

# The Maiden's Prayer

Written by Nicky Silver

DRAMA

## Characters:

*LIBBY (Cynthia's hard-drinking sister, is in love with Taylor herself and she can take it no longer.)*

*PAUL (Taylor's best friend, a charming fellow, who, since childhood, has harbored a secret love for him.)*

*A restaurant. Libby and Paul are seated at a table with menus. Paul is quite tense.*

**LIBBY.** I ask you for advice and you ridicule me?!

**PAUL.** I did not ridicule you!

**LIBBY.** You called me "risible." You used the word risible. Thus you were able to make me feel small AND show off your fancy vocabulary at the same time. Well, no one is impressed.

**PAUL.** I just don't see the problem.

**LIBBY.** I explained it. I laid it out very clearly. I have this client --

**PAUL.** *(Correcting her.)* John.

**LIBBY.** Don't use the vernacular. It makes me feel cheap. I have this client, Gerald, perfectly nice man, used to see him Tuesdays and he offered me a job. Second editorial assistant, catalogue. Well do you know what that pays?

**PAUL.** I have no idea.

**LIBBY.** It doesn't pay enough for cat food.

**PAUL.** You don't have a cat.

**LIBBY.** Luckily, or she'd starve to death. The point is, I look at this job as supplemental income. Clearly, it can't be my main source of income. I mean clearly -- I don't know what the other assistants are doing, dealing drugs or something, I have no idea. So I have my regular clients and my new nine to five, which I'm looking at, strictly, as a doorway. You know, something that could lead to something that could lead to something. But I think I have to quit. I mean, I don't think I can stay there.

**PAUL.** *(Annoyed.)* Then quit.

**LIBBY.** Do you think I should?

**PAUL.** I have no idea.

**LIBBY.** But you see my point. It's one thing to sleep with Gerald, who by the way is the hairiest human being I've ever laid eyes on the man is one third simian -- it's one thing to fuck him when I'm getting paid to fuck him. But if I'm the second editorial assistant, catalogue, and I fuck him, it's sexual harassment!

**PAUL.** *(Angry.)* Then quit! Just quit!

**LIBBY.** Well ... you're in a mood.

**PAUL.** You horn your way in on this lunch and then bombard me with your problems, which, I'm sorry, I'm sticking to my guns, are simply risible -- I mean fuck him, don't fuck him. What's the difference? He pays you to fuck him, fuck him! -- Did it ever occur to you that I might have problems? I might have something on my mind?

**LIBBY.** No. Frankly, it didn't. I'm sorry I'm so self-absorbed. I am really, I'll try to be interested in other people in you. You have problems? You never have problems.

**PAUL.** Of course I have problems!

**LIBBY.** You never share them. You're very withholding. What kind of problems? What's the matter?

**PAUL.** Dolph wants to move in.

**LIBBY.** Dolph?

**PAUL.** The man I've been seeing.

**LIBBY.** (*Thinking*) You never mentioned a Dolph. I'd remember a Dolph.

**PAUL.** I told you. You don't listen!

**LIBBY.** What?

**PAUL.** Skip it.

**LIBBY.** His name is Dolph?

**PAUL.** He's Swedish.

**LIBBY.** Let's hope.

**PAUL.** I don't want to talk about it.

**LIBBY.** So do you think I should quit?

**PAUL.** We've been dating for three weeks, a record, and I'm very fond of him.

**LIBBY.** Does he speak English?

**PAUL.** Yes!

**LIBBY:** Good

**PAUL.** A little. Broken English. He's very sweet. He's very attracure. The sex is fantastic!

**LIBBY.** Have you seen a waiter?

**PAUL.** Are you listening!?

**LIBBY.** Yes, I'm sorry. He's sweet. How?

**PAUL.** He's cule. He makes me things.

**LIBBY.** What kind of things?

**PAUL.** Cookies. Baked goods. He's a baker.

**LIBBY.** He sounds like a catch. Move in with him. Dolph the baker. I hope you'll be very happy.

**PAUL.** I don't love him.

**LIBBY.** And you won't move in with him. I know you. The fact that it's been three weeks is the surprising part. You go through men much faster than I do, I mean I still have my very first client, Jack --- he gave me this watch. Like it? Anniversary gift - I still have Jack and you've been through God knows how many men!

**PAUL.** Not that many.

**LIBBY.** Shall I name them?

**PAUL.** It's not that many.

**LIBBY.** There was Billy, and Charles, and Donald, two Davids and Derrick, and Dell ---

**PAUL.** What's your point!?

**LIBBY.** I think I've made my point.

**PAUL.** Well, Dolph wants an answer -- is there a waiter? Is this a cafeteria?

**LIBBY.** And what do you mean I horn my way in?

**PAUL.** I told you I was having lunch with Taylor and you begged me to come along -

**LIBBY.** I wouldn't've had to beg if you'd've invited me.

**PAUL.** I haven't seen Taylor in months. I'm worried about him. I wanted to see him and you know you make him uncomfortable.

**LIBBY.** I don't make him uncomfortable. I don't make anyone uncomfortable!

**PAUL.** Fine.

**LIBBY.** I make him uncomfortable?

**PAUL.** Yes.

**LIBBY.** He told you that? When?

**PAUL.** I don't remember.

**LIBBY:** He never said *anything* - did he?

**PAUL.** He implied it.

**LIBBY.** Why would I make him uncomfortable?

**PAUL.** Because you love him.

**LIBBY.** So?

**PAUL.** Because you love hiin -- you're in love with him, obsessively, and you're very obvious about it.

**LIBBY.** And that makes him uncomfortable? Well, I refuse to participate in that kind hyper-sensitivity.