

MUSES

Written by

Jennifer Mulligan

Ottawa, Ontario
613 266 9511

FADE in:

OVER BLACK:

"Sometimes I'm terrified of my heart; of its constant hunger for whatever it wants. The way it stops and starts." -- Edgar Allen Poe.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Dim lights, and comfortable atmosphere. Not a pickup joint, not a dance club. Somewhere between. Regulars sit at the bar nursing drinks.

CLARICE, a studious 43, sits in the corner next to a fireplace. Her notes and papers are spread out. She's tapping away on a laptop.

SANDY, a cute, waif-like, waitress come over.

SANDY

Are you okay? You need some more coffee?

Clarice doesn't notice. She's got earbuds in.

Sandy touches her arm.

Clarice jumps off the chair and removes one earbud.

CLARICE

Jesus, you scared me.

SANDY

Sorry. Just wanted to see if you needed a refill.

Clarice looks at her cup. The coffee that was in it looks pretty dried up.

CLARICE

Sure.

Sandy begins to pour --

SANDY

Hard at work, I see.

CLARICE

Yeah, working to a deadline.

Sandy wipes down the table next to her.

SANDY

What's it like getting paid to make stuff up?

Clarice stifles a laugh.

CLARICE

It's the best thing ever.

Clarice goes back to her notes and her typing.

Sandy finishes up and clears some dirty dishes. She looks at Clarice, sideways, with a question on her lips.

She goes for it.

SANDY

Are you seeing anybody?

Claire looks up again. Personal, much?

CLARICE

No.

SANDY

I don't understand. I mean, you're in here all the time, alone.

Clarice winces, and Sandy off that look --

SANDY

I mean, no offense, but you should have some handsome, artistic guy, or girl, hanging off your arm. Just saying.

She senses that she's said too much. She picks up the dish bin and hurries away.

Clarice watches her go, a little wistful, puts her heads down and continues typing.

INT. CLARICE'S APARTMENT - LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Clarice is wrapped with blankets. She's watching Trailer Park Boys.

Her cellphone BEEPS. She picks it up.

A text message from LARA:

CALL ME. RIGHT AWAY.

Clarice hesitates and wraps the blankets a little closer.

She hits some buttons. She put it on speakerphone.

RING, RING.

LARA (O.S.)
Hello.

CLARICE
What's up?

LARA (O.S.)
Clarice. Fuck lady. What are you
doing tonight?

CLARICE
I have a date with three handsome,
slightly stoned and drunk men.

LARA (O.S.)
Ugh. Not that shit again.

Clarice mutes the TV.

LARA (O.S.)
I got something better. Get
dressed. We're going out.

CLARICE
No, I'm in for the night.

LARA (O.S.)
Look... Your vagina isn't getting
any younger. You need some action
and I have found your stunt man.

INT. FANCY UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Clarice is dolled up, as much as she could. Hair down, tight blouse and dress pants. Light makeup. She's actually a knock out. But subtle.

She takes out a compact and checks her teeth.

A trio walks through the door.

Lara, the big show in fur and diamonds, you wonder how her and Clarice are friends. She's flanked by two much younger bad ass dudes.

GRAHAM, all black, all bad. His face is partially tattooed. And, SLED, the leather jacketed punk with a mohawk.

Clarice gulps as she sees their reflection in the mirror.
Under dressed, much?

Lara walks up with the men. Clarice turns around in the
seat.

LARA
Clarice! So funny to run into you
here.

Lara winks and goes in for the kiss-kiss-kiss on the cheek.

CLARICE
Yes, because I'm always hanging out
here... Funny story...

LARA
Drinks? Let's get a table.

Clarice holds up her phone.

CLARICE
Actually, just got a call. My
great aunt has taken a turn for
the...worse...and --

Lara snarls, she leans in to Clarice.

LARA
Fuck off. I'm doing you a huge
favour. I'm getting you laid
tonight.

INT. FANCY UPSCALE RESTAURANT - PRIVATE AREA - NIGHT

A WAITRESS sets down the last drink, and Sled drops some cash
down. Lara and Graham are snuggly in the corner.

CLARICE
So, music producer?

SLED
Yeah, it's a pretty sweet gig.

CLARICE
I bet. Anyone I'd know?

SLED
No, mostly European metal.

CLARICE
Right. You said you were from
Sweden.

SLED
I'm working with the label that
Apocalyptica is on. Ever heard of
them?

Lara is alive in the corner, after all.

LARA
Fucking love those guys.
(she looks at Clarice)
I sent you some of their music.

Clarice chugs her drink to avoid talking.

Sled notices that she's avoiding him.

SLED
Did you like it?

CLARICE
(cornered)
I, um, I, don't really remember.

SLED
Right.

Clarice checks the time on her iPhone.

SLED
Got somewhere else to be,
beautiful?

CLARICE
Maybe.

SLED
You're wound up pretty tight...

Clarice glares at him.

CLARICE
What's that supposed to mean?
(realizes she probably is)
I've had a long day.

SLED
You didn't tell me what you do.

CLARICE
I'm a writer.

SLED
Anything I'd know.

LARA

Clarice has had a few short stories
in some magazines. She's working
on a novel.

CLARICE

And, apparently I have a PR Unit.

LARA

She also paints.

SLED

Me too... When I'm in town, I
crash at a friend's studio.

Clarice checks the time again.

LARA

You should go see some of his
stuff. Tonight.

Clarice snaps her head up.

Sled thinks that this is an awesome idea.

CLARICE

No.

LARA

Loosen up.

SLED

(smiling)

I'll be a gentleman.

EXT. FANCY UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Sled hails a cab. He opens the door for Clarice. She
accepts and steps in.

INT. LOFT STUDIO - NIGHT

Sled opens the door to the studio. It's large and spacious.
Windows that showcase the nightscape. Loungy. A separate
area is curtained off for a bedroom.

Clarice puts her purse down.

SLED

Drink?

CLARICE
Sure, what ya got?

SLED
Rye. Ginger ale.

CLARICE
Perfect.

Sled smiles and goes off to prepare the drinks.

Clarice looks at the paintings. She checks out one that is partially done. It's of a nude woman.

CLARICE
This one your's?

SLED
Yeah. You like it?

CLARICE
I do. An ex perhaps? A current?

SLED
She doesn't exist, really.

Clarice is confused.

Sled walks up, hands her a glass.

SLED
Only in my head. She's my
recurring dream girl.

CLARICE
Ah. A muse.

SLED
My ultimate lover. My only lover.
I create her and she's perfect
every time.

Clarice sips her drink, and is not lost on the comment. Did this guy just say that?

A softening. Sled notices his in.

SLED
Music?

CLARICE
You'd better choose. I likely don't
know anything you have.

Sled laughs.

SLED
I produce metal, but I do have some
other tastes.

He puts on some Jazz.

Clarice, again, confused.

CLARICE
So, you're really an old guy
trapped in a young guy's body?

Sled comes up to her. He raises his glass. They CLINK.

SLED
I had older parents. I'm European.
It helps.

He takes the glass from her hand and sets it down on the
drawing table.

He takes her hand in his. He puts another hand around her
waist and brings her in close.

Clarice doesn't resist, much. What the hell?

He goes in to kiss her. Stops just before he touches her
lips.

SLED
Lara tells me you haven't been with
anyone in a long time.

CLARICE
(amused)
She did, did she?

SLED
I asked her. I wanted to know who
I'd be seducing tonight.

Clarice is done. It must have been that last drink.

She kisses him. It's pretty hungry.

Clarice pulls back and bites her lower lip.

SLED
I don't want to fuck you.

Clarice is disappointed. Sled, off her reaction --

SLED

I want something better for you. I
want you to be my muse tonight. Be
the face of my lover. Love me
tonight.

She nods in agreement. He begins to unbutton her blouse.

INT. LARA'S APARTMENT - DAY

A cellphone vibrates on the counter.

Lara runs from another room, towel around her head, grasping
another towel around her body.

She picks it up.

A text:

CLARICE: YOU HOME?

Lara taps back:

YES

A second later, the phone rings. Lara puts it on speaker.

INT. LOFT STUDIO - MORNING - INTERCUT WITH LARA'S APARTMENT

Clarice is in bed, naked, wrapped in white cotton sheets.
Sled is asleep beside her.

CLARICE

Lara?

LARA

You dirty girl. Where are you?

CLARICE

Still at Sled's studio.

LARA

Good for you girl. Good for you!

CLARICE

Pretty amazing night.

LARA

You got sloshed, you got laid, it's
all good.

CLARICE

No better.

Clarice looks at the painting.

It's done. It has a face now. It's Clarice.

LARA

What? What's better than sex.

Clarice isn't answering. Sled's awake and his kisses are intoxicating.

CLARICE

Being the inspiration for someone's soul. That's what.

(beat)

I gotta go. I'm needed here.

Click.

Clarice crawls under the sheets.

FADE TO BLACK