

MATTERHORN

Frank's restaurant looks like it was built probably in the thirties or forties. The dining room has fallen into disrepair, but there is definitely a charm about it. Faded photos of past customers who did something no one can remember cover the walls. The bar has a mish-mash of glasses and mostly cheap liquor. There is a hallway marked restrooms, and a swinging door that goes to the kitchen. A large plate glass window looks out onto a dark rainy night. The red and blue glow of a neon sign can be made out.

Becky is a waitress in the restaurant and is quickly clearing some dirty plates from a table. Becky is in her thirties, pretty, but with a face that looks older than her age. She does not wear a uniform. She wears a pair of jeans and an unremarkable blouse. Becky rushes the plates back into the kitchen. Then a moment later, the front door opens, a small bell rings, and a customer enters. This is Bill Rollins, early fifties. Bill is pleasant enough even though he is wet from the rain. He carries a large duffle bag and a small backpack. He has obviously just come from some sort of trip. He walks in and looks around the restaurant.

BILL

(yelling off to her)

Hello?!

BECKY

(off, frustrated)

Ugh! No fucking way!

A beat.

BECKY

(yelling from off, more
cheerful)

I'll be right with you. Have a seat anywhere. But we're closing soon!

BILL

Sign says open till ten?

Bill looks at the completely
empty restaurant.

BECKY

(yelling from off)

I'm closing early. It's just me and I think the rain is keeping people away.

BILL

You're here by yourself?

Becky comes out from the back
wiping her hands on a towel.

BECKY

(slightly frazzled)

Yup. Just me, myself and I.

BILL

I see. Who's cooking the food back there?

BECKY

(somewhere between
frustrated and cheerful)

If you order something, I guess I am. Pete, our cook went home sick an hour ago. So I'm stuck here.

BILL

Nothing contagious I hope.

BECKY

(frustrated)

What?!

BILL

Your cook? Sick?

Becky looks at him blankly.

BILL

(correcting himself)

Well that sucks.

BECKY

Welcome to my world.

Becky dumps a bucket of some
dirty water into a sink.

BILL

(laughs)

Do I need a passport?

BECKY

(slightly snippy)

Is that a joke? Cause it's not funny.

A beat. They take in the awkward
situation. Then they laugh
together.

BECKY (CONT'D)

You know, it's not even my night, I'm just filling in for my
friend.

BILL

That's very nice of you.

Becky continues cleaning, rushing
about.

BECKY

I know. I'm a nice person. I was planning on catching up on
some TV and eating a whole bag of Oreos, but, Gloria's
grandson caught a bug. Something must be going around. I said
I'd help her out. Anyhow, you don't need to know all
that...what can I get you?

Bill sidles up to the counter and sits on a stool. Becky wipes down the counter while they chat.

BILL

I'm not sure yet. I can't believe how empty this place is on a Friday night.

Becky deflates, as she's now clearly going to have to wait on him.

BECKY

Yeah, it was great. I mean...so, what brings you in on this rainy evening?

BILL

I'm here to meet some people I knew back in High School.

BECKY

Oh... I see. Are there a lot of you? Because I'm by myself, so...

BILL

No, Don't worry. It's just two.

Becky stops wiping the counter and comes over to Bill, and tries to turn the conversation around.

BECKY

How long since you've seen them?

BILL

About a year ago.

BECKY

Not too long. That's nice that you keep in touch.

BILL

Before that, I hadn't seen them in awhile.

BECKY

But, I'll bet they're the kind of friends that you cannot talk to for years and years, but then when you finally see each other it feels like no time has passed at all.

BILL

That's exactly right.

Becky goes back to cleaning the counter and arranging napkins and salt and pepper shakers.

BECKY

(can she get him to go?)

So, do you think they'll be here soon? I'd like to get home before the roads get any worse.

Bill turns and looks towards the door for any sign of his friends.

BILL

They should have been here by now.

BECKY

I'll bet the roads are bad already.

Becky tilts her head and looks at Bill closer, and lightens the mood.

BECKY (CONT'D)

Have you been here? I feel like I've seen you before.

BILL

No, no. I get that a lot. I have one of those faces I guess.

BECKY

Well, It's a very nice face.

BILL

Thanks, you too.

She motions towards his duffle bag.

BECKY

Are you traveling?

BILL

I'm always traveling.

BECKY

Did you just get in? Or just leaving?

BILL

Both actually. I'm in town for the Saint Francis reunion tonight. I travel for work and decided to take a little detour.

Becky goes back to her cleaning.

BECKY

You're in town for one day and you decided to spend your time at this dump? It's not that interesting of a town, but there's better places than this.

BILL

We all used to hang out here back in the day.

BECKY

I heard it was really busy back then, before the highway opened. Now I think most people come just for the nostalgia and terrible food..

BILL

That's why I'm here...The nostalgia. Not the terrible food.

They laugh.

BILL (CONT'D)

I thought it would be fun to meet up with the old gang at the old hangout one last time.

BECKY

Oh no! Is somebody dying?

BILL

(taken aback)

What?

BECKY

(changing the subject)

Never mind. You want a cocktail or a beer while you wait?

BILL

No, I don't drink.

BECKY
(smiles)

Good for you.

BILL
I quit a couple of years ago.

BECKY
Me too.

BILL
How about a Coke?

BECKY
We're out of regular coke. All I have is Diet.

Bill nods. Becky goes to get his
Coke.

BILL
I'm surprised how little this place has changed. The booths
are new.

BECKY
(at the bar pouring a coke)
Not new. These same booths have been here since before I
started. Things do not change much or often around here.

Becky hands him his Diet Coke.
Bill notices a calendar on the
wall. They playfully banter back
and forth.

BILL
I can see that...that's a really old calendar.

BECKY
What?

BILL
It looks like that same calendar has been up there for quite
awhile.

BECKY
Yeah, it's old.

BILL
Why don't you take it down?

BECKY

I like the pictures. I flip the months.

BILL

It says September, but it's October.

BECKY

It just turned October.

BILL

A week ago.

BECKY

Okay, I like the September picture. So I leave it on September all the time.

BILL

It's just a bunch of cows. What do cows have to do with September?

BECKY

They're all cows. It's a cow calendar.

BILL

(joking)

So, do you have a thing for cows?

BECKY

They're okay. Does the calendar bother you? Because I'm not taking it down.

BILL

(laughs)

No, I kind of like it. When I pulled into town, it felt like time had actually stopped.

Becky starts to fill salt and pepper shakers.

BECKY

Time is relative.

BILL

I'm sorry?

BECKY

It's relative.

BILL

I don't get it.

Becky continues filling salt and pepper shakers while she talks to Bill.

BECKY

Think about it. Whether something happened years and years ago or just last month, your mind just gives them all the same weight. The memory of your breakfast, looks about the same as your Jr. Prom, to your brain. So when you think about it, really, there is no real "time". In our minds it's all the same. It might as well be that everything in your life just happened all at once, because it's all just jumbled up in there. A minute, or a year. It's all the same. So the past never really goes away does it? I'm writing a paper on it. Do you want to order something while you wait?

BILL

No. I'll wait for them to show up. You're in school?

BECKY

Yeah, I went back last year to get my degree- just community, but I figure I've only got so much time, so I should make the most of it.

BILL

School and work. That's a lot. I admire that. I quit college after two years. Just wasn't for me.

BECKY

I do it for my daughter.

BILL

How old is she?

BECKY

She's twelve.

BILL

What's her name?

BECKY

Angela.

BILL

Pretty name.

BECKY

Thank you.

BILL

Like angel, with an extra "a".

A beat.

She's lucky.
BILL (CONT'D)

Becky looks confused for a moment.

What?
BECKY

BILL
She's lucky to have a Mom who's looking out for her.

I do my best.
BECKY

More than some.
BILL

A beat.

Your Mom?
BECKY

BILL
(spit take)
What?!

BECKY
(changing the subject)
I'm sorry!! Sometimes I just blurt things out.

BILL
I think it's charming...My parents and I weren't close.

A beat.

What's your name?
BECKY

BILL
(as James Bond)
Bond. Bill Bond.

Becky extends her hand.

BECKY

Nice to meet you Bill Bond. I'm Becky. Just Becky, until we know each other better. Which we probably never will, ya know. Do you think you folks will be eating? Or just drinks?

BILL

I don't know. I hadn't thought about it.

BECKY

Are your friends fast eaters?

BILL

(laughing)

You really want to get out of here don't you?

BECKY

I'm sorry, I have a long ride home, and I'd like to get on the road as soon as possible, in case the weather gets worse.

BILL

I didn't see any other cars outside.

BECKY

I don't have a car. I ride a bike. Saves gas, saves money. Cheaper than the gym.

BILL

In this weather?

BECKY

I'm used to it. Sometimes I hitch a ride, but usually my bike and I do just fine. I like being alone and having time to myself, to think, or whatever.

Bill takes a sip of his Coke.

BILL

Me too... Your Diet Coke is a little flat.

BECKY

Yeah well, so am I.

A beat.

BECKY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I don't know how to fix that.

BILL

You don't?

BECKY
Nope.

BILL
I do.

BECKY
Really? Have at it.

Bill comes behind the counter to help her. They continue to talk.

BILL
I'll share a little secret with you. I worked here for a short while when I was in High School. I was usually the one to change the CO2.

BECKY
Wow, you're full of surprises.

BILL
I am an international man of mystery!

BECKY
You're mixing your metaphors.

BILL
What's a metaphor?

A beat.

BECKY
I'm not falling for that.

BILL
See- they have a wrench right here for this. It's super easy.

BECKY
I'm so jealous of people who get out of this town to follow their dreams.

BILL
I left to sell life insurance.

BECKY
(being positive)
Well, people need insurance...

BILL

See, you just loosen this nut here, grab a new tank, and switch the line.

BECKY

That's it?

BILL

That's it.

Bill finishes with the CO2.

BILL

There you go! All set. Now you know how to change it.

Becky laughs.

BECKY

I totally knew how to change it. I just didn't feel like it.

Bill laughs.

BILL

Should we try it out?

BECKY

What?

BILL

Should we share a fizzy Diet Coke?

BECKY

(joking)

Absolutely. But just one. I've got that bike ride ahead of me.

BILL

My friends should have been here by now. Sorry about this. I know you want to go home.

BECKY

It's okay, Here's a menu. Maybe you could pick something out for each of you to save time? But it's just me, so you can only pick something that I know how to make.

BILL

What do you know how to make?

BECKY

Pancakes. And eggs.

BILL
(smiling)

That's it? Really?

BECKY
You can ask for anything else on there you want, but you'll be taking your chances. I'm a terrible cook.

BILL
(laughs)
I think breakfast for dinner sounds fantastic.

The door bursts open and Sharon and Gary stumble in. Sharon is in her early fifties. She is beautiful, put together, and she wears a cosmopolitan, trendy dress and carries a purse that matches, but she is soaking wet. Gary is the same age and he is dressed in a casual collared shirt and sweater, also soaking wet.

SHARON
(yelling at Gary)
But I told you to back up and turn around!

GARY
Do you know how many miles it is to turn around and come the back way? That would have taken forever!

Sharon starts shaking out her wet clothes and taking off her jacket.

SHARON
And walking in a monsoon is a shortcut?!... Bill!! Oh my God, I'm so wet... sorry we're late, but this asshole drove the car off the road into a river of mud. We've been walking out in the middle of nowhere for the last forty five minutes.

GARY
(to Bill)
It wasn't that long.

She goes to hug Bill.

SHARON

(mocking Gary)

"It wasn't that long"... "Come on Sharon, it's just right around the corner, just a little bit farther Sharon"

GARY

Okay, it was farther than I remembered it.

SHARON

C'mere, Billy boy, give me a hug. I've really missed you. It's been so long.

They hug.

BILL

Only a year. How are you, Sharon?

SHARON

Wet.

GARY

And one for your 'ole buddy?

Gary hugs Bill.

GARY

Hey, I was calling you over and over. Don't you pick up your phone??

BILL

Hmmmm. I didn't get any calls. I was just sitting here chatting with Becky.

SHARON

Who's Becky?