

BEST OF LUCK WITH YOUR HORRIBLE CAREER

written by
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SCENE ONE

Setting: The waiting room to hell.

At Rise: The set is an automobile, flipped upside down onstage and smashed; as the lights come up, the tires are still spinning.

Our character in this first scene is upside down in the driver's seat, smashed against the driver's side window, which is shattered. Her hair and face are bloody.

Her name is LULU, and she is middle-aged, and, when not smashed in a a car, reeks of tawdry glamor. We cannot see it at the moment, but she is dressed in an ensemble that might have looked dazzling in Club 57 in the Seventies, but has seen better days.

Lulu breathes hard, opens her eyes, stares around wildly. She pushes open the car door, tumbles out -- bottles of alcohol, empty, tumble out with her. She sits up, stares at the audience.

LULU

Really what is there to say at a moment like this but oh shit. Look at this! And what of Fifi?

(Lulu crawls around on her hands and knees calling out the dog's name.)

LULU

Fifi! Fifi? FIFI!

(She crawls behind the car.)

LULU

Well, there is no glamor in this sort of a discovery.

(She stands, holding up a headless dog.)

LULU

What a way to go out, Fifi. What a way for both of us to go.

(To audience)

Oh, I know I didn't survive that. How could I? You'll read the news tomorrow, when you wake up. Lulu -- dead! Skull crushed in an auto accident, drove too fast on the Pacific Coast Highway, drove too drunk. She was dead before she knew she went off the road. And you'll think, how strange. I dreamed of Lulu last night. I dreamed of her accident, of her car, of her poodle. I wonder what she was doing on the road then?

(Shrugs, throws down dog. Comes around to front of car, to audience.)

LULU

I was coming to see you, Bumps. Oh, Bumpsy, my dear, dear Bumpsy. So terribly young. So terribly stupid. So endearingly naive. I had a vision of you tonight, and it just terrified me. I had a vision of how high you may rise, how that great, stupid beauty you possess would catapult you to the top of the Hollywood Hills, how one day you would be peering down at all of us from your perch. You've got it, Bumps. You've got the magic. People look at you and hear cash registers ring. They see lines at the box office. You're unstoppable. And that's the worst thing any human can be. I came to tell you all that, but I guess I needed some dutch courage to get me through it. I mean, you told me you never wanted to see me again, and you called me an old woman, and you kicked me out. But I needed some of your time, Bumps. I needed an hour or so for this old woman and her dog -- to warn you. To warn you! And now that will never happen, except in your dreams. And what will become of me? Where am I to go now?

(Stage right, off in the wings, red lights roar up, and the sounds of crackling fire, and murderous laughter, and screams.

Lulu looks at it, shrugs. Lights down.)

LULU

I guess I should have known. Lulu was far from a saint. And that's what I wanted to tell you about too. I wanted to tell you of the rotten things I have done, the absolutely utterly miserable things I have done, so you would know where the road you're on leads to, Bumps, so you would know that you don't get to be a mad old woman like me, who once was on top of that Hollywood Hill too, you don't climb that hill without breaking some things that ought not be broken. There's a price to pay. I would have warned you, but now I'm just a ghost in a dream, and I have an appointment with my own mistakes. Here I go, Bumps! REMEMBER ME! REMEMBER ME, BUMPSY!

(Lulu spins toward stage right, which once against bursts into flames via the magic of stage lighting, and other lights rise -- Disco lights, and weirdly distorted disco music, and Lulu disappears off the stage, and all falls silent.

And then: The music and lights again, and Lulu spins back, this time holding a ticket, like the one they give at a baker's shop. She returns to her original position, and the lights and sound stop. She looks at the audience, holds up the ticket.)

LULU

Apparently there is something of a backlog. They'll call my number when they're ready for me. So this is it, Bumpsy. I know

LULU (CONTINUED)

you're still asleep, and I know you're still dreaming of dead little me. I can look up and I can see the inside of your skull, so I know I'm in here deep, deep in your head, Bumpsy. And how do I know it's you? Because it's so empty in here, and because the inside of your skull has been spray painted with all those idiotic positive affirmations you used to tell yourself. Oh, there's one: NEVER BE AFRAID TO KNOW HOW GOOD YOU ARE. That was never really an issue for you, was it, Bumps. You never lacked for unearned confidence, my darling. Oh, and what's this one? IF YOU ADORE YOURSELF, OTHERS WILL TOO. I suppose that was true. You and I were always competing for your affections. It was a race to see who could adore you the most, and I gave it my best, I gave it the Lulu college try, but you had the advantage of proximity. Sometimes I was away, and then it was just you, alone with yourself, an orgy of self-adoration. Some superstars have embarrassing sex tapes. You were the one with the self-abuse tape. And what a tape! Oh my God, you went after yourself with an enviable passion. You actually called out your own name a few times. And how did that tape find its way into the public? Stolen by an assistant you claimed. Taken out of your safe. Released without your permission. Is that so, Bumps? IS THAT SO? Then answer me this: Why did it come with a commentary track? There's 45 minutes of you discussing the preparation you did for this video. There are OUTTAKES for Chrissakes. OUTTAKES. THERE ARE 18 COSTUME CHANGES AND A MUSICAL NUMBER. And, oh my God, was that video hot. For someone with no talent at all, you got talent, baby. Jesus, just thinking about it makes me crazy where are my poppers.

(Lulu drops to her knees by the open car door, fumbles around inside, and produces a blood-spattered purse. She tears it open, and bottles of pills rain out. She flings items out of the purse -- makeup, sex toys, money -- and finally produces a small glass vial. She cracks it open and inhales, then grasps her head, sighing.)

She crosses behind the car, flips on her back so we only see her legs. They start moving, and we hear Lulu moaning. Suddenly her legs shudder and then go slack. She rises, glaring at the audience.)

LULU

If I had any shame, I'd regret that. But fuck it, I'm dead, and you gotta get what you can on your way out. And you know what I thought of? I thought of the first night we met, when I was still on top of the hill and you were a nobody A NOBODY. Do you remember that night? I had just won an Emmy for my nighttime variety special, LULU PAINTS THE TOWN. I had gone to a little club with my lover at that time, Lee Majors, television's Six Million Dollar Man. Lee was always embarrassed by my drinking, and my pill use, and, of course, the cocaine, and also my taste in hustlers, and also the fact that I couldn't be left alone at a piano bar. So, of course, this club was a piano bar, and I was wasted on a cocktail of LSD and codeine that I call LISSYDEAN, and Lee had to go to the bathroom, and when he came back I was at the bar and I was singing. What was I singing?

(MUSIC comes on -- tinkly piano jazz.)

LULU

Hey, yeah! That's the music! And I was lying on top of the piano, topless, and I was improvising lyrics, and they went like this: *(Sings)* I'm too much goddamn woman / for just one goddamn man / give me a third or give me nothing / oh a fourth would be just grand / what's the point of being rich / but to pay off the newsmen / what's the point of being famous / if I can't have anyone anywhen / is that your pretty date there / well, I will have her too / It won't do to discriminate, you know / it absolutely utterly completely will not do! / Not for Lulu! / Not for Lulu! / Not for LUUUUULUUUU! *(Stops singing)* Well, as you can imagine, Lee Majors did not find this amusing. Bit of a spoilsport, Lee was, bit of a party pooper. This was before

LULU (CONTINUED)

Farrah, of course. So he just storms out, on my big night, and I go to chase him, and I'm running down Santa Monica, with just a tiny fox stole covering my ta-tas, and I don't find Lee, no I don't, do I? What do I find? I find you, Bumps. There under that overpass, your sleeve rolled up, shooting heroin, and oh my God, you were an angel then, not more than a child, a runaway. You had come to Hollywood, like all the beautiful runaways did, and you were doing every rotten thing that made you feel good, and I saw you then, your face slack, your eyes rolled up in your head from the sheer goddamn ecstasy of it all, and I knew -- you were the one. God, it's hard to believe that was just two years ago. *(Beat; confused)* Two years ago? That doesn't seem possible. Well, my sense of time was never all that good, and it never really mattered in Hollywood. Everything seems to happen all at once here anyway. That's what Cary Grant told me. He's the one who introduced me to acid, you know. We'd go out on his deck, just tripping balls, which he did because his shrink told him too, and we'd look at Hollywood sprawling out before us. And he told me that in Hollywood everything happens at all once, all of it at the same time. And I said FUCK YOU CARY THE LSD IS FUCKING YOU UP and he'd say TO HELL WITH LULU. Oh my God, he loved to say that. TO HELL WITH LULU. I never fucked him. I thought he was bent as an elbow. Turns out maybe he wasn't, so, my loss. What was I what was I what was talking about? *(Beat)* It came easy for you. I took you to two parties. TWO. And why? Why? I was inspired by Warhol who I called ass-hol. He was always dragging trash along to parties, because it would goose things up, and it amused him. He'd show up with these horrible hustlers on his arm, and they'd eat all the food and go through everybody's purses and leave with everybody's fur, but who could get mad about it, you know, it was Andy. So there you were, my own little junky, and so with me to parties you went. But there were no purses for you. No furs. No, just job offer after job offer after job offer. Modeling jobs. Screen tests. Two parties and you were off! It wasn't like that for me, no, you bet your life it wasn't. I actually went to acting school, you know. And my parents hated it. They were old money, you know, East Coast, and to them actors were nothing more than drug addicts and

LULU (CONTINUED)

prostitutes, which, of course, it turned out they were right about. I took Sandy Meisner's classes, which frankly I never understood, but they were awfully amusing. I remember we had to do an exercise where we did a physical action, some sort of action, something physical, an action, a physical action, don't you know, and our acting partner didn't any sort of a clue what the other was up to, but would have to just play the scene as though he knew. So I got out all my old furs and I just cut them up, and then I sewed them together using a knitting needle and pink yarn. And that's how I wore them from that point on, just wandering the streets of downtown Manhattan in these furs held together with pink yarn. That's how I met Andy. He saw me. He just thought it was the most fabulous thing ever, even if he never said it aloud, the fucking asshole. But, anyway, my point is that we had craft then, we studied our CRAFT, even if we didn't understand it, and God knows I didn't. Still don't! We were stars of the legitimate theater before we went on the Hollywood, and to movies, and to our millions. There were no shortcuts. Do you know how many awful experimental plays I did back then? Ugh, I had my clothes off more often than on when I was on the boards, reciting dreadful poetry or doing rambling hour-long monologues that never seemed to go anywhere and were set in some horrible Godot environment that was neither the world of the living nor the world of the dead. God those plays were portentous. PORTENTOUS! That's why they had my clothes off. Nobody could have stood watching them without seeing some flesh to pass the time. *(She looks at her clothes, starts to undress, thinks better of it.)* Anyway, as a result, there was a lot of crossover to porn -- there was pretty much a revolving door between the East Village theater scene and hardcore. Do you have any idea how many porn loops I made back in the 70s to make ends meet? We all did! Groucho Marx was down on his luck then, and I probably did five or six scenes with him, which was a pain, because that mustache was just greasepaint, and so you would wind up with your inner thighs just completely painted black for weeks. These weren't the kinds of things to show up under the counter in those horrible Times Square paperback novel stores either -- these were privately funded and privately traded, and

LULU (CONTINUED)

God help us if any of them see the light of day. They were still being made in the Eighties, and they still attracted the best talent, if they needed some quick work to pay off some tax debt or to pay the mortgage. Although the lighting was just ghastly then and it was all shot on video and was simply horrible. Budgets slashed. Standards fallen. Still, some good was done. I did two with Charo, which are worth tracking down if you can do it. She plays flamenco guitar. Orson Welles did a hideous series that was just surfer boys pissing on him. He was so drunk in them, he'd just stare at the camera and say OH SURFERS OH PRETTY BOYS. Still, he directed them himself, and there is some art to them. I understand they're still used in teaching advanced editing at USC.

(A DINGING NOISE. Lulu looks stage right, then looks at her number.)

LULU

Not my number yet. I may have gotten off-topic a little. Oof, poppers. They always make me so goddamn chatty. Gotta come down. I swear to god, I had Quaaludes in my purse. Did they roll under the car?

(She searches, finds pills bottle. She takes a handful, opens one of the liquor bottles, washes it down.)

LULU

Elvis used to warn me against this. Don't mix the pills and the booze, darling, he'd say. But fuck it. What's going to happen to me now? Overdose? I DON'T THINK SO. Maybe I'll see him soon. We did a movie together, you know. Never released. It was the only film of his the studio shelved. It was called MARS NEEDS ELVIS. I played a Martian. I was topless all the way through the movie, and painted gold. We had a fling. He was only interested in me when I was painted gold, but the paint gave us both horrible rashes. Still, it amused him. After we made love, he'd go find his gang, and he'd open his fly and whip out his ding dong, and

LULU (CONTINUED)

it would be bright gold. And he'd say, look, boys, I'm having it preserved for posterity. Then they'd go back behind his house and shoot holes in television sets, or whatever the hell he did with his time. Why am I telling you this, Bumps? Because you never seemed to respect me, you never respected the fact that I WAS SOMEBODY ONCE I WAS ON TOP I WAS AS BIG AS THEY GET and before you were ever even born, you little monster. You used to like to call me washed up, Bumpsy. Do you remember that? You'd say, go away, you washed up old hag, and take that horrible dog too! Well, you never had Elvis YOU NEVER HAD ELVIS. Although they say when you sleep with somebody you sleep with everybody that person has ever slept with, so I guess in a sense you've had Elvis, and we've both had Ann Margaret, although at different time, and I think, if we were to really look into people's sexual histories, there's a bit of Jacques Cousteau floating around there somewhere. God, now there was a man. You'd look around at a party, and everybody would just be so fucking boring, and then, suddenly, you would lock eyes on Jacques Cousteau, and you would think, this man swam with sharks. This man has looked a Great White in the eye and lived to tell about it. This man invented SCUBA gear. We actors think we're explorers, we think we're on the outer edges of human experience, but, oh my God, all we do is pretend to cry when, I don't know, the movie tells us our boyfriend spontaneously combusted or or or or Elvis died in space on his way back from Mars or whatever. But here is a man, here is Jacques Cousteau, and he has been further to stranger than any man on earth. He's the one who has seen the coral, and has talked with the dolphins, and has fought giant squid. And all of us, we think we're big shots, we think we're celebrities, but we're NOTHING NEXT TO THIS MAN. And that's a kind of sexy you and I will never be able to claim, Bumpsy, and that's what I wanted to tell you when I was on my way to see you tonight. I wanted to teach you some LIFE LESSONS, Bumpsy, because I learned them the hard way and, god damn it, you know I love you, and I don't want to see you come up as hard and as cruel as I did. This was a mission of mercy, Bumpsy, and you'll never know it, except for a faint tickle in the back of your head that you dreamed of a dead movie

LULU (CONTINUED)

star on her way to hell. Because there are only two sins, Bumpy -- to be boring or to be cruel. Well, you never were boring, but you never were kind either. NEVER. I made a list.

(She goes to the smashed car, digs around in it. Produces a notepad.)

LULU

Maybe the police will deliver this to you tomorrow. Maybe at least some of my message will get delivered. I made a list of how cruel you could be, so that you'll just have to face it, Bumpy, you'll just have to face your own horribleness. I don't know if it will stick. I don't know. Maybe you'll read this list and laugh. You'll see your awfulness and find it amusing. That would be just like you. But I want to get through to you, my darling. I mean, JESUS, how do you even live with yourself? Look at this list! It's an inventory of every limo driver, personal assistant, makeup person, gaffer, grip, best boy, and movie extra you were ever mean to. It goes on for hundreds of pages. God, I remember the first time I saw your capacity for cruelty. You had that punk band then, I SHIT ON YOU, which I have to admit is a great band name, and you were playing Johnny Depp's place on the Strip, and some people came running in and they were screaming RIVER PHOENIX IS DYING OUT HERE. And you took your guitar, and you went out, and you stood above him, and you just wrote a song, right there on the spot, called ONE LESS MOVIE STAR FOR ME TO WORRY ABOUT. I still remember that song.

(Punk music plays, Lulu sings.)

LULU

So you're pretty so you know how to act / I ain't gonna shed no tears after the fact / there's too many pretty boys standing in my way / one less pretty boy rules okay / I ain't gonna cry no I ain't gonna pout / You're one less movie star for me to worry about.

(Music stops.)

LULU

And everybody on that street corner was looking up at you and saying WHY WHY WHY ARE YOU SINGING THAT CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S DYING but you just kept playing, leaning over him, practically spitting the lyrics in his face. And we had just started going together then, and I saw you for the first time that night as you really are, not as some glorious beautiful junkie, but as a creature of fathomless ambition and bottomless heartlessness. I should have turned and walked away right then, but the truth is I was turned on by it. Cruelty is always exciting when it is directed at somebody else, and that Halloween night, 1993 ... *(Confused.)* 1993? But how old are you now? 22? We just had your 22nd birthday, I remember that. We had it at Canter's deli and everybody came, because it was also the night of the opening of that film you did with Spielberg in which you and Tom Cruise play a younger and older version of Joey Dellasandro. That was just a few nights ago, and that's when it all ended for us, because Tom Cruise called me your mom, and I guess it embarrassed you, because you wouldn't talk to me at all that night, and every time I said anything to you you said JEEZ and you said WILL YOU LAY OFF and you said CAN YOU GET THAT POODLE TO SHUT UP. Well, Fifi is shut up now, Bumps. You got your goddamn wish. No more yap yap yap. Not from the dog at least. I'm not going to shut up anytime soon, though. Not till they call my number, at least.

(A buzzer rings. Lulu looks at her corner, looks stage right, then shakes her head.)

LULU

Not this time. Not my number yet. You know, let me tell you of a terrible thing I did, Bumpsy, because I know I have been sounding judgmental, and that is not my intention in the absolute slightest. No, I speak from hard and bitter experience, from my own cruelty, and how I have lived with it. I remember years ago, Jesus, no, decades ago, after my first starring role in that horrible Ayn Rand musical that made millions of dollars,

LULU (CONTINUED)

ATLAS SINGS!, I remember the I was approached in the streets by some tiny little girl, some speck of a tiny dot of a child who was a fan of the movie, and she had her little autograph book in her hand, and she came up to me to ask me to sign. But I was just a little monster in those days, I was just taking any pill or snorting any powder I could find, and a friend had gotten me some sort of rhino tranquilizers, and, as you might guess, they were no fun at all. So this little girl comes up to me, and I'm lying on the ground near Sunset and Vine, just rolling in the street, and I could barely move. This little girl kneels down to me and says MISS LULU CAN I HAVE AN AUTOGRAPH. And I try to speak but all that comes out if, like, this BRAHHHH HRRMMM HAAAH HRRRMMM sound. And I clutch for the autograph book, but I have absolutely no control over my muscles, and I just smack this poor little girl in the face. And I try to apologize, really I do, but all that comes out is RRRAAAHH BRRAAAWW HHRRRRR BRMMMM, and this little girls, this tiny little thing, no bigger than a pencil eraser, cries and screams and runs away, and she leaves her autograph book. Later, when the rhino tranquilizers wear off, I look at the book, and do you know who the last person to sign it before me was? Roddy McDowall! Just the loveliest and most gracious and sweetest man in Hollywood. And I felt like such an ass, I felt so guilty. I called Roddy and we met on the set of EXPLOSION OF THE PLANET OF THE APES. He was in his ape suit, or his chimp suit, or whatever the hell they had him dressed like, but I could see his eyes, his compassionate eyes, and he gave me just the most wonderful advice. He told me I must always be on my best behavior around fans. ALWAYS. All they want to do is love me, and that's a sacred bond between performers and audiences, and without that, baby, you got nothing at all. What is an actor without an audience but a dream waiting for a dreamer? So I promised him. I said, Roddy, you gorgeous, sweet, sweet man, you monkey-suited saint. I will always treat my fans with the utmost respect, and he nodded and then he climbed a tree and ate a banana or something, I don't really remember. So I am passing this advice along to you, Bumps. You may not listen to a goddamn thing I say, but when Roddy McDowall says something, you goddamn well better listen. My only sadness at

LULU (CONTINUED)

this moment is that I won't be able to see him again. I'm sure he's not where I'm going. Him and Liz Taylor are up in heaven somewhere with National Velvet and Mickey Rooney, having some heavenly threesome, like they used to. (Beat) You know, my whole life I've been called a liar. And it was true, it was true, it was true. When I was a girl, I was a terrible liar. Why am I telling you this? I suppose you have to know what is false before I you can know what is truth, because otherwise you will disregard everything I have to say. You always have, Bumps. But there is value to lies, great, great value. It's the moment when we turn away from the world as it actually is and imagine it as we wish it to be, and there is no art without that. I learned to act as much from being a little liar as anything Sandy Meisner taught me, because, let's face it, I didn't understand a thing he taught me. I was running away to Manhattan every weekend starting when I was 14. You lie to your parents, you make it credible. I slept with my first boy when I was 15 -- some Yale boy who had a Village apartment and was like a revolving door for venereal diseases and was awfully mean to me. My parents never knew. They thought I was part of another world, a world of little girls who regularly spend weekends at each others' houses and going to soda fountains and whatever the fuck it was they thought little girls did. And I didn't know it then, but I was in training. I was in training to be an actress, and a great one, despite what you might think of me, Bumpsy. So yes, yes, you call me a liar. You tell me I just make up stuff, and sometimes I do. We were ENCOURAGED to do so when I was a girl. I learned it from Andy! He always told us that the newspeople will print anything you say, so say anything, so long as it is amusing. And that's what I have done my whole career, and I have done it the way a real liar does, by mixing truth with lies, the way the devil does, or the way he's supposed to, and I guess I can ask him soon. When you approach life like this, suddenly you're not some square, some goddamn bore with a house and a wife and a job and RESPONSIBILITIES. Suddenly your own life is your art, and it's collage -- a mix of everything, everything, everything, and the parts that don't interest you you can erase, and the parts that do you can expand and combine and it all

LULU (CONTINUED)

becomes fascinating. So yes, I lie, I'm an actress, we lie. But it's all in service to truth, Bumpsy, and the truth is this: There have been so many like you before, one after the other, these horrible little beauties that have come into my life, and used me up, and left me. Am I crying now? I'm crying, yes, finally, tears for you, but for them too, and for me. I was one of them once. I did my share of using. I have seen every single one of them that followed me turn into me, and I don't want that for you, Bumpsy. I never wanted that for you. I thought maybe once, ONCE, I could set up signposts along the route, and say, here, take care here, this is where I have gotten hurt, and this is where everybody else that has followed me has gotten hurt, and this is where you will get hurt, and where you will hurt others, if you don't take care, Bumpsy. This is the truth. These are the things I say that are true, and, oh god, how desperately I wanted to communicate them to you. But there are real roads in this world, not metaphorical ones, and there are real turns, and sometimes more than just feelings get hurt. So here I am, waiting for my moment in hell, trying to get that last message across to you, Bumpsy. I can see your eyes moving in your head, Bumpsy, I can see them spinning -- you're deep in the dream, and I am deep in you, and I want you to remember this, Bumps. Remember it. You will, I just know it. You will remember.

(A buzz. Lulu looks stage right. She turns back to face the audience.)

LULU

My number.

END SCENE

SCENE TWO

Setting: The set is now a bed. The best must be rigged so that it can rise and fall on its own.

At Rise: Our actress stands before it, fiddling with a video camera on a tripod.

Our actress is no longer Lulu. She is now BUMPS. She is dressed androgynously, in an oversized black suit and pink cravat, the whole of it self-decorated with safety pins and small illustrated buttons. She wears a razor blade around her neck as a necklace, and leather bondage straps on her arms as bracelets. Her hair is a mess, but deliberately so.

She turns on the camera and crosses to her bed, sitting and holding sides from a script.

BUMPS

All right, dialogue samples from SKINHEAD JUNK RIOT, as read by me, Bumps, as requested by my agent, Shondra Levy, with me reading the part of BAMF. *(Reading)* Oy wot gob on it innit FIGHT FIGHT FIGHT and we'll all of us scrum when West Ham gets peaky right and then innit time for us all to partake of the abbey habit the busters and be right chuffed about bombita wot OY OY OY ...

(The camera wobbles.)

BUMPS

Don't.

(It wobbles more.)

BUMPS

Seriously, don't.

(The camera tips over on its side.)

BUMPS

Fabulous. Thanks for that. I wasn't using that or anything. I really appreciate the interruption, because it's not like I needed to make that video or anything.

(SOUNDS: CRASHING.)

BUMPS

So this is how it's to be, is it? Oh, go ahead. I won't complain. Just knock shit over. Yeah, just knock it all down to the floor. This never grows even REMOTELY TIRESOME. What was that? A bunch of CDs? Yeah, no doubt, they're better off on the floor. And those books. They're definitely better with pages torn out.

(The bed rises with Bumps on it.)

BUMPS

Oh, and here we go. Up we go. I couldn't pop round to Disneyland this week. It's nice of you to turn my WHOLE FUCKING LIFE into the Space Mountain Rollercoaster.

(The bed lurches up and down. Then drops, selling on the floor again.)

BUMPS

Is that it then? Are you done with your tantrum? Can I get back to work then, or is there to be more?

(A notebook -- Lulu's notebook -- slides out from under the bed. Bumps glares at it.)

BUMPS

So that's it, you raving, psychotic hag? Is it to be storytime then? I didn't get enough of your lunatic ranting in life, is that right? Because that's what I loved most about you, and that's what I wanted to remember most. I'm so glad the cops brought this to me after your crack up on the side of the highway. I had thought you were just a bit balmy, but this revealed just how utterly and dangerously mad you actually were.

(The bed rises and falls repeatedly. Bumps hangs on, fearing she might be thrown off. The bed remains in the air.)

BUMPS

God, you're a bully. Can we make a compact? Can we reach an accord, you and me? If I read two pages from your book of bonkers, you'll let me be for the rest of the night, yeah? But you're going to have to let me respond. That's the deal. Otherwise I'm just going to let you do your worst. Go ahead and smash up this room. I'll just have it cleaned. Toss the bed around. Smash it to matchsticks. I can get another bed. But you're getting in the way of my work, which is not surprising, because, despite your endless blathering about craft, about an actor's craft, you really were better at fucking things up than making them work, weren't you? But I'm not you, and you're dead, and, believe it or not, I really do want to play a junkie skinhead, and so I would like A BIT OF PEACE IF IT IS NOT TOO MUCH TO ASK THANK YOU. So if we can agree to this little deal, just set the bed down gently, I'll grab the book, and we'll begin.

(The bed settles. Bumps inhales hard, then steps off the bed to retrieve the notebook. She opens it.)

BUMPS

So where were we when we last let off? Let's see. I remember us going over these pages, where you accuse me of beating a valet

BUMPS (CONTINUED)

with my belt. Which never happened. And this is familiar -- this is your story of how I set fire to Natalie Wood's house in revenge for her saying I would be prettier with a girl's haircut. Never mind that Natalie Wood drowned in 1981 and I was born in 1998. Oh, and I remember this story -- one of my favorites! You bought me a car and I immediately fled to Las Vegas in it with a gang of homeless teenagers, and you spent weeks in a panic looking for me. That story is true, except for one thing. You were along for the entire Vegas trip, bankrolled it, and got arrested in the pool of Ceasars for swimming around naked and screaming that you'd just had a massive homeless teenage boy orgy. Somehow that got left out of your retelling of the story. But that's all old news, isn't it? You want me to read something new, don't you? Let's find something new.

(Flipping through book) Yes, here we are. Entry 427. Let me read. I hope you don't mind if I impersonate you when I do, Lulu. It just doesn't sound right unless I'm reading it in your voice. *(Reading, impersonating Lulu)* This one pains me to tell you, it just absolutely pains me, Bumpsy, but you were just so utterly frightfully horribly cruel to me on Christmas, when I bought you that present. You're just so very hard to shop for, my darling, and I thought that I had gotten something you would really enjoy, but you just flew into an absolutely terrifying rage at my gift and sent me home, and me and Fifi had to spend Christmas alone, and how is that to treat a friend? *(Beat)* Well, by some miracle, we have a tale in this memory book of yours that is actually true. It's not some bizarre fabrication you glued together out of fragments of real experiences and ridiculous scenes you had with past lovers and lies you just make up on the spot about old celebrities. No, this actually happened to you and me. I notice there is something missing in this story, though, Lulu. Just a little detail you somehow managed to leave out. And that detail is precisely what the precious gift you shopped so carefully to get me was. How puzzling. Seems like an especially salient detail, yes? Do you remember, Lulu? It was an enormous painting, wasn't it? Of me. That thing must have been eight feet tall. And what was I doing? I was utterly naked, and I was lying down, my legs thrust into

BUMPS (CONTINUED)

the air, my fingers down on my genitalia, spreading my vulva. And if that were not grotesque enough, there, inside my vagina, what had you told the painter to put? What had you told him to put, Lulu? Come on, you can somehow cast yourself out of hell to torment me, surely you can answer! What had you told the painter to put? Your own face, yes, peeking out, with a big maniac grin, your arms bursting forth from inside me, like this:

(Bumps thrusts her hands up like a jazz dance move, smiling widely.)

BUMPS

TA-DA! *(Beat.)* I'm not that hard to shop for, Lulu. Despite your ongoing insistence that I am an idiot, I'm a bit of a reader. I'm a great one for a really interesting book. A nice scarf and I am grinning from ear to ear. A little tickle and a kiss on the cheek, I'm happy as a contented dog. But present me with an eight-foot tall painting of a 50-year-old woman bursting forth from my uterus like a newborn space alien doing a Bob Fosse dance routine, I'm not likely to react well, am I? So yes, you spent that Christmas alone, and I spent it drinking myself into a coma and taking an endless, obsessive series of scalding hot showers, screaming like Meryl Streep in *The China Syndrome*. Which I have seen, yes, and you were not in it, no, despite your repeated claims to the contrary. That was Cher, Lulu. It was Cher. Shall we continue? Shall we peruse another page, you daft poltergeist? Yes, let's. *(Reading, in Lulu's voice.)* Entry 428. I just broke down sobbing writing this one Bumpy. Just thinking about it made me absolutely well up with tears. You remember when you were in that awful homeless shelter, and they made you take the AIDS test. And you were just so frightened that you asked me to come along, because you had hustled for a while. And we sat together, waiting for your results, just holding each others hands. And then finally they called you in, and you tested negative, and I went to embrace you, because I was so absolutely thrilled. But you pushed me away, and you said this was the best news of all, because you wanted to fuck Don Knotts, and he won't touch anybody who isn't clean. *(Long beat.)* I would

BUMPS (CONTINUED)

like to think that if I had enough time, I could come up with an explanation to you about this. I mean, I could take it apart and find where the truth is in it. Yes, when we met I was in a homeless shelter. I imagine you did actually go with somebody to get their AIDS results, I imagine that is true, although it didn't happen with me. But Don Knotts? What sort of fevered brain invents that detail? Is there anybody on earth who doesn't think he was the sweetest, gentlest man. I met him just last year and was utterly charmed by him, just charmed -- and yet here you have him banging teenage whores if they test free of venereal disease. I'm sorry, Lulu, but that is legitimately deranged. I hesitate to soldier on, for fear of what I might read next, but we had an agreement. And so let's see what you have written for Entry 429. (*Reading, in Lulu's voice.*) Entry 429. (*Dropping Lulu's voice.*) You know, I'm not going to do your voice anymore. I was mocking you because I was angry, but now I feel that I am just being cruel to somebody who is ill, or at least was ill, or I guess still is ill, if ghosts can be ill. Anyway, I am not comfortable with that. If you don't mind, dead Lulu, I'll just do this one on my own voice. Entry 429. There were the betrayals, Bumpy. Again and again you broke my heart. I have listed all of them. There was the girl from the video store. There was the young woman you were in the shelter with. There was my friend Molly Quinn, who I never spoke to again. There was girl from the club that you carried on with for two weeks. There was your agent, Shondra Levy, who I introduced you to. There was that threeway you had with your two castmates the night your first movie ended. Oh, for fuck's sake, Lulu. For fuck's sake. There was the girl you met on Sunset Strip when you were both book shopping. There was your friend from high school that came out to visit. There was ... I'm going to stop, Lulu. How many pages does this list go on for? Two? Three. I didn't know you knew about all of these. I didn't know you had a goddamn list, for fuck's sake. This list. I tried to explain it to you. We talked about the fact that we never agreed to be exclusive. I don't know what else I could have said to make it clear. I really am very sorry it hurt you. I am just mortified that I wasn't more discreet. It was never my intention to throw

BUMPS (CONTINUED)

it in your face, Lulu. I did care about you, you know. I know you didn't believe that. I am sure you still don't. I was just another in a series of horrible beasts you fell for, and who shot past you and betrayed you, and whose dreams you haunt to this day. They've all gotten mashed together into some bizarre cartoon of Hollywood decadence in your addled brain. But look, look, listen, Lulu, I have a book of my own. Can we change the accord for tonight? Can we renegotiate our terms? Instead of me reading out loud this outlandish series of charges against me, can I read something to you? I don't know how to get an answer out of you, but I presume that if you are unhappy, you'll break something.

(Bumps leaves the stage. She returns with a different notebook.)

BUMPS

This is my diary, Lulu. Or one of them. I have a few hundred of these. I wrote everything down, from the moment I arrived until the night you died, and after that I just didn't feel like writing much of anything at all. I suppose I could read any of them to you, but I thought maybe this would be the best one, since it's from the night we met. Will you let me read it, Lulu? *(Opens book.)* August 2, 2008. Stayed out past curfew tonight, and I don't have many demerits left or I get kicked out of the shelter. But it was worth it. I met absolutely the maddest woman tonight, and I am utterly fascinated by her. She's an old movie star, or, at least, says she is, and she met me on Sunset Boulevard in an old disco outfit, complaining that Lee Majors had abandoned her. She was just smashed, and she wouldn't stop going on and on about how beautiful I am, and so she invited me out for drinks. I can't imagine how old she is -- to look at her, I would think she's in her 40s, but she claims to have come up in New York in the 70s, and been a Warhol superstar. She asked my story, and I told her about dropping out of school, and moving to Los Angeles, and running out of money. She asked me what I wanted to be, and I told her I'm a great reader, so maybe writing is for me, and she insisted that with my face, I should

BUMPS (CONTINUED)

be in the movies. So I will probably see her again. (*Stops reading.*) That's it. The night we met. Every time you tell the story, I'm shooting heroin, but I don't know who you're remembering when you tell that story. I've done heroin once, I smoked it, and I was with you, who gave it to me. (*Beat.*) I know I owe you a lot, Lulu. I owe you everything. It's true -- two parties, and suddenly I was out of the shelter and modeling, and I went from broke to rich overnight. I know it wouldn't have happened on its own, despite the fact that I tried to will it into happening, reciting phrases I had gotten out of self-help books like some sort of magic spell. They didn't help. You helped. You. That was a great thing you did for me. You changed my life forever. I do belong in movies. I do belong on magazine covers. I remember the first time I saw myself on the cover of *Elle*, I thought, that's where I was always supposed to be. I like the life. I like the perks. I like the parties. But, oh my God, Lulu, you lorded it over me. Suddenly it wasn't a kindness you had done a stranger, it was a debt I owed you. Obviously you were keeping track of every imagined slight, every time that debt came due and I failed to acknowledge it. So perhaps you can understand why I had to break it off with you. There's mad enough to be amusing, and then there is too mad to get a handle on, and you went from one to the other with terrifying speed. Or maybe you always were too mad, and I just didn't know it at first, because I was so young, and I was a little mad myself. And maybe I haven't been understanding what's going on here correctly. I have thought you were haunting me. But maybe this is something else. Maybe you're not in hell at all. Maybe you're in some sort of purgatory, and you can't move on until you confront me, and hear the truth of it. Well, this is the truth of it, Lulu. I hurt you, and I am sorry for it, but I didn't mean it. (*Beat.*) You're right, though. This is a funny town. Everything does happen here at the same time. I'm still homeless. I'm still with you. You're still with Groucho, or Charo, or Elvis, or Cary Grant. You're still dying inside your smashed car. You're still screaming at me at a party, and I'm still calling you old and telling you to leave. Every hurt we ever did is happening at this very moment, and also every decent

BUMPS (CONTINUED)

thing we ever did, and I guess there weren't many. I never knew why you called me stupid. It seemed unnecessarily cruel of you. I'm not stupid, I'm not some blank beauty without a thought in my head. I always assumed you treated me that way because you felt stupid so often, and were just projecting. There was so much you projected off on me. You always introduced me as being the lead singer of the band I SHIT ON YOU, but that was your band. I'd like to take credit for it, because it's a great band name, but it was you. So you made me cruel as a projection of your cruelty, and you made me a monster as a projection of your monstrosity, and you made me an idiot as a projection of your idiocy. That's what I thought. And then, the night you died, I was at Musso and Frank's reading a script, and Lee Majors sat down across from me. And I see what you saw in him. That's a very handsome man. And he just sat opposite me without asking permission, and he started singing to me. He sang:

(Singing.)

Andy saw me in a shopping mall / He said he liked the suburban sprawl / He told me that he'd been meaning to call / He said you know I like you best of them all.

(Stops singing.)

So, of course, I started to panic. I said LEE! LEE MAJORS! WHY ARE YOU SINGING TO ME, LEE MAJORS? But he just kept singing. He sang:

(Singing.)

Andy bought me a big diamond ring / He said it was the silliest thing / But he likes the pleasures silly things bring / And he said he like me most of them all

(Stops singing.)

And at this moment, I'm going out of my mind. I say LEE, I WAS A BIG FAN OF THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN WHICH I USED TO WATCH IN RERUNS, BUT HAVING YOU SING TO ME LIKE THIS IS TERRIFYING! And he reaches across and grabs my hand. And he says, don't be scared, Lulu. Don't you remember that was the song Andy wrote for you? And I say LEE MAJORS I AM NOT LULU. And he starts to cry, and then he says, yes you are. You're just like her. And I run out without paying my check, which, frankly, was a lot, because I had been drinking. So I sleep bad, and have strange

BUMPS (CONTINUED)

dreams of Lulu, a car, and fire. The next morning I go back to Musso and Franks and I pay what I owe, and I apologize, and I tell them that I got scared by Lee Majors. And the maitre d' looks odd, and he says, Lee Majors never comes in here, because this is where Farrah broke up with him. And I say, well, he was here yesterday, sitting in my booth. And the Maitre d' says, oh? I didn't see him. And I say WELL, HE WAS HERE. And as I'm leaving, I hear the Maitre d' say to a waiter, isn't it weird? Everybody lies about Lee Majors. (Beat.) When I got home, the police were there with news that you died, and they gave me the book that was in your smashed up car. And I cried for a while. And then I read your book, and I didn't understand it. So guess what I did, Lulu? I called him. That's right. I'm a big star now, and if you think I can't call Lee Majors, you're crazy. I got his number from my agent, and I called him. And I didn't know what to say, so I said, Mr. Majors, my name is Bumps, and we used to have a mutual friend. And I say, I don't know how to tell you this, but Lulu is dead. And he says, well, I never met the lady. But I'm awful sad to hear that she has died, because I was her biggest fan. (Beat.) I knew what he meant. I was your biggest fan too. What was I, after all, but somebody taken in by your fame, such as it was, and your glamor, such as it was? What was I, but the latest in your long series of fans? And what was it you always told me? We must always be on our best behavior around fans. We were never on our best behavior around each other, and maybe that's why we're haunting each other. It wasn't kind of me, and it wasn't smart, and I guess when it came to you, I was genuinely, undeniably stupid. Well, can we try to make a change? Can we try to have peace? Can you try to move on, and let me move on too? It's what I want, Lulu. I hope it's what you want too.

(Bumps' notebook falls from her hands, as though knocked out of it. Bumps picks the notebook up, opens it.)

BUMPS

Well, this is not very promising, Lulu. Not very promising at all. You seem somehow to have scribbled over every page of my journal in red ink.

(Bumps holds up the notebook.)

BUMPS

Is this your doing, then? You've written the word "lies" all over this page. And what's on the next page? *(Flips book.)* "Lies," you've written. "Lies" and "lies" and "lies" again. Page after page after page, Lulu. PAGE AFTER PAGE AFTER PAGE.

(The book drops again, as though struck.)

BUMPS

God damn it, Lulu!

(She leans down to pick the book up, pauses.)

BUMPS And what's this you've written on the last few pages? WHAT'S THIS, THEN, LULU?

(She holds one page up. In huge red letters, there are the words DON'T BE LIKE ME.)

Bumps turns the page. More huge letters, these spread across two pages, reading BEST OF LUCK WITH YOUR HORRIBLE CAREER.)

BUMPS

For fuck's sake, Lulu. Nobody likes an ambiguous ending. The lights better not go out.

LIGHTS GO OUT. END OF PLAY