

IN HIGH HEELS AND MIRRORS

by

DE04-20

DE04

INT. BACKSTAGE DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

A KNOCK at the door.

JOEY (O.S.)

Yes?

HERBIE (O.S.)

(behind door)

You're on in five!

JOEY (O.S.)

Almost ready.

JOEY SETLICH, 26, sitting before a vanity mirror.

Tall. Bone slender. Beautiful.

He throws on a billowing lace-front wig. The crown of his beguiling drag look.

The mirror reflects his vacant stare.

Joey quickly comes to. Grabs his lipstick. Continues beautifying himself.

INT. GAY BAR - NIGHT

It's packed. A BOUNCER checks I.D.'s by the door. The bartender serves shimmering cocktails.

A lip syncing drag queen dazzles the trendy crowd. He ends with a gauche curtsy. The audience claps and whistles.

HERBIE, a pudgy emcee, takes the stage. He sports a glittery bow tie.

HERBIE

So what'd you boys think of  
Sugarpop's performance?

A positive crowd response.

HERBIE (CONT'D)

Don't lie. Y'all know it was bunk.

Scattered laughter. The bouncer chuckles. Herbie rolls out a few more jokes.

ANDY SETLICH, 23, enters the bar. Blue jeans. Ball cap. Leather jacket. He flashes his I.D. to the Bouncer.

ANDY  
I'm here to see Joey.

BOUNCER  
Who?

ANDY  
Joseph Setlich? He works here?

BOUNCER  
There's nobody who works here by  
that name.

ANDY  
Isn't this MOCKERS?

BOUNCER  
Are you here for the show or not?

Andy tries scoping the place.

BOUNCER (CONT'D)  
Ten to get in.

Andy forks over the cash.

He takes an obscure seat by the bar. Scans his surroundings.  
A bit out of his element.

HERBIE  
Our next diva is someone I'm sure  
all of you will enjoy. She normally  
hosts Sinful Saturdays; but tonight  
she wants to give you a special  
treat, so give it up for the  
sizzling and salacious LADY MIROIR!

Cheers ripple. Music cues.

A platform shoe covered in mirror shards steps on stage.  
Reflects the spotlight. A smoky voice croons.

It's Joey, clad in complete drag.

He floats through the delighted audience. He mimics feminine  
finesse with every step... every note... every flounce of his  
tresses.

Andy watches Joey's mock-lady movements.

Joey sashays upstage. Faces the crowd with a smoldering  
glance.

Recognition strikes Andy.

ANDY  
 (to self)  
 Joey.

The song comes to an end. The audience claps and cheers.

Spotlight cuts out.

INT. BACKSTAGE - LATER

Joey pens a final autograph. His grateful fans exit the back door. He quickly retreats to his--

DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joey enters with an exasperated sigh. Peels off his wig. Plops down in front of the vanity mirror.

JOEY  
 I'm so glad that's over.

Herbie appears in the doorway. He murders a jelly donut.

HERBIE  
 You served it fierce tonight! They were lovin' it.

JOEY  
 Please. It's the same old crowd every weekend, Herbie.  
 (rubs temples)  
 Ugh. My life...

HERBIE  
 Girl, cut the drama. You know how many of those queens would love to fill your stilettos?

JOEY  
 If they can walk in seven inches, then be my guest.

Commotion brews outside.

BOUNCER (O.S.)  
 I'm sorry, that's a private dressing room.

ANDY (O.S.)  
 I just need a minute to talk to him.

BOUNCER  
Sir, you can't be back here.

ANDY (O.S.)  
But he's my brother.

JOEY  
Herbie, what's going on out there?

HERBIE  
Lemme check.

Herbie takes off.

Joey faces the mirror. Removes his wig cap.

Something in the reflection stirs him.

Andy.

Only a few feet away.

Joey spins to face him.

JOEY  
What are you doing here?

HERBIE  
(coming up behind Andy)  
Who is this?

ANDY  
(offering a handshake)  
I'm Andy.

JOEY  
Herbie, a moment please.

Herbie's lost. Leaves anyway.

JOEY (CONT'D)  
Close the door.

Andy complies.

JOEY (CONT'D)  
What are you doing here? How did  
you find me?

ANDY  
I wanted to come see you. I tried  
calling, but your number changed.  
(MORE)

ANDY (CONT'D)

And when I visited the address I had, the landlady said you moved, but that I might be able to catch you working here--

JOEY

You shouldn't've come.

Joey turns back to his vanity dresser.

Snatches his wig. Makeup. Hosiery. Shoves each of them into his bag.

Still senses Andy's presence.

He huffs. Stops packing.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Wait for me outside. I'll be out in a few.

EXT. GAY BAR - BACK DOOR - NIGHT

Rainbow flags sway. Andy hangs out in the cold.

Two men walk by. Hand-in-hand. They catch Andy staring. He shifts his focus elsewhere.

The back door bursts open. Andy looks up.

Joey exits in tight yet less feminine clothing. Strides briskly. Already smoking a cigarette.

JOEY

My apartment's a block over.

Andy keeps up.

INT. JOEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Shabby chic.

The boys enter. Joey tosses his bag onto a chair. Marches to his bedroom.

JOEY

Sorta make yourself at home.

Andy checks out the unusual place.

A "NO H8" block poster of Joey in drag.

Various mirrors along the walls. Unique shapes. Different sizes. Echoing Andy's reflection.

A plethora of pop albums. Andy browses a few.

ANDY  
 (to self)  
 Madonna, Madonna, Madonna... more  
 Madonna. Madonna... Lady Gaga?

Joey enters in a satin kimono. Masculine features shape his freshly washed face. He musses his short brown hair as he heads into the kitchen.

JOEY  
 Are you staying anywhere?

ANDY  
 (tentative)  
 Wasn't plannin' on it. I just came  
 to talk to you.

Joey shoots an askance glance. He then surveys the fridge.

JOEY  
 I don't keep any beer. But I have  
 lots of vodka. Some boxed wine.

ANDY  
 You got any Sprite?

Joey looks at Andy with a raised eyebrow.

JOEY  
 Sure...

Joey grabs a can of soda and bottle of vodka. Pulls two clear cups out of a nearby cabinet. Sets them on the counter. Fills both with ice. One with soda. One with vodka.

ANDY  
 I, uh... I told dad I was comin' to  
 see you. He says hi.

JOEY  
 Really.

Joey hands Andy the cup of soda.

Andy sits on a couch.

Joey stands by a table across the room. Sips his vodka. Eyes Andy carefully.

ANDY  
So, uh... How've ya been?

Joey stares coldly.

JOEY  
Good.

ANDY  
Cool.  
(beat)  
You, uh... been doin' the, um...

Andy gestures with his hands.

JOEY  
Drag shows?

ANDY  
Yeah... How's that goin'?

JOEY  
Good.

ANDY  
Cool.  
(beat)  
You been doin' that for a while--

JOEY  
What do you want?

Andy meets Joey's austere glare.

JOEY (CONT'D)  
You didn't hunt me down to make  
small talk, Andy. So why are you  
here? Is dad on his death bed?

ANDY  
No, no. Dad's fine--

JOEY  
Then what is it?

Andy strains out the words.

ANDY  
I... I started goin' to this church  
recently, and... It's been on my  
heart to tell you that I'm... I'm  
sorry.

JOEY

(dubious)

You went to church. And you felt compelled to apologize... I don't get it.

ANDY

I needed to apologize for how I treated you before-- For back when we were younger.

JOEY

It's been eight years, Andy. Why now?

ANDY

(eyes on the floor)

Because God spoke to me.

Joey doesn't follow.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I was in church, and He told me I was wrong about the way I treated you. How I dealt with you in light of your sin.

JOEY

My sin? Oh gosh. You drove four-hundred miles so you can talk to me about my sin?

ANDY

No, not exactly. That's not what I'm trying to say--

JOEY

Then what are you saying, Andy?

ANDY

(looks at Joey)

That... I know I wasn't the best brother to you. But I came here to say I'm sorry. And that I love you, and that... Jesus loves you--

Joey smacks the table.

JOEY

Don't play me for a fool, Andy! You haven't spoken to me in eight years!

(MORE)

JOEY (CONT'D)

You think I'm so stupid I'd believe you went to church and thought to come all this way so you can apologize? Is this some Christian "scheme"? To find me so you can judge me all over again?

ANDY

I'm not here to judge you. I'm not in any position to judge, and I never was. I'm here to make things right with you... if possible.

JOEY

You can't make things right after what you did. Not for how you hurt me. I sacrificed my teenage years trying to hold our family together after mom died. But you and dad both rejected me.

(bitter reflection)

You didn't even come to my high school graduation.

ANDY

I know, I just... When you came out, I didn't know how to deal with-- The whole thing, it confused me! I felt like I lost my older brother.

JOEY

You didn't lose me, Andy! You pushed me away! That day dad kicked me out, do you remember what you said to me? You looked me in the face and you said, "I hope God smites you with AIDS."

(scorned)

And now you have the nerve to sit there and tell me "Jesus loves me."

Sorrow veils Andy's face. He sighs heavily. Voice tremors.

ANDY

I never meant to stop loving you; I just didn't know how to love you when...

JOEY

(pained)

When I was gay? Because I was suddenly a different person, you forgot how to love me?

(MORE)

JOEY (CONT'D)

What if it was you, Andy? What if you turned out to be "the gay one"?

Joey's words sink deep.

ANDY

I'm so sorry.

(let's tears fall)

I know I can't take back what I've done. But I've asked God to forgive me--

JOEY

See that's the thing! You guys always use that as your defense whenever it suits your sin; but when it comes to anyone else's--

ANDY

There's no difference.

Joey's taken aback.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I thought there was, but... I've learned I need Jesus as much as you do. And if He hadn't come into my life, I...

His voice trails off. Joey figures it out.

JOEY

So that's what this shimmies down to? Humph... Well you find me a Jesus who bleeds rainbows and glitter, then come preach to me.

(cold)

Now if you'll excuse me, I need to get my beauty sleep.

Andy hesitates. Rises slowly. Heads toward the door.

Joey swallows. A vague crack in his resolve.

Andy's hand touches the doorknob. He looks back.

Joey crosses his arms. His countenance stone.

Andy takes the hint. Nods goodbye. Leaves.

Joey quietly locks the door. He's vexed and drained. Trudges toward his bedroom.

Something catches his eye. On the coffee table.

A Bible.

Joey picks it up, uncertain of it. Cracks open the cover.

A photo falls out. Joey retrieves it. He checks it out.

It's Joey and Andy when they were kids. About 10 and 7 respectively. Huge, carefree smiles. Joey's arm draped over Andy's shoulder. Andy leaning into Joey affectionately. Brotherly bliss captured in time.

Joey's eyes soften.

He looks in the Bible cover and sees a dedication: "From Andrew Setlich. To Joseph Setlich. 2012."

Joey reads a note on the opposite page.

ANDY (V.O.)

"I hope someday you'll read this and discover Jesus, Who forgives us and makes all things new. And I pray we can have a strong relationship again. Love, Your Little Brother."

Joey sets the Bible down. Studies the photo again.

He hurries out the front door.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Joey runs into the street.

JOEY

Wait. Andy!

Too late. He watches Andy's car drive off.

Joey's shoulders slump. He folds his arms. Looks up at the smoggy night sky.

INT. JOEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Joey slugs back inside. Shuts the door.

He takes the Bible from the coffee table. Scrutinizes the covering. Fans through some pages.

INT. ANDY'S CAR - SAME

Andy cruises. Contemplates.

A cross dangles from the rearview mirror.

INT. JOEY'S APARTMENT - SAME

Joey's eyes weave through labyrinthine text.

Unusual words and phrases stand out:

- "His lovingkindness"

- "atonement"

- "propitiation"

- "new creation"

Joey looks up. Dabs his watery eyes with his finger. Regains composure.

He bookmarks the Bible with the old photo. Tucks the Bible underneath his arm. Moves toward his bedroom.

He stops before a mirror.

Briefly considers his reflection.

Adjusts the frame.

Then clicks off the light.

CUT TO BLACK.

