

LOU'S BLUES

Written by

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INT. LENA'S JAZZ LOUNGE - NIGHT

Summertime by Lena Horne and Harry Belafonte faintly plays in the background.

LOU (50s, black hair) sitting at a table on the main floor in front of the stage. Ella (22, waiter) approaches him.

ELLA

Can I get you another sauce,  
Mister?

Lou looks up and nods.

LOU

Yes. Scotch...neat...and make it a  
double.

ELLA

A double? You should take it easy.  
The evening is still young.

LOU

I can handle it. Besides, I'm  
waiting for someone. They're  
running late.

Ella walks to the bar to grab a decanter of Scotch. She returns to Lou's table to fill his glass.

ELLA

Mmm. I love this song.

LOU

Hm. Bronze Venuz was one of a kind.  
I remember when she performed right  
off of 142nd Street and Lenox  
Avenue. Her voice is smoky, yet so  
sensual and it could invite anyone  
deeper into the story behind any  
song she sings. She nurtures every  
note, one...by..one.

ELLA

Every time I hear this song it  
brings back so many fond and sweet  
memories of my childhood. She has a  
way with words that reminds me so  
much of when my mother used to sing  
to me as a baby.

LOU

Yea, she has a unique way with music that transcends time and will probably travel through generations.

ELLA

Well, I have to get back to work. I'll come back after a while to check on you. No more drinks tonight, hear?

LOU

Yes, Ella. Now, please let me be.

Ella sighs and walks away.

INT. LENA'S JAZZ LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Lou chugs the Scotch and pours himself another glass. Three drinks later, he hears the lounge doors open. He glances and notices a woman's silhouette.

LOU

There she is.

The woman removes her coat and the coat checkman takes it to the back. The woman begins walking towards Lou.

LENA

Dear, it's so good to see you.

Lou pulls out a chair for Lena to sit down.

LOU

You're late, sweetheart. I've been waiting hours for you.

LENA

I know. I've been waiting for you too.

LOU

The band has been performing without you.

LENA

They'll be playing without me for a while. I'm sure the band has been doing great.

LOU

They played one of Ella's favorites so far.

Lena hums the melody to Lena Horne's "Summertime".

LOU

Yep, that's the one. She's loved that song ever since you sang it to her as a baby.

LENA

How's Ella doing this evening?

LOU

She's been running this lounge like her own. She may be ready to take it over herself.

LENA

Well, we raised a bright and beautiful girl. I always knew she would be special.

LOU

Just like her mother.

INT. LENA'S JAZZ LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

LENA

Do you remember when we first started this club? We were young and...

LOU

Broke!

LENA (LAUGHING)

Broke, yes. But more importantly-in love.

LOU

Let our parents tell it, we didn't know what love was but I knew I loved you when I first laid eyes on you.

LENA

Yes, I remember because you couldn't pick your mouth up off of the floor to even say hello.

LOU (CHUCKLING)

I knew you were out of my league, but I didn't have anything to lose. Only to gain.

LENA

Although you didn't have much, you never made excuses to take me out. You've always treated me like a lady. What I admired about you the most was your ambition.

LOU

Woman, you sure do know how to make a man weak.

LENA

You know...you never told me why you insisted on naming the lounge after me.

LOU

Well, we started this club as a tribute to our love for Jazz and for one another. I wanted to name it after the greatest love of all-- you.

Ella Fitzgerald's Someone to Watch Over Me begins to play.

LOU

May I have this dance?

LENA

You may.

INT. LENA'S JAZZ LOUNGE - MOMENTS LATER

ELLA

Daddy?

LENA

Lou, it's time to cut out the drinking. It's been weighing on your health for quite some time.

LOU

Leave it to you to always worry. As long as you're here, you're all my health needs.

LENA

How long has it been?

Lou sheds a tear. Lena attempts to wipe it away, until Ella interrupts.

ELLA

Daddy? It's time we go home now.  
You've had enough to drink.

LOU

No. Wait, your mother!

ELLA

She's not here, Daddy. Remember?

Lou turns away from Ella and stumbles to the gentlemen's lavatory.

INT. GENTLEMEN'S LAVATORY

Lou rinses his face with cold water in the basin tap and stares in the mirror. He sees Lena's reflection standing behind him.

LOU

It's been 20 years...

Lena vanishes into thin air.

FADE OUT.