

BLONDE ON A BUM TRIP

by

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CHARACTERS

CANDY DARLING – a trans woman in her 20s; witty, sharp and theatrical, she carries herself with an aloof hauteur that both shields and hides deep wounds.

HOLLY WOODLAWN – a trans woman in her 20s; zany, warm and high-spirited, while a natural performer, she lacks her friends' deep ambitions.

JACKIE CURTIS – a gender fluid person in their 20s; charismatic, blunt and driven, their sharp-elbowed nature and prodigious drug intake sometimes hinder their pursuit of their goals.

Parts to be played by TWO additional actors, either male, female or nonbinary (in order of appearance) – PENNY ARCADE, REPORTER, ONDINE, PETER, JOHN, ANDY WARHOL, PAUL MORRISSEY, JOE DALLESANDRO, TRUMAN CAPOTE, ANDREA, PARTYGOER, FRAN LIEBOWITZ, ACTOR 1, ACTOR 2, PAT HACKETT, SUSAN, GEORGE CUKOR, WAITER, MAN, JEREMIAH, TAFFY

SETTING

New York's countercultural art scene, which briefly becomes a celebrity flashpoint. A mix of dingy self-destruction and glamour pervade the bars, theaters, art spaces and squats we follow the protagonists through.

TIME

The years 1967 to 1974.

Note: Jackie Curtis was, by all accounts was gender fluid, when that term was not understood. The play's characters use both "he/him" and "she/her" pronouns to describe Jackie in the play, as they did in Jackie's life.

PUNCTUATION NOTES

A stroke (/) marks the point of interruption in overlapping dialogue.

A dash (-) marks the halting of a thought.

Scene 1

HOLLY WOODLAWN and CANDY DARLING enter an apartment. Party chatter and a television are heard.

HOLLY

So we're, what, watching a Barbara Streisand special?

CANDY

Yes, "Color Me Barbara." Murray has a color tv.

HOLLY

(chuckles, ironic)

"Color Me Barbara." What a title. What else would we call / her?

CANDY

(firm)

Ms. Streisand is a star of stage and screen.

HOLLY

Yeah, I know.

CANDY

A special like this is a showcase for her . . . one of a kind essence.

HOLLY

(hiding annoyance)

Okay.

CANDY

Can I stay with you and George again? Tonight, I mean?

HOLLY

Um, sure.

CANDY

Thank you . . . I'd hate to go back to Long Island tonight.

HOLLY

I understand . . . he was a little upset last

time, though.

CANDY

Upset? About what?

HOLLY

Nothing big. He just mentioned that you used all the dishes without cleaning them, and ate a bunch of his food, and said you never seem to bathe.

CANDY

I bathe!

HOLLY

Right, I / know

CANDY

How rude.

HOLLY

I think he just meant you stayed with us for a week, and he didn't remember you taking a bath is / all

CANDY

That isn't a very gentlemanly thing to remark on, is it?

HOLLY

It's his place, you know? . . . I mean, we're together, so technically it's mine, too, but he's paying the rent, / so

CANDY

I take baths when no one's around, or when people are sleeping.

HOLLY

Huh? . . . Why / do you

CANDY

It isn't a spectator sport. I don't want people barging in, and –

(upset, embarrassed)

Seeing –

Candy glances down to her nether regions.

HOLLY

Oh, right . . . George is with me, so it's not like he's –

CANDY

Thank you for letting me stay.

HOLLY

Sure. Like I said, it's no / problem

CANDY

Barbara has that special quality. A lot of girls are talented, but only a true performer becomes transcendent, like Bette Davis, or Barbara.

HOLLY

(hiding boredom)

That's true.

CANDY

I believe if you're born with that gift, and you cultivate it, people take notice, don't you?

HOLLY

I keep mace in my bag for the types of people who notice us in this neighborhood.

CANDY

Of course, those qualities require . . . cultivation, but that's where girls like us have an edge. Everything we do is an act of creation, isn't it?

HOLLY

Huh? Hormone shots and tucking?

CANDY

Did I ever tell you that when I was a child I wrote to Kim Novak and asked for an autographed / picture?

HOLLY

Yes, many / times

CANDY

Well, when that photo came, I must have stared at it, uninterrupted, for an entire day. I just knew that what she did was what I was going to do, as well.

JACKIE CURTIS enters, in men's clothes, and crosses to the pair, seemingly struck by their appearances.

JACKIE

Hi. I'm Jackie.

CANDY

Hello. I'm Candy and this is Holly.

JACKIE

Nice to meet you. Are you two here for the special?

HOLLY

Yes.

CANDY

I wouldn't miss it.

JACKIE

I know. I met Barbara when I was a kid.

HOLLY

Really?

JACKIE

Oh yeah. I had my picture in the paper shaking her hand and everything.

CANDY

(intrigued)

You were in the paper?

JACKIE

Sure. Plenty of times . . . You know, Barbara is a real star. Some girls get a few breaks, but stars like her have that indefinable sparkle.

CANDY

I was just telling Holly that, wasn't I?

HOLLY

Yes . . . at great length, in / fact

JACKIE

I act and write plays myself. Experimental stuff.

CANDY

You do?

JACKIE

(nods)

I was just in a show at La Mana. Ms. Nefrititi Regrets. It was alright. The actress, Bette Midler, got all the good lines, though.

CANDY

I see –

(probing)

And do you want to be an actress?

JACKIE

(bashful)

I've done drag before with my friend.

HOLLY

Candy and I are on hormones.

JACKIE

(nervous)

Oh. How's that?

CANDY

It's great if you're tired of being called "faggot" and getting arrested for impersonating women.

JACKIE

I could see that.

HOLLY

I couldn't grow breasts without them.

JACKIE

Right . . . some days I wake up and I want to look like this, and others I –

CANDY

Did you say you wrote plays?

JACKIE

Yeah. My new show Glamour, Glory and Gold is going up soon. It's going to be big.

CANDY

Did I mention I'm an actress?

JACKIE

You are?

CANDY

Yes.

(theatrical)

I want to live, mother. Do you understand? I've got so much more to offer this crazy world.

(as self)

Barbara Stanwyck.

JACKIE

That's good . . . do you two ever go to Max's?

CANDY

From time to time.

HOLLY

They have a free buffet.

CANDY

Why do you ask?

JACKIE

I'm there a lot. It's where you can see Andy Warhol. If anybody can make you famous, it's him.

CANDY

Where will your play be staged?

JACKIE

We're still setting that up.

(glances offstage)

We should probably go if we want a good spot,
The show's starting soon.

Jackie exits toward the tv. Holly begins to follow, but Candy stops her.

CANDY

Did you hear what Jackie said? I've got to get
myself cast in Glamour, Glory and Gold.

HOLLY

Jackie's play? Why?

CANDY

Well, he's obviously good at publicity, since
he's been in the paper. Plus, it's a chance to
be seen by Andy Warhol.

HOLLY

Andy Warhol?

CANDY

Sure – don't you know anything? Andy
Warhol makes people superstars.

HOLLY

Yes, I "know" things. I just don't know why
you think being in Jackie's "experimental"
play is going to make you the next Kim
Novak.

CANDY

I'm going to start hanging around Max's. That
way I can casually see Jackie and ask about
the production. He seems pretty intrigued
by girls like us . . . I'll help him out, and he can
help me.

HOLLY

I guess . . . I mean if that's really what you –

Candy, not listening to Holly, crosses toward the tv and exits.

HOLLY

Hey, wait –

Holly exits, as well.

Scene 2

Jackie and Candy stand on a theater stage, off-off-Broadway. Jackie wears women's clothes and makeup. Candy has dyed her hair platinum. PENNY ARCADE approaches him in a rush.

PENNY

There's a reporter here from Gay / Power

JACKIE

Good. I thought that son of a bitch would never get –

(to Candy)

Did you see the piece in the Village Voice? I told you the photos would be amazing.

CANDY

All my photos are . . . Did Andy say he's coming yet?

JACKIE

I'm working on it.

(to Penny)

Tell him he can come back.

(confidential)

Is he, you know, worth looking at?

PENNY

He's not un-handsome.

JACKIE

"No un-"? It doesn't matter. I'm too busy anyway.

Penny exits toward the lobby.

CANDY

Do you sleep with gay men?

JACKIE

Me? I guess.

CANDY

I don't. Psychologically, I'm a woman.

JACKIE

I guess that makes sense.

CANDY

I go to bars full of men I don't want, and the ones I do . . . don't always like what they learn when we're exploring one another.

JACKIE

My relationships are about as long as a cigarette break.

CANDY

Holly's been with a man almost two years. They live together.

JACKIE

She was that friend you were with at the party?

CANDY

I've known her awhile.

JACKIE

Does she like acting?

CANDY

She isn't serious about it . . . her boyfriend wants her to get "the operation."

JACKIE

Is she going to?

CANDY

She's considering it.

JACKIE

What about you? Are you interested in getting the chop?

CANDY

That depends.

JACKIE

On what?

CANDY

Well, when I picture myself as a wealthy woman in the Connecticut suburbs with a husband and kids, yes. But when I think about –

Penny enters with the REPORTER, who Candy approaches with regal charm.

CANDY

Welcome. I hope you didn't have trouble finding us.

Jackie crosses to them with urgency.

REPORTER

No, not / at all

JACKIE

We're glad you could come. It's Lenny, right?

REPORTER

Yes, / Lenny

JACKIE

Great. I'm Jackie Curtis. I wrote Glamour, Glory and Gold. I act in it, as well.

REPORTER

It's good to / meet you

CANDY

And I'm Candy Darling. I'm being called an ingenue, but I'm really more of a leading lady.

REPORTER

It's a / pleasure

JACKIE

This is a cover story, right? When will it run? We open in a week?

REPORTER

It should come out next Thursday.