

Green

by

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FADE IN:

INT. CAB - NIGHT

It pulls up to park in a posh suburban street. An Incredible Hulk action figure swings below the rear view.

GILBY (40s) slouches in the driver's seat. Chubby, bald on top, amiable features. Flicks cigarette ash out the window. Beeps the horn twice. Checks his watch, tuts.

GILBY

Come on.

The squeak of a gate makes him look right.

GILBY

Ooh la la.

He throws his cigarette butt out the window. Hurriedly fixes his hair in the rear view.

An elegantly dressed woman in her fifties gets in the back. This is ROSIE. She's turned heads all her life - still does. Her jet black hair is slicked straight back.

GILBY

Evenin', gorgeous.

Rosie responds with a tiny smile.

GILBY

Where to, luv?

ROSIE

The Gallows Club, off Belmont. If you could you hurry please, I'm a little late.

Her accent could cut glass.

The cab sets off. Gilby eyes her in the mirror.

GILBY

No problem. Have you there in no time, luv.

ROSIE

Please don't call me that. I find it... unbecoming.

He grunts an acknowledgement. Screws another cigarette between his lips.

GILBY

Don't mind, do you lu..

Bites his lip just in time. The cigarette catches her eye. Looks at it with longing.

ROSIE
Isn't smoking banned in taxis?

GILBY
Not in this one it isn't. Nobody's too bothered, long as you don't blow it in their faces.

ROSIE
I see. In that case, feel free.

He lights up. Rosie inhales deep through her nose as smoke wafts her way.

ROSIE
Um, I hate to ask, but do you think I could possibly have one of those?

GILBY
You wanna fag? Yeah sure. Long as you don't burn the seats.

He throws a cigarette back to her. She catches it with a giggle. He holds out a lighter. As she takes it her fingers touch his - for the briefest of moments.

Gilby's eyes widen.

ROSIE
Very decent of you.

She lights up, like a kid in a playground. Passes the lighter back to him.

ROSIE
Most kind.

Gilby nods. A wide grin blossoms on his face.

The cab stops at lights. Rosie sucks on her cigarette, leaving smudges of red lipstick around its filter.

ROSIE
My, still tastes exceptional. I feel a little light-headed.

GILBY
Gave up, did you?

ROSIE
Almost five years now, apart from the occasional...

GILBY

What do you do you then, luv? If you don't mind me askin'?

She peers out the window. The traffic lights change. She focuses on the green light as the cab sets off.

ROSIE

I don't mind you asking. However I do mind being addressed as luv. Consider your tip forfeit if you don't refrain further.

GILBY

Oh yeah, right. Sorry 'bout that. Force of habit. Name's Gilby, by the way.

ROSIE

Unusual, quite nice. Suits you. My name is Rosie. Very pleased to meet you, Gilby.

He looks in the mirror to see Rosie doing a little wave.

GILBY

Feeling's mutual, lu... Nearly, so what's it you do then, to keep wolf from door?

ROSIE

I'm sorry?

GILBY

I mean for work, y'know.

ROSIE

For my sins, I'm an art critic.

GILBY

You mean like a writer? For who?

ROSIE

You mean 'for whom'.

GILBY

I'm not sure I do.

ROSIE

Trust me, I'm a professor. I'm also a freelancer. So I'll write for anybody. Within reason, naturally.

GILBY

So you write reviews about all those turds and dead animal thingies. And halls filled with rice grains then?

ROSIE

In a way, I suppose you could put it like that. I take it you're not an art lover.

GILBY

Au contraire, my dear. I adore art. Most of it anyway. I been to all the Tates, and the Louvre. I went the... oh you know, in Madrid. They've got those Bosch triptychs...

ROSIE

The Prado.

GILBY

That's the jobby. It was great. Goya, what a guy. Dark but deep.

ROSIE

You're an admirer of the old masters rather than the new.

GILBY

Long as you put 'bates' after new masters. Wouldn't surprise me if the exhibited that either.

Rosie giggles despite herself. She coughs to stop.

GILBY

At the Prado I saw the real stuff. Those triptychs, now that boy had skill, and a hell of an imagination.

ROSIE

Indeed. Quite literally. So you may have you heard of Hughdy P. Delancey?

GILBY

Hmm, sounds a bit paddy mick to me. Should I have? Obviously. Hang on, a bell dings in the distance. The green guy, right? Isn't he the one who lives in a shed with a goat?

ROSIE

He's Irish. You really shouldn't read the tabloids, Gilby. They're somewhat perverse in their outlooks. He's a recluse, and so the rumours abound. But he's meant to be there in person tonight. I'll believe it when I see it.

GILBY

I heard he was in court a while
back about copyright or something.

ROSIE

He trademarked a certain shade of
green. Definitive colour
coordinates.

(a ringtone sounds)

Excuse me.

She takes out her phone. Gilby coughs as Rosie speaks perfect German into it. She laughs loudly, pauses.

ROSIE

Gilby, could you pick me up later?

GILBY

Love to, be a pleasure.

He pulls a card from a dispenser on the dash, passes it back to her. She handbags it with a smile.

EXT. BELMONT STREET - NIGHT

The cab rolls in and almost stops as hundreds of people mill. Gilby gawks with astonishment at the crowds.

GILBY

It's like Glastonbury in June.

The crowd slowly parts to allow the cab to proceed.

EXT. THE GALLOWS CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

A huge green neon sign above the door declares Hughdy P. Delancey in fancy lettering.

GILBY

Why's it called the Gallows club?

ROSIE

Everything inside has been hung.
They did actually hang people here,
in the old days.

GILBY

Like when Thatcher was in power?

Long green banners hang from high above the entrance.

Rosie ignores Gilby's gag, much to his displeasure.

Two burly bouncers check invites from 'the beautiful people' queueing - long, well dressed and patient.

INT. CAB

GILBY

That'll be twelve twenty please.

Rosie leans forward to give him a twenty pound note. He reaches into his pockets.

ROSIE

No. That's all yours. You were a little uncouth, but enjoyable company nevertheless. I'll phone you when I'm ready to leave.

GILBY

Thanks muchly. A pleasure, luv. Oh, sorry.

The cab pulls up adjacent to the main entrance. Rosie exits, a slight smile on her lips. She takes out her phone.

GILBY

Now that's my type o' woman.

Gilby drives away.

EXT. CAB

Rosie babbles Spanish into her phone.

A ratty-faced man in his twenties and an ill-fitting tuxedo rushes towards her. - JACOB. He follows her to the entrance.

JACOB

I was getting worried. Where have you been, Rosie?

ROSIE

Jacob, do I pay you to worry? And we're not friends, remember? Especially not in public.

JACOB

No, Miss Kael.

ROSIE

So, do what I pay you for. What's happening?

They flash press passes to the bouncers as they wander in. The queue protests, but only with dirty looks and moans.

Rosie and Jacob enter the -

RECEPTION ROOM

The entire decor is a distinctive shade of green, as is the carpet. Well-dressed beautiful types congregate and yap.

Dwarves, dressed completely in green, serve snacks and drinks. Each wears a different style of hat.

A band of green clad musicians quietly perform green themed old songs on a small stage.

Art and huge photographs decorate the walls. Sequences depict beautiful naked models covered in green paint. They then show show them being rolled over blank canvases. Each sequence ends with the canvas.

Rosie and Jacob stroll beside long tables filled with food and drink.

JACOB

He's not here yet. Everyone else is though.

ROSIE

Did I miss anything?

JACOB

Well no but...

ROSIE

So why the admonishment? Learn your place, young man. Hello Fabien.

Jacob scurries away.

Fabien (50s) approaches with a strut. He's tall, blond and handsome. Unfortunately his hands are the size of shovels. His eyes are slightly out of sync with each other too.

Fabien more than compensates for this with an abundance of self confidence. He kisses Rosie on both cheeks - Eurostyle.

FABIEN

(heavy French accent)
Fashionably late, mon amie, as ever. Always with the style.

ROSIE

One tries one's best. Any signs of the man himself yet?

FABIEN

Only via colour. I feel like I'm at some tree hugging conference. Other colours are available.

He glances around at the crowd.

FABIEN

Green everywhere. All we need now are passionate mullets with check shirts.

ROSIE

Oh Fabie baby, it's Hughdy! We used to dream of occasions like this, way back when we were poor scruffy students. The man's a mad genius.

FABIEN

I do not disagree for a moment. But he is absent as usual and it is well over a decade since we cared. He could have his staff doing all this while he counts his money from one rubbish skip to another.

They grab glasses of wine from a passing dwarf.

FABIEN

He could be long dead for all we know.

ROSIE

Oh please. He'll be here, somewhere. He's here in spirit at least. Would you even know if you saw him?

They scan the crowd. Rosie takes a big swig from her glass.

FABIEN

I would. He'll still have those elephant ears of his. All this green is making me feel like I'm seasick. I always preferred Cornelius. His models were délicieux.

ROSIE

Pervert. You and him both.

LATER

The tables are almost empty. The dwarves clear away glasses and empty plates.

Fabien and Rosie sip from large wine glasses.

FABIEN

They remind me of ill smurfs. What is the time?

ROSIE
Time for the toilet. Have you seen
any around here?

FABIEN
(shakes his head)
They told me it was a plumbing
problem. Rather ironic for a show
called 'Liquid'.

ROSIE
I heard it was called 'Internal'.
Does your phone work yet?

Fabien shakes his head as he shrugs.

FABIEN
They should call it 'A Waste Of
Your Precious Time'. I know what
it'll be called in the reviews
tomorrow... 'Deathly Dull'. What
time is it?

The crowd mill about with boredom. Rosie checks her phone.

ROSIE
Half twelve. Three hours. I'm
absolutely famished.

FABIEN
And almost loaded. You should have
had some food with your wine. Three
hours we'll never get back.

She spots Jacob, grabs him.

ROSIE
Why are we still waiting?

JACOB
His PR said it should be starting
any minute.

FABIEN
She told me exactly the same thing
an hour ago.

An inconspicuous CCTV camera zooms in on them.

INT. SECURITY ROOM

A black and white monitor picture zooms in on Rosie.

HUGHDY (O.S.)
(heavy Irish accent)
I think they've waited about long
enough.

A man's finger presses a red button on an intercom system.

HUGHDY (O.S.)
Showtime.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM

The dwarf waiters place fingers to their earpieces.

They whisper to each other as they assemble at one end of the room. The band stop playing. They pack up their equipment.

The crowd watch the dwarves form a line against a wall. Behind them a door opens. An attractive young woman in a dark red designer dress enters. This is SARAH. A hush falls.

SARAH
Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to
the first Hughdy P. Delancey show
for over fifteen years. My
apologies for the delay, and my
thanks to each of you for your
patience.

A brief smattering of applause.

SARAH
The show is about to commence. As
your name is called please step
forward. Norma Joan Brown.

NORMA steps forward. She's small and in her sixties. She adjusts her huge spectacles.

SARAH
Fredo Bulsara.

FREDO grins as he joins Norma. He's in his twenties and dressed in a white tuxedo.

SARAH
Fabien Delon.

FABIEN
Farewell my dear.

He kisses Rosie on the cheek, then joins the others.

SARAH
Finally, for the time being...
Rosemary Kael.

Rosie exhales with a smile as she steps forward. A groan circles from those not chosen. Dwarves hurry towards the four with open clear plastic bags.

SARAH

Please leave your mobile phones
and any camera equipment. They will
be returned after the show.

The four drop phones and cameras into the bags.

SARAH

Excellent. Please follow me.

Sarah goes back through the doorway. The four follow into -

WHITE ROOM

The burly bouncers, fresh from entrance duty, wave security
wands over Norma and Fredo.

The bouncers step away then nod to Sarah.

SARAH

Okay. When I say your name please
step through that door.

She gestures to a metal door on the other side of the room.

SARAH

Fabien Delon.

Fabien exchanges glances with the others, then opens the
door. Sarah smiles as she studies her wristwatch.

ROSIE

Could I go the loo, Sarah?

SARAH

I'm afraid not. Problem with the
plumbing. Bubbling I believe.

LATER

Sarah stands by the door, still watch studying. She's alone
apart from a dwarf with a tray of drinks and Rosie, now
leaning against a wall.

SARAH

Rosemary Kael.

Rosie steps forward. She opens the door.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

A row of taxis line the alleyway.

SUPER: Fifteen minutes later.

Nearby, several men chat. Gilby's taxi pulls up. He opens his window to peer at a green dwarf standing patiently by a metal door.

It opens - Rosie exits.

The dwarf leads her to the first taxi of the line.

ROSIE
No, no. I have my own transport.

DWARF
Are you sure? It's free, take you
wherever you want to go, luv.

She sneers, then spots Gilby's cab.

ROSIE
No thanks.

She crosses the road towards -

INT. GILBY'S CAB - MOMENTS LATER

As Rosie closes the door the cab sets off.

GILBY
Welcome back Rosie.

She takes out her phone. She looks tired, her hair not as slick as it was. She yawns.

ROSIE
Thank you Gilby. Take me home
please.

GILBY
How was it? Did Hugh P. Doodahdy
show up then?

ROSIE
Probably. In spirit at least.

GILBY
So what happened?

ROSIE
I just have to make a call.

She selects 'Fabien' from her phone's contacts' list.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Fabien's screwed up face displays an expression of near
ecstasy.

A ringtone opens his eyes. He pushes a young woman's head away from his crotch then grabs his phone.

The young woman wipes her mouth.

FABIEN

What?

ROSIE (V.O.)

Good evening to you too.

FABIEN

I was busy.

ROSIE (V.O.)

What's her name?

FABIEN

I don't know, I didn't ask.

The young woman sneers then heads to the bathroom.

ROSIE (V.O.)

What on earth was all that about tonight?

FABIEN

You don't know yet?

ROSIE (V.O.)

No. I don't think so. Why? Tell me.

Fabien laughs. The young woman joins in, unsure.

FABIEN

When you go, pay close attention.
Au revoir mon amie.

He ends the call, then jumps on the young woman.

INT. GILBY'S CAB

Rosie puts her phone away. They pass a green traffic light, she stares at it.

GILBY

No wiser then?

ROSIE

Sadly not. It was bizarre.

Gilby holds up a cigarette.

GILBY

You mind?

ROSIE

Not as long as you give me one too.

He throws one back to her, she catches it and takes the lighter from him. Her fingers touch his, for a long moment.

ROSIE

Thank you Gilby. Most kind.

GILBY

A pleasure. Any time. So go on.

ROSIE

That was the strangest show I've ever been to, including 'Women Naked with Cactii' last year. They made us wait for three hours

INT. RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT

Rosie and Fabien mill around in the crowd sipping wine.

INT. LONG NARROW WHITE CORRIDORS - NIGHT

Rosie enters. Closes the door behind her. She looks up at the walls with bewilderment as she wanders through - all blank.

ROSIE (V.O.)

Only to lead us one by one through a winding set of white corridors.

She turns a corner. Another long white passage. Around another corner - the same.

GILBY (V.O.)

And that was it? What was in the corridors?

INT. GILBY'S CAB

ROSIE

Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

GILBY

That's modern art for you. Big bag of shite. Gimme Bosch and Velázquez any day. Was is Minimalism or something?

INT. ROSIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rosie wears a bathrobe. She sits in front of a mirror removing her make-up.

She digs into her handbag. Pulls out Gilby's card. Smiles as she looks at it. Places it beside her phone. She gets up, goes into -

BATHROOM

Rosie flicks through a magazine as she sits on the toilet.

She drops the magazine, then wipes herself. She turns then drops the tissue into the toilet bowl.

She reaches to press the flush. She stops. Peers with puzzlement into the bowl.

The water is green - a familiar and very distinctive shade of green.

ROSIE

Oh. Hi P.

Rosie smiles.

FADE OUT.