's cold out here.

GUY:

You could go back inside.

GIRL:

I'd rather spend a month naked in Siberia. All that loud music and run-down furniture.

GUY:

(Chuckling.)

It's college. Everybody's furniture is run-down.

(He retrieves his coat from the chair where he was sitting and drapes it over her shoulders.)

GIRL:

And the way they dance these days. I remember when I was six my grandmother taught me how to do the foxtrot.

(Dancing.) Forward, backward, rock left turn, forward progressive, promenade.

GUY:

Not bad. Do you know the Argentine tango?

GIRL:

Yes. Grandma loved to dance so she taught me everything. I remember her and my grandpa in the living room of their condo, still dressed in their bathrobes at 2 in the afternoon, dancing like it made them 18 again. Then when they were done, Grandpa would sit down, cause he was winded, and Grandma would teach me how to foxtrot until I had the steps down pat. I wish they still had parties like they had when my grandparents were my age. Guys would get dressed up in suits and actually try to act like gentlemen. May I get the door for you miss? Might I have a dance? Tell me, do you like the theater?

GUY:

You wouldn't have liked it that much.

GIRL:

What an awful thing to say. I'd have loved it.

GUY:

No you wouldn't. Everybody smoked back in those days. Why do you think your grandfather was always winded? Hey, wait a minute. An old man and an old woman dancing?

(Looking behind her back.)

That's in the book! You stole that from the book!

GIRL:

So what? It's a horrible book, they die in the end and the grand daughter learns some stupid life lesson-

GUY:

Awe, Damn it! Don't ruin the ending for me just so you can supplement your boring life.

GIRL:

Look if all you're going to do is ruin my fantasy you can go find something better to do with your time.

GUY:

Well, I'd go back to reading my book but I think it's pointless now, isn't it?

GIRL:

Why are you out here?

GUY:

I wanted a smoke and to take a break from the party.

GIRL:

Why did you bring a book to the party?

GUY:

I like books. I don't really like parties. I figured I could escape and kill some time before she noticed I'd disappeared.

GIRL:

And yet she hasn't come out here looking for you. She's probably in there right now getting felt up by some bug-eyed keg-jockey. And yet you're still out here.

GUY:

I'm not the jealous type.

GIRL:

There's that word again. TYPE. Tell me what do you do around here, anyway? You talk so much about types that you've got to be some sort of classifier. Science major? Psychology? Zoology? Do you pin butterflies to corkboards?

GUY:

That's called ophthalmology. No, I'm actually a graduate teaching assistant in music appreciation. You're, let me guess, an art history major.

GIRL:

Why? Cause I know a Kandinsky from a Paul Klee? Just because I've been to a few museums and know more about art than Hook-nose...

GUY:

All right then, what are you?

GIRL:

(Shivers.)

I'm tired. I want to go home. You think anybody in there would call me a cab?

GUY:

(Tosses away his cigarette.)

How far is it?

GIRL:

About twelve blocks.

GUY:

I'll drive you, if you like.

GIRL:

What about your girlfriend?

GUY:

She'll get a ride from somebody.

(They begin to walk off together.)

GUY:

So tell me, when you offered to let me feel your tits, was that for real?

GIRL:

Yes, of course, but first we have to talk a bit more. Do you like Kandinsky?

(BLACKOUT.)