

TRICK

written by

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(Based on his original short story)

Scripted

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FADE IN

EXT. DINGY STREET CORNER - NIGHT

Litter, on the sidewalk. A street light, sputtering light to dark. Keeping time with the pulse of neon from restaurants and low-rent dives, to either side.

SOFIA (V.O.)

The trick is to look beautiful,
and hungry.

She does. SOFIA, late teens, early twenties; it's hard to tell. Gorgeous, in a hollow-eyed-pixie kind of way. Wearing provocative tight clothes, under a huge, padded duffle jacket.

Could be a hooker, tricking on a cold night. Could simply be a runaway. Could be both.

SOFIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I do okay, I suppose. What Mother Nature didn't give me, I pay for. Hungry, now. Hungry's hard. Those fad diets? Low Carb, No Carb, Brown Rice, Protein Shake, whatever. Been there. Done that. Doesn't work. Bulimia's better. Shove a popsicle stick down your throat, kiss those calories goodbye. Yeah, right. And wind up smelling like the walking dead. It's not easy.

Sofia's eyebrows rise.

SOFIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But, I guess I'm doing all right.

JOHN (O.S.)

I've, uh...

JOHN (forties; and that's what he is) approaches. He's a little overweight, average-looking. Face lined by your typical family-guy stress.

SOFIA (V.O.)

A middle-aged, middle-sized, middle-income type. He's probably taking pity on me, 'cause I look like his daughter. Or niece.

And, he's nervous.

JOHN

I've never done this, before.

Sofia gives a lop-sided grin. Slightly mocking. Slightly teasing. Totally charming. You can almost feel its impact, on poor John.

SOFIA

Had the Blue Plate, at Safari Sam's?

Her smile widens. Cranking up the tease.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

It's not that hard.

The implication being, it soon will be.

Mock formal, Sofia offers her arm. John takes it.

Arm-in-arm, they step briskly toward a greasy spoon, around the corner.

INT. SAFARI SAM'S DINER - NIGHT

Greasy, but not grimy. The decor's pretty tasteful, booths and tables not too tacky.

It'll do.

At least, that's the impression John gives, as he scopes out the patron, SAFARI SAM (beefy, jovial, fifties), while she mingles with her late-night CUSTOMERS - several of whom are working girl / runaway types, like Sofia. A few with "John's" of their own.

Our John's scoping out Sofia, as well.

It's warm, in the diner, but Sofia still has her jacket on. Open. Throwing out glimpses of what she's not quite wearing, underneath.

SAFARI SAM

Here we go. Specials, for my special.

Safari Sam lays two dishes out in front of John and Sofia.

Sofia grins up at her.

That diet hasn't affected her appetite. Sofia alternates between wolfing down the famous Blue Plate, teasing the other customers, and joking around with Safari Sam.

John has a few bites of his own Special; finds it good. Drawn in by Sofia's antics, he's loosening up.

Sofia leans forward.

SOFIA
So. John.

JOHN
Yep.

SOFIA
Smith?

JOHN
It's Jones, actually. Kidding. You know, there's an actress, named Sofia--

SOFIA
I know. D'you see her, in that movie? God, she was--

JOHN
How'd you wind up, here?

SOFIA
Just walked in, off the street. Arm in arm with this guy. John, something. Remember? You were there.

JOHN
No, I--

Sofia's an amiable blank; giving nothing away.

John backs off. Apologetic smile.

JOHN
Sorry. Force of habit. Be Sensitive, 101. It's how I get all the hot chicks. My wife, now. She's--

Sofia holds one hand up, like a traffic cop. Raises a forkful to her mouth, with the other. Chews, beaming ecstatically.

SOFIA
Mmmm.....

Both hands, now. She makes exaggerated eating gestures, with her knife and fork. Smiles encouragingly, at John. Like a mother enticing her little one to eat his greens.

John rolls his eyes.

JOHN

Yeah.

But she's won him over. They chow down together in comfortable silence, for a while.

SOFIA

Want to get out of here?

JOHN

Okay.

INT. SEEDY MOTEL - NIGHT

This actually is seedy. And THE OWNER (a sour-faced guy in his forties) looks like he rents the rooms by the hour. And doesn't give a damn who knows.

Sofia's with John, leaning up against the scarred wood reception desk. She's hunched into her jacket, arms wrapped tightly together. Shivering.

SOFIA

Do you ever turn down the air-conditioning, here?

THE OWNER

No.

He slaps a room key on the desk before them.

THE OWNER (CONT'D)

Room 17. This corridor, first left. Don't leave a mess.

John trades some crumpled bills for the key.

During the exchange, two other couples from the diner crowd round the desk. One of the johns is slobbering impatiently at his escort's neck.

Sofia rolls her eyes at John, as they move away from Reception.

SOFIA

Jeezus. Get a room.

John cracks a smile. As he starts down the corridor, Sofia throws a look back, toward The Owner.

SOFIA (V.O.)

This place is, like, a flesh farm. I swear. Local cops know about it. They're bought, and paid for.

Her arms are down by her sides, as she walks. But she's

shaking them, in their huge sleeves. A weird circular motion. Like a sprinter, psyching up for the big race.

SOFIA (V.O.) (CONT'D.)

And The Owner, he'll get his cut.

Outside Room 17. For such a dive, the walls and doors look remarkably solid. Like a vault. Or a crypt.

Fumbling, John keys the door open, as Sofia follows.

And two sets of wicked-sharp blades snap down, to her fingers. They're exotic looking. Could be ancient weapons. Could be surgical instruments. Could be both.

Sofia sweeps back her foot, and the door bangs shut.

SOFIA (V.O.) (CONT'D.)

After I've made a few cuts, of my own.

FADE TO BLACK