

WHEN *THE MAN* CAME TO TOWN

Written by

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Based on the short story 'When The Man Came to Town' by  
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FADE IN:

EXT. MAIN STREET/SMALL QUAIN TOWN - DAY

In black and white, a dress-shoe comes into frame and STRIKES a pavement. As the view widens to include tweed-clad legs, the opposite foot STRIKES home. The shot continues to open up as the sound of measured FOOTSTEPS continues.

Parallel to one thigh is an old, leather suitcase with straps and travel stickers stamped haphazardly.

A matching tweed coat is revealed, a jumper vest with a shirt underneath. A dickie bow at the throat. A fedora on top. This is THE MAN.

The Man's age is indefinable - 30/50/60 - changing depending on the situation and who he interacts with. There is nothing remarkable about him that one can put a finger on. He is average height, average build. Yet he's still remarkable somehow. Perhaps a little more handsome around the jaw than the ordinary Joe Soap. Could be there's something a bit more interesting across the eyes.

Once The Man is fully introduced, the shot widens to take in the town. As it does, COLOUR seeps into the footage. The sounds of the HUSTLE AND BUSTLE of a gay small town swallow up The Man's footsteps.

This town would be like Pleasantville, except it's an ugly town made nice only by the efforts and constant vigilance of a town committee. Pot plants and window boxes. Striped awnings and tall weeping trees. A long main street with a grandfatherly CLOCK always visible at the far end, and a bright white BANDSTAND in the square - two hallmarks of the town that feature regularly.

It's the kind of place where women swap recipes, where men smoke cigars and everyone knows everyone and their cousin twice removed.

The Man walks through town, toward the clock, tipping his hat and getting likewise in return, along with--

VARIOUS

Good mornin'/Mornin'/A pleasant

day to you, etc.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - DAY

A diner with padded metal stools affixed to the counter, formica tables on the floorspace. Up the aisle between, AMY Dunbar(24, petite, pretty) sashays in her apron, topping up coffee as needed. She has a big, easy SMILE. A band of gold flashes on her ring finger, fencing in a diamond engagement RING. Both are pristine. New.

In the b.g. outside the windows, The Man appears and passes along, tipping and greeting. The diner door opens and The Man enters. He makes his way to the stools at the counter.

DETECTIVE(V.O.)

What can you tell me about The Man?

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - EVENING

An interrogation-type room. The time of day doesn't really matter as there are no windows. There is the usual two-way mirror and the buzz of industrial lighting.

Amy sits at a table, handbag clasped in her hands. She's nervous, uncertain if she's in trouble or not. Makeup does a poor job of covering up the BRUISES on her face.

The detective who asked the question cannot be seen on the other side of the table, and never will be.

Amy shrugs and opens her mouth to speak.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - DAY

Back in the diner, Amy's answer to the detective dictates The Man's actions.

AMY(V.O.)

Nothing out the ordinary. He came in, greeted me politely, hitched

himself on a stool with his  
suitcase propped against his  
ankle, and asked for a coffee.

THE MAN

Black. One and half sugars.  
(smiles)  
Please.

Amy pours coffee from her pot into a mug, and slides a  
sugar bowl over to him. The Man stirs in a spoonful of  
sugar then takes a sip.

THE MAN

That there's one mighty fine cup  
o' Joe.

Amy's big, easy smile. She leans her elbows on the counter  
and they get to talking.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - EVENING

Back with Amy in the interrogation room.

DETECTIVE (O.S.)

Some patrons complained that they  
had a hard time getting your  
attention that day.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - EVENING

Same set up except now BILL HERAGHTY (50s, beer gut) is in  
the chair.

BILL HERAGHTY

Ten minutes I was waiting. Ten  
minutes for a pot of tea and a  
scone.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - EVENING

Back with Amy. She nods, eyes wide. She latches on to the statement like a woman desperate to offload responsibility.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - DAY

Amy is still leaning on the counter, chatting with The Man.

AMY (V.O.)  
He asked one question.

In the b.g. Bill Heraghty sits at one of the tables, looking miffed. He gestures over at the counter - "Where's my order?" - then shakes his head in exasperation at his companion.

AMY (V.O.)  
I don't even remember what it was.  
But it was like he flicked the  
first domino in a chain. I just  
couldn't stop talking.

THE MAN  
Fierce nice town, a quiet town  
I'll bet?

Amy smiles.

AMY  
Oh, we have our get-togethers now  
and again. In fact, there's a  
party in the square this Friday  
evening.

THE MAN  
That so?  
(sips his coffee)  
And would a pretty girl like  
yourself be going to this party?

Amy blushes and drops her eyes to her hands where gold and diamonds sparkle [...]