

AS GOOD AS IT GEST - CAROL & MELVIN

CAROL
You look so s...

She stops herself from saying "sexy," gathers herself, then...

CAROL
You look great.

They arrive at the table. He holds out her chair for her.

CAROL
You wanna dance?

MELVIN
I've been thinking about that since you brought it
up before.

CAROL
(rising)
And?

MELVIN
No...

And before she can digest that:

... I don't get this place.
They make me buy a new outfit but they let you in
in a house dress.
I don't get it.

*Melvin has no idea he has insulted her. Sandbagged in extreme, she gets up --
actually ready to leave.*

MELVIN
No.
Wait.
What? Why? Where are you going? I didn't mean
it.
You gotta sit down.
You can still give me the dirtylook... just sit down
and give it to me.

CAROL

Melvin, pay me a compliment... I need one and quick... You have no idea how much what you just said hurt my feelings.

MELVIN

(really pissed, mutters)

That monominute someone gets that they need you they threaten to walk out.
Never fails.

CAROL

That's not a compliment, Melvin... that's just trying to sound smart so I feel stupid... a compliment is something nice about somebody else... now or never.

MELVIN

Okay.

He waves her down.

CAROL

(sitting)

And mean it...

MELVIN

Can we order first?

She thinks and then nods. The waiter is across the room. This does not stop Melvin.

MELVIN

(calling)

Two crab dinners and pitcher of cold beer.

(to Carol)

Baked or fries?

CAROL

Fries.

MELVIN

(calling)

One baked -- one fries.

STARTLED WAITER

(shouting back)

I'll tell your waiter.

MELVIN

(to Carol)

Okay, I got a real great compliment for you and it's true.

CAROL

I am so afraid you're about to say something awful...

MELVIN

Don't be pessimistic.

It's not your style.

Okay... here I goes... clearly a mistake.

This is hell for him.

I have this -- what? Ailment... and my doctor -- a shrink... who

I used to see all the time... he says in 50 or 60 percent of the cases a pill can really help.

I hate pills.

Very dangerous things, pills.

"Hate," I am using the word "hate" about pills.

My compliment is that when you came to my house that time and told me how you'd never -- well, you were there, you know... the next morning I started taking these pills.

CAROL

(a little confused)

I don't quite get how that's a compliment for me.

Amazing that something in Melvin rises to the occasion -- so that he uncharacteristically looks at her directly, then:

MELVIN

You make me want to be a better man.

Carol never expected the kind of praise which would so slip under her guard. She stumbles a bit -- flattered, momentarily moved and his for the taking.

CAROL

That's maybe the best compliment of my life.

MELVIN

Then I've really overshot here 'cause I was aiming at just enough to keep you from walking out.

Carol laughs.

CAROL

So how are you doing with those pills? Well, I
hopahopahopa.

MELVIN

Takes months to know... they work little by little.

Holds his head; then

Talking like this is exhausting.

Carol moves to the chair next to him... She sits very close -- he tenses.

CAROL

Have you ever let a romantic moment make you do
something you know is stupid?

MELVIN

Never.

CAROL

Here's the trouble with never.

*She moves in for the kiss. Their faces are close -- she looks at him... She
closes her eyes -- her face moving toward him he is wide-eyed and afraid... His
face almost moves away -- in a shot this close it's almost flight... But now his
head moves back and he receives her kiss. It is
brief. Carol smiles encouragement to him and herself.
Melvin can't bear the pleasure.*

MELVIN

You don't owe me that.

CAROL

That wasn't payment.
When you first came into breakfast, when I saw
you -- I thought you were handsome... then, of
course, you spoke... so now that your soft li'l
underbelly is all exposed.
Tell me, why did you bring me?

*Melvin's voice is soft -- hesitant, okay, vulnerable... as he holds up his hands in
a "stop" signal.*

MELVIN

Well, ah... that's a personal question.

CAROL
Tell me even if you're scared.
Tell me why you wanted me here.
It's okay.

She kisses him again.

CAROL
If you ask me... I'll say, "yes."

MELVIN
(dissembling)
There are lots of reason... I had a thought that if
you had sex with Simon it might...

CAROL
(humiliated)
Sex with Simon?

MELVIN
It's one idea...

CAROL
That's why you brought me? Look at me! Is that
really why you brought me... like I'm a what and I
owe you what?!

MELVIN
I don't know why I brought you -- that idea
occurred to me is all... it came out first... Hey, you
kiss him -- me... he says he loves you.
You two hit it off.
But you don't want to... fine... forget what I said
about sex with Simon.
It was a mistake.

CAROL
(wiping away tears)
I'll never forget you said it.

MELVIN
It was a mistake.