

mia

a film script by

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SCENE 1: EXTERIOR: NIGHT.

A FULL MOON SHINES BRIGHTLY IN THE COLD, NIGHT SKY. A BITING WIND KICKS ASIDE STRAY LEAVES AND LOOSE PAPERS UNLUCKY ENOUGH TO BE OUT ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS.

FADE TO BLACK.

INTERIOR. CUT TO C.U. OF A WOMAN'S FACE WHICH PARTLY FILLS FRAME. BY THE EXPRESSION ON HER FACE, SHE LOOKS EMOTIONALLY DRAINED, TIRED. HER EYES BLINK IN SLOW MOTION, AS IF SHE WERE TRYING TO STAY AWAKE, TRYING TO KEEP TEARS AWAY. A MAN'S HAND COMES INTO FRAME AND IN SLOW MOTION, CONNECTS FORCEFULLY WITH HER FACE. THE WOMAN'S FACE IS JERKED BACK. A SMALL KNOWING SMILE BREAKS THROUGH HER LIPS. IT INTERMINGLES WITH A TEAR WHICH ESCAPES. SHE KNOWS THIS IS IT. SOMETHING HAS FINISHED. HER EYES LIFT UP AND SHE LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW TO THE MOON WATCHING OUTSIDE.

EXTERIOR: NIGHT. THE MOON WATCHES OUT IN THE COLD.

FADE TO BLACK.

INTERIOR. ANOTHER NIGHT. WOMAN'S ROOM. STILL IN BLACK: THE BLACKNESS IS BROKEN BY THE FINE, WHITE MIST OF THE WOMAN'S BREATH. IT BILLOWS OUT INTO THE COLD ROOM, HANGS THERE FOR A WHILE THEN SLOWLY DISAPPEARS. THE WOMAN IS SITTING THERE IN A CHAIR. SHE IS WRAPPED IN HER DOONA. SHE SITS IN FRONT OF HER DRESSING TABLE, MAKE UP STREWN OVER IT. NEXT TO IT IS A FULL LENGTH MIRROR.

SHE IS ALONE.

ON HER BED ARE A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT COMBINATIONS OF CLOTHES ALL CAREFULLY LAID OUT.

SHE HAS BEEN PREPARING HERSELF FOR SOMETHING. SHE PUTS ON HER LIPSTICK: NOT RED, BUT A DULL PINK. ALMOST COLOURLESS AGAINST HER SKIN.

SHE LOOKS AT HER WATCH.

SHE TAKES A DEEP BREATH.

SHE STANDS AND GOES OVER TO THE BED AND STANDS IN FRONT OF A GROUP OF CLOTHES WHICH SHE HAS SELECTED.

SHE DROPS THE DOONA TO THE FLOOR.

SHE LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW AT THE FULL MOON.

DISSOLVE TO MEMORY: THE WOMAN'S FACE FILLS SCREEN. A MALE'S HAND COMES IN AND STRIKES FORCEFULLY AGAINST IT. HER FACE HOWEVER REMAINS EXPRESSIONLESS AS IF SHE WERE EXPECTING IT. AS IF IT WERE NORMAL. THERE'S A TRICKLE OF BLOOD WHICH PUSHES ITSELF FREE FROM THE SKIN NEAR HER LIP.

WOMAN

(She speaks calmly, every word almost measured)

Please, ... please make love to me. Love me. Why don't we make love any more?

MALE'S HAND COMES IN AND STRIKES HER FACE. TEARS ESCAPE, THOUGH THE EXPRESSION REMAINS CALM. WE DON'T SEE THE MALE'S FACE.

DISSOLVE BACK FROM THE MEMORY TO THE ROOM: LATER: SHE IS NOW DRESSED. HER HAIR IS MADE AND SHE LOOKS SORT OF NORMAL. ON HER HEAD IS A WIDE BRIMMED HAT TO SHIELD HER EYES. STANDING IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR LOOKING AT HERSELF, THE MEMORY IS STILL QUITE VIVID IN HER THOUGHTS. HER EYES MEET. SHE STARTS TO BREATHE HEAVILY, NERVOUSLY. SHE MOVES UP CLOSE TO THE FULL LENGTH MIRROR. HER LIPS MEET THE MIRROR IN A KISS AND PUSH HARD AGAINST IT, HER TONGUE PRESSING AGAINST IT, LEAVING A PINK SMUDGE.

WOMAN

(She looks into her eyes closely,
nervously.)

I know you can do it. Go on. Good luck.

SHE THEN QUICKLY MOVES AWAY. THE CAMERA STAYS ON AND COMES IN CLOSER, TO THE SMALL, DULL PINK, WET RING SHE HAS LEFT ON THE MIRROR.

BEHIND US A DOOR CLOSES AND A LOCK IS TURNED.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXTERIOR: THE WOMAN WITH THE WIDE BRIMMED HAT LEAVES HER HOUSE AND WALKS THROUGH BACK STREETS THAT ARE STREWN WITH RUBBISH AND FILTH. A GANG OF BOYS ARE TRYING TO BREAK INTO A CAR. ON SEEING HER, THEY KICK, PUNCH AND SMASH THE CAR WITH BOOTS, FISTS AND BOTTLES AS THEY RUN AWAY. SHE WALKS PAST AN OLD MAN SLEEPING IN A SHOP DOORWAY. HE WAKES AS SHE PASSES.

OLD MAN

(His voice is drunk on too much cheap wine)

Hey... Hey, lady...

Can you loan me a couple of bucks?...

Two dollars?...

Lady?...

AS HE GETS NO RESPONSE, HE SIMPLY SLUMPS BACK INTO HIS CORNER. THE WOMAN CONTINUES ON HER WAY.

INTERIOR: WOMAN'S BEDROOM: (CONTINUATION OF PREVIOUS MEMORY SCENE OF HER AND MAN. SHE HAS WIPED AWAY THE BLOOD FROM AROUND HER LIP.

WOMAN:

I'm sorry, I probably deserved it.

(The whispering coolness of her voice, its quiet sensualness, frightens him. She goes up to him and wraps her arms around lovingly.)

Please, I'm sorry.

MAN:

Stop it.

WOMAN:

Why?

(She looks up at him, her ruffled hair
across her face.)

HE SIGHS DEEPLY, UNCOMFORTABLE.

WOMAN (CONT):

Every slap is a caress. Every trickle of blood, the
most tender of kisses. A shove to me is a hug. A
bruise is an orgasm.

SLOWLY, SHE REACHES UP AND KISSES HIM ON THE NECK
SEDUCTIVELY, HER ARMS SURROUND HIM. IT IS THE WAY SHE
STOPS HIM FROM HITTING HER. TEARS WELL UP IN HER EYES AS
HE BEGINS TO RESPOND. HOWEVER, HE CANNOT SEE THEM.

FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE 2: EXTERIOR: SAME NIGHT. EMPTY, WET STREETS.

A FULLY RESTORED MORRIS MINOR SPLASHES ITS WAY THROUGH THE STREETS, ITS LIGHTS REFLECTING ON THE WET PAVEMENT.

CUT TO INTERIOR OF VEHICLE: INSIDE IS TINY TINSTON. A HUGE LUG OF A MAN FOR WHOM THE TERM “BUILT LIKE A BRICK SHITHOUSE” WOULD BE MOST APPROPRIATE. HE IS ADJUSTING HIS TOUPEE IN THE REAR VIEW MIRROR HARDLY NOTICING THE ROAD AHEAD.

TINY IS THE SORT OF GUY WHO DRESSES WITH A LOT OF STYLE BUT VERY LITTLE CLASS. HIS BEAUTIFULLY TAILORED DOUBLE-BREADED SUIT WOULD LOOK BETTER ON SOMEONE ELSE. ANYONE ELSE. HIS PENCIL-THIN, CLARK GABLE MOUSTACHE DID LOOK A LOT BETTER ON MR GABLE. ON HIS FINGERS ARE A FEW RINGS WHICH HOLD LARGE STONES OF SOME DESCRIPTION.

AT THE MOMENT THEY ARE TAPPING ON THE WHEEL TO A TUNE WHICH SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING BARRY MANILOW WOULD HAVE MADE FAMOUS. UNFORTUNATELY, TINY HAS FORGOTTEN THE WORDS.

TINY:

(Very animated, Latin up beat tempo thing, a bit like ‘Copacabana.’)

Wow,.... da ra ra da da, da ra ra ra da,

ENJOYING HIMSELF, HE DRIVES THROUGH THE WET STREETS AND THROUGH A PUDDLE WHICH SPLASHES WATER ON TO THE FOOTPATH AND ALMOST ON TO THE WOMAN WITH A WIDE BRIMMED HAT WALKING HURRIEDLY TO A DESTINATION.

TINY:

(His singing continues into the next scene, slowly fading out.)

Wow,.... da ra ra da da, da ra ra ra da,

FADE TO ANOTHER MEMORY. INTERIOR: WOMAN’S BEDROOM:
THE WOMAN IS SITTING ON THE UNMADE BED, UNHAPPILY

LOOKING AT THE MAN STANDING IN FRONT OF HER. THE ROOM IS A BIT OF A MESS. IT SEEMS THE MEMORY COMES FROM A HOT SUMMER'S DAY AS THE ROOM IS VERY BRIGHT AND THEY'RE WEARING VERY LITTLE. HE IS IN JEANS AND T.SHIRT, SHE IN LIGHT TOP AND LOOSE SKIRT. BEADS OF SWEAT MARK THEIR FACES.

THERE IS AN UNCOMFORTABLE PAUSE. TINY'S SINGING HANGS IN THE AIR AND FADES. SHE LOOKS AT HIM AND SMILES NERVOUSLY.

MAN:

I don't love you, you know that.

WOMAN:

I know.

MAN:

Look, it's probably made you really bitter about me,...

WOMAN:

Not at all.

MAN:

Well, especially now that you know about...

WOMAN:

Don't! Don't mention her name, please Michael. I don't want to hear her name. Please.

(A tear appears and slides down her cheek. She pauses. her voice begins to break.)

It hurts. It hurts to hear you say her name. You no longer call me by my name. Why?

MAN:

Oh for heaven's sake. I just want you out of my life.

WOMAN:

Dead?

MAN:

Don't be stupid.

WOMAN:

(She is now a little more composed.)

Remember that game we used to play for fun? The one about people we really hated. Remember? We'd think of different ways we could kill them."

MAN LOOKS AT HER AS IF SHE WERE MAD. ABOUT TO BREAK.

WOMAN:

(She is becoming more animated, happier at the thought.)

Remember how we'd cuddle up in bed and we'd imagine such and such turned into a wooden statue. We'd then invite them over for dinner and the only cutlery we'd set would be a hammer and chisel.

MAN:

Stop it.

WOMAN:

(Rushing on)

Remember,... oh I forget her name, we changed her into a beautiful, wild bush bird. Then we put a huge ball and chain around her leg, so she'd flap about wildly. Finally, she would just give up and die. Poor thing. Dead.

Don't you remember that awful game?

(She looks up only to see the room empty.

Down the hall the front door closes.)

WOMAN:

(To herself) A beautiful, wild bush bird.

THE CAMERA FOLLOWS HER EYES AS SHE LOOKS TO THE WINDOW WHERE THE FULL MOON IS SHINING. TINY'S SINGING COMES BACK IN, SLOWLY UNDERNEATH AS WE FADE TO THE NEXT SCENE.

EXTERIOR: STREET OUTSIDE QUIET BAR: TINY PULLS UP IN FRONT OF BAR AND DELIVERS BIG ENDING TO SONG WITH DRUM ACCOMPANIMENT ON HIS STEERING WHEEL.

TINY:

Da, da da daaaaaaaaaaaaaaar..... Yes!!

FINISHED HE GETS OUT OF THE CAR REFRESHED.

SCENE 3: INTERIOR. SMALL, OLD FASHIONED BAR:

TINY ENTERS FOLLOWED BY A LARGE, FAT MOTH. HE WATCHES IT WITH A SMILE, CONCENTRATING ON ITS MOVEMENTS, BUT AS IT FLIES OUT OF REACH, HE COMES BACK TO THE BAR.

HERE A FIRE WARMS THE PATRONS AND TINY SHAKES THE COLD FROM HIS CLOTHES, RUBS HIS HANDS AND WALKS TO THE BAR.

BARMAN:

(With that feigned friendliness, barmen elicit so well.)

Mr Tinston.... How are you, Tiny?

TINY:

(As he places his huge posterior on to a poor stool.)

Oh, fantastically well, my dear, Bob. Fantastically well.

TINY TAKES OUT HIS CIGARETTES - ST MORITZ, MENTHOL. METICULOUSLY BETWEEN FOREFINGER AND THUMB, HE DRAWS ONE OUT. DELICATELY, HE TAPS IT ON THE BOX. CAREFULLY, HE PLACES IT IN HIS MOUTH AND LIGHTS IT. HE TAKES A LONG DRAG AND RELEASES THE SMOKE WITH A MOST SATISFIED EXPRESSION.

BARMAN:

(Returning from serving another customer)

What can I get you then, Tiny?

TINY:

(Carefully takes a drag of his cigarette and with eyes closed, enjoys every wafer of smoke).

Ahh, ... a drink. Yes, let me see.

(Looks at the top shelf. Then finds what he wants.)

Ah... a Kaluha and milk thanks, Bob. But, if you don't mind, a very small dash of Kaluha. Have a job, tonight.

BARMAN:

Right...

TINY DRAGS ON ANOTHER PUFF. BUT HALF WAY THROUGH IT, HIS CONCENTRATION IS TAKEN BY SOMETHING ELSE. HIS OPEN HAND RUSHES IN TO THE AIR, AND LATCHES ITSELF SHUT. A BROAD SMILE WRAPS AROUND TINY'S FACE.

BARMAN:

There you go.

(He hands over the drink then goes off to deal with other drinkers.)

TINY:

Thank you, kindly, Bob.

FROM WITHIN HIS FIST, TINY PULLS OUT THE MOTH, FLUTTERING FRANTICALLY. HE HOLDS IT TO HIS FACE AND WATCHES INNOCENTLY, FASCINATED.

TINY:

(Quiet, soothing, seductively.)

Hello, my little darling. You're looking extremely beautiful tonight. Just dropped in for a little chat, have we?

THE MOTH, ALMOST AS IF REASSURED, STOPS FLAPPING.

TINY:

There, now that's better, isn't it?

(He gently pats the moth with a big finger.)

There, there, just relax. Tiny loves you. Relax.

SLOWLY, TINY PLACES THE MOTH ON THE BAR WHERE IT SITS QUIETLY. TINY PUTS HIS FACE CLOSE, SMILES WARMLY.

TINY:

Relax, baby. Daddy's here.

FROM THE COAT POCKET, HE REMOVES A SMALL KNIFE. A KNIFE WITH A SHINING SILVER HANDLE AND A PENCIL THIN, STEELY SHARP SIX INCH BLADE.

TINY:

Baby, it's ok.

THE KNIFE IS POISED OVER THE MOTH'S HEAD. TINY POUTS HIS LIPS AND BLOWS A KISS.

TINY:

There, there, my sweet, I love you. Now, tell me what it feels like.

HE DRIVES THE KNIFE A SHORT DISTANCE THROUGH THE MOTH'S HEAD AND INTO THE BAR WHERE IT STICKS. TINY LOOKS ON FASCINATED AS THE MOTH DIES. HE GETS AS CLOSE AS HE CAN, TRYING TO SEE THE EXPRESSION ON THE DEAD MOTH'S FACE.

TINY:

What does it feel like?

BARMAN:

Oh, fucking hell, what the fuck. Get that thing off my bar, Tiny.

TINY.

Terribly sorry.

HE REMOVES THE KNIFE AND WIPES THE MOTH OFF THE BAR.

BARMAN:

Jesus Christ, mate.

TINY:

I apologise. It won't happen again, I assure you, my little darling. I just wanted to see what death looked like.

BARMAN:

Do it again and you won't have to look far. Fucking crazy.

TINY:

Can I look into your eyes, Bob?

BARMAN:

Fuck you, it's not funny, Tiny Tinston.

TINY LAUGHS LOUDLY TO HIMSELF AS IN THE BACKGROUND WE HEAR A WOMAN'S VOICE.

WOMAN:

Mr Tinston? Mr Tiny Tinston?.

TINY TURNS, THE SMILE DISAPPEARS FROM HIS FACE. HE SEES THE WOMAN WITH THE WIDE BRIMMED HAT, HER FACE IS IN SHADE AND SHE IS STANDING NEXT TO HIM. TINY LOOKS AROUND WONDERING HOW SHE GOT IN WITHOUT HIM SEEING HER.

TINY:

That's right, I'm Tiny Tinston. Pleased to meet you.
And you are...?

WOMAN:

(Cool and business like)

Never mind who I am. I've brought what was asked for. Here is the name, address and photograph of the person. There's even a key.

TINY ACCEPTS THE ITEMS AND STUDIES THEM CLOSELY. TINY:

(Reading off the note)

Mia Burton. Lovely name. Looks like a nice, respectable lady.

HE LOOKS AT THE PHOTOGRAPH HIDDEN IN HIS LARGE HANDS AND LOOKS BACK AT THE WOMAN. HE STUDIES HIS CLIENT CLOSELY. THE DULL PINK LIPSTICK IS SLIGHTLY SMUDGED AND THE EYES ARE DEEP BLUE. HE GRABS HER FACE AND CRADLES IT IN ONE OF HIS BIG HANDS. HE LOOKS CLOSELY AND WITH HIS FREE HAND SMEARS AWAY SOME OF THE SMUDGED LIPSTICK.

SHE PULLS AWAY SHIELDING HER FACE FROM HIS GAZE.

WOMAN:

It should be done tonight.

(She pulls herself away, shading her face
behind the brim of her hat.)

She'll be home tonight. I know for sure.

TINY:

Then, my dear lady, it shall be done tonight. Poste
Haste. We can't keep St. Peter waiting at the Pearly
Gates, now can we?

WOMAN:

No.

(She produces a thick envelope from her
bag.)

Here's the amount promised. I suppose you'll want to
count it or something.

SHE HANDS IT TO HIM, MAKING SURE NO ONE SEES THE
TRANSACTION. HE HARDLY EVEN LOOKS AT THE PACKAGE AS
HE SMOOTHLY SLIPS IT INTO HIS POCKET. IT'S JUST ONE OF THE
FORMALITIES OF HIS GAME. SOMETHING ELSE, THOUGH, TAKES
HIS ATTENTION. HE GRABS THE WOMAN'S WRIST AND PULLS IT
CLOSE TO HIS FACE.

WE CAN'T SEE IT.

TINY:

Very nice, if I may say so. Very nice tattoo, madam.
I've never seen one like that. Work of art really. Get
it done locally.

WOMAN:

(As she wriggles free.)

Never mind about that, you have a job to do.

TINY:

Ah, my work, madam. It is uppermost in my mind, I
assure you.

WOMAN:

Good.

TINY:

Pardon me for asking, but Mia Burton, you must hate her with a passion.

WOMAN:

(Responds by looking him directly in the eyes.)

Not at all. In fact, I love her very much.

Passionately, you could say, Mr Tinston.

SHE TURNS AND WALKS AWAY. TINY WATCHES HER VERY CAREFULLY, THEN LOOKS CLOSELY AT THE PHOTOGRAPH FOR A WHILE. WHEN HIS GAZE SEARCHES FOR HER AGAIN ALL IT FINDS IS THE BAR ROOM DOOR SWINGING CLOSED, SHUTTING OUT THE NIGHT. HE LOOKS BACK AT THE PHOTOGRAPH AND BEGINS TO LAUGH. SOFTLY AT FIRST, BUT THEN IT SLOWLY BUILDS.

FADE TO BLACK.

TINY'S LAUGH CONTINUES OVER BLACK AND INTO THE NEXT SCENE.

SCENE 4: MIA BURTON'S BEDROOM LATER THAT EVENING:

OUTSIDE MIA'S OPEN WINDOW A FULL MOON SHINES IN THROWING SOFT, DIFFUSED LIGHT ACROSS A NONDESCRIPT BEDROOM. MIA SLEEPS. HER BREATHING IS RELAXED, RHYTHMIC. WE DO NOT SEE HER FACE. IN FACT, IT IS HARD TO MAKE OUT THE ROOM AS EVERYTHING IS IN SHADOW.

SUDDENLY, A VERY STRANGE, YET VERY LARGE SHAPE MOVES. IT IS TINY'S SILHOUETTE. HIS SHADOW FALLS ACROSS THE BED.

C.U. ON MIA'S LIPS AS A SHADOW COMES ACROSS THEM, FOLLOWED BY A GLOVED HAND WHICH CUPS ITSELF OVER THE MOUTH.

C.U. OF MIA'S EYES OPENING SUDDENLY IN FEAR, BUT HER VOICE IS UNABLE TO SCREAM. SHE SEES A LARGE DARK SHAPE STRADDLED OVER HER BODY MAKING HER UNABLE TO MOVE.

TINY:

(He whispers like a lover, softly into her ear.)

Good evening, my sweet,. My little Mia. Relax.
Everything's going to be ok. There, there. I promise.
Tiny loves you, my little darling. Relax, Daddy's here.

MIA DOES NOT STRUGGLE. IN THE DARKNESS SHE SEES A HUGE, BLACK SHAPE.

TINY:

Oh, you're so relaxed, that's good. Very good. I want to love you. I'm going to love you.

A PENCIL-THIN BLADE EMERGES FROM THE BLACKNESS OF THE SHAPE. IT GLITTERS IN THE MOONLIGHT.

TINY:

Gently does it now, my sweet.

C.U. ON HER EYES WHICH WIDEN IN ANTICIPATION AND TREPIDATION. THE COLD, STEEL BLADE COMES TO REST INSIDE HER EAR.

TINY:

Goodnight, my love. Thank you for a wonderful, exciting evening.

THE LONG, COOL BLADE IS FORCED FIRMLY THROUGH HER BRAIN, KILLING HER INSTANTLY. THE BLADE IS GENTLY WITHDRAWN, WIPED CLEAN AND PUT AWAY. ONLY A SMALL TRICKLE OF BLOOD EMERGES WHICH IS WIPED AWAY.

TINY:

How was that for you, my sweet? Was it good for you, my sweet? Let's have a look.

TINY TURNS ON THE BEDSIDE LIGHT. AS THE LIGHT RUSHES TO CHASE AWAY THE SHADOWS, WE NOTICE FOR THE FIRST TIME IT IS THE WOMAN'S ROOM. THE FULL LENGTH MIRROR HAS THE DULL PINK LIPSTICK SMUDGED ON IT. TINY LOOKS CLOSELY AT THE WOMAN AND NOTICES THE SMUDGED LIPSTICK AROUND HER LIPS.

HE DOESN'T LOOK SURPRISED. HE LOOKS CLOSELY AT THE FACE, AT THE CALM EXPRESSION. TINY CLOSES THE LIDS OVER HER DEEP BLUE EYES.

TINY:

You can relax now, Mia Burton. Nobody shall hurt you again. Hell of a way to get a little peace and quiet. Get some sleep, my darling.

(He slowly leans over and kisses her on the lips.)

It's ok. now, sweetheart.

(He reaches for her wrist and sees the tattoo.)

A work of art that is Mia. A beautiful, wild bush bird. Pity about the ball and chain around its leg. Lovely, really lovely. I'm sure there's a key somewhere.

CAMERA LEAVES TINY THERE. CONTINUE TO PULL BACK
THROUGH WINDOW TO EXTERIOR.

EXTERIOR: HOUSES IN DARKNESS.

HUGE MOON SHINING BRIGHTLY OVERHEAD. TINY EMERGES
FROM THE HOUSE, LOOKS UP AT THE MOON.

TINY:

Goodnight, my friend. I wonder what you make of
all this. Does anybody care?

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.