

Thank You for Shopping Hoochum's Bargain Basement

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Cast of Characters

Tennyson:

Early 20's, a college student.

Krystal:

Also in her early 's, a college student.

The Waitress:

A stereotypical American drive-in waitress. Roller-skating, if applicable.

ACT I

Scene 1

*The Setting: The interior of Krystal's car.
Two seats placed side by side. A steering wheel
and flashlight are placed under the driver's seat.*

KRYSTAL (OFFSTAGE):

Oh, just stop whining and put it in the trunk! You're lucky we were able to find one anyway!

TENNYSON (OFFSTAGE):

Well, I don't see you offering to help carry it, and you're the one that drug me all around town looking for the thing! First it was Searmann's, then Bloodworth's, Boxmall's, regular Hoochum's and then the Hoochum's Outlet. You're going to be lucky if the thing even works by the time we get it home!

KRYSTAL (OFFSTAGE):

All I need is the water tank off of it, anyway! I can just put the cracked one back in the box where the new one was and return it.

TENNYSON (OFFSTAGE):

Too bad you can't do that with brains.

KRYSTAL (OFFSTAGE):

I heard that!

The beeping sound of someone unlocking a car by a keychain remote control.

KRYSTAL and TENNYSON walk onstage. TENNYSON is carrying a large box. He puts it behind the two chairs and takes his on the passenger's side. KRYSTAL takes her seat on the driver's side.

TENNYSON:

How did you manage to crack the water tank on that thing anyway? It's just a coffee maker, not a punching bag.

KRYSTAL:

Well, you're starting to look like a punching bag after all of this.

TENNYSON:

If you had a coffee maker water tank for every time I heard things like that we wouldn't have had to come to the worst part of town this late at night.

(CONTINUED)

KRYSTAL:

(she examines her clothes) We probably should have done this when we weren't leaving our internship.

TENNYSON:

Right. We were getting stares in there. Dressing like this on this side of town is asking for trouble, especially that paired with carrying coffee cups.

There is a gunshot offstage. A car alarm goes off. A woman screams.

KRYSTAL:

Is your door locked?

TENNYSON:

It is now. *(He mimics locking a nonexistent car door)*
We really should get out of here. We have absolutely got no business on this side of town.

KRYSTAL:

Yes we did, we had to get my coffee maker! You say that because you weren't going without coffee every morning. I'm not pretty without my coffee!

TENNYSON:

You're not pretty with-

KRYSTAL:

Don't.

TENNYSON:

-that frown on your face.

KRYSTAL:

Well, we're already out, why don't we go get icecream or something?

TENNYSON:

Well, there is nothing better than fattening foods past midnight. Isn't that burger and ice cream joint over by the thrift shop that burned down still open? Isn't it called Charcoal's or something?

KRYSTAL:

Yeah. You know why that thrift store burned down, right? It was all over the news.

TENNYSON:

No, I don't. I just know that the rubble and a few half-melted store shelves are there.

KRYSTAL pulls the steering wheel out from underneath her seat and mimics cranking the car.

KRYSTAL:

Well, supposedly- (she begins mimicking driving) -the owner of Charcoal's got mad at the old lady who used to run the thrift store, and one night while she was there late, working on receipts, he snuck in and dumped hot grease and woodchips around her oxygen tank while she wasn't looking. She was deaf as a post, you know. Well, that grease lit up in a flash, and the oxygen tank exploded. The owner of Charcoal's had just enough time to escape, though. You can piece together what happened.

TENNYSON:

Just like you're going to piece together that coffee maker.

KRYSTAL:

Enough about the coffee maker! The store caught fire and fell in. The worst part is, the rumor is that the old lady's scorned graduate student lover, who was in the back, grading papers for the class he was the assistant grader for, was in the back. He supposedly was horribly burned and ran away from the scene, because he was taking favors in exchange for grades and was afraid he'd get caught if he went to the hospital.

TENNYSON:

I'd be more afraid of getting caught romancing an old lady for money she hasn't got. Isn't stealing social security checks practically stealing from the government? I think I'd care a lot more about that over changing grades for free frozen-yogurt trips and invitations to "watch movies" with pleased students. You know college students don't have any money.

KRYSTAL:

Obviously he did!

TENNYSON:

Only because he was stealing it.

KRYSTAL:

It's too late for philosophy, dear. That's how cults get started. He wasn't with her for money, anyway, he was with her for her one true expertise, coupons.

KRYSTAL:

How would you even catch a disfigured graduate student?

TENNYSON:

Usually I'd say wait for the point where he tells his parents that he's becoming a professional student. In this case, I say 'I don't know.'

Lights out.

KRYSTAL puts down the steering wheel, placing it under her seat. She picks up the flashlight and shines it on her face, as if telling a ghost story.

The WAITRESS should take her place beside TENNYSON, holding the tray of milkshakes as KRYSTAL speaks.

KRYSTAL:

Officer, I failed a creative writing class. I couldn't make this sort of thing up, if I tried. What we saw that night was real. It all really started once we got our milkshakes from Charcoal's.

KRYSTAL turns off and puts the flashlight away. The lights return.

TENNYSON pays the WAITRESS and takes the two milkshakes, handing one to KRYSTAL. The WAITRESS walks offstage, pocketing the money.

TENNYSON:

We should really go up on that lookout pointe above the beach tonight.

KRYSTAL:

Why do you keep trying to get me to go up there with you? That's just plain creepy.

TENNYSON:

No, I've told you a million times, everyone says that crazy stuff goes on up there!

KRYSTAL:

Does it have to do with fogged up windows? I think I can easily explain that.

TENNYSON:

No, no, no! There is supposedly some kind of creature that lives up there, and if you look for it, sometimes, if you're lucky, you'll see it.

KRYSTAL:

Some people say that about your sense. Nobody has seen it yet, though.

TENNYSON:

I'm serious! Let's go up there and see if we can spot it. What have we got to lose?

(CONTINUED)

KRYSTAL:

I know what some people go up there to lose and I'm not interested!

TENNYSON:

Fine, if you go up there with me to look for whatever that thing is supposed to be called, and we see it, I'll pay for your coffee maker. You can just keep the new one rather than trying to shuffle parts around and return it.

KRYSTAL:

Now you're speaking my language!

TENNYSON:

Where have I heard this before?

Lights out.

TENNYSON picks up the flashlight and shines it on his face, as if telling a ghost story.

TENNYSON:

So, officer, we headed up to the lookout point, and that's where everything changed. We had just finished eating and gotten settled in...

TENNYSON turns off and puts the flashlight away. The lights return.

KRYSTAL:

Well, you're the supposed leader of this expedition, you figure it out. We drove all the way up here and wasted half a tank of gas getting lost, so you do what you need to do.

TENNYSON:

Well, I would suggest getting out of the car, but my stomach is hurting from eating that milkshake, so I'm not going to do that.

KRYSTAL:

Really? You could just say that you're scared. I'm going to make fun of you either way.

TENNYSON:

You don't know what it's like to have IBS!

KRYSTAL:

I know what it's like to be around BS, alright...

Lights out.