

A Game of Chess

David Beatty

Double Yellow Line Films  
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**INT. LILLY'S PLACE**

Lilly is a prostitute. Eliot, her client. They've been here before. They know each other well.

A bed, vanity and smell of wet perfume all squeezed into the small claustrophobic room.

**ECU - Lilly (30s) puts on a pair of stockings.**

Eliot (20s) on his back, out of focus.

ELIOT  
I've had a lot to drink.

LILLY  
It's okay.

She crosses to her table.

**STREAMING CAMERA POV -**

She gets a pack of smokes from the bedside table, lights up.

ELLIOT  
It's never happened to me before.

LILLY  
(Placating)  
Of course not.

She takes a drag

He looks at her for a long moment. Observing her.

ELIOT  
I would still like to pay you.

LILLY  
Uh, yeah. Of course.

ELIOT  
I can give you more than usual, if  
you want.

She looks at him, questioning.

LILLY  
How much more?

Elliot shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

ELLIOT  
Five thousand.

Beat.

LILLY  
I've never known you to have that  
much money.

ELLIOT  
Today I'm rich. Do you want it?

LILLY  
If a client offers me five thousand  
extra, you can't blame me for  
questioning his motive.

Beat.

ELIOT  
Rumor has it you're knocked up.

LILLY  
What?

ELIOT  
You're pregnant.

She beams with anger but keeps her cool.

LILLY  
Who told you?

ELIOT  
Is it true?

Beat.

LILLY  
None of your business.

Beat.

ELIOT  
Am I the father?

Matter of fact.

LILLY  
What?

ELIOT  
Is it mine?

LILLY  
Your not the only client I have.

ELIOT  
I know, I'm not stupid. I just want  
to know if I'm the father.

She hesitates.

LILLY  
I don't know.

ELLIOT  
You think about keeping it?

She looks at him, incredulous, suspect, regretful.

LILLY  
No. Yes. Probably not.

As if that's even an option for  
someone like me.

He understands.

ELIOT  
Do you go to a doctor?

LILLY  
I go to a chemist. He'll give me  
pills to bring it off. It's not the  
first time.

He nods. Considers his next move.

ELLIOT  
Do you want the money?

LILLY  
Under what condition?

Beat.

ELLIOT  
We find out if it's mine.

She stares at him, considering this but reconsiders

LILLY  
And if it's not?

ELIOT  
Then nothing. You keep the money.

LILLY  
And if it is?

ELIOT  
We get married.

She laughs.

LILLY  
Well then I'll tell you right now,  
it's definitely not yours.

ELIOT  
I want to have a child. I want to  
have a family. I think somewhere  
deep down you do too.

Long Beat.

He picks up his jacket off the floor, takes out a wad of  
cash. He holds it out for her to make a choice.

She is intrigued.

In a different tone:

LILLY  
Where did you get it?

ELIOT  
None of your business. Are you  
going to take it or not?

LILLY  
I haven't decided, where did you  
get it?

ELIOT  
I've been commissioned by the State  
to write a play.

She recognizes it is important.

ELIOT  
Has to fall within guidelines but I  
signed a contract. It'll be the  
first play produced in over a  
decade at the State Opera House.

(CONTINUED)

She nods, somewhat concerned.

ELIOT  
You going to congratulate me?

LILLY  
Congratulations.

ELIOT  
You don't seem happy.

LILLY  
I am but I'm also realistic.

ELIOT  
What does that mean?

LILLY  
Why did they chose you?

ELIOT  
(Incredulous)  
Uh... Because I'm talented!?

LILLY  
Of course you are. What's it about?

He smiles.

ELIOT  
I'm basing the entire play on a  
classic piece of literature.

She waits for more.

ELIOT  
The Wasteland.

She nods, considers the work.

LILLY  
Was that your choice?

ELIOT  
No. They assigned it to me.

She sets him straight.

LILLY  
It's propaganda.

ELIOT

Just because it has not been banned  
by the State, doesn't mean it's  
propaganda.

She doesn't agree.

He leans in, secretly.

ELLIOT

(whispers)

I could re-write it. Change the  
ending. Something a bit more  
rebellious, subversive, unorthodox.

She stares at him blankly, unimpressed.

LILLY

I don't think you should change  
anything.

ELLIOT

Why not?

LILLY

It's too risky. They might even  
expect you to do something radical  
and they'll use you as an example.  
If they suspect you to be an  
agitator, you will be arrested. Do  
yourself a favor, don't get  
arrested on your first play.

ELLIOT

I want this play to be the  
revolution.

LILLY

That's not going to happen, not for  
a first time playwright.

ELIOT

Every revolutionary idea begins in  
the theater.

LILLY

That is so self righteous.

ELIOT

My play will change the world.

LILLY  
Your play will get you killed.

ELIOT  
Might be worth it.

LILLY  
Not if nobody sees it.

Beat.

LILLY  
Don't change the ending, you'll be replaced.

ELIOT  
What are you afraid of?

LILLY  
There are more lives than just yours at stake.

ELIOT  
I have to do something.

Beat.

LILLY  
You are a talented writer. But right now you're a nobody. You're young and naive and that's why they want you cause they can control you. So let them control you. Fall in line, do what you're told and someday when people know your name, when you're a famous playwright, then you can change the world.

Long beat.

He holds the money up to her again.

ELIOT  
I want to know if I'm the father.

She hesitates...

She takes the money.

LILLY  
You are a proper fool.

They lay in like spoons.

Beat.

He recites more poetry.

ELIOT

Good night, ladies, good night,  
sweet ladies, good night, good  
night.

She turns to him.

LILLY

You sweet talker.

They kiss.

**END**