

MISTER PARADISE AND OTHER ONE-ACT PLAYS

CANDY: Want me to show you?

KARL: No.

CANDY: How is your drink, does it need freshening, yet?

KARL: Yeah. I'm a very heavy drinker.

CANDY: You'll notice I'm being very feminine now in my talk and my mannerisms as well as appearance. Isn't that what you want?

KARL: You do this often?

CANDY: Often when I'm alone. In fact usually when I'm alone, when I come in at night, I put on my hair and slip in a fresh negligée. I have ten of them in all the rainbow colors, some of them worth a small fortune. Ha ha, not a small fortune, I mean a hundred or two . . .

KARL: You must be loaded.

CANDY: Rich? No, just well off. My life expectancy isn't a long one and I see no reason to put aside much for the so-called rainy day.

KARL: You're sick?

CANDY: Haven't you noticed how short-winded I am? I have a congenital heart. I mean a congenital defect of the heart. A leakage that gradually leaks more. It's just as well. I won't look pretty much longer, even in 'drag' . . . One of my upstairs tenants, the younger one, is a poet. Let me read you a poem he wrote about queers which I think is lovely, not great, no, but lovely. [*Produces and reads lyric.*]

AND TELL SAD STORIES OF THE DEATHS OF QUEENS . . .

I think the strange, the crazed, the queer
will have their holiday this year,
I think, for just a little while,
There will be pity for the wild.

I think in places known as gay,
In special little clubs and bars,
Pierrot will serenade pierrot
with frantic drums and sad guitars.

I think for some uncertain reason
mercy will be shown this season
To the lovely and misfit,
To the brilliant and deformed.

I think they will be housed and warmed
and fed and comforted a while,
Before, with such a tender smile,
The earth destroys her crooked child.

—That's it. It's dedicated to me, just to my initials, it's going to come out in a little mag soon. He's the nicer of my upstairs tenants. They occupy the slave quarters. When they go out I will show you their place because it's one of my best interiors, and very ingenious in the use of small space, only two rooms and a—You look unhappy! Why?

KARL: Do you know any women?

CANDY: Won't I do?

KARL: No, I don't go this route.

CANDY: I told you, I just want friendship. I'm terribly lonely. Just to have the company of someone I find so attractive, to entertain him, amuse him, is all that I ask for! Really!