

BEING JOHN MALKOVICH

INT. THE STUCK PIG - NIGHT

Maxine sits at the bar, watching her watch. Craig rushes into the room, frantic, out of breath. He spots Maxine and plops himself next to her.

CRAIG

Made it. Maxine. Maxine, Maxine, Maxine.

MAXINE

Just.

CRAIG

Buy you a drink, Maxine?

MAXINE

You married?

CRAIG

Yeah. But enough about me.

Maxine laughs. The bartender approaches.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

What'll you have?

MAXINE

(to bartender) The usual, Barry.

CRAIG

(to bartender) I'll have, like, a beer. Like a Budweiser, or something.

The bartender walks away.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

I like you. I don't know what it is exactly.

MAXINE

My tits?

CRAIG

No, no, it's your energy or your attitude or the way you carry yourself or...

MAXINE

Christ, you're not a fag are you? Because I don't want to be wasting my time.

The drinks arrive. Maxine's is in an enormous fishbowl of a glass. It's bright blue, with fruit and marshmallows swimming in it. Paper umbrellas stick out of it, an plastic monkeys hang from the rim.

CRAIG

That's the usual?

MAXINE

Don't let the girly shit fool you. It'd blow your shorts off.

Maxine downs it like a shot of whiskey. She pushes the empty glass to the bartender.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Set me up again, Barry.

The bartender walks away with the empty glass.

CRAIG

I'm not a homosexual. I just like women for more than their bodies. I guess you could say I'm the new American male.

MAXINE

You're a fag or a liar.

CRAIG

(backpedaling)

I mean, I am really attracted to you.

MAXINE

(mocking) I mean, I am really attracted to you. Jesus, you are a fag. We can share recipes, if you like, Darlene.

Maxine gets up.

CRAIG

(at a loss) No, wait! I like your tits. (beat) I love your tits. I want to fuck you.

MAXINE

(sitting) Good. Now we're getting somewhere. (beat) Not a chance.

Maxine's second drink comes. She downs it, pushes the glass toward the bartender.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

So, tell me about yourself. If you can get your mind out of the gutter long enough, dog-boy.

CRAIG

Well, I'm a puppeteer...

The bartender comes back with Maxine's drink.

MAXINE

(to bartender) Check.

CRAIG

Don't you want to know what happened to me?

MAXINE

(considers) No.

Maxine heads for the door. Craig grabs her arm.

CRAIG

This is important!

MAXINE

(looking at his hand on her arm) It better be.

Craig sits Maxine down in a chair, lets go of her arm.

CRAIG

There's a tiny door in that empty office. It's a portal, Maxine. It takes you inside John Malkovich. You see the world through John Malkovich's eyes, then, after about fifteen minutes, you're spit out into a ditch on the side of The New Jersey Turnpike.

MAXINE

Sounds delightful. Who the fuck is John Malkovich?

CRAIG

He's an actor. One of the great American actors of the 20th century.

MAXINE

What's he been in?

CRAIG

Lots of things. He's very well respected. That jewel thief movie, for example. The point is that this is a very odd thing, supernatural, for lack of a better word. It raises all sorts of philosophical questions about the nature of self, about the existence of the soul. Am I me? Is Malkovich Malkovich? Was the Buddha right, is duality an illusion? Do you see what a can of worms this portal is? I don't think I can go on living my life as I have lived it. There's only one thing to do. Let's get married right away.

MAXINE

Is this Malkovich fellow appealing?

CRAIG

Yes, of course. He's a celebrity.

MAXINE

Good. We'll sell tickets.

CRAIG

Tickets to Malkovich?

MAXINE

Exactly. Two hundred dollars a pop.

CRAIG

But there's something profound here, Maxine, we can't exploit it.

MAXINE

Fine. I'll do it myself. I was going to offer a partnership to you, but this way it's more money for me.

CRAIG

You wanted to be partners with me?

MAXINE

(bored) Sure. It'd be fun.

CRAIG

(pleased) Really? (then:) But, Maxine, can of worms! End of the world! Illusory nature of existence!

MAXINE

I'll protect you, Dollface.

Maxine reaches over and squeezes his lips affectionately between her thumb and forefinger.

CRAIG

(in love) Oh. Maxine.

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(beat)

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(to bartender)

Check.