

Seduction in C-Sharp
by
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EXT. A SPARSELY FURNISHED OFFICE

The frosted glass on a typical office door reads "Frankie Fast" in bold black letters.

The door opens and the camera follows an off-screen person into an almost pitch black room.

FRANKIE FAST (V.O.)
Sometimes on a quiet Saturday night
you get an assignment that doesn't
exactly tickle your fancy.

The room contains a window with a view of a streetlight, a desk lamp and a desk covered with stacks of paper and styrofoam coffee cups.

FRANKIE FAST (V.O.)
But in the back of your egg, you
know if you don't find the sap,
somebody else will...

Behind the desk sits FRANKIE FAST (30's.) Her fedora is peeking out over the wrinkled pages of a newspaper. The sound of cracking knuckles and a gruff voice break the reverie.

BUTTERS (O.S.)
We got a rogue crap shooter here.

A hand slaps a dossier on the desk.

BUTTERS (O.S.)
The mugs around Stoney I call 'em
Two Tone Tony.

FRANKIE grips the newspaper tight and then releases slowly.

BUTTERS (O.S.)
He's into Mutton Chops for some
serious scratch.
(more knuckle cracking)
This crumb cake is gonna wish he
never had fingers to throw dice
with.

As BUTTERS (50's) leans over the desk his grim face becomes illuminated by the desk lamp.

BUTTERS
He needs to get found.

FRANKIE FAST
 (from behind the paper)
 I'm not a bloodhound or a bookie,
 Butters.

BUTTERS
 Yeah, Frankie, but you are a bitch
 and you're definitely skirt-

She slams down the paper in a quick sweeping movement and stares at Butters without even the trace of a smile.

BUTTERS
 (almost an apology)
 -this guys slips between the cracks
 like nothin'.

He gently scoots the dossier toward her. She picks it up and leafs through the wrinkled, grease-smudged pages.

FRANKIE FAST
 (aghast)
 No picture?

She flicks the dossier at his chest. Pages sprinkle everywhere.

FRANKIE FAST
 What is this, Butters? Amateur
 night at the Wish We Were
 Detectives Club?

He reaches into his jacket and pulls out a roll of cash.

BUTTERS
 (palming a roll)
 If I had a make of this guy I'd be
 saving myself a lot of bread right
 now.

He drops the roll of cash on her desk.

BUTTERS
 You're type can get to him.

She snatches up the roll and pulls off the rubber band.

FRANKIE FAST
 My type gets a percentage of what
 this screw owes Mutton Chops.

She counts the money with an air of disdain.

FRANKIE FAST
 (without looking at him)
 I'm sick of the bones you throw me,
 Butters. They don't have any meat.

Butters turns on his heel. The sound of his footsteps and popping cartilage fade away.

BUTTERS (O.S.)
 Just get the kid.

Frankie lifts her hat and wipes the sweat off her hairline. She contemplates for a moment before she stuffs the wad of cash in her bra, grabs her coat and slams the door behind her.

TITLE CARD: SEDUCTION IN C-SHARP

30 Seconds of Black and White Mug Shots to a Drum Beat:

The Major Players : Frankie Fast, Red Fred, Sam the Sham, Two Tone Tony, Ernie the Ant, Slow Cyd, Sad Annie, Rita Yum Yum, Cut the Butters, Boots the Bouncer, Bea the Barkeep, Mutton Chops Murphy & his Pink Poodle.

END TITLES.

EXT. A CITY STREET OUTSIDE "THE DOWN LOW LOUNGE"

Frankie, in a trench coat and fedora, makes her way across a desolate city street toward the door of a dive bar with a dimly lit sign that reads "The Down Low Lounge."

Erratic jazz music can be heard pulsing through the lounges' walls.

FRANKIE FAST (V.O.)
 The city was red as a fever rash
 but I was bluer than a blood vein.
 At least at the lounge I could kill
 two birds with one slug. Besides, I
 figured Mutton Chops owed me a
 drink if he was going to make me do
 the kind of thing that I need a
 drink for.

TWO BAR PATRONS skid past her doing eclectic dance moves and glide through the bar door.

Frankie follows behind, but the door immediately slams in her face.

She knocks and a narrow window slides open, BOOTS THE BOUNCER peers through.

BOOTS THE BOUNCER
You don't know the code.

FRANKIE FAST
Swordfish.

The little window slams. Frankie cusses under her breath.

Frankie paces for a moment, she will not be defeated. She opens her coat and inspects her dress. A light bulb goes off above her head.

She tears the bottom half of her dress off to make it a short skirt, she turns back to the door and knocks profusely.

BOOTS THE BOUNCER
We got two for every guy in here,
whistle britches. Go home.

Frankie blocks him from closing the window.

FRANKIE FAST
I'm the entertainment, *friend*.

The door clicks open.

INT. THE DOWN LOW LOUNGE

Frankie walks through the door into a joint that is completely live. Couples press their bodies close together and work across the floor.

BOOTS puts two fingers in his mouth and whistles. The music stops.

Suddenly the dancers freeze and turn to look at Frankie. She looks like a deer in headlights.

The band strikes up the "Striptease" song and pushing her concern aside. As she slinks across the room toward the bar, removing her gloves, scarf and trench coat with slow, deliberate care.

The men drop their partners one by one and follow her slow strip tease like wolves. Even the CIGARETTE GIRL stops to watch. Boots seems satisfied.

Once at the bar Frankie takes her hat off, sets it down and signals BEA THE BARKEEP, who goes to work making a drink while Frankie gets out a black cigarette.

When the filter of the cigarette is firmly between her teeth, a match comes from out of nowhere to light it.

The camera follows her gaze up to SAM THE SHAM, who is wearing a lascivious smile. He gets dangerously close to her ear until his lips are grazing her dangling earring. He nibbles at it.

Frankie lights her cigarette gingerly before she puts out his match with her fingertips and looks him dead in the eye.

His grin fades.

SAM THE SHAM

That's okay, legs. You play the role.

(he gets close)

I'll play the poppy seed on top of you.

Sam's date, SAD ANNIE, yanks at the collar of his jacket and tows him back onto the dance floor. Annie throws Sam on the floor and does a quick turn with a sharp landing in Frankie's face.

SAD ANNIE

(high pitched)

Go chase ya' self, honey. This 'aint your kinda place.

Frankie is busy ignoring Annie when she takes notice of a quiet guy, RED FRED, who is huddled over a beer at the end of the bar. She sucks on her smoke and catches Red Fred's eye.

Suddenly a glass of red wine pops up in front of Frankie and impedes her view of Fred.

The hand holding the wine sets it down on the bar and then its owner, ERNIE THE ANT, moves in.

He snatches the cigarette out of her mouth and takes a drag.

ERNIE THE ANT

(with a lisp)

Fishin' for a good time starts with throwin' in the line.

Hardly fazed, she plucks the cigarette out of his hand.

FRANKIE FAST

Your talking your way into a pair of purple eyeglasses, friend.

Hit the pavement before I do
something about it.

He leans in and blows the smoke along her neck.

ERNIE THE ANT

I get my kicks above the waistline,
Sunshine.

She ashes in the wine. Ernie grabs the glass, dances backward and shoots her a menacing wink.

He dances to the middle of the room and then hands the wine to RITA YUM YUM and the couple starts to dance.

Over Ernie's shoulder, Rita shoots Frankie a venomous glare and then takes a sip of the wine.

Frankie sits back down with a satisfied smile. She and Fred make eye contact again until out of nowhere a hand is caressing her shoulder.

Without looking at him, Frankie pretends to dangle her cigarette and burns his hand. He pulls it away defensively and rubs the wound.

FRANKIE FAST

(without looking at him)

Watch your paws, mack. If I want
fingerprints I got ten of my own.

He clenches his teeth and pulls out a knife with a personalized pink inscription that reads TWO TONE TONY.

He holds the point close to her jugular with a grin that has canary feathers dangling from it.

TWO TONE TONY

Ever seen this, Candy Apple? It's
called a paring knife. It cuts ya'
in half, makes you a pair.

Frankie stands up and whips around. Suddenly her expression changes. Frankie and Tony exchange a glance. She takes only a moment to recover before staring him down.

She presses on the point of knife blade with the tip of her index finger.

FRANKIE FAST

Don't worry, stranger. Apples and
pears I can handle.

Tony flicks the blade closed and grabs Frankie by her lower

back, pulling her in hard. He is holding her tight, he whispers in her ear half seductive, half menacing.

TWO TONE TONY
 (between his teeth)
 You've never had any interest in
 Til then, Frankie.

Tony gets cut off as his dancing partner, SLOW CYD, circles him and gets in Frankie's face. Cyd grabs Tony and pulls him back on to the dance floor, they disappear into the other couples dancing.

Frankie turns back to her seat only to come face to face with the mysterious Red Fred. He strokes an ivory cane across her cheek.

RED FRED
 Are these chumps botherin' you,
 sweet heart?

She pushes the cane away.

FRANKIE FAST
 Those scraps are old news, but I've
 never seen you here before.

RED FRED
 You don't look so familiar
 yourself, Partner.

FRANKIE FAST
 (pure sass)
 That's cause I've never been here
 before and I don't have a partner.

Red Fred hooks his cane on the back of her chair.

RED FRED
 (disdain)
 A girl like you always has some
 kind of partner- whether he's a pig
 or a lap dog.

FRANKIE FAST
 I don't wear a badge-
 (lifting her ring finger)
 -or a handcuff.

He smirks and shakes her raised left hand, there is a small slip of paper tucked into his palm that he passes to her as they exchange a lingering handshake.

RED FRED

Red Fred.

She grasps his forearm with her free hand--

FRANKIE FAST

It's a pleasure, Red.

--and pulls him up violently.

Frankie engages Fred in an erotic dance that borders on hate and lust and pushes the other bar patrons off the floor. They bar patrons are entranced.

With a sharp change of the music, Annie, Cyd and Rita jump back out onto the dance floor, envy is written all over their tough-looking mugs.

The Girls slide in between Frankie and Fred and begin pushing Frankie back until they freeze and tower over her.

Frankie gets in Slow Cyd's face with a casually smug soft shoe. She freezes.

The Girls response is to get threateningly closer.

All three move forward in an intimidating dance that pins Frankie to the bar until Frankie swiftly pushes The Girls back the entire length of the room.

Boots opens the door and Frankie dances the Three Girls outside.

Meanwhile, Sam, Tony, Ernie and Fred have begun to circle each other.

Frankie walks cocksure back inside just as Two Tone lunges at Red Fred with his knife.

A fight breaks out in full and several other bar patrons jump in.

Fred knocks the knife out of Two Tone's hand and punches him square in the jaw. Two Tone falls into a chair and Fred starts to wail on him.

Frankie grabs Fred's collar, pulls him away from Tony and pushes him toward Ernie the Ant. Disoriented, Fred takes a wild swing at Ernie.

Ernie dodges the punch and socks Fred in the gut. Frankie sneaks up from behind Ernie and chokes him with his own tie.

Ernie turns the tables on Frankie and traps her.

Meanwhile, Fred swings his legs over the bar and knocks Sam down. Sam collapses near Two Tone.

Two Tone comes to, gets out of his chair and stumbles forward. He is the last man left standing, square in the middle of the room.

Fred pulls out a gun and aims it across the room at Two Tone. Frankie finishes off Ernie, drops him to the ground and freezes.

They all stare at each other, waiting for something to happen.

With one sexy, precise move, Frankie positions herself between Tony and Red's gun.

Fred walks up to Frankie until he is nose to nose with her. His gun is over her shoulder, still aimed between Tony's eyes, who is several feet away.

Frankie puts her hand up to Fred's chest and kisses him gently, slowly, fully on the mouth.

Behind her, Tony grinds his teeth, but does not budge.

FRANKIE FAST
(softly, against his lips)
He's not worth community showers,
Red.

Pushing Frankie backward with every step, Fred walks intently toward Tony.

Fred stops just short of Tony's nose with Frankie is sandwiched between them. He eyes Tony decisively before he smacks him across the face with the revolver.

Tony crumbles to the ground and Frankie exhales with relief.

Frankie stumbles past Fred, collapses against the bar and raises two fingers. Bea the Barkeep quickly pours two shots of amber colored liquid and sets them down in front of her.

Frankie picks one up for herself and turns around to hand the other to Fred--

--but he is nowhere to be found, and when she glances over at the bar stool, his signature ivory cane is gone.

The camera pans across the room to reveal stillness and carnage. The passed-out brawlers have X's over their eyes.

She hands the shot back to Bea, who accepts the glass. They silently toast and toss back the bitter libation.

Bea holds out her palm, Frankie slips her hand into her bra for some cash and accidentally pulls out the hastily folded note Fred gave her.

She opens it to reveal a sheet of pink and silver "Hotel LaBelle" stationary with the numbers 777 written on it.

Frankie exchanges the note for some cash and slaps down a fifty dollar bill.

FRANKIE FAST

(to Bea)

You don't have eyes or ears about this.

Bea reaches behind the bar and holds out Frankie's hat with a flirtatious smile.

BEA THE BARKEEP

Don't forget your sky-piece, lady.

Frankie takes it from her and puts it on with a wink.

As Frankie collects her coat Bea makes her way around and sprays the knocked-out thugs with seltzer water to clear them off the dance floor, which has hesitantly began filling up with patrons.

Frankie walks back toward the door, but stops short right above Two Tone. She grabs him by the scruff of the neck, heaves him up and starts to bum rush him out the door.

Boots looks at her with an awed, slaphappy expression.

BOOTS THE BOUNCER

You weren't foolin', whistle
britches. Your act is like watchin'
a Ziegfield girl box a gorilla.

Frankie rolls her eyes and Boots opens the door so she can shove Tony--

OUTSIDE

--where she pushes him up against a street light. She puts her hand around his throat, on the verge of choking him.

She lunges in...and kisses him passionately.

Tony grabs her by the arms hard.

TWO TONE TONY

(slurring from the drinks
and the jabs)

You gotta alotta nerve comin to *my*
place actin' like a bruised banana,
Frankie! What the hell crawled into
your skull!?

Frankie slaps him upside the head.

FRANKIE FAST

I just saved your ring finger from
becoming a pink poodles' chew toy.
Mutton Chops Murphy would be
breathin' down your neck right now
if it wasn't for me.

Tony softens.

TWO TONE TONY

Yeah. Well. You owed me one from
the last time.

FRANKIE FAST

(stern)

Come on, before someone I can't
afford sees us together.

He puts his hand on her lower back and gently pulls her
close.

TWO TONE TONY

You aint cross with me for sugar
footin' with Slow Cyd?

Frankie reaches into Tony's coat pocket and pulls out a small
velvet pouch.

FRANKIE FAST

(still hard)

You got bigger worries than what
I'm going to do the next time I
catch you dancing with a cheap
skirt.

She pours two oversized pink dice from the pouch into her
hand. They are personalized with Tony's name.

FRANKIE FAST
No more throwin, Tone.

She clutches the dice in her palm. He gently dabs the tip of her nose with his index finger.

TWO TONE TONY
It's hard not to gamble when I got
a lucky charm like you, peaches.
Your a horse shoe covered in clover
leaves.

She allows herself a smile and they exchange the kind of kiss that could only be made in Hollywood.

EXT. HOTEL LABELLE - LATER THAT NIGHT

In a dark, haze an ivy-covered sign vaguely reads "Hotel LaBelle." Frankie blows by it in a hurry.

FRANKIE FAST (V.O.)
Maybe you don't believe me but I
fancy myself an honest gum shoe and
most of the time I play it
straight. Most of the time. But
this is one of the other times when
straight isn't a word in my
vocabulary...

INT. HOTEL LABELLE HALLWAY

Frankie walks up to room number 777 and puts her ear to the door. Muffled sounds of music and a voice can be heard. She kneels down and peers through the keyhole.

THROUGH THE KEYHOLE:

Some staticky jazz is filtering through a radio and Red Fred is on a chaise lounge pouring himself all over a YOUNG LADY.

The Young Lady is leaned back as far as she can, politely trying to decline.

RED FRED
(three sheets to the wind)
C'mon pussssy cat. Lemme hear you
meow.

He stomps his foot and bays like a hound dog.

BACK IN THE HALLWAY

Frankie pulls away from the door with a bemused expression on her face. She reaches into her pocket and underneath the doorjamb tosses--

INSIDE THE HOTEL ROOM

--two oversized dice that roll into the room. The first die lands on 2, the second die lands on the word TONE.

The camera pulls out to reveal Fred is fervently kissing the Young Woman, unaware of the new addition to his hotel room.

INT. OFFICE - LATER

Frankie lets herself into her pitch black office and flicks on the desk light. Butters is casually perched on her office chair, causing Frankie to nearly jump out of her skin.

BUTTERS

Where ya' been, Frankie?

FRANKIE FAST

(trying to act cool)

Didn't your boss pay me to play detective?

BUTTERS

(cracking his knuckles)

If you were gettin' paid to play detective, why were you throwin' back bourbons at the lounge, wise acre?

She snips the Hotel LaBelle stationary out of her bra and holds it between her index and ring finger.

He snatches the paper out of her fingers, walks past her and opens it. She keeps her back to him as she lights a black cigarette.

FRANKIE FAST

(her back to him)

He's booked under the name Red Fred.

He folds the note, throws another roll of cash on the desk and starts to leave. Frankie calls after him.

FRANKIE FAST
(still not looking at him)
And be careful, Butters. He's
carrying.

Butter pauses for a minute, shakes his head, and then walks through the door.

OUTSIDE FRANKIE'S OFFICE.

Butters, chewing a previously lit cigar, closes the door behind him and crosses paths with a well-dressed gentleman. He puts his hand on the man's shoulder and stops him.

BUTTERS
Hey mack...you got a light?

A personalized lighter ignites Butters stubbed out cigar.

Butters nods his head with approval. Tony tips his hat and sails past on his "get out of jail free card."

BACK IN FRANKIE'S OFFICE

Frankie turns off the desk light.

All that can be heard is her footsteps as she crosses the room. Behind the plate glass door, the hallway light silhouettes the figure of Tony.

FRANKIE FAST (V.O.)
Maybe you think that's not a keen
way to behave, but people today
have to look out for their health.

She opens the door, reaches up and locks Tony in a passionate embrace.

FRANKIE FAST (V.O.)
And he keeps me healthy in all
kinds of ways.

The camera pushes into the profile of their kiss.