

TOULOUSE

(Straightening her dress, caught
in the act of teasing FROU FROU.)

Mazie! What are you doing? If Duke ever catches you off the street
off the floor, he'll break every bone in your body!

MAZIE

Sssh! Listen, I got some juicy gossip about Nola
Noonan, and I'm gonna let the cat out of the beans.

TOULOUSE *... through the beaded curtain*

Oh, I knew it. I saw it in the cards. What happened? *life*

Turn my trick without you reading glasses on
I took her to a very posh soiree the other night, and
she embarrassed me. *at 4 in the morning in some hotel*
The beaded curtain is not time to see the beaded curtain of life

TOULOUSE

Aaah ... don't tell me they caught her drinkin' out of
the toilet bowl again. *The long grey line?*

Oh my Venus MAZIE *of Paradise appears, no matter*
Almost. There was this truck driver there, see, who
just couldn't take his eyes off the punch-bowl ... *call to how*

TOULOUSE

Or you! *Blonde is golden - geeks are* *Chicago* *these sub-*
the geek MAZIE *geeks IT GRAY. sympathy*

But aside from him, everyone there was "swells", talking
except for Nola ... she couldn't take
punch-bowl neither. *never dropping to*

KE, the greasy owner of the
er, the only 'real' diner
acter, comes in furious.)

DUKE

Awright, what the hell's goin' on in here?

(MAZIE runs and hides behind one of the trunks.)

I'm runnin', a diner, here, not a talk-a-thon, now
get your ass out on the floor, and make it before
Christmas.

TOULOUSE

What the hell's wrong with you, Duke?

DUKE

What the hell is wrong with me?

(HE grabs TOULOUSE by the collar.)

Look, I got hungry guys out there, and they wanna be
fed.

THE
LGBTQ
HISTORY | PROJECT

TOULOUSE

(Pulling away.)

So go'n'feed 'em! Only get off my back!

DUKE

Keep it up and you're gonna be out on your ass.
Maybe you can get your old job back, washing out
elephant's assholes!

TOULOUSE

(Incensed.)

Why, I never washed out an elephant's asshole in my
life!

(Proclaiming.)

I am a woman and an actress!

DUKE

Where is East?

(HE storms off.)

East!

TOULOUSE

Kiss my high heels, Frou Frou!

MAZIE

(Coming out from behind the trunk.)

Hey, Toulouse!

TOULOUSE

What is it now, Mazie?

MAZIE

powder, will ya? Duke used mine all
n afford to buy his own foot powder.

TOULOUSE

t like working here, why don't you

MAZIE

I can't quit. Where can I go?

(TOULOUSE starts to tell her.)

Awright, awright, awright! So I'll never make it as a
big band singer. I'm in love!

TOULOUSE

Yeah, the wind blew and the shit flew.

MAZIE

Go ahead ... go ahead and laugh.

TOULOUSE

Who can laugh?!

MAZIE

One of these days you'll all be sorry when they drag my body out of the river.

TOULOUSE

Look, Mazie, I'm your friend; we went through all this in Detroit. What happened to Nola?

MAZIE

Oh. This guy comes over to her and asks her a question.

TOULOUSE

Don't tell me! Somebody actually tried to make verbal contact with her?!

MAZIE

He asked her, in no five dollar words, what she thought of Kipling.

TOULOUSE

I'm ready.

MAZIE

She says, "I don't know. I never kiplled."

(NOLA enters. SHE is a loud, brassy redhead and/or blonde. SHE is carrying two library books, dripping in fox, and ging.)

NOLA

YES MY BABY

DON'T LOVE NOBODY BUT ME

E!

E throws down the book. After underous applause, SHE speaks.)

TOULOUSE

Where were you?

NOLA

Sorry I'm late. I stopped off at the library.

(SHE opens her purse.)

Hey, look what I got! It's new ... they call it St. Valentine's Day Mascara. Well, Toulouse, what do you think? How do I look?

THE
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HISTORY | PROJECT

TOULOUSE

You need more paint. More cat-ness around the eyes, moonbeams, Twiggies, shadow, rainbows, lips, rouge and do. The Duke wants to see the "big face".

NOLA

Mazie? May we have your point of view now?

MAZIE

Gorgeous! — *Repeats Toulouse's line (above)*

NOLA

Seriously? Do you think I look all right to go on right now? The place is packed, and I'll bet Duke's pretty steamed.

MAZIE

Don't I know it. He's used up all my foot powder.

NOLA

You know, Mazie, sometimes I get the distinct impression you think you're living in Star-Brite Park.

MAZIE

(To herself, under the following.)

Star-Brite Park ... Star-Brite Park ...

NOLA

(Racing over to TOULOUSE.)

Look, if she don't like working here, why don't she quit. Already Frou Frou the pinhead is upset. It's all right ... a nice girl like her, slinging this.

MAZIE

a. You're regular.

NOLA

MAZIE.)

Yeah, but do I look all right to go on right now?

TOULOUSE

You look like you're fleeing from a goddamn burning building. Where'd you get these clothes, Nola? You're not trying to pay off an election bet, are you?

MAZIE

(Very empty-headed.)

I mean ... this town ... it ain't big enough. If they ever hear of politics here, Duke is gonna lose out ... on slave labor!

DUKE

(Running in.)

You're late, Nola. Get out there and rack up the balls!

(NOLA exits.)

Frou Frou, go out and pick me up a pack of butts ... I'm all tapped out.

TOULOUSE

(Crossing stage left.)

I thought I told you never to come into my dressing room!

MAZIE

(Crossing stage right.)

Well? You heard the lady ... breeze!

DUKE

C'mere, East. Wrap your ass in a kimono, tie your head up in a turban, and predict yourself a happy ending, 'cause you're fired!

(During MAZIE's next line, NOLA re-enters.)

MAZIE

But I just started.

DUKE

Yeah, and you just finished, you dumb broad. Now get the hell outta here!

MAZIE

(TOULOUSE.)

louse. We're getting out!

TOULOUSE

? I'm afraid, Mazie, the Raven just weather outside your door. And you ... tough shit!

(MAZIE exits, sobbing.)

How about that dame?

NOLA

Mazie?

TOULOUSE

I said 'dame', didn't I?

NOLA

Oh, what about her?

TOULOUSE

Did ya get a load of that hair-do? It's hard to know where she swept it up from. She looks like The professional blind date.

NOLA

You know, you got a tongue that could clip a hedge.
(Referring to FROU FROU.)
Hey, did you two ever think of going into the beauty parlor business.

TOULOUSE

Yeah, I'm a dreamer at heart.

NOLA

Well, your talk alone could curl hair.
(NOLA takes out a bottle and takes a pill. With great perkiness, SHE says ...)
Why! I'm a different person!

TOULOUSE

Yeah, but are you ready?

NOLA

Honey, this body is always ready.

TOULOUSE

... mean "library"?

NOLA

...ning over to pick up the book.)
...eeded a new love affair last night.

TOULOUSE

... stomps on NOLA's hand.)
...ed a lay!

NOLA

So when I got him to fall hook, line and sinker, I accepted. Then I told him yes, my suggestion on going to New York City was a very good one.

TOULOUSE

So ... you're getting out of Chicago.

NOLA

That's right ... and I'm leaving tonight. And you're not! Hey, Frou Frou, will you help me pack ... I'll let you feel my tits.

TOULOUSE

Sure, Nola. And the first thing we'll tuck away is your head.

BLACKOUT.

(The follow spot comes up on
NOLA, alone on stage.)

NOLA

I'm Nola Noonan. I was a waitress here in Duke's diner, but unlike Toulouse, you can see I got a face that didn't wear out six bodies. You can see I have a face that'll be my fortune, and not my chaperone. I've got a future, Harvey tells me ... of course, it takes a lot to get him to say it, but I need reassurance. I'm emotionally insecure ... I need love. I was raped at an early age. Seven, to be exact. By a door-to-door salesman. He asked me if my Mommy was at home. Is anything strange about admitting you're a bastard, and "no", your Mommy is not at home? You have no idea where she is, let alone who she is? I had become, at age seven, de-flowered by my lover and guardian, a reformed ice-man who was out delivering at the time. The salesman asked me if I was interested in bringing since he'd run out of bibles three doors away from a truly musical background ... my saxophone player with a tight lip. I let my brochure read: "Vaudeville Again in Seven Years Back!" It was somewhere between bird and shoe, actually, that I found myself brutally attacked. Slapped down, pinned to a lumpy old mattress. His big, muscular arms held me down. Sweat trickled from my forehead, tears streamed down my cheeks ... I loved it!

(By this time, SHE is leaning
against the left proscenium arch.)

Oh, but the breathing. Oh, but the panting. Breathing and panting, panting and breathing, breathing and panting ... well, what the hell. I was never a screamer. I knew somewhere at the back of my head that what we were doing couldn't be justified. But listen, what the dumb ice-man didn't know wouldn't hurt his tight lip, now would it?

(Continued.)

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HISTORY | PROJECT

NOLA (continued)

I was enjoying this adulation, this stranger making violent, passionate love to me. An animal in bed, ripping and tugging at my brand new, all white, sta-pressed, starched crinolines. His manliness penetrated the starch, and I screamed: "I hate crinolines!! I hate starch and sta-pressed! I hate this lumpy old mattress!" But I shut up. Screaming can be very distracting to a frenzied rapist, and I did not want to distract him. I ripped the crinolines down to the linoleum. Yes, the ice-man was a Polack, and ugly Polack who dreamed that one day he would regain possession of that goddamn saxophone and blow it on the fire escape, so that he could drive me to drink, drive me to suicide, drive me to the neighbor ... a very sweet longshoreman who understood my seven year old mind. Suddenly, it was over. He took me with him to Chicago, and I made him forget all about bringing back vaudeville. And one morning I turned around, and just like in a movie, he was gone. And I never did get my money back!

(The stage lights fade up, revealing HARVEY KRAVITZ, a cowboy truck driver. NOLA continues.)

Harvey is my ticket outta this schlock diner. I hate Chicago. The town that Billy Sunday couldn't shut down, the pansy! I met Harvey at Mazie's party the other night. It was love at first sight. Harvey has a truck ... that never runs out of gas. And New York City is where it'll take me to. And there, I'm gonna

climb the ladder of success. I'm emotionally always feel undressed and scared, but if I'm dressed and not scared ... maybe it would

! The lights are up full.

MAZIE starts making up to HARVEY, as TOULOUSE drags MAZIE out to watch.)

the motor. No use wasting gas ...

let's hit the road.

HARVEY

First, prove to me you love me.

NOLA

I love you, I love you. Okay, Harvey, let's go.

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HARVEY

Nola, prove to me you love me.

NOLA

All right, wait'll we get in the truck ... I'll drive.

HARVEY

Nola ... now and right here.

NOLA

Subtle, this guy!

BLACKOUT.

(The follow spot comes up on
MAZIE and TOULOUSE.)

MAZIE

I thought she hated long farewells.

TOULOUSE

She has style, Mazie, no matter what you say about her wardrobe. She has style.

BLACKOUT.

(The stage lights come up.
MAZIE and TOULOUSE still stand
the left proscenium, in semi-
kness. HARVEY is zipping
pants.)

NOLA

r been greater. I may not be able
"t's", Harvey, but I love you. I
you. Oh, Harvey.

HARVEY

(Trying to get NOLA off him.)

Okay, Nola, that's enough.

NOLA

I can't stop, Harvey. I can't stop.

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HARVEY

You better stop. The motor's running, and all that gas is burning up, and your two friends are making us a regular double feature.

NOLA

Make love to me. Harvey, please, I can't go anywhere without it ...

(HE kisses her.)

You're getting to me, you're getting to me.

BLACKOUT.

(The follow spot picks up
TOULOUSE and MAZIE.)

Follow Toulouse

TOULOUSE -

Keeping a secret from Nola was like trying to sneak daybreak past a rooster. Like I told Mazie ... she may be good for nothing, but she was never bad for nothing. She really did go to the library, and she lifted about seven plays ... not that she can read. She had this new occupation: Actress! The only thing: she couldn't talk. She was frightened at an early age, by a Chinese typewriter, when she was looking for an earring she dropped between a ching and a chow. Her tongue got cuaght, and it took the fire department two hours to unwind thirty feet of red and black ribbon. It was new, or so she said.

BLACKOUT.

The stage lights come up on
NOLA, who is making up to HARVEY
(HE tries to drive.)

NOLA

Oh, Harvey, why don't you stop here? I'm tired, I'm hungry, I'm thirsty ... Harvey, you're not stopping.

HARVEY

Nola, you're killing me! Look, I can't stop. I ain't got no insurance on the truck.

BLACKOUT.

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(Skids and a crash are heard in the darkness. The follow spot comes up on MAZIE and TOULOUSE.)

TOULOUSE

Nola was hysterical by the time they told her Harvey would have to be sewn up ... in ten different places ... before they could bury him. He didn't have insurance.

BLACKOUT.

(The follow spot picks up NOLA, in a fur coat and a widow's weep.)

NOLA

You mean he's dead?

BLACKOUT.

(The spot picks up MAZIE.)

MAZIE

She had this soft spot in her heart ...
(SHE points.)

Right here!

BLACKOUT.

(The spot picks up NOLA.)

NOLA

... Listen, I'm stranded here, and I never did like Albany. Why don't you and your partner take a breather and drive me into Manhattan?

(All breath.)

... Hmm? What do you say?

(SHE opens her coat and unbuttons her blouse.)

My, my! Albany's so hot this time of year, isn't it? Whew!

BLACKOUT.

— (The spot picks up MAZIE.)

MAZIE

She only stayed in mourning at most forty eight hours. Black was not her most flattering color, ~~but didn't it appeal to two police officers, who believed it was hot in the dead of February cold ... back to the Chinese typewriter and the tangled ribbon tongue. Nola was hysterical by the time they told her she would forever have this one and only, red and black tongue.~~

BLACKOUT.

(The lights come up on NOLA, seated in FLORENZ ZEIGFELD's lap.)

NOLA

No, Mr. Zeigfeld ... I haven't been able to pronounce my "t's" ever since.

ZEIGFELD

Why don't we have a look at that tongue ... may be good for a specialty.

NOLA

(SHE slaps him.)

Mr. Zeigfeld! You dirty old producer! You'll not glorify my tongue.

BLACKOUT.

he follow spot comes up on ZIE and TOULOUSE.)

TOULOUSE

~~the spot had class.~~ Tell me what broad is still a broad when she tells a person like Flo Zeigfeld that he can't see her tongue? Not that anybody ever saw it ... in the light.

BLACKOUT.

(The stage lights come up on NOLA, looking in the mirror.)

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LGBTQ
HISTORY | PROJECT

VINNY

Sure, Nola, that's all right ... hey, you wanna come for Chinese food after the show?

NOLA

Sure, honey, Chinese food. We can also do a rain dance in front of Radio City, okay? Ahh, when I'm a star, I'll never forget your kind ways ... you fool.

~~CLASH / 151 / 8888~~
BLACKOUT.

(Lights come up on MAZIE.)

MAZIE

I was one of the survivors. ~~Vinny was fatally wounded, but he recovered. But several Rockettes will never dance again, due to sever ankle abrasions. I broke a heel, too. But Nola, well, Nola was Nola. She climbed down the fire escape and right into a gangster's convertible, and just like in the cinema, they drive away. I mean anyone who reads Variety knew Nola was canned and barred from Radio City. And also that Radio City was practically dying on its feet. These days, all they play are the Nola Noonan flics, because that's all the public wants. Nola Noonan, Nola Noonan, Nola Noonan. I guess we were all wrong about Nola Noonan.~~

BLACKOUT.

follow spot comes up on
and JOHNNY APOLLO.)

NOLA

his name. I finally met a guy who
me. Who could love me. Who could
support me and my girlish whims.

JOHNNY

Six hundred grand for a necklace?

NOLA

But it was a necklace of diamonds, shaped into tiny
"t's". A trade secret and a world joke. Johnny ...
Johnny, make love to me.

JOHNNY

Nola, I think I better get my men to rough you up a little. You don't seem to listen!

NOLA

Nor do you. I'm sick and tired of making publicity appearances at your floating crap games, your card games at dawn. That ain't my image, honey! I wanna be an actress ... a goddess ... a star!

JOHNNY

I like you when you get beautiful.

NOLA

I don't get beautiful. I am beautiful! I was born beautiful, and I will die beautiful!

JOHNNY

Nola ... you are beautiful.

NOLA

Aw, gee, Johnny, you really mean it? Yer not just trying out a line on a cheap hotel pushover, because this ain't no hotel. This is our home. OUR home. Incidentally, spender, when're we moving to the city into a hotel? I hate this hell-hole!

(A very good looking dumb cop, PETER BELLINGS, blows his whistle and begins to take JOHNNY away.)

Whistle!

JOHNNY

What from my life?

NOLA

What JOHNNY, as he is dragged away eyeing PETER at the same

time. *to get put away* But I'll wait for you, darling ... I'll wear it, by everything that's holy.

(The lights dim down on NOLA leaving PETER in a spot.)

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HISTORY | PROJECT

PETER

And just what was holy to Nola? Nothing. My name is Peter Billings. I'm a dumb cop. I was born with my badge pinned to my skin, and Nola spotted me in the paddy wagon. She brushed her silver fox against my blue flannel, and we made love in the wagon. Apollo cried and begged, but Nola, well, she just groped for peace. Nola didn't care about the grocery bill, the drugstore bill, the laundry bill. She had a vague idea that there was this war going on, but as long as it wasn't going on in Hollywood, she didn't care. People were starving in Europe. People were going on welfare. Mazie had to take on two jobs, and I needed a raise, to keep up with Nola's capricious, teeny-tiny expenses.

BLACKOUT.

(The stage lights come up on
NOLA and her SPEECH TEACHER.)

NOLA

T ... t ... t ... t ... t ... t ... t ... t ...

TEACHER

No, Miss Noonan, round tones, round, round! Caress the palate ... soothe the roof ... roof, bitch, roof!

PETER

ters in a huff.)
g twenty five dollars of my hard-

NOLA

o away. Come back later ... I'm busy.

PETER

stion, I expect an answer.

SPEECH TEACHER

Men!

NOLA

(SHE holds up her hands.)

Peter, my nails are drying. You know I can't answer sill questions when my nails are drying.

PETER

Why?

NOLA

I talk with my hands ... now be a good boy and go play
in traffic. Peter ... scat, scat, scat!

SPEECH TEACHER

No, Miss Noonan ... t ... t ... t ... t ... t ...

BLACKOUT.

(The stage lights come up on
Peter seated. TOULOUSE is

PETER
Why?

NOLA
You're on duty ...

PETER
Look, Nola, you never stopped to think why they stuck Apollo away, and you certainly didn't care when it happened.

(penny)
NOLA
(Fingering her necklace.)
Boy, you got a bad habit of bringing up the past. Well, I can't live in the past. Peter, I tried to be sophisticated. All these months, didn't I peddle tickets for the policeman's ball? That drag! And didn't I perform at the damn thing? You think special material comes cheap? And how about me serving punch to all those cops and their wives! And your perverted commissioner grabbing my ass backstage. Just so you could get a raise. Peter, I never said anything ... I just grinned and beared it. But you don't care if I never become a movie star. You wanna see me rot here. You'd like to see me fall away in this railroad flat with you and Toulouse and that second-hand hot plate.

PETER
All right, Nola, all right.

NOLA
No, it's not all right, Nola, it's not all right! I beauty parlor in months, and when I innocent thing like hire a speech with my "t's", you blow up!

PETER
our "t's"?

NOLA
They're not movie star "t's", you know that. Don't get vague with me.

PETER
What's this movie star mystique with you, anyway?

NOLA (Margo)

(With mounting hysteria.)

Peter, I never lied to you. We both got into this thing with our two eyes open. I never led you on, and it's been that way ever since that night in the paddy wagon. Always had a weakness for paddy wagons, you know that ...

(SHE drops her cigarette and stamps it out.)

Ahh, never mind! When I met you, I forgot about the others. I thought you were my chance, my ticket outta the misery I was in. But now, when you show me two tickets to St. Paul ... I can't go with you to St. Paul. I can't meet your sister and brother-in-law. I just don't think I'm the type of girl you could bring home to your sister ... your brother-in-law, maybe ... but not your sister. What they think of a ... a ... a ...

PETER

A stripper?

NOLA

(An artiste! Ahh, I'm just a little nobody. What do I have to offer?) (A façade, a glittering façade? I can't go to St. Paul, or anywhere else.) (I gotta go to Hollywood, while there still is a Hollywood.)

~~Taylor's speech~~
(The follow spot comes up on TOULOUSE.)

TOULOUSE

ing in forty-five minutes, and on it
iness to be. But for some odd reason
r did reach Hollywood. It came close.

BLACKOUT.

(The stage lights come up on NOLA, in a dressing room.)

THE
LGBTQ
HISTORY | PROJECT

BLACKOUT.

(The lights pick up ARNY, a film director.)

ARNY

Hollywood! Babylon! Girls came ... girls went. Girls came ... girls went. There wasn't a girl in the world who didn't want to be a movie star, unless of course they wanted to become nurses, and after they left me, they became nurses. It seemed like they were all cut from the same mold. But Nola ... well, she got the part. She didn't even have to audition. She knew what to do. She was too beautiful to resist, too mysterious to ignore, too dangerous to trust. She was a goddess and a star. If she was beautiful, it was because she was born to be so, if she was blonde ... don't forget, I made her that way.

(The stage lights come up, revealing the movie set and FRITZ, ARNY's assistant.)

All right, is everybody here today? Everybody on the set. Toulouse de la Beauprès ...

(TOULOUSE enters.)

TOULOUSE

Arny, do you think I look like Delores Del Rio?

ARNY

Get real

TOULOUSE

Last night, didn't you?

ARNY

the set ... absolute quiet ...

LA and her SPEECH TEACHER enter.)

ARNY

Nola, baby ...

NOLA

Arny, sweetie ...

(THEY come together and buss. Meanwhile, the SPEECH TEACHER checks over the set, and finally nods her okay.)

Thank you, Anna.

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ARMY

Right this way, darling. On the chalk marks ... stay on the chalk marks. They're perfectly visible. And back up for nobody.

NOLA

Look, Army. I am not going to appear in the kind of a picture that attracts that kind of an audience.

(By this time, others have come on the set, including LAMONTE, NOLA's leading man.)

(SHE refers to him.)

Now I put him on the payroll, and I can take him off.

(SHE pushes him away.)

Three feet ... three feet ... three feet!

ARMY

All right, Fritz. Okay, let's get a move on. All right, quiet on the set. Nola Noonan in "THE GARDENER AND THE GODDESS".

FRITZ

Lights ... camera ... action ... playback!

LAMONTE

Do you think I can go on letting you support me for the rest of my life?

(HE is holding NOLA close, so SHE can emote, smoulder and do everything but let him get attention.)

You work like a slave down at the five-and-dime, to harpies all day long, and I can't see this ... of course, until I'm on my knees where there really is nothing else we can do. Where there really is no other choice, is there?

(A has been handed a page, and gets all upset, breathing heavily, panting furiously.)

NOLA

(Certainly not looking at her script, speaking to ARMY, to anybody.)

What is this? What is this?

ARMY

Cut! What is what, Miss Noonan?

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NOLA

(Holding up the page.)

This! Qu'est-ce que c'est? In case you don't recognize French when it hits you, that means "what is this?"

ARNY

Why, this happens to be dialogue, Miss Noonan.

NOLA

Oh, yeah? Dialogue! Dialogue! I, Nola Noonan, goddess and star of stage and screen, do not do dialogue! I don't speak lines! I'm Nola Noonan. Dialogue ... you must be insane. Cut it. Out.

ARNY

Yeah, okay.

NOLA

Now!

ARNY

All right, it's cut.

(To LAMONTE.)

You just continue with your next speech. We're cutting out the part where Miss Noonan is supposed to say "no".

LAMONTE

Yes, all right. I do all the speaking, and all the cameras are on her.

NOLA

There's no business like show business ... get your ass on that set before I kick it there. Okay, Arny,

FRITZ

Lights ... camera ... action ...

A and LAMONTE dance. SHE
ns whispering in his ear.)

LAMONTE

What is it now, you dimwit redhead bitch?!

(LAMONTE and NOLA go for each other.)

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ARNY

Cut! All right, Nola, all right, everybody ... quiet!
What's wrong, Nola, you got a bug up your ass this morning?

NOLA

Can the filth, Arny. This guy just ain't playing the scene like he should.

ARNY

What was he doing wrong?

NOLA

It wasn't what he was doing, it's what he wasn't doing.

ARNY

Riddles, Noonan! All right, what wasn't he doing?

NOLA

He wasn't making love to me ... he wasn't adoring me.
A nola Noonan movie is full of love, adoration, sex, sensationalism. Best part of the picture ... Nola Noonan. He wasn't worshipping my body ... he wasn't ...

ARNY

(To LAMONTE.)

What was she whispering to you?

LAMONTE

"Worship me, you dodo ... make love to me or get your ass
... re me, schmuck ..." I couldn't make

ARNY

ance. The movie just started ...
time for you to act.

NOLA

... there's plenty of time for me to
act! As a matter of fact, from now on you'll have
nothing but time, 'cause I'm quitting ...

ARNY

Nola, honey, please ... you don't ...

NOLA

Get the fuck out of my way ...

ARNY

Nola, there's nobody in Hollywood but you!

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HISTORY | PROJECT

NOLA

Get Toulouse. She needs a job ... give the girl a break, slob.

BLACKOUT.

(A slow spot comes up on ARNY, making love to NOLA. His riding crop appears behind NOLA. This must be his way with her.)

NOLA

Oh, Arny, please don't stop making love to me. Nobody does it like you do.

ARNY

Well, you've gotta be a good little girl and finish shooting on this picture. And then I'll take you out tonight.

NOLA

Okay. I'll finish shooting on one condition ... you don't take me out tonight.

ARNY

Huh?

NOLA

We stay in! Beat the shit out of me, Arny!

BLACKOUT.

the lights come up, we
in NOLA's dressing room.
and TOULOUSE are also
nt. NOLA is drinking
from a gin bottle.)

TOULOUSE

You better lay off the booze. We came all the way from Chicago for this? You're holding up production. I can't wait until they get you under those hot lights in front of those cameras. They've got big fists like cured hams and they'll beat every female hormone out of your body, just like they did to Anna May Wong!

THE
LGBTQ
HISTORY | PROJECT

NOLA

Whaddya mean, "cut"? Fuck you ... "cut"! Strike that damn wind machine, and maybe I won't need an iron lung on set twenty-four hours! Can't we play this touching scene in a bus depot? What's the difference? A conductor is a conductor! Never did like pilots, anyway.

SPEECH TEACHER

"Pilots", Miss Noonan. P ... p ... p ... p ... pilots. Speak the speech as I taught it to you, trippingly on the tongue ...

NOLA

(Kicking the SPEECH TEACHER.)

Get off my tongue ... hag!

ARNY

Listen, Nola, this is dialogue we're fooling with.

NOLA

Dialogue!! There's that word again. I don't mind speaking it ... d'ya have to remind me constantly?

ARNY

And Nola, this is a prison quickie. This ain't one of those three-hour long, spectacular, biblical madnesses, where you play a deaf mute saint who wanders around the desert, and won't talk for fourteen days ... then goes out and falls in a river and drowns, because she can't remember the swimming instructions John the Baptist taught her, but that's okay, because she gave them up for lent! ~~What's the point of~~ here with those films! The steam has a message!

NOLA

Say, when I wanna message, I'll call

(throws TOULOUSE on the floor.)

ARNY

And another thing, Cinderella. Your language doesn't look very pretty in the columns every day. You'd better start acting like a lady in public. Gulping down pills and slopping gin at the Brown Derby, while John Wayne picks up a tab for six people he don't even know ... it ain't nice.

THE
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NOLA

Since when is a goddess expected to act like a lady?
Since when is a goddess expected to pick up a check for
six people? Since when has a goddess expected to be
nice?! Prison quickie or no prison quickie, I am a
star first, a goddess second, and a lady ...

(SHE slaps TOULOUSE.)

... never!

ARNY

Nola ...

NOLA

The goddess has spoken!

ARNY

(Bending NOLA's arm behind her
back.)

Nola, sweetie, honey, baby, darling, poopie ... get
this! And get it straight. Your language is costing
the studio valuable prestige. This is not the old
days, and it's not like old times when Nola could come
in and bitch to just anyone living ... no. These are
hard times. People are forming bread lines.

NOLA

Let 'em eat cake!

ARNY

Look at you! Look at you! Take a good look at you!!

(NOLA quietly sits and
listens to ARNY.)

to smell like a rummie ... a lush. You
an aging character actress on her way
ry. You've forgotten what it means to
ts at your steady, pretty, pedicured,
feet... look at those feet. Look at
t! If they're not swollen, they're
if you got them in ace bandages so tight
ap the shit out of you and bind those
... you're amazing ... I've never seen such a
pig! And what do you do, Porky? You sit around on your
ass all day watching "I Love Lucy."
Ah, yes. Stars are stars, and stars will have outrageous
private lives ... so outrageous that even I can't keep
them out of the newspapers! I warned you once. I warned
you twice. I warned you three ... four times after that.
I remember. And what does the property man find in your

(Continued.)

THE
LGBTQ
HISTORY | PROJECT

ARNY (continued)

purse? Gin, gin, gin! Gin-soaked, rotting, smelly, sweaty Nola Noonan ... how does that sound? A camel smells better than you do! But you go right on, pouring that cheap, French perfume all over your clothes. It's getting so bad I can hardly distinguish the perfume from your unbelievably offensive B.O. And I don't mean Box Office, bitch!

And when was the last time you shaved your legs? Brushed your teeth? Gargled ... chewed a piece of sweet smelly and tasty chew gum ... and when was the last time you went to the confession, Nola? But they say with age, there is the closest relative: senility. Get it, sweetie? Senility's setting in with you. Face it, Nola, you've had it! Even Toulouse says your through. You've changed, Nola. You've lost a great deal of that innocence you displayed so early in your career. ... but soon replaced by a cute drinking habit. Boy, what plans I had for you. You were gonna be big time, big top, honey! You and that schmuck sidekick of yours.

I'm speechless, Nola, absolutely speechless! You turned out to be a real hard case ... a mean motherfucker! Wow, am I hurting. Well, get this and get it straight, just in case you forgot ... your silver lining is tarnished ... shot. Go on and shake, you rat bastard, drink, drink, drink, smoke, let them feel your legs up. What the fuck do you care? You're stoned and out of your head most of the time. You can't remember whether you're walking on air, a tight rope, or thin ice. But I'm warning you, Nola, and I'll be brief ... watch out ... just watch out ... you can only push me too far before I bust. I'm

a guy if you're a regular kind of a understand one another? Then, we do

ant to pay five bucks to see a pair of smelly slob in pink sequins. Bad put up with those friends of yours. s in the Hollywood. Do you know what call your co-stars? "A couple of ers", how do you like that?

But I put up with them ... Why? Because your name alone on any flyer, kiosk or marquee anywhere in the world today evokes such a devastating and intoxicating spell for millions of men everywhere. Oh, there's no getting around it without running into the girl on cloud nine ... Why don't you face it, Nola? You've got a few good pictures left in you, maybe, with a nice long rest without

(Continued.)

THE
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HISTORY | PROJECT

ARNY (continued)

any of de boozie-booze. Maybe then you could get back on that set without falling on your goddamned face. Today you fell on your face ... or was it your ass? Come to think of it, Nola, it's getting mighty hard to tell which is your face and which is your ass.

(The CAST laughs at this.)

Quiet! At first it was funny. The audiences thought it was a novelty act. You know, part of the show? You no longer amuse anybody ... you're fucking repulsive! Do you ever know what it means to be fucking repulsive? You are gonna suffer, Nola. It don't take no crystal ball to figure out where you'll wind up ... the bins! The loony bins! In between flops that's where they'll keep you ... just so they can keep you from killing yourself because every day a little bit of your mind disappears ...

(HE makes an air sound.)

Whoosh! And I really think your brain cells have been anaesthetized from your sleazy environment. Go ahead and drink ... and then tell me something, after you piss away every female hormone in your decaying body, then what? What the fuck then, huh?

I don't know about you anymore, Nola. I just can't put up with you anymore. My patience with you is at a low ebb. You know what that means, ya dumb cunt?! Any time you feel like you wanna take a nice long walk somewhere else, you go right ahead ... and if you insist on drinking yourself to death, do it on your own time! I pay people to make pictures ... I don't pay people to drink and sweat in my company.

(HE lifts her arm.)

What a fucking mess you are! You smell, You stink ... pew!

NOLA

(NOLA is really moving from her chair.)
ate you! And I will never talk to you
as I live, which will be forever. You
silver screen, and then you dragged me
down. Well, ARNY, tell me ... how does it feel to play
God?

ARNY

It hurts, Nola. It hurts.

NOLA

That's great. Hitting a woman when she'd drunk.

THE
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HISTORY | PROJECT

TOULOUSE

You don't understand, Army. Comebacks are a delicate operation.

NOLA

Comeback ... comeback ... there's that word again. Everyone's throwing that word in my face, as if I was Charlie Chaplin and that was a pie. There is nothing left to be delicate about Nola Noonan.

(SHE kicks TOULOUSE.)

And that's for not calling the liquor store!

BLACKOUT.

(The follow spot comes up on ARNY.)

ARNY

The word was out ... there is nothing delicate about Nola Noonan. Production was shut down for a few days. Nola was her own law. The title of the movie was being changed. "SEARCH FOR A DEAD NYMPHO" didn't sparkle, had no glamour ... in short, it lacked class. The picture was one of Noonan's first since her breakdown, and it was set to preen at Grauman's Chinese, so the title had to give! Weeks later, I came up with "GODDESS OF THE REICH!"

BLACKOUT.

follow spot comes up on SPEECH TEACHER.)

SPEECH TEACHER

... seen my milk truck in three months. The picture "GODDESS OF THE REICH" was stopped for three weeks, to get Miss Noonan's tongue in shape for the motion picture. But she still insisted on a minimum of dialogue, just in case there were any vicious Chinks in the audience. I'll never forget the night of the premiere. Nola thought it would be a great idea if we all arrived in the milk truck, but like I said, I haven't seen it in three months. Well, milk truck or no milk truck, this was a premiere to end all premieres.

BLACKOUT.

THE
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HISTORY | PROJECT

(The stage lights come up on ARNY and NOLA, seated as if in the theatre watching her film. From offstage, we hear the repeat of the dialogue from "THE GARDENER AND THE GODDESS".)

LAMONTE'S VOICE

Do you think I can go on letting you support me for the rest of my life? You work like a slave down at the five-and-dime, selling hairnets to harpies all day long, and I can't let you go on like this ...

NOLA

(Speaking loudly over the movie's dialogue, and eliciting yells from other, imaginary viewers, called from offstage.)

Look at that shot. You couldn't have held it just a little longer? If you blink, you'd miss the whole thing.

(SHE sits for a moment, then turns on ARNY.)

I don't give a good goddamn who rented what fur from what furrier! Premiere or no premiere!

(There is a "Sssh!" from offstage.)

NOLA starts to whisper, but soon builds again.)

How could they pull a switch like this on me ... they knew! They knew! There's a clause in my contract!

A hears a "Hey lady!" from stage, and starts whispering.)

Can't they read, up in the premiere 're so busy promoting Linda Darnell, s a blur!

stage, there is a "Sssh!")

fically ... no Chinese New Year's, dries ... or theatres! -sssh!)

And with all the scratch houses in New York, they gotta pick Grauman's!

ARNY

But sweetie!

NOLA

(A long stare.)

Look, Arny, I've had it up to here with you "but sweetie's". Take your foxes and feathers and furs and scam ... the goddess will remain absent.

("Ssssh!")

ARNY

Oh, no she won't, either. They want you there ... they want your tongue print!

NOLA

(SHE turns to ARNY.)

My tongue print?

(SHE turns desperately to someone, anyone else.)

My tongue print!?

ARNY

Now doesn't that make you feel all young and girlish again?

NOLA

My tongue print!

ARNY

I can just see it, right beside Marlon Brando's boot print.

NOLA

I love it ... I love it! Okay, you talked me into it ... gimme five minutes ... I gotta coat my tongue.

BLACKOUT.

(The follow spot comes up on an ANNOUNCER, at the side of stage.)

ANNOUNCER

n Hollywood land ... oh, it's a star-p-the-sky occasion tonight, ladies and Noonan's comeback has turned into a ... fans have come from all over the world west, most exciting, most sensational ... or so they tell me! "GODDESS OF THE REICH" promises to be a biggie! Oh, look at the stars arriving ... Miss Noonan should be here any minute ... look! There's Maria Montez and ... and Huntz Hall!

BLACKOUT.

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HISTORY | PROJECT

(The stage lights come up on
NOLA, pacing frantically, and
ARNY, the epitome of calm.)

NOLA

Tell me it was a joke ... tell me it was a joke ...
tell me it was a joke!

ARNY

It was a joke!

NOLA

Then why ain't I laughing? They planted her there to
make me nervous! Plots I need, yet! I didn't have
enough aggravation in one night?! Get Toulouse outta
my limousine! I ain't no anti-semite, neither. I know
enough to know it ain't Rosh Hashonah ... where does
she come off telling me she was performing an old
Jewish custom?! Nobody blows the chauffeur in my
limousine!

ARNY

The limousine was rented, Nola.

NOLA

I'm paying for it; it's mine!

ARNY

Nola, the studio's paying for it ...

NOLA

Arny, how is the studio paying for it? I wasn't born
are you gonna learn not to argue with
an, you're absolutely impossible.

ARNY

s get going ... we're holding things up.
late enough ... let's not overdo it and
hing.

NOLA

What, are you afraid of a few setbacks now? Just wait'll
my tongue flashes across that screen!

ARNY

So ... this is the real Nola Noonan. It's a crying
shame what twelve press agents, working overtime, can
do to the human spirit.

NOLA

What the hell are you rattling about?

ARNY

(Grabbing NOLA, who is making
all kinds of hysterical sounds.)

Hey, hey, hey ... c'mon, c'mon, c'mon ... calm your
nerves, Nola ... Let's go, we got a premiere to do.

BLACKOUT.

(The stage lights come up on
NOLA, seated and drinking gin
from her bottle. Her SPEECH
TEACHER enters, talking and
acting like a demented vampire.)

SPEECH TEACHER

I quit, that's all ... I quit! All that screaming and
hollering going on all night long! I hate it, that's
all ... I hate it! I can't take it any longer, d'you
hear? I've got a nervous system, too, and it's not
happy, nooo! Hollywood ... nooo ... nooo! Dialogue
... nooo ... nooo! I hate it, I hate it ... I quit,
I quit!

NOLA

(Pulling out a crucifix.)

Does this mean you're leaving?

BLACKOUT.

lights come up on MAZIE
(TOULOUSE.)

TOULOUSE

ve her ... what would she have left?
pills? Her air tight hose with the
ired Mazie.

MAZIE

Nola got so nervous, she swallowed a dozen Miltown by
mistake. Nola got so nervous, she called up her mother,
Frieda Noonan.

TOULOUSE

A little pathos. Mazie and Army and I arrived in New
York a few hours later ... I must say it did Nola a
world of good ... she started going to see her old
movies ...

THE
LGBTQ
HISTORY | PROJECT