

LUCKY BOY

Based on the life of Harry Crosby

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FADE IN:

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

SUPER: "December 1929"

A man, HARRY CROSBY, and young woman, JOSEPHINE ROTCH-BIGELOW, stand entangled in the early stages of love-making. They are drunk enough for it to show. In the dream-like blurriness, we never see their faces clearly.

Harry wears a classic overcoat and holds a tattered flask; Josephine has on a fur coat and cloche. He hands her the flask so he can unlock the door. He is unfamiliar with the lock so it takes several attempts.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Harry and Josephine enter a nondescript man's apartment. All is still blurry as they pull off one another's coats and work their way to the bedroom. It takes some time since they cannot keep their hands off one another or the flask.

JOSEPHINE

Your friend is fine with this?

HARRY

He gave me the key, didn't he?

JOSEPHINE

That's true. But are you sure...?

HARRY

Do you love me?

JOSEPHINE

More than anything!

HARRY

Then trust me.

JOSEPHINE

All right... but I am the only one
you ever wanted to do this with,
right?

Harry mumbles in agreement.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

(believes everything he says)
Me too! I mean, with you that is.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Harry and Josephine stand near the bed. The only noise is a ticking alarm clock nearby that reads "5:00."

JOSEPHINE

What do we do next?

HARRY

(sweetly)

Lie down.

They lie down on the bed, Josephine on Harry's left.

JOSEPHINE

I can't believe I'm really doing this.

(suddenly hesitant)

It feels like we're only playing a game.

HARRY

Then pretend you're a doll.

(suddenly remembers)

Did you know St. Dominic's has used the same doll in their manger for Christmas Eve mass for the last 25 years?

JOSEPHINE

(laughs)

This doesn't feel like church right now.

(pretends to be serious)

No more jokes. This is supposed to be serious, right?

He agrees as he gently guides her hands to her sides.

HARRY

Put your arm here... No, here.

Harry rolls to his side to face Josephine.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Stay right there. Perfect.

In the silence we only hear her uneven breathing.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Relax.

JOSEPHINE
(giggling nervously)
I'm trying to.

A long moment. The tick, tick of the clock begins to fade. There is a loud GUN SHOT. Blood begins to soak the bed.

BLACK SCREEN

FADE IN:

SUPER: "Based on the life of Harry Crosby"

EXT. SINGING BEACH - DAY

SUPER: "Boston North Shore 1919"

The surf is rough enough to keep people away today. Except for one lone swimmer. He swims laps between the jetties, stopping only to stand, turn around and swim back the other direction.

The young man walks out of the water and falls on to the sand. He is HARRY CROSBY, 20s, a vision of boyish charm, impetuous and restless. He falls asleep in the sun.

LATER

Harry's younger SISTER creeps over. In her hand is a wad of slimy kelp. She plops it on him to wake him up. She runs away laughing, stopping only to wave at him to hurry.

Harry jumps up to follow her. He does a cursory wipe to get some of the sand and kelp off. He has no towel or shoes.

EXT. CROSBY HOUSE - DAY

The Crosby summer residence outside Boston. This is not a summer cottage on a normal scale. Its size and grandeur show there is old-money here, and a lot of it.

Harry runs up the sprawling front yard, past his sister on the front porch. He pays her no attention and runs upstairs.

The chauffeur brings the car up to the house and attends to Harry's mother, HENRIETTA CROSBY. She has a kind, unassuming look about her but has fallen into the role of matronly wife.

Harry runs out and jumps into the car with them. Aside from his pressed clothes, he looks like a vagrant with his sandy hair and red eyes from the sun and saltwater.

INT. FAMILY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A popular restaurant for the upscale summer crowd. In the room is a party of about ten (including young men DUCKY, JUNIOR, LUG and young women PLAIN JANE, VIRGINIA, PIGTAILS).

The hostess is Henrietta. The guest-of-honor is birthday boy Harry. He is comfortable in this privileged crowd but just detached enough to keep from fitting in completely. The seat to his right remains empty. Various conversations swirl.

DUCKY

I hear Ruth might go to New York.

LUG

He's a one-season wonder. They should pay him in bananas for all he's worth.

PIGTAILS

What's the show with that song?

(starts to sing)

Yes we have no bananas today! We have string beans and onions, cabbages and scallions--

Ducky scrapes the last spoonful of soup from his bowl.

DUCKY

This clam chowder is the best!

HARRY

(looks over to say)

Take human bites.

PIGTAILS

(still singing)

-- and all kinds of fruit and say, We have an old fashioned tomato, a Long Island potato--

She's horrible. Harry motions to her discretely to wipe food from the side of her mouth. She stops singing to do so and never knows he was lying. He smiles his irresistible smile.

PLAIN JANE

Julia Lothrop's uncle took her to the opening night of the Follies!

JUNIOR

Was he really her uncle?

VIRGINIA

I'm so tired of her frozen smile.

Harry leans in to speak privately to Plain Jane and Pigtails.

HARRY
 Tell me quickly, before my mother
 looks over, what color
 undergarments are you wearing?

Plain Jane gasps in embarrassment. Pigtails stares at Harry,
 nervous but excited by his candidness.

POLLY PEABODY, late 20s, is escorted to the party by the
 waiter. She is an orchid at this table of daisies.

HARRY (CONT'D)
 (dully, to Pigtails)
 White, I assume?

POLLY
 (to Henrietta)
 I apologize for being late. The
 driver got horribly lost.

HENRIETTA
 (to everyone at the table)
 Polly Peabody has been kind enough
 to leave her family at home tonight
 to join us as a chaperone.

Polly is led to the chair next to Harry and sits down.

POLLY
 I knew when I saw the Harvard
 crewmen out my left, I was in
 trouble.

Various greetings and conversations continue around the table
 as the entrees are served. Polly looks over to find Harry
 staring at her.

HARRY
 (remembering)
 I've seen you before. Last week.

POLLY
 (smiles in recognition)
 Yes.

HARRY
 Where was it?

POLLY
 In town. Copley Square.

HARRY

That's right. I was arguing with my sister.

POLLY

Are you always so mean to young ladies who need your help?

PLAIN JANE

Harry is always bothering some girl mercilessly.

DUCKY

Remember when your sister came up to the tree house? And you took the ladder and she was stuck up there all day.

PIGTAILS

(whispers to Polly)

Harry just asked us what color undergarments we have on!

POLLY

(quietly back)

I hope you told him you weren't wearing any.

Pigtails is horrified. Harry has delightedly heard all of it.

JUNIOR

-- delicious, isn't it?

Harry doesn't answer at first. He is too busy watching Polly, soaking in every detail of her. Finally, he turns to Junior.

HARRY

Sorry, what was that?

JUNIOR

The roast beef. I can't get enough of it.

Without any hesitation, Harry picks up his own piece of meat with his hand and plops it on Junior's plate.

HARRY

Here you go then. Enjoy.

Junior considers his plate with Harry's food on it. He's disgusted by the gesture but eats it anyway.

HENRIETTA

(to Polly)

Harry was in the war. He drove an ambulance.

HARRY

Mother--

HENRIETTA

And he will be joining his father soon in the banking concern.

HARRY

(embarrassed)

Mother, please. That's like predicting the sun will rise tomorrow.

It's clear that discussion is over. He turns back to Polly. She glances over to see Harry staring intently. She follows his eyes down to see him ogling her cleavage.

POLLY

You are drooling in your lemonade.

(reaches for his glass)

No sense in acting like a puppy.

Maybe it would help if I set it here?

She slides the glass in front of her, near her breasts. She and Harry share a private smile.

EXT. NANTASKET BEACH - NIGHT

An oceanside amusement park. A banner reads, "Happiness is Paragon Park." On the boardwalk is a gaudy entrance made to look like a canal in Venice. A sign reads "Meet your sweetie in the Tunnel of Love." All the party guests go in.

INT. TUNNEL OF LOVE - NIGHT

Rickety gondolas float and zigzag through the dark tunnels and paintings of Venetian bridges. In several boats are Harry's guests. In the last boat are Harry and Polly.

HARRY

I need some quick relief.

He pulls out his stylish, new flask to drink. Aloof as only a 21 year old can be.

POLLY
Have you tried Milk of Magnesia?

We hear muted conversations in the boats ahead of them:

VIRGINIA
She's almost ten years older than
Harry!

JUNIOR
You know about her husband, don't
you?

PLAIN JANE
He's in a sanitarium. He can't seem
to stay out of them. Been to three--

LUG
-- four other hospitals already.
Doesn't do any good though.

JUNIOR
Neurasthenia. From the war.

LUG
He's a fire chaser.

PIGTAILS
A what?

JUNIOR
He has a fire alarm over his bed.

VIRGINIA
-- has to have a nurse with him at
night. I heard he gets violent.

LUG
-- whenever it's more than a two-
alarm at the fire station.

PIGTAILS
Why does he do that?

JUNIOR
So he can get into his gear--

DUCKY
I heard he keeps it at the foot of
their bed. Boots and all.

LUG
Races to the fire and just stares--

JUNIOR

-- watching the firemen fight the fire.

VIRGINIA

Maybe she has a thing for wounded soldiers.

PIGTAILS

You mean like those women who work at the Salvation Army?

ON HARRY and POLLY.

POLLY

They must be talking about us.

HARRY

They're jealous. Because we're such a beautiful couple.

POLLY

I'm sure all the girls wish they were me. Alone with the dashing birthday boy.

HARRY

Not Virginia and Jane. They're doing more than keeping warm with that sweater in their laps.

Harry motions to other people in front of them.

HARRY (CONT'D)

And the blond one up there, she just got engaged. She's here because otherwise she'd be with her fiance Roger and realize she has nothing to say to him.

There are squeals and laughter from people as the ride ends with a splash down a slide and out of the tunnel.

HARRY (CONT'D)

They are all the same. Saving their money, going to church every Sunday, washing behind their ears.

As they stand up to leave their boat, Polly brushes off the beach sand that has fallen from Harry.

POLLY

You might do with a little of that washing you talk about.

EXT. NANTASKET BEACH - NIGHT

The guests in the arcade. Harry steps out of the group and pulls Polly over with him. They run down the boardwalk away from the amusement park.

Away from the lights of the park, they STOP. It's as if they both realize at the same time they are alone. In the charged silence, Polly finally speaks.

POLLY

Harry, you are charming. But honestly...you are 21.

HARRY

So?

POLLY

So I saw you staring at me all through dinner. Were you doing that on purpose, so I would notice you?

He leads her down the stairs to the beach.

HARRY

When you decided to wear such a low-cut dress tonight, was it because you wanted me to notice you?

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Before Harry and Polly lies the entire, empty beach all for them. The park music and crowds are far behind them. The boardwalk lights grow blurry as they run through the dunes.

POLLY

(stops running)

Before I chaperone a man on a deserted beach, I prefer to know more about him.

HARRY

(courtly, but exaggerated)

The name is Harry Grew Crosby.

He walks back to her to take her by the arm.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Noble's. St. Marks School. Harvard, of course. Mayflower Maisie on Anne Street for supplemental learning.

(takes a drink from flask)

(MORE)

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