

White Palace - After the wedding scene, backyard

MAX(calls out)

Nora...?

Nora, where are you...?

NORA

Out here

red glow of a cigarette arcs up through the darkness, then flares brighter as Nora drags on it. She's lying on a lawn chair, facing away from him. She hugs a frayed monkey doll tightly to her chest. There's a vodka bottle to her foot.

NORA

Dark enough for you in there?

MAX

What happened?

NORA

,Lectricity is out

MAX

How come?

NORA

Cause I didn't pay the bill, that's how come.
Three months overdue.

MAX

Oh Jesus, Nora

NORA

Poor people are a hoot, aren't they?

MAX

Nora, why didn't you say something?
I would've given you - a loan or something

NORA (fiercly)

I don't need your charity or anybody else's.
I'm doing just fine, thank you.

MAX

Oh yeah, this is „doin' fine“. „Doin' great“ is
when they kick you out of your house.

NORA (abruptly)

Have a nice time at the wedding, Max? --
Yeah, that's right. Think hard. I saw the invite at your apartment.
Why'd you lie to me? Are you going out with someone else...?
Some college girl, huh, Max?
Somebody nice and pretty that likes „Spaghetti Carbonara“?

MAX (angrily)

There's no other woman, Nora. I almost wish there were,
sometimes.
Jesus! Everything was so - so clear before I met you. I mean,
my life was lousy, but at least it was clear. Everything was in it's
place...and now nothing is!
Some of my oldest friends were at the wedding today, and they
looked like strangers to me... I sit at my desk, at work, and I
can't even think straight...!
I don't know what's happening to me, Nora.
All I know is, no woman ever made me feel the way you do. Not
even my wife.

NORA (frightened)

Don't say that. How can you say that?

MAX

It's true, Nora. - I love you.

NORA

Oh Jesus, Max. ..You can't say that.
You can't say that to me if you don't really mean it.
Words like that can kill a person.

MAX

But I did say it! I do mean it.

NORA

Are you drunk? Are you crazy?

MAX

I don't know what I am, anymore.
Nora, look at me...!

*he kneels by her chair, takes her face into his hands and kisses her passionately.
She pushes him away, near tears.*

MAX (cond)

I love you. And I know you love me, too.
To hell with everything else.

NORA

Max, if you love me, then why did you
lie to me about this wedding, huh?

MAX (uneasily)

Nora, look - it's just -(he hesitates)
Have you ever been to a Jewish wedding...?
Okay, well, lemme tell you, compared to those yentas,
Perry Mason is still in law school.
„When's the big day, dear?“
„Isn't it about time you two thought about a family, dear?“
„And when are you converting, dear?“

NORA

Well, hell, every wedding is like that. Jewish or not.

MAX (improvising)

I just thought - it's not fair to put you through that, right now.
So, so I decided it was better if I didn't even mention the wedding.
I know now that was wrong, Nora...I'm sorry.
Can you forgive me?

NORA

One thing I can't abide is being lied to. Hell, I'd rather
have a man beat up on me than lie to me. Bruises will heal...
I trusted you, Max.

MAX

Nora, I said I was sorry...I said that I love you.
I wish you'd say you forgive me.

NORA

I forgive you once, Max...
But I'll be damned if I forgive you twice.

