

**NO LIFE WITHOUT YOU,
ROSANNA DREAMER**

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INT. NIGHT CLUB DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Sparse furnishings: cot, bookshelf, table, a dangling light.

ROSANNA, with her child-like stature and long raven hair, sits rigid. The table is covered with a black cloth.

Rosanna wears a simple white dress.

Her back is to us.

ROSANNA

If I sing off-key, the audience goes apeshit. But if you sing off-key, this act goes straight down the shitter.

HECTOR, early 40s, plops in a chair behind Rosanna.

HECTOR

I'm the star. So please, young lady, watch your mouth.

He's tall, paunchy. Pallid of face with a scruffy beard.

ROSANNA

Nobody gives a dummy's ass about my mouth. It's your mouth they are watching.

Hector, armed with a hair brush, meticulously strokes through her silky fleece.

HECTOR

All right. We're both stars of this team.

ROSANNA

Read my lips: You and Me are no stars. But we are two *dummies on an empty stage!*

Rosanna giggles so hard she SNORTS.

Hector picks up a white bow from the table linen. Clips the bow to Rosanna's hair.

He spins the tiny brunette around. Rosanna is a **ventriloquist doll**. Her eyes are closed. A wan smile paints her delicate face.

Suddenly, her eyes flutter open.

ROSANNA

Uh-oh.

An uninvited guest WHISTLES a tune at the far end of the room.

Rosanna and Hector crank their heads toward the door.

Strolling out of the shadows is **LON**, mid-30s, thin build, slick dark hair. He's dressed like a gangster on holiday.

Claps his hands.

LON

Bravo. Encore. How ya doin', Hector? It's me, Lon. Paying you a friendly visit.

He moseys toward the table. Slips his fists into black leather gloves.

LON

Thought maybe you wanna settle your debt today. Get it outta the way.

HECTOR

June 20th. Please. As we agreed.

Lon smirks with displeasure.

LON

Sure thing. Me and the fellas will be back. But I ain't comin' as a friend.

Hector averts Lon's laser gaze.

His hands jitter. He drops the hair brush. Knocks over a glass of water onto a black table cloth.

Wetness inching toward a magician's **Top Hat** and a **Magic Wand**.

The water-soaked table cloth exposes a name in white font:

THE MAGNIFICENT HECTOR

Hector's eyes scroll upward.

HECTOR

It's only two grand.

LON
Five Gs. You forget interest.

HECTOR
I perform simple feats of
magic in a night club. For
little pay. Look around. You
see anything here of value?

Lon zeroes in on Rosanna.

LON
How 'bout doll face? She part
of your magic act?

Hector pulls Rosanna from her chair. Holds her close.

LON
How 'bout I take doll face
off your hands? Show her what
a real man can do.

HECTOR
Get out.

ROSANNA
Sir, I'm taken.

Lon flashes a lecherous grin.

LON
Goddamn amazin' how you do
that ventriloquist shit.

HECTOR
I'm not a ventriloquist.

ROSANNA
He's not a ventriloquist.

HECTOR
I'm a vocal-illusionist.

Lon pulls a handgun. Racks it. Ambles around the table.
Extends an open palm for Rosanna.

LON
May I?

HECTOR
You may not.

ROSANNA
Not my type. *Ripugnante.*

Lon pauses... then rips Rosanna from Hector's grip. He checks her up and down. Sneers.

LON
 With that smart mouth of
 hers, I bet she gives
 dynamite head.

He jams a Glock into Rosanna's mouth. Hector's eyes widen.

LON
 Say ahh, little darlin'.

ROSANNA
 Ahhh... nuts.

HECTOR
 NO -

LON
 BOOM!

Lon blasts a hole through the dummy's head.

Splinters of wood and plastic fly into oblivion. Tufts of doll hair and dust linger in the air like smoke.

The magician reaches for what's left of Rosanna.

Not so fast. Lon slams the rest of Rosanna's against the table. Her body blows to pieces like a land mine.

FLASHBACK

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT (MOS)

A wedding reception underway. A bride and groom share a dance. Surrounded by guests - when GUNFIRE erupts.

Bullets spray the room. Bursting champagne bottles. Punching holes in the wall. A maitre d riddled. People scatter.

A few party guests catch bullets. Bodies crash to the floor.

One of the victims is the BRIDE, a pretty, 30-something brunette woman. A dead-ringer for the dummy Rosanna.

Blood soaks her wedding gown.

Hector, dressed in a tux, rushes to her. Scoops her in his arms. Screams in silence.

FLASHBACK ENDS

Hector gathers bits and pieces of Rosanna. Squeezes her white bow in his hands. Peers up at his tormentor.

HECTOR

Bring your army, you vampire.
See what's waiting for you.

Lon casually tucks away his gun.

Hector clutches his chest. A stab of pain in his expression.

Lon studies Hector and laughs. Mocks the ailing man.

LON

Don't die on me, Houdini.
Till then, sweet dreams.

Lon WHISTLES his signature tune and he's out the door.

DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Hector drags himself to the closet.

Lifts up a floor panel. From a hiding place under the floorboards, he retrieves a small candle and a GLASS TUBE the length of his forearm.

Carries everything to the table. Shuts off the room light.

Strikes a match and fires up the candle. Sets it next to his **Magician's Hat**.

Hector deposits fragments of Rosanna's body into the hat.

He reaches for an URN sitting on a shelf above his cot. Carries the urn to the table and pours ashes into the hat.

Sucks in a breath – let the ritual begin.

Hector snaps the glass tubing that entombs the scroll. HISS – a green gas is released into the air. Hector removes the scroll. Unties a black band that binds the sacred parchment.

Unravels a single sheet as thick as a goat's hide.

Hector's eyes scan the ancient text. Lips chant inaudibly.

INSERT

Handwritten calligraphy on thick papyrus paper. Ravaged by time but still discernible.

Hieroglyphics of undetermined origins, intertwined with images: Flying creatures. Horned characters. Humans. Natural elements, such as fire and water. Temples. Ruins.

Smoke, ashes and spiritual entities: Angels. Demons.

Clouds. Symbols of celestial planets. Death. Rebirth.

He stops. Weakened, Hector drags himself to the cot. There, he witnesses the scroll burst into flames. Reduced to dust.

The flickering candle casts an orange glow on the wall. Hector's **SHADOW** comes to life. It lifts the Magic Wand.

With a free hand, the shadow grabs the table cloth. WHOOSH. Pulls the cloth. Unfurls the dark linen and drapes it around his shoulders like a cape.

The shadow becomes **THE MAGNIFICENT HECTOR**.

The real Hector lies back in the cot. His eyes close.

DREAM SEQUENCE STARTS

INT. NIGHT CLUB STAGE - NIGHT

A surreal mist of smoke hovers around the stage.

Under an intense spotlight, the Magnificent Hector looks dapper in his magician's tuxedo and top hat.

Hector's gaze sweeps the room. His eyes are penetrating, seductive. He removes his hat, as he takes a little bow.

Sets down his hat on the stage floor.

Whips the cape from his shoulders and lovingly drapes it over the hat.

Hector lifts a magic wand and waves it above the hat and cape. Summoning his beloved to respond. He sings softly...

HECTOR

*Beautiful Dreamer, awake unto
me. Starlight and dew drops
are waiting for thee.*

The cape rises like a black ghost. Higher and higher.

Hector's gyrations mimic an orchestra conductor. He clutches the cape and WHOOSH. Reveals Rosanna, **A HUMAN-SIZED DOLL**.

Rosanna pivots toward the audience, her face expressionless. She's wears a flowing white dress.

She DANCES. Stiff and awkward. Arms flutter like broken wings. Moving about as a marionette.

Her dark brown eyes as cold as marbles.

In the background, Hector assumes a SVENGALI-like presence. Hypnotic. Shoots thin bolt of energy from his eyes.

Under Hector's spell, Rosanna's dancing becomes smoother.

A sparkle of life in Rosanna's eyes. Dark hair bounces off her shoulders. She glides with the control of a ballerina.

Pirouettes - then *jete, jete, jete, grand jete*, and into Hector's waiting arms.

He catches her as she transforms into:

The BEAUTIFUL WOMAN of his past. Rosanna, his **BRIDE**,

HECTOR

*Sounds of the rude world
heard in the day, lulled by
the moonlight have all passed
away.*

The couple dances in flits and flurries under the fiery spotlight. Holding each other like impassioned butterflies.

Their eyes never leave each other. Like Astaire and Rogers.

HECTOR

*Rosanna Dreamer, queen of my
song; list while I woo thee
with soft - soft...*

Hector stumbles. His voice trails off. Rosanna clutches him.

HECTOR

My body is failing. Can't...

ROSANNA

Stay with me, my love.

The dance stops. Hector gazes lovingly into Rosanna's eyes.

HECTOR

I return you to life, my
Rosanna Dreamer. For what you
are fated to be. And fated to
do... and sadly, without me.

ROSANNA

You've carried me our entire
lives, Hector. Now it's my
time to carry you.

A weak smile on Hector's face. The dance continues, only now Rosanna leads and Hector follows.

They sway and soar about the stage. Rosanna sings to Hector.

ROSANNA

*Beautiful dreamer, out on the
sea, Mermaids are chanting
the wild lorelie.*

Hector rests his weary head on Rosanna's shoulder. His eyes closing. She carries him through the last stages of dance.

ROSANNA

*Over the stream let vapors
are borne...*

Rosanna eases Hector into a wooden chair on stage. His body sits, then slumps. With eyes shut, his head nods forward.

ROSANNA

*... waiting to fade at the
bright coming morn.*

She caresses Hector's face with her hands. Kisses him and whispers in his ear.

Rosanna spins toward the audience. Curtseys left, curtseys right. From behind her back, she produces a

FLAME THROWER

With wicked glee, she torches the room.

DREAM SEQUENCE ENDS.

INT. - DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Semi-darkness. Lon's haunting whistle gets louder.

The door pushes open and in strolls four mobsters, including Lon. Dressed in black. Armed with handguns.

They cough and cover their faces.

LON

What the hell... gasoline?!

The floor is a thin film of gasoline. Hundred dollar bills laid out like a thousand flat boats. From room corner to room corner. Greenbacks soak up the liquid fuel.

Lon looks around. Wades through the gasoline spillage. He yanks a hanky from his pocket to cover his nose and mouth.

Drops his phone. He coughs hard.

Lon's squinty eyes lock on the cot – to Hector.

LON
You trick-talking bastard. I
should'a whacked you
yesterday when I was happy.

He reaches for the dangling light cord. About to pull –

HECTOR
DON'T – touch the light.
(whispers)
It's rigged to blow.

Lon retracts his hand. Reaches for his phone/flashlight, but it's not there. Regardless, he trains his gun on Hector.

HECTOR
Go ahead. Shoot.

LON
With pleasure.

HECTOR
BUT BE WARNED – one spark of
gunfire and this room will
blow to smithereens.

Lon thinks and withdraws from shooting.

LON
(to his men)
Don't nobody fire your guns.

The other mobsters shine their phone lights around the room. They trade glances. MOB MAN 2, a hulking brute, lifts wet cash from the floor.

MOB MAN 2
All the dough is in gasoline,
boss. What'da we do?

LON
GET THE MONEY anyway, you
idiots!

Mobsters kneel down and collect soaked bills.

Lon steps close to Hector. Pulls a switchblade. He faces Hector, who remains motionless.

HECTOR
You recall the massacre of a
wedding? A year ago today?

LON
... so?

HECTOR
That was my bride you
murdered.

LON
Fuck your dead bride. And
fuck you for reminding me.

Lon lunges at Hector and stabs him. Repeatedly.

LON
DIE, you bastard.

Lon recoils.

LON
What the ...? You ain't even
real -

Hector's lifeless body flops from the cot to the floor.

Mob man 2 goes to the door, but it's locked.

MOB MAN 2
It's a set up!

Lon drops his knife. The gangsters scramble to the door.

Mob man 2 rattles the door knob. He bangs on the locked door. The other men also pound the door.

Lon scuttles to the room window, throws back curtains. But the window is boarded up.

LON
SHIT!

Rosanna WHISTLES Lon's own haunting TUNE.

Freezing Lon in his tracks. He turns toward the shelf above the cot. Follows the whistling. Approaches with trepidation.

A MATCH is lit – in the hands of Rosanna, **THE VENTRILOQUIST DOLL**. She comes FACE to FACE with Lon.

Rosanna's eyes flutter open. Stone cold marbles.

Smiles like a razored throat.

She drops the match...

ROSANNA

BOOM!

Lon's expression is a mask of terror. WHOOSH – The room is engulfed in flames. Mobsters SCREAM. Their bodies crackle.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Burnt to a cinder.

A gentle whistle of an evening wind passes through a massive hole in the blown-out ceiling.

A blast of stars dot the sky.

The faintest of night light beams down on the shelf. The magician's cape, a smoky shield, slips to the floor.

Perched on the shelf are two dolls: HECTOR and ROSANNA.

Unscathed. Unharmed.

The wooden dolls sit shoulder to shoulder. Their dangling legs swing to and fro, like the pendulum of a clock.

He wears a slightly-oversized tux and she wears her doll-sized wedding gown.

Rosanna gazes up at the night. A shooting star streaks through space. Hector misses the moment.

Rosanna's HAND reaches over. Squeezes Hector's HAND.

They exchange glances. Both peer up.

Together they survey the sky. Behold a bright shooting star.

FADE OUT.

The End.