

IF/THEN

excerpt

CAMILLE: Well, now that we've established that I think it's time for bed.

[He stands, with alacrity.]

BILLY: Time for bed?

CAMILLE: Time for me to go to bed. And time for you to go wherever it is handsome young men disappear to in this big beautiful city.

[He hesitates, hangs his head.]

BILLY: Oh.

CAMILLE: I'm sorry. I'm being rude. You'll want to be paid.

[She reaches for her purse.]

BILLY: *[sadly]* Naw, I don't want to be paid.

CAMILLE: Don't be silly. It's no problem. And, really, I think for all your trouble—

BILLY: I didn't do it for money.

CAMILLE: Well, that's very sweet. However—

BILLY: Is that what you thought? You thought I was a hustler?

CAMILLE: *[a little embarrassed]* Well, it had crossed my mind, but don't take it personally. Take it as a sign of your—

BILLY: I just thought you were interesting, that's all.

CAMILLE: It's a compliment I wish I could return. As it happens, I only have a weakness for handsome young men in bad tuxes. When they drop a stuffed capon on my plate and whisper would-you-like-more-wine, my heart goes pitter-pat. The problem, of course, is that with waiters one quickly runs out of topics of mutual interest. I believe we've reached that point.

[He hangs his head, sullenly.]

CAMILLE: I'm sorry. I'm being unkind. It's just rather late, and I've got a lot to do tomorrow. But I do wish you the best of luck in all your future endeavors. Be happy. Be healthy, wealthy, and wise.

[He doesn't move.]

CAMILLE: And, of course, you must let me give you cab fare.

[Still he doesn't move.]

CAMILLE: I'll get your things.

[She goes out the upstage door and returns a moment later with his clothes: a waiter's tux, pants, and shoes, and a small gym bag. He accepts them reluctantly from her. Then, changing tack, he gives her a sly, seductive look and slowly removes his towel.]

CAMILLE: Your charms have already been amply noted.

[He starts to dress, slowly.]

BILLY: How did you get started in the jewelry business?

CAMILLE: Are you thinking of trying?

BILLY: Just making conversation.

CAMILLE: I guess I had a flair for it.

BILLY: Sure, but how did you get it out there? How'd you get people to notice you?

CAMILLE: I had some seed money. That helped.

BILLY: Investors?

[Beat.]

CAMILLE: The money... came from my husband.

BILLY: Hah! I knew it had to be something like that! Where is he now?

CAMILLE: Dead.

BILLY: I'm sorry.

CAMILLE: Well, life is loss, so they say.

BILLY: Where'd you meet him?

CAMILLE: Do you mind, Billy—it is Billy, isn't it?—I'm not feeling terribly autobiographical tonight.

BILLY: I was just curious. I like to know about people.

CAMILLE: Are you new in town?

BILLY: Pretty new.

CAMILLE: Well, you'll quickly discover that Manhattan is full of people only too willing to share their entire life story on two minutes' acquaintance. And the sooner you get dressed, the sooner you can go seek one out.

BILLY: I'm done now.

[He makes a show of looking through his gym bag.]

BILLY: Is that everything?

[He slaps his forehead.]

BILLY: I almost forgot.

[He heads for the bedroom.]

BILLY: My camera.

CAMILLE: Your—?

[He goes off and returns a moment later, holding aloft a small digital movie camera.]

CAMILLE: Where was that?

BILLY: On your bureau. I put it there when you were in the bathroom. It was pointed at the bed. It's quite a toy. Cost a lot of money, but it's worth it for the picture quality. It takes digital movies. See?

[He plays the movie back, allowing her to look over his shoulder as he does.]

BILLY: Yup. It's got a real good picture quality. You photograph well. Not many women would look good in that position.

[She reaches for it, but he holds it teasingly up out of her reach.]

BILLY: Uh-uh.

[She makes a few more swipes for it, then grabs his arm. He pushes her away with a rather too forceful blow to the chest. She staggers back and eyes him warily.]

CAMILLE: What do you intend to do with it?

BILLY: Depends on you. Left to my own devices I might just post it on the web. I've got a website all ready for it. But of course it won't stay there. There'll be thousands of copies all over the world within a few hours. People will be downloading it onto their hard drives. Showing their friends.

CAMILLE: Unless, if I understand your implication, I pay you a large sum of money.

BILLY: Yes.

CAMILLE: Such as...

BILLY: \$50,000.

CAMILLE: That is a large sum of money, Billy. And nothing I keep lying about the house.