

Silent film

The Way to Oz

By Mihaela Iancu

September 23, 2010

When the Ford stopped on the other side of the road, Eric was at his fourth cigarette. He was sitting on the bench, behind the children's playground, under one of the street lamps.

A few steps away, there was a non-stop shop, from where he had bought earlier, for the second time that day, a pack of Marlboro.

Two men got out of the car, from the front seats, and a woman got out from the back seat on the right side.

The driver closed the door, and then pulled up his trousers by the belt, all over his belly. He looked to the left, then to the right, got round the car and then on the sidewalk. The other man had already opened a can.

It didn't look like beer. Eric didn't recognize the brand. It probably was an energy drink.

He took the can to his mouth often. He wore a leather jacket and a green T-shirt underneath. His hair was cut short, he was shaven, and had a bony face. Eric was picturing him with a strong jaw and a perfect nose. He was sure that he was a handsome man. Tall, one head and a half taller than the woman standing on his left.

She was wearing a short, tight fitting, blue dress. She had some gorgeous hips. There is no way she was a whore. She was holding her hands in the pockets of her coat and kept lowering her gaze. She must have been playing with something.

There was some distance between her and the man in the leather jacket.

The man with the paunch stopped next to her shoulder. He said something to the other one. The woman laughed.

It was past midnight, but the cars were still speeding along the boulevard. Eric could hear nothing of what they were saying. He puffed on his cigarette again.

The woman took her coat, opened the rear door and threw it on the seat. After that, she returned to the same spot and pulled her sleeves up, revealing half of her forearms.

The man standing near her went to the back of the car. He opened the trunk. He took two boxes out of it, and then closed it. He gave her one.

From time to time, she was looking at the man in the leather jacket. The men were talking to each other. The woman didn't say a word.

She untied her black hair and ran her fingers through it. The man in the leather jacket walked in her direction, then she took a step backwards, but he suddenly turned left. He took a few more steps until he got to a trash can, in which he threw the box.

The trash can was inside the yard of a hotel. It wrote, in bright neon, White Horses, four stars. Inside the wing of the building meant for the rooms, some lights were turned on, but there was no silhouette at the windows.

On the second floor, there was a bar, or maybe a coffee lounge. Eric counts, through the glass walls, eleven people scattered around the room, most of them gathered around the piano which had no one playing. He brought the cigarette to his mouth and drew a deep smoke. His fingers heated up and then he noticed he had long ago reached the filter. He took another one out.

The woman was leaning against the trunk, her hands and ankles crossed together. In front of her, the man who had earlier given her the energy drink, was talking to her while stroking, every now and then, his scruff, from the bottom to the top. She nodded. She didn't agree.

She sat on the car, her soles above the ground. The man in the leather jacket opened the front door, brought his palms to his back and got his head inside.

The woman hit the car body twice, irritated. The man in front of her took her by the shoulders, said something and touched her cheek a few times. After that, he got inside the car and slammed the door behind him.

The woman took off her shoes one by one and put them next to her, on the trunk. The man in the leather jacket left the door open and came in front of her. He took off his jacket. He put it over her shoulders. They stayed like that for a few seconds.

Then the woman turned her head to the right as if she were waiting for a sound. She told the man something. He slapped the trunk a few times. They both laughed soundly. He cupped his hands to his mouth and shouted something to the one inside the car.

She then jumped off the trunk, barefoot. He offered his arm as support while she was putting her shoes back on. Then he grabbed her by the waist and kissed her.

The other man got out from the front seat. He had his collar up. He buttoned his last two top buttons, then pulled the red tie out of his pocket and tied it around his neck. He headed towards the other two.

The woman kissed the bony faced man one more time, shortly, on her tiptoes, then tore her arms away from him and turned to the other man.

She said something to him, he shrugged and let her finish his tie knot.

The tall man got closer to her and restrained her hands gently, in the hold of his leather jacket, which still covered her back and enclosed her like inside a shell.

Eric took his phone out of the pocket of his pants and made a call.

“Angy? Were you sleeping?”

“Eric?”

He had woken her up.

“What’s the matter? What time is it?”

You could hear something fall, then the alarm clock, then silence.

“Damn it. It’s past three and a half. Is something wrong?”

“No.”

He opened the pack of cigarettes, then closed it. Once. Twice.

“I just wanted to tell you I really care about you.”

He looked to the street. The three had disappeared.

“Angy? Are you still there?”

“I love you too, Eric.”

“Good. Now go back to sleep.”

“Good night.”

“Good night, Angy. I’ll be waiting for you tomorrow.”

Translated by: **Iulia Anca Toma** and **Mădălina-Ioana Borcău**

MTTLC, Bucharest University

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