SCENE 2

“I WANNA BE LOVED BY YOU”

The year is 1942: Ballroom dance floor

CUE MUSIC: “I WANNA BE LOVED BY YOU.”

At Rise: Priscilla stands to the side waiting. Milbert stands opposite her mustering up enough courage to ask her to dance. He walks over to her, asks her, she declines. He persists. She relents. He takes her hand, escorts her to the middle of the floor as they slow dance. They circle once. Milbert tries to kiss her but she pushes him away and brings out her fist to his face. He backs further away, but she brings him back closer to continue dancing.

MILBERT

Do you come here often?

PRISCILLA

Yes, every Saturday night for the last five years.

MILBERT

Really? But I thought this place has only been open for six months.

PRISCILLA

I wore this dress at my senior prom. My mother wore this dress at her senior prom. My grandma...

He cuts her off.

MILBERT

I wasn’t going to come out tonight.

PRISCILLA

Really? What changed your mind?

MILBERT

My mother.

PRISCILLA

Your mother?

MILBERT

(embarrassed)

Yes, I still live with my mother. Her name is Gladys. But you don’t know. You have no idea.

PRISCILLA

What? I don’t know what?

He looks around.

MILBERT

Nobody really knows how much she needs me.

Priscilla nods.

MILBERT (CONT’D)

Mother has bronchitis. And last week her arthritis was acting up. And the week before that she was constipated for a whole week. Can you imagine being constipated for a whole week?

PRISCILLA

Yes, I get constipated all the time. I’m constipated right now.

MILBERT

Do you live with your mother?

PRISCILLA

No.

MILBERT

Why not?

PRISCILLA

She’s dead.

MILBERT

Good reason.

MILBERT (CONT’D)

Who do you live with?

PRISCILLA

Nobody.

MILBERT

Nobody?

PRISCILLA

Well, that’s not true. I have cats.

MILBERT

Oh, pets are nice.

PRISCILLA

I have twenty cats.

MILBERT

Twenty?

PRISCILLA

Yes, twenty. And I have names for each of them. You want me to tell you their names?

MILBERT

Oh, uh maybe later.

PRISCILLA

Do you like cats?

Beat.

PRISCILLA (CONT’D)

You paused. That means no.

MILBERT

No, I like cats. Felix the Cat.

PRISCILLA

That’s a cartoon. That doesn’t count.

He thinks.

MILBERT

Garfield? Sylvester? Oh...I’ve got it... The Pink Panther!

CUE THEME SONG INTRO: THE PINK PANTHER - Milbert prances around Priscilla, circling her, trying to entice her.

MUSIC STOPS.

PRISCILLA

Fiction. All fiction. I like real cats.

MILBERT

Yes. I’m sure you do. Twenty? Wow.

PRISCILLA

More than I like people but I shouldn’t say that. Yes, twenty. Do you want to know their names?

MILBERT

Eh... Do you come here often?

PRISCILLA

Every Saturday night. You already asked me that.

MILBERTMother wanted me to come tonight. So I’m here. She wants me to find a nice girl. Are you nice?

PRISCILLAYes, but mostly only to cats.

They begin to sing “I WANNA BE LOVED BY YOU.”

MILBERTI wanna be loved by you, just you

And nobody else but you

I wanna be loved by you, alone!

PRISCILLABoop-boop-a-doop!

MILBERT(Priscilla hums along)I wanna be kissed by you, just you

And nobody else but you

I wanna be kissed by you, alone!

BOTHI couldn't aspire

To anything higher

Than, to fill with desire

To make you my own!

PRISCILLABoop-boop-a-doop, boop-boop-a-booh!

MILBERT(Priscilla hums along)I wanna be loved by you, just you

And nobody else but you

I wanna be loved by you, alone

MUSIC INTERLUDE: THEY DANCE...

PRISCILLAI couldn't aspire

To anything higher

MILBERTThan to feel with desire

To make you my own

PRISCILLABup-bum, bu-tle-doo-dle-dum-bum!

BOTHI wanna be loved by you, just you

And nobody else but you

I wanna be loved by you

PRISCILLA

Ba-dee-dly-dee-dly-dee-dly-dum!

MILBERT

Boop-boop-a-doop!

Song ends.

They both stop and stand there. Milbert looks around then at his watch. He points to someone, then steps away. He turns back to see Priscilla standing alone exactly where he left her. She begins to lower her head slowly. Milbert thinks, then slowly approaches her.

MILBERT (CONT’D)

Priscilla? That is your name, right?

PRISCILLA

Yes, Milbert? That is your name, right?

MILBERT

Yes.

PRISCILLA

Priscilla Pickle Puss.

That’s my full name.

He nods. She eyes him.

MILBERT

Mine is Milbert... Pickle Puss?

PRISCILLA

We have the same last name?

MILBERT

Uh... no. Milbert Merryweather. Milbert Waldo Merryweather. But mother calls me Pookie.

PRISCILLA

What were you going to ask me a moment ago?

MILBERT

(reluctant)

Ask you? Oh, uh... what are the names of your twenty cats? Mother will ask me that when I come home tonight.

She lights up like a Christmas tree.

PRISCILLA

Well, let’s see. I can start off alphabetically. Now there’s Alice, from Alice in Wonderland. She’s always getting lost just like Alice in the book or movie. I prefer the movie to the book. Most people prefer the book but I don’t. And then there’s Alfalfa from the Little Rascals. Albert and Alberta. Beatrice and Bertha...

She interupts herself.

PRISCILLA (CONT’D)

Oh... and I can sing like a cat... Do you wanna hear?

He watches her.

PRISCILLA (CONT’D)

(singing: “I Wanna Be Loved By You”)

Meow -- meow - meow -- meow - meow - meow - meow - meow meow meow meow meow moew meow meow meow meowwwww...

MILBERT

Hey - hey... I can do an impression of Ed Sullivan... wait till ya get a load of this.

CUE ED SULLIVAN SHOW INTRO: “GOOD EVENING LADIES AND GENTLEMAN. TONIGHT, LIVE FROM NEW YORK...THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW! AND NOW, HERE HE IS.. ED SULLIVAN!”

MILBERT (CONT’D)

(SPEAKING LIKE ED SULLIVAN)

Tonight we have a really big show.

Here’s an amazing act. We have the lovely, vivacious and very talented little lady... Priscilla Pickle Puss. She will entrance you with her rousing rendition of cat calls. And next week, we’re gonna have, in person, on stage for you my favorite... Topo Gigio and Herb Albert and the Tijuana Brass. In person, on stage, for you, next week.

PRISCILLA

That was really good. No really, I’m so impressed. The voice, the mannerisms. Really good...

MILBERT

Oh, thank you. Thank you.

PRISCILLA

I mean your posture, your delivery...

Really - really good!

Beat.

PRISCILLA (CONT’D)

But I have one question.

MILBERT

Yeah? What’s that?

PRISCILLA

Who’s Ed Sullivan?

Beat. Look at audience gobsmacked.

BOTH

Boop-boop-a-doop!

Curtain.