

I Can't Win

by

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Cast of Characters

NELLA :

50's

AVID :

50's

Place

Car - Moving

Time

Evening

2.

Setting: Nella and her husband Avid are driving along a dark road late at night.

At Rise: Nella is upset and getting worse as Avid tries to console her and get control of the situation.

AVID: You're working yourself up---

NELLA: Am I?!

AVID: Calm down--

NELLA: I will not calm down--

AVID: I'm here to listen, but talk calmly--

NELLA: Disgusted to no end!

AVID: I'm driving. Do you want me to pull over? I can't see shit as it is driving in the dark on roads I'm unfamiliar with---

NELLA: Drive slow and change your lights, the lights are on the wrong, THERE, that's it, that's why it was so dark while we're driving.

AVID: I can see now, but stop making me nervous, please.

NELLA (sighs): I don't know what to do anymore.

AVID: What is it about him that you don't like?

NELLA: I'm tired of him! Who the hell does he think he is to insult me that way? I cannot believe it, Avid. I am the adult. How dare he? Where does he get the nerve to speak that way? I just don't know what to say. I'm at a loss for words here. I cannot believe our daughter is dating an animal like that. What a piece of shit he is. God! You know, I told her to stay away from Germans. Did she listen? Of course not. She does what she wants to do anyway. What's the point?

I never liked him from day one. Hey, I'm sorry, but it's how my mother raised me. She told me, "Nella, you stay away from those German boys. They are controlling and jealous". So, that's exactly what I did. I respected my mother's wishes. If my mother said jump in front of a train I would have, because I trusted her word. My daughter, completely different story altogether. She rebels, she rebels against what I want her to do. She forgets all that I do for her as a mother and as a friend. Sometimes I can't believe she was raised under this roof.

Whatever, I'm through with it, let them both do what they want. I don't care anymore. At least my other daughter listens to me. She's my pride and joy. Thank God for her. She keeps me sane. I never have to complain about that one. A perfect little angel.

AVID: Don't you think you are taking this all so intensely?

NELLA: How can you say that?

AVID: I'm saying it because this guy has never shown us any reason to think unkindly of him.

NELLA: She complains to me about him all the time. I told her if you're not happy, LEAVE.

AVID: They are young and I am sure you are forgetting how many times you complained to your mother about me when we first started talking?

NELLA: What are you saying?

AVID: Your mother told me all about it. She said there were times you would cry yourself to sleep on the phone and completely forget about everything the following day. Ha!

NELLA: I never did such---well, on second thought, I do remember confiding in---I can't believe she told you that!

AVID laughs.

Don't laugh.

AVID: Relax. I'm just trying to point out that life isn't so bad. Sometimes we make things worse in our minds than they actually are.

NELLA: Are you saying I'm a crazy person? I am not a crazy person.

AVID: I'm not saying you're a crazy person, at least not the sort of crazy person you imagine.

NELLA: I am not crazy.

AVID: Okay, okay.

NELLA: And WHY are you taking his part?!

AVID: I'm not taking his part, darling. All I'm trying to say here is that you are coming down on him a bit much. I don't think he's done anything to deserve such criticism. (beat) I'm only being honest here.

NELLA: I don't like him! I don't like where he comes from and how he talks and the things that he's interested in or---

AVID: But our daughter does, doesn't she? And he always gives you and me and the family in point of fact the utmost kindness. You may not like him according to your own tastes, but you should look at him for who he is and not be so judgmental.

NELLA: I can't believe you are telling me this.

AVID: Listen, I am not trying to argue with you, I just don't see why he shouldn't be given a fair shake.

NELLA: A fair shake? I think you are the one who's losing their mind.

AVID: Nella, please---

NELLA: No! There will be no fair shakes going on. This boy is poison. I can tell just by looking into his eyes. He's no good. You don't see any of that?

AVID: I don't know.

NELLA: Oh, don't go off on me like you always do with that, "Oh, I don't know" routine. Don't drop out on me this time.

AVID: I don't know what the hell you want me to say, Nelly. You don't hear my side of things. You don't take into account what I say. It's always your way and that's it.

NELLA: I am not going to argue over this child.

AVID: You need to really get past whatever you have against him because you can lose your daughter. If she loves him, she will choose him over you.

NELLA: How dare you---

AVID: Nella, enough! Have you forgotten how it was when we were first starting out? Your father could not stomach the sight of me. It took me years to gain any sort of halfway decent approval from him and that was after we were already married and had Jacob. You forget the arguments you had with him over our relationship and his unwillingness to accept me as part of HIS family? I don't! It wasn't until many years had gone by that your father started getting soft on me. Years! You are acting the same way he did. (beat) You have a chance to make things right with your current outlook on this young man. Maybe he isn't the greatest, maybe he's not what we wanted or expected for our daughter, but I'll tell you this, if he loves her even half as much as I love you, he will be alright in my book. That's all I have to say about it. It's her life, let her live it the way you've lived yours. We turned out pretty okay, didn't we? ...Didn't we?

NELLA: Yes, yes we did.

AVID: Well, there you go.

NELLA: I didn't know I was so much like my father.

AVID: You've always been like your father, but mostly the good parts.

THEY smile at one another.

NELLA: ...brings back memories.

AVID: Does it?

NELLA: Remember when my father caught us fooling around in his garage.

AVID: Right on his 1964 hot red mustang convertible. It was your idea.

NELLA: Was not!

AVID: You were the one who was looking sexy as hell. You wore that green dress that drove me crazy and I warned you not to wear it.

NELLA: Oh stop, I didn't think you had the guts.

AVID: To attack you?

NELLA: Never in a million years did I expect you to do what you were getting down to doing on the hood of my dad's red hot mustang.

AVID: It was awfully hot.

NELLA: You surprised me.

AVID: I think it was that day your father began to like me.

NELLA laughs loudly.

I think he doubted my, shall we say, BALLS.

NELLA: So did I.

AVID: You did? I mean, you really did?

NELLA: Well, you were always a bit too polite, always trying a bit too hard.

AVID: I was on a mission to win you.

NELLA: And you certainly did.

AVID: Do you feel better?

NELLA: I do. Sort of.

AVID: Just give him enough rope to hang himself and if he never does, then it was well worth the effort.

NELLA: Okay. Well, alright. I'll give this..MAN, a fair try. I'll try to be open about it, not be so judgmental towards him and...do you think Patricia will be okay?

NELLA cries.

AVID smiles warmly.

AVID: Of course she will be, honey. She's always going to have us.

END OF PLAY