

the worst you can say about me. I, uh, I think I'm gonna get better as I get older, you know? I think I'm gonna be the—the balding virile type, you know, as opposed to say the, uh, distinguished gray, for instance, you know? 'Less I'm neither o' those two. Unless I'm one o' those guys with saliva dribbling out of his mouth who wanders into a cafeteria with a shopping bag screaming about socialism.

(sighing)

Annie and I broke up and I—I still can't get my mind around that. You know, I—I keep sifting the pieces o' the relationship through my mind and—and examining my life and tryin' to figure out where did the screw-up come, you know, and a year ago we were . . . tsch, in love. You know, and-and-and . . . And it's funny, I'm not—I'm not a morose type. I'm not a depressive character. I—I—I, uh—

(laughing)

—you know, I was a reasonably happy kid, I guess. I was brought up in Brooklyn during World War II.

The Goodbye Girl

Warners/Rastar (Produced by Ray Stark), 1977

Screenplay by Neil Simon

Directed by Herbert Ross

Time: 1977

Place: New York City

Paula, an out-of-work dancer in her thirties, and her daughter, Lucy, ten, live in an apartment in New York City. Paula's live-in boyfriend, Tony, has recently deserted them and moved to California. He sublet the apartment without Paula's knowledge. When the new subletter, Eliot Garfield, arrives, Paula reluctantly lets him live with her and Lucy.

INFO

Eliot, in his thirties, is an actor from Chicago who has moved to New York to play Richard III Off Broadway.

One evening, on her way home from dance class, Paula has her purse stolen. After dinner she explains to Eliot that she's strapped for money and gamely asks to borrow some. Eliot responds generously, offering to pay all living expenses until she gets a job. Paula, suspicious, asks him what he wants in return. When Eliot says, "Just be nice to me," Paula misinterprets his remark and tells him to go to hell. This is Eliot's response.

ELIOT

START

Will you listen very, very carefully to me? Just for once— This may be the last time I ever talk to you. Not everyone in this world is after your magnificent body, lady. In the first place, it's not so magnificent. It's fair, but it ain't keepin' me up nights, ya know? I don't even think you're very pretty. Maybe if you smiled once and awhile, okay, but I don't want you to do anything against your religion. And you are *not* the only person in this city ever to get dumped on. I myself am a recent dumpee. I am a dedicated actor, Paula, ya know? I am dedicated to my art and my craft. I value what I do. And because of a mentally arthritic director, I am about to play the second greatest role in the history of the English-speaking theater like a double order of fresh California fruit salad. When I say "nice," I mean "nice"—ya know, decent, fair. I deserve it, because I'm a nice, decent and fair person. I don't wanna jump on your bones. I don't even want to see you in the morning. But I'll tell you what I do like about you, Paula: Lucy. Lucy's your best part. Lucy is worth puttin' up with *you* for. So here is fourteen dollars for the care and feeding of that terrific kid. *You* get zippity-doo-dah. You want any money? Borrow it from your ten-year-old daughter.

END