

FLORA/HARRY I

22

FLORA, THE RED MENACE

HARRY. *(There is an awkward moment.)* You're—
—you're—welcome.

SECRETARY. Will you please leave?!

ARTISTS. *(They begin to get up and gather their things.)* Alright!
Okay.

FLORA. *(Harry begins to go.)* Hey, hey, hey—don't go. Hey!
Where are you going? Hey!

HARRY. Me?

FLORA. Yes, you—Harry.

HARRY. I've g-got an appointment.

FLORA. You've got time for a quick cup of coffee, don't you?

HARRY. With you.

FLORA. No. *(Referring to secretary.)* With her. Yes with me!

HARRY. Now?

FLORA. Now.

SECRETARY. NOW!

HARRY. I—I—I—uh

FLORA. I'll take that as a yes. *(To secretary.)* We're leaving.

SECRETARY. Good! *(The secretary leaves and takes the box of merchandise with the samples inside into Mr. Stanley's office.)*

FLORA. *(Calling out to her.)* Tell Mr. Stanley to give me a ring.
And that dress! *(To the artists.)* I wouldn't wear it to a shipwreck!
(She exits.)

[MUSIC #3a "KID" PLAYOFF/APPLES]

SCENE THREE

On the street, moments later

[MUSIC #3a APPLES (CON'T)]

APPLE SELLER. *(As the scene changes.)*

APPLES, APPLES

ONLY A NICKEL MISTER

HARRY. *(Entering, carrying his portfolio. He buys an apple.)*
Mister, an apple.

APPLE SELLER. Thanks, buddy.

HARRY. Sure thing. *(The apple seller exits.)*

FLORA. *(She rushes after him.)* Harry, that is the third secretary
and the third waiting room I've dealt with today. Sometimes I
think they must figure we've got nothing better to do than just sit
around. Isn't that true?

start
→

in
through

HARRY. Ya—uh—I—I

FLORA. I mean by the end of the day, I feel like a piece of furniture. Do you?

HARRY. Oh—I—uh

FLORA. Do I look like a piece of furniture?

HARRY. No.

FLORA. (*Momentarily at a loss for words.*) That's a SWELL hat you have on.

HARRY. Th-th-th

FLORA. Thank you?

HARRY. Thank you. I stammer.

FLORA. Oh. Who would notice! Not me!

HARRY. That's very nice of you to s-say that.

FLORA. (*Determined to continue the conversation.*) So Harry . . . you're an artist.

HARRY. Oh—well—(*He steps away.*)

FLORA. Well me too. At least I try to be. The last job I drew ads for a paper in Bayside. The Daily Journal. Do you know it?

HARRY. No.

FLORA. Well, the publisher didn't have any money so he used the barter system. Which would have been okay—but he owned a cemetary. I quit at seven plots.

HARRY. (*This touches something in him.*) You should have stood up for your rights. Organized a s-strike!

FLORA. (*He's finally talking.*) A strike?

HARRY. Yeah!

FLORA. Sure! A strike! (*She doesn't know what he is talking about.*)

HARRY. And g-gotten your money.

FLORA. Of course he didn't have any money.

HARRY. So—you could have g-gotten s-something.

FLORA. Right! Maybe more cemetary plots. I could have buried my whole family in a month.

HARRY. But something.

FLORA. Sure. (*She sees the point.*)

HARRY. You have to fight for what's fair.

FLORA. (*She becomes increasingly more determined and animated.*) Yeah! That's right. (*She swings her arms in the air, shadowboxing the world.*) No more cemetary plots!

HARRY. A-a-absolutely.

FLORA. No more waiting rooms. (*She swings her arms even more aggressively.*)

HARRY. Ya s-see that?

FLORA. No more polka-dotted SECRETARIES! (*She swings around and punches Harry right in the nose.*) Oh my god!

HARRY. Woah! Put those plots of yours to g-good use.

FLORA. Oh! I'm so sorry.

HARRY. It's not the first time.

FLORA. Look—we can get some ice at my studio. (*She goes through her bag to get a handkerchief.*)

HARRY. No! No! No, no, no. We don't have to g-g-go to your s-studio.

FLORA. It's just around the corner.

HARRY. No! I'm—ah—just fine. I'll j-just go on my way.

FLORA. (*She will not give in.*) Harry! Please. I insist. (*She picks up Harry's portfolio and book.*)

HARRY. Uh—I—uh

FLORA. "My studio." Doesn't that sound grand? It's nothing really. I mean, it IS something. But not THAT much something. It's just an old ballroom in the Hotel Sedgewick.

HARRY. Listen—

FLORA. I rent it out to different artists and at the end of the month—if everything comes out right—I make a little money.

HARRY. The collective cause.

FLORA. Of course, nothing has come out right. Yet. But it will. One of us has got to make some money. I mean, we're an odd bunch. [MUSIC #4 ONE GOOD BREAK] But we're kinda like family. ~~We might as well be—we practically LIVE in the studio. First off, there's Kenny and Maggie . . .~~

(Harry and Flora start to exit as Maggie comes onto the stage. Maggie flips a light switch and the wall sconces in the studio come on. She has just come in from outside and takes off her coat. Flora and Maggie's dialogue overlap. The underscoring for the song begins. Each of the speeches incorporated into the song is delivered directly to the audience.)

FLORA. Maggie ran a dance studio in Oklahoma until . . .

SCENE FOUR

The Studio

MAGGIE. (*overlapping with Flora's dialogue.*) I ran a dance studio in Oklahoma until one afternoon the whole place just blew

end—

AK

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