

AS GOOD AS IT GETS

As Carol passes Simon's door... stands in front of Melvin's apartment -- twists herself to ease nervousness and knocks on the door... then RINGS the BELL. Finally Carol hears MUFFLED THROAT CLEARING on the other side of the door.

CAROL

Uh, Udall?

MELVIN (O.S.)

Carol the waitress?

CAROL

Yes.

As we hear him unlock the door, Carol looks at her breasts and gasps. She grasps the fabric and holds it straight out just as Melvin opens the door. His hair is static city, standing on end as he periodically gives it self-conscious pats.

CAROL

The doctors had your billing address. I'm sorry about the hour.

MELVIN

I was working... can't you just drop me a thank-you note?

CAROL

That's not why I'm here...
(tearing suddenly)
... though you have no idea what it's like to have a real conversation with a doctor about Spencer...

MELVIN

(very uncomfortable)
Note. Put it in the note.

CAROL

Why did yo do this for me?

MELVIN

To get you back at work so you can wait on me.

CAROL

But you do have some idea how strange that sounds??? I'm worried that you did this because...

She pauses -- the beginning of an extraordinarily long silence. Finally.

MELVIN

You waiting for me to say
something?

(as she shakes her head)

What sort of thing do you want?
Look, I'll be at the restaurant
tomorrow.

CAROL

I don't think I can wait until
tomorrow. This needs clearing up.

MELVIN

What needs clearing up?

CAROL

(strong and true)

I'm not going to sleep with you.
I will never, ever sleep with you.
Never. Not ever.

Melvin's reaction? Well, he'll never get credit for the
brief but intense inner struggle -- the struggle not to
scream --

-- not to cry -- to process the sudden and stunning hurt
during his half turn away from her -- and then answer
hoarsely.

MELVIN

I'm sorry. We don't open for the
no-sex oaths until 9 a.m.

Carol is amused, surprised... maybe, in some small way
ever taken by his style... but top priority is clarity.

CAROL

I'm not kidding.

MELVIN

Okay!!!! Anything else?!?

CAROL

Just how grateful I am.

Her mission completed -- she turns.

MELVIN

So you'll be at work?

CAROL

Yes.

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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 50 or 60 percent of the time
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.