

Frill or be Frilled

by
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FADE IN ON:

NICK BRANSON's face. His frightened eyes dart around, like those of a caged animal.

BRANSON (V.O.)

No matter how many dark alleys
you've walked down. No matter how
many barroom brawls you been in.
No matter how many times you stared
Death in the face, there comes a
time that brings even the toughest
palooka to his knees--

Branson looks around. He dressed in a 1940's suit and trench coat. A fedora rests on his head. He's attractive, in a roguish way.

He's in a ladies' lingerie shop, surrounded by racks of undergarments and mannequins in various poses.

Everything around him is from the same period.

BRANSON (V.O.)

When he has to buy his girlfriend
an anniversary gift.

He cautiously makes his way along the isles, gently touching things with his index finger.

BRANSON (V.O.)

Dollface and I will be together for
a year this Saturday. And I
promised her something special.

He tilts his hat at two women passing by. They smile at him. One covers her mouth as she GIGGLES (M.O.S.).

BRANSON (V.O.)

Something that Romeo would've given
Juliet. Or that BOgart would've
given Bacall.

He looks at a mannequin, modelling a short silk robe. It barely extends past the mannequin's thigh.

BRANSON (V.O.)

Unfortunately, Dubrowski's Sausage
Shop had burned down last week.

He steps up and takes a good long look at it.

BRANSON (V.O.)

The Fire Marshall said it was the best smelling fire he and his men had ever been to.

He runs his finger along the robe's hem. He starts lifting the back of the robe up, exposing the bottom of the mannequin's ass.

BRANSON (V.O.)

Which is too bad, 'cause my friend Gallespi was telling me how his girlfriend loved the big sausage he gave her for their annivers--

A hand reaches from behind Branson, tapping him on the shoulder. A feminine hand.

He snaps his hand back, spinning around, and finds himself facing--

INGA, (25). Her platinum blonde hair rests perfectly on her shoulders. She's the epitome of European beauty.

Her smile is both innocent and seductive.

A name tag on her floral dress reads 'INGA.'

He stares at her, like a horny school boy.

BRANSON (V.O.)

Her name was Inga and she was Inga-credible.

He forces a bashful smile on his face and tips his hat.

BRANSON (V.O.)

Hair like corn silk. Lips like bing cherries. And legs that rode all the way up to her hips.

The two say something brief to each other (MOS). She GIGGLES. The two smile at each other.

BRANSON (V.O.)

I told her I was looking for something pretty and frilly. Something for a romantic evening at home... with my sister.

Inga's and Branson's smiles both vanish. Branson looks at her, a little awkward. He says something to her (MOS).

BRANSON (V.O.)
Then I told her the truth. About
Dollface--

She smiles again. So does he, a bit nervously.

BRANSON (V.O.)
And that saved the moment. I
figured I'd have to say an extra
rosary next time I went to
confession for lying.

Inga takes a robe from a nearby rack. The same one on the
mannequin.

BRANSON (V.O.)
But since when is it a crime to
want to look at an angel?

She shows him the robe, holding the material out for him to
touch.

She holds it against her body and gently sways. She smiles,
almost giggling.

His smiles disappears for a moment.

BRANSON (V.O.)
Sister? What the hell was I
thinking?

His smile returns.

BRANSON (V.O.)
I'm not from Alabama.

GERTRUDE (50) stands behind a counter. She's short and
heavysset. Very matronly-looking. Her name tags hangs on a
very unflattering dress.

She gives a customer some change and then a shopping bag.
She smiles and nods.

She turns and sees Inga and Branson in the distance. Her
smile vanishes. Her scowl is painful to look at.

BRANSON (V.O.)
And just like a young man's first
visit to a whorehouse--

Inga sways back and forth as Branson waves the one of the
sleeve cuffs at her. They talk to each other (MOS), smiling.
She giggles.

Gertrude steps in front of Inga, snapping the robe from her.

BRANSON (V.O.)
The fun ends real quickly.

She gestures to Inga to leave. Inga looks at her, and Branson, with sad puppy dog eyes.

Gertrude gestures again, sternly. Inga leaves, passing by Branson. He watches her walk away for a moment and then turns to see--

Gertrude, staring at him in disdain.

BRANSON (V.O.)
Yikes.

Gertrude holds the robe aside, continuing her stare.

BRANSON (V.O.)
She reminded me of that spinster aunt that would try to kiss me at all the family gatherings.

Branson stares back.

BRANSON (V.O.)
Always leave that ring of lipstick on my face. Looked like I was kissed by a catfish.

She waves her hand in front of the robe, a cheap gesture.

BRANSON (V.O.)
She was the kind of dame that God dealt a cruel hand to when he was giving out beauty.

She puts the robe back on the rack and pulls out a similar one. She repeats the cheap gesture.

BRANSON (V.O.)
Oh yeah. When she fell out of the ugly tree, she hit every stinking branch on the way down.

She HUFFS and rolls her eyes, putting the robe away. She looks at him in a condescending way.

BRANSON (V.O.)
The worst of it was her attitude. Smug. Overly-confident. That condescending look on that cat-that-ate-the-canary face of hers.

Branson's hands clench in fists.

BRANSON (V.O.)
It's as if she was daring me to hit
her, thinking, 'You wouldn't dare
hit me--'

She stares at him, wrinkling her nose.

BRANSON (V.O.)
'A real man would never hit a
woman.'

Branson stares back at her. No emotions show on his face.

BRANSON (V.O.)
Well, I got news for you,
Sweetheart. I'm confident enough
in my manhood that I'd hit a woman.

A look of realization grows on his face.

BRANSON (V.O.)
Hit...? And then it hit me. The
perfect gift for Dollface.

DING! DING! DING!

INT. BOXING ARENA

Two boxers punch it out in a smoke-filled ring. Thousands
CHEER as the dance and dodge each other's punches.

BRANSON (V.O.)
Tickets to the Perillo-Jabrowski
bout.

Branson sits at the edge of his seat, jabbing the air in
front of him, mimicking the fight.

DOLLFACE sits next to him, all dressed up. She looks bored.

He turns to her and nudges her with his elbow. She feigns a
smile and nods to him. He returns to the fight and she
returns to her bored state.

BRANSON (V.O.)
Sometimes, I amaze even me.

He throws more jabs in the air.

FINAL FADE OUT.