

Well don't kick'im. SADIE

If he is on the ground, he is going to get kicked. DEE

(Dee pulls Holt to sitting)

Upsie daisy, pal. Come on—theeere you go! That's it. Now—Holt—eyes here. I want you to keep this (soda bottle) on your face so you don't look all Quasimodo. You know who Quasimodo is? He's a freak. And you know what happens to freaks?

What happens to freaks? HOLT

Freaks are ostracized and stoned to death by angry, torch-carrying mobs. I have to go to the lawyer's. And while I'm gone, will you at least move some of those bottles out of the fridge so we have room for, oh, I don't know, food? DEE

(Dee exits)

You all right? SADIE

(Sadie helps Holt up)

I got beat up by a girl. HOLT

I won't tell. SADIE

Why'd you punch me? HOLT

I'm sorry. SADIE

I gotta go do stuff. HOLT

Holt. SADIE

(Holt exits)

I'm sorry.



Scene 3

A room above the bar in New Orleans. There is Zydeco music playing below

Roby sits in a folding chair. She's handcuffed to the chair.

She finishes off another beer, and lines it up with the other bottles. She pounds the floor with her foot.

Start →

ROBY

Knock it off down there! Accordians. Face it, *Rick*. Nobody likes a loser.

(She tips out of the chair, handcuffs dragging the chair on top of her)

Awwww shit. (Hardly distinguishable as English:) Clown-ass-son-of-a-donkey-piece-a-cow-pie, shit.

(She drags the chair by the handcuffs)

C'mon, li'l doggy. C'mon. We goin for a walk, baby. You be good an I'll get you a biscuit. How bout that? Gooooood chair. Sit. Sit! SIT!

(ROBY struggles with the handcuffs. She throws the chair and hurts her wrist)

OWWWWWWW!!!! *You sonofabitch!!!!*

(She kicks the shit out of the chair, wrestles it to the ground, tumbles over it. Danny enters in the midst of this pathetic display. He carries a briefcase and a letter. Roby notices him and stops)

ROBY

This chair has a drinking problem. Just look at all these bottles! Bad chair.

(DANNY: "Why are you handcuffed to a chair?")

I am handcuffed to a chair because I uh, uh, I was out, doing things and stuff happened, and, uh, I got a question for you.

(DANNY: "Don't change the subject.")

I'm not changing the subject, you are the one changing the subject. You know what I found out today? You're still working for that guy, aren't you? Thought you were gonna quit? Huh?

(DANNY: "I can't quit.")

One of these days you're going to get hurt, you know. Making his deliveries will get you hurt. Now go on, get lost! Can't you see I'm in the middle a something? You deaf too? Get lost!

(Danny tosses the letter on the table and exits)

Where you goin? Hey! Where you going? Where ya goin Danny? Hey. What'd I say?

(Roby gets the letter from the table and opens it, tries reading silently.

Sadie appears)

SADIE

Errrga trew durrrrfa barrg rooey far werrrrgrin par nefertiti.

ROBY

What the hell?

It's upside down. SADIE

Huh? ROBY

(Sadie enters the room, turns the letter right side up in Roby's hand)

Oh-ho! ROBY

I think you're a little drunk. SADIE

Is that what this says? That's amazing! How'd you know that? ROBY

No, it doesn't say that, silly. SADIE

My god, it's good to hear from you, Sadie Lady. Guess you got my postcard, huh? Hey, how's Holt? You guys still twins? Joke, course y'are. ROBY

Why are you handcuffed / to the...? SADIE

Stick to the letter, kiddo. ROBY (overlap above)

Oh—okay. Well, first, I guess... Daddy blew his brains out. Bullet went through his head and clear through the side of the house. SADIE

Guess he don't have much of an ear for music anymore, that son of a bitch. So where's the good news, now? You gotta have some good news? Maybe I gotta shake the letter the good news falls right outta the damn thing with all the little commas and scribbles. ROBY

I don't have any good news. SADIE

Go rewrite this and put some good news from home like you won a spelling bee. ROBY

You know I can't do that, Roby. SADIE

You didn't have to win first, just second place would be fine. I'd be proud a you just for trying to spell stuff like, um. Spell handcuffs. Your word is... Handcuffs. ROBY

Roby... SADIE

ROBY

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ROBY

Ah ah ah. Spell it.

SADIE

(takes letter)

Maybe you should finish reading this some other time.

(Roby snatches the letter back)

ROBY

You don't got any good news. Then gimme all your bad news. Go on, lay it out there. I seen it all, can't be as bad you think.

SADIE

I'm dying.

(Pause)

SADIE

Roby, I just haven't heard from you forever and I get your postcard on the day I need a miracle. I don't want to bother you if you can't help, but if I didn't tell you and you *could* help me, that might've been a worse thing.

ROBY (overlap the end above)

Now look, Sadie Lady, I been getting ready for your funeral since you were three years old. Sorry I gotta say it all bluntly like that, but you say you're dying, and I know 'cause you been dying every day of your life.

SADIE

This is different.

ROBY

How?

SADIE

Because I already died once.

ROBY

Maybe I am a little drunk.

SADIE

My heart stopped. I wasn't scared. I was dead. I know I was. But then, boom, my heart squeezed up tight and opened, started like an engine getting revved up for a second shot at the road. My blood started moving and I got warm again. Woke up from being dead. I don't know why. I'm trying to figure out why. I told the doctor I died and he says that's impossible. I say it's impossible I'm still here for this long. Now, doctor says there's this surgery. Where they open you up and fix your heart. It doesn't always work, and it's expensive. I'd find some way to pay you back, of course! 'Course I would, you know that.

ROBY

How much time do you have left?

SADIE

Three months.

(Pause)

ROBY
What was it like?

SADIE
What was what like?

ROBY
Being dead.

SADIE
Like bein a little out of tune.

ROBY
Wait, Sadie, please don't leave.

SADIE
Oh, Roby. You know I ain't here.

(Sadie exits. Danny enters)

(Danny touches Roby's neck. She looks like she's going to puke. Danny holds out the garbage can for her, but she waves it away. He discards her empty bottles instead)

ROBY
What time is it?

(DANNY shows her his watch)

(DANNY: "You ready to tell me about the cuffs now?")

ROBY
So I met this cop. Freddy. This was a few nights ago. We had a few drinks, that's it. That's all. Cross my heart. Then today I get arrested, I don't need to go into the details, but I got arrested by Freddy, this cop. And he's like "Roby?" And I'm like, "oh my god, Freddy." Real awkward. He hauls me into the station, there aren't any chairs, don't know why, so Freddy gets this folding chair for me. But there's no rails to chain me to in his office and he needs to go off for no more than a minute to grab the paperwork. I say, Freddy, just hook it to the chair, it's one minute. He says, Roby, standard police procedure does not authorize me to hitch a perpetrator to unsecured furniture. *Perpetrator?! Is that all I am to you? A "perp"?* I promised him, crossed my heart, that he could hook me to this chair, and I would stay put during the one minute he was gone. ... You ever try sprinting with a chair? It is not easy.

(DANNY: "How much did you steal?")

What difference does it make? You're running stolen cash all the time! That's what you do. That's your job, Danny, helping other people steal.

(DANNY: "That's different")

Oh, how's that different?

(DANNY: "How much did you steal?")

Two hundred bucks, and don't tell me my stealing's any different from your stealing.

(DANNY: "Well it is.")

How is it different?

(DANNY: "It just is")

Oh, (blows raspberry)

(DANNY: "(blows raspberry) yourself. What are you going to do?")

I'll get someone to bust me out soon as I get out of town.

(DANNY stops: "Are you leaving?")

Yeah. I'm leaving. Freddy's looking for me, and I ain't serving time for this. I ain't going to jail. I didn't do anything wrong.

(DANNY: "Didn't do anything wrong? You stole \$200!")

Well, I gave the money back when they caught me!!!!

(DANNY picks up the guitar: "what about your job?")

I got fired today! You believe that? Assface downstairs fired me. Just cause I'm handcuffed to a chair and couldn't play tonight, he fires me! And you want to know why he *really* fired me? Cause I won't play my stupid dad's music.

(DANNY: "Where are you going to go?")

ROBY

Who cares where I go?

(DANNY: "I care.")

(Danny sits on Roby's chair, pulls her onto his lap. He wraps his arms around her and rests his head on her back)

You listening to me breathe again? I bet you'd sit there all day and listen if I'd let you. Wish you could tell me what you hear. I'd like to know what's in there. Does it sound like the ocean? Or a cave? Or them pumping out the oil fields? Or what if I stopped—like this.

(Holds her breath—he squeezes her until she lets her breath go)

No squeezing! Cheater. Big cheater.

(A pause)

Why won't you make love to me?

(Danny doesn't respond)

You think you're some kinda saint? I gotta go.

(DANNY: "Why?")

Cause I'm getting all cagey. I hate this room. I hate that guitar. I hate ten cent nights and dimes and pay phones you gotta feed dimes. I hate this chair. I really hate this chair. I really hate it. And this—(crumples Sadie's letter)—bullshit from my sister, what she think I can do? I ain't God. I ain't even famous. Now all those other fellas with hearts I left in pieces, they didn't chase me down, and don't you follow me either. You know

why? Ain't worth the effort to go all Pecos Bill on a hat-puker. One of these days, you'll find a nice quiet girl who's good for you. But today's not that day and she ain't me.

(DANNY: "Please don't leave")

You say my name, and I'll stay. You say *Roby*—and I'll and stay with you for the rest of my life and we'll get married, have eight kids, get old, and die. Say my name, Danny. Please! You say my name and I'll stay, I swear to god I will. Come on, Danny. Roby. Let me help you. Let me help you say my name, I'll help you with your lips.

(She puts her hand on his face, squeezes his cheeks:)

Ro. Beee.

(He pushes her arm away)

ROBY

Fuckin mute. Can't even say my fucking name.

(Danny throws a chair to the floor in frustration and anger. Then he exits)

(Roby stands there. She looks at the briefcase. She uncrumples Sadie's letter, then opens the briefcase. Roby takes her guitar out of her guitar case, and empties the money from the briefcase into the guitar case. She exits with guitar case and folding chair, leaving the guitar behind)

END