

## AS GOOD AS IT GETS

CAROL

You look so s...

She stops herself from saying "sexy," gathers herself, then...

CAROL

You look great.

They arrive at the table. He holds out her chair for her.

CAROL

You wanna dance?

MELVIN

I've been thinking about that since you brought it up before.

CAROL

(rising)

And?

MELVIN

No...

(and before she can digest that)

... I don't get this place. They make me buy a new outfit but they let you in in a house dress. I don't get it.

ON CAROL

Melvin has no idea he has insulted her. Sandbagged in extreme, she gets up -- actually ready to leave.

MELVIN

No. Wait. What? Why? Where are you going? I didn't mean it. You gotta sit down. You can still give me the dirty look... just sit down and give it

to me.

CAROL

Melvin, pay me a compliment... I need one and quick... You have no idea how much what you just said hurt my feelings.

MELVIN

(really pissed,  
mutters)

That monominute someone gets that they need you they threaten to walk out. Never fails.

CAROL

That's not a compliment, Melvin... That's just trying to sound smart so I feel stupid... A compliment is something nice about somebody else... Now or never.

MELVIN

Okay.

He waves her down.

CAROL

(sitting)

And mean it...

MELVIN

Can we order first?

She thinks and then nods. The waiter is across the room. This does not stop Melvin.

MELVIN

(calling)

Two crab dinners and pitcher of cold beer.

(to Carol)

Baked or fries?

CAROL

Fries.

MELVIN

(calling)

One baked -- one fries.

STARTLED WAITER

(shouting back)

I'll tell your waiter.

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 in 50 or 60 percent of the cases  
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.

She moves in for the kiss. Their faces are close -- she looks at him... She closes her eyes -- her face moving toward him he is wide-eyed and afraid... His face almost moves away -- in a shot this close it's almost flight... But now his head moves back and he receives her kiss. It is brief. Carol smiles encouragement to him and herself. Melvin can't bear the pleasure.

MELVIN

You don't owe me that.

CAROL

That wasn't payment. When you first came into breakfast, when I saw you -- I thought you were handsome... Then, of course, you spoke... So now that your soft li'l underbelly is all exposed. Tell me, why did you bring me?

Melvin's voice is soft -- hesitant, okay, vulnerable... as he holds up his hands in a "stop" signal.

MELVIN

Well, ah... that's a personal question.

CAROL

Tell me even if you're scared.  
Tell me why you wanted me here.  
It's okay.

She kisses him again.

CAROL

If you ask me... I'll say, "yes."

MELVIN

(dissembling)

There are lots of reason... I had a thought that if you had sex with Simon it might...

CAROL

(humiliated)  
Sex with Simon?

MELVIN  
It's one idea...

CAROL  
That's why you brought me? Look  
at me! Is that really why you  
brought me... Like I'm a what and  
I owe you what?!

MELVIN  
I don't know why I brought you --  
that idea occurred to me is all...  
It came out first... Hey, you kiss  
him -- me... He says he loves  
you. You two hit it off. But you  
don't want to... fine... Forget  
what I said about sex with Simon.  
It was a mistake.

CAROL  
(wiping away tears)  
I'll never forget you said it.

MELVIN  
It was a mistake.