

WGAE REGISTRATION N° VSGA0DFCD97B

Oscar & Bella Back from the Airport

(A naive girl gets dumped)
an original short script by LLVT

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CATS' CRY

General Note: The story is meant to be played for realistic comedy and with essentially candid atmosphere.

TITLES

LEAVING THE USA

1 – AIRPORT CHECK-IN (English)

Fall 1997: Washington Dulles airport international check-in. A 23 year old with cropped short hair, dressed comfortably and in hip hop video good shape, puts an oversize suitcase and a large duffle onto the scale, and places passport and ticket on the counter.

BELLA

Hello.

HANDLING AGENT

Good afternoon. Going to Madrid today?

BELLA

Yes. I'd like a window seat please, as close to the front as possible.

HANDLING AGENT

One thing at a time please. Two bags to check?

BELLA

Yes, just these two, plus the carry on.

Bella lofts a small carry on size suitcase –no wheels and soft case- to head level swiveling so her purse is behind her back when she does this.

HANDLING AGENT

OK. You can lower that now. Do you know how much they weigh?

(Pointing to the bags on the scale next to his counter)

BELLA

Bella lowers the carry on.

No but I'm sure you're about to tell me...

(nervous smile)

HANDLING AGENT

No, really, scale's busted. Did you weigh the bags today?

CATS' CRY

BELLA

(looking at the bags)

No, I really don't know how much they weigh. I'm not really good at gauging things like that.

HANDLING AGENT

Well, I guess there's nothing we can do about it now. Do you have your return reservation with you?

BELLA

(looks back to Handling Agent)

I don't have one. I'm moving for good. Do you need to see my other passport?

HANDLING AGENT

No, I don't need it. I was just asking in case you wanted to confirm you return.

HANDLING AGENT proceeds to tag bags.

2 – INSIDE AIRPORT (English)

Now in the boarding gates area, "DELAYED" flashes on the monitor for the flight to Madrid. The dark windows and few people milling around the terminal reveal the late hour. Bella goes to the public phones and dials.

BELLA

Hi, I suppose you're out but I just wanted you to know there's a delay so you can sleep later tomorrow. Right now they say it'll be about three hours, but if you call the airport in the morning they should be able to tell you the right arrival time. I can't believe tomorrow I'm finally going to see you again. I can't wait. I love you.

3 – FOOD STAND IN THE AIRPORT (English)

There is only one clerk at the food stand, which is one of few left open. A big glossy poster advertisement high on the wall behind the register shows "soup+breadstick" for \$4.50.

BELLA

Hi. I'll have the soup of the day with a breadstick please.

CLERK

We out-a breadsticks.

CATS' CRY

BELLA

Oh.

(short pause)

Well, if I can change it for a roll then that's fine.

CLERK

But then you pay extra 'cause tha roll's extra.

BELLA

OK, then don't give me a roll, just the soup.

CLERK

\$4.50.

BELLA

\$4.50? The soup by itself costs the same as the special offer?

CLERK

Soup \$4.50. Breadstick free.

BELLA

But you don't have breadsticks, so you should give me something in its place.

CLERK

Here. Napkin free.

BELLA

Keep the soup.

4 – AIRPORT BAR (English)

At an airport bar, Bella sits on a stool at the bar sitting sideways to it so she can see the television and monitors. The sound from the sports event on TV is loud throughout the bar.

BELLA

Hi there. What kind of gin do you have?

CATS' CRY

(Pulls the closest snack bowl closer and starts to munch)

RUDE BITCH, a prissy yuppie with accent, comes from behind Bella and pushes her shoulder.

RUDE BITCH

You're going to want to move your foot from there so I don't have to run over it with my trolley.

BARMAN

Sorry, but you'll probably want to know I have to close in fifteen minutes.

BELLA

Could I have a shot of gin and a tonic to go then?

BARMAN

Can't serve anything to go, but there are vending machines further down the hall.

BELLA

OK, I'll drink fast then. Forget the tonic and just give me a gin no ice.

BARMAN

You're going to have to show me your ID.

RUDE BITCH

(Chipper)

Don't say I didn't warn you.

RUDE BITCH moves the trolley so it rolls over Bella's foot and simultaneously heftily pushes BELLA into the bar.

BELLA

(Looks over shoulder to Rude Bitch)

Excuse me; I don't know if you noticed there is plenty of room in this area for anyone to get from one end to the other without making any physical contact with another person, let alone shoving them.

RUDE BITCH makes a face and huffs off, then Bella looks back toward Barman while rolling her eyes.

Here, make it a double.

5 – BOARDING GATE (English)

CATS' CRY

Hundreds of passengers stand near the boarding gate counter. Couples are arguing with each other. Screaming children are tugging at their parents. The entire crowd looks disgruntled and tired. Handling Agent from check in arrives at the gate just as the gate personnel begin to call for boarding. Handling Agent scans the crowd semi-hysterically like searching for a criminal, then spots Bella and pushes his way through to her. Handling Agent is red faced and obviously pissed off.

HANDLING AGENT

(Spitting with face only inches from Bella's)

You ain't foolin' nobody lady. Your suitcase weighs over 90 pounds an thuthr bag near 50.

BELLA

(Leaning back away by arching her back but not able to move much due to the crowd passing around her through the gate)

I told you I didn't know what they weighed. I didn't lie to you about it.

HANDLING AGENT

(Pointing in her face)

You shuld hav ta pay fur it.

BELLA

(Sweet voiced and apparently calm)

I didn't say I wouldn't. Do we do that here before I can get on the plane?

(Pointing and looking to the gate counter)

HANDLING AGENT

Can't make ya now cause tha flight's already boarding.

(Looks around to realize the crowd has thinned out)

But you better know y'ain't foolin' no one. People like you. Somebody could hurt their back goin' for a bag that heavy.

BELLA

I'm really sorry but, like I said, I really didn't know how much they weigh.

Nearly all the passengers are down the finger now, and the attendant taking the boarding cards motions her to pass so she does, leaving the Handling Agent muttering and cursing behind her.

CATS' CRY

In the airplane, Bella sits in the window seat as other passengers enter the cabin. We see Rude Bitch stops by her aisle with two dirty and smelly children approximate ages 6 and 8. The children move and talk constantly during the interchange between Bella and Rude Bitch, making a sort of background noise:

CHILD AGE 6

(Loud)

Mom, how long before they serve us the peanuts? Mom?

(Tugging at Rude Bitch's jacket and getting progressively more impatient)

Mom, how long before they serve us the peanuts?

CHILD AGE 8

(To CHILD AGE 6)

Window! Did you hear me? I called the window.

(Jumping)

CHILD AGE 8

Hey cool! Headphones! They fit in my walkman.

RUDE BITCH

(To Bella, patronizing)

Oh, you're going to have to get up dear because I've got two children with me and we have to sit together.

BELLA

I am so sorry for you if they didn't give you the seats you wanted when you checked in. If you mention it to the stewardess she might be able to move you to three adjoining seats. I really don't think the plane is full.

RUDE BITCH is swatting the child's hand away from herself without looking but not indicating anything else to the children and ignoring the fact that they are now the only passengers left standing.

RUDE BITCH

Oh, but the places with three seats together are in the middle of the plane. You'll want to give your seat to my kids so they can look out the window.

BELLA

No, I would not want to give them my seat

(Under breath)

CATS' CRY

Even if they weren't your kids. I waited in line for check in to open so I could get the seat I wanted, which was this one. If you actually chose the seats you got then you should be satisfied. If not speak with the stewardess.

STEWARDESS

(To Bella)

Flight attendant please.

(To Rude Bitch)

Is there something wrong? We need everyone to sit down now so we can prepare for takeoff.

CHILD AGE 6

(To Stewardess but still background noise)

Can I have a coke?

CHILD AGE 8

(To Stewardess)

What's the movie they're gonna show?

RUDE BITCH

I'm traveling with two small children. I can't be separated from them by the aisle.

STEWARDESS

Well, I'm afraid for take off you will have to sit in the seats that appear on your boarding cards. Can I see them?

(Takes them from Rude Bitch's hand)

Yes, one seat is here

(Shows the other side of the aisle)

and the other two are next to this lady here, but after takeoff you're welcome to move to the rear of the plane. The flight is half empty so there should be no problem for the three of you to sit together later.

We see Stewardess stay and make sure that the children and mother are seated.

CUT TO

Fifteen minutes later. Now the children buckled in across the aisle from each other and Rude Bitch is next to Bella. Bella is looking out the window as the plane taxis.

RUDE BITCH

(To Bella)

You should be ashamed of yourself.

BELLA

Me?

(She turns around)

The check in clerk wouldn't have given you seats separated by an aisle unless you specifically asked for it, so you apparently were planning on either having an extra seat free or putting someone out.

RUDE BITCH

How can you live with yourself depriving a child of a view like that?

BELLA

(Arching an eyebrow)

As it happens, this is probably the last time I will ever see this coastline. Not that you have any reason to know, but I'm moving permanently and probably won't be back here again. At least not for a long time.

RUDE BITCH

Moving to Europe?

BELLA

Yes, to Madrid.

RUDE BITCH

You won't get far there with that attitude missy. Women put children first in Spain.

Bella turns back to the window and they attempt to ignore each other after this. Bella watches the night city lights and after take off Rude Bitch and children move to the back of the plane. Bella takes a pill and lies down across the tree seats.

FLASHBACK TO BELLA'S REASON FOR MOVING

7 – BELLA'S MADRID FLAT 15 MONTHS AGO (Spanish)

Dream / Flashback to 15 months ago. In downtown Madrid, a building from the 40's, a small and narrow second story bedroom with white walls. A full length window opens on a faux balcony over the street. The bedroom is flooded with pinkish white light coming from the street and the only decoration on the walls is a pink shaded Degas style painting of dancers. A bed is pushed up against one wall with a fancy solid dark wood dresser at its foot and past that is the door to the bedroom. The space between the bed and the other wall makes a sort of corridor. Shoes and clothes are on the floor

CATS' CRY

near the bed. The dresser has a couple of small boxes and a wind up alarm clock on it. The bedroom door is also full length with folding glass panels and is open so through it on the other side we see a small sitting room with nice chandelier but bare walls, a TV, round table and high backed wooden chairs.

Oscar is dark haired, same age as Bella, has bodybuilder physique, and is sitting up propped against the wall. Bella is lying down with her legs over his: both are naked.

OSCAR

I can't believe I'm still here. It's nearly five and I haven't even called my mother.

BELLA

(Amused)

Will she be worried because you didn't go home for lunch?

OSCAR

No, she's used to that. It's just that I've never done this before. Stayed all day with a woman –like this- and I'm not really sure what I'm doing here.

(Absentmindedly lifts her legs and leans over toward her)

BELLA

(Propping herself on elbows)

Hey, if you want to leave you can go. God forbid you should feel I'm keeping you.

OSCAR

What I mean is that I've never felt comfortable like this with anyone before. I think I may be getting myself into trouble.

BELLA

It's a problem that we're having a good time? Because the way I see it it's a good thing. We have similar ideas, we're interested in a lot of the same things and -you won't have realized because I wasn't really able to verbalize coherently at the time but-

(Smirking)

I saw god that last time.

OSCAR

That's precisely it. What will happen when you go back to the US?

(Grinning, she leans up to kiss him)

8 – BELLA'S MADRID FLAT 12 MONTHS AGO (Spanish)

Three months later (a year ago) in the sitting room at night with weak yellow lighting from the chandelier. Oscar looks drunk but also quite upset and we hear loud vomiting sounds coming from behind a small door opposite the bedroom then Bella, blanched, opens the door and stumbles through from a bright, fluorescently lit, white tiled bathroom. She appears to try to close the door behind her but is not successful.

BELLA

I shouldn't have had all that beer.

(Swaying)

Never drinking beer again.

(Slumps on a chair)

OSCAR

I knew you would get sick. We shouldn't have gone to those bars.

BELLA

No, I shouldn't have had beer. All that gas really kills my stomach.

OSCAR

Look at me.

BELLA

What?

OSCAR

Come here.

BELLA

Oh, no,

(Making pathetically weak arm motions to keep him at a distance)

you don't want to get too close I must smell awful.

OSCAR

Forget that. Come here.

(Pulls her to sit on his lap)

I've been thinking about this. I can't stand the idea that you're leaving.

BELLA

(Cow eyed)

You'll see me again in a year. Unless you want to come visit me.

OSCAR

You know I can't do that. I don't want you to leave. Stay.

Bella puts one hand to her stomach and the other to her mouth as she mutters and runs to the bathroom again. After more loud heaving she starts talking from the other side of the door and sounds in pain.

BELLA

I would if I could but I cannot. Do you have any idea how much money I already owe in university loans? Nobody here gets that but in the United States it is very expensive to go to college.

(Pause)

I've already gone so far I can't just drop out in the last year and waste it all.

(She comes back through to the sitting room)

It's not like I could transfer, especially two weeks before the semester starts.

OSCAR

(Tearing up and slightly whiny)

Marry me.

CATS' CRY

(Reaches out to hold her hands and draw her to him)

I know you don't believe in it but promise me that. Promise me that when you come back you will marry me and never leave me again.

BELLA

If you really feel that way, then as far as I see it we already are.

OSCAR

Promise me.

BELLA

(Besotted)

When I come back, I'll marry you. Here. You can have my ring. You know what it means to me so you know I mean what I say. But promise me that when I come back you'll smile when you see me.

BELLA ARRIVES IN MADRID

9 – BARAJAS ARRIVALS HALL (Spanish)

Back to today, Bella has touched up and changed her shirt before getting off the plane. She pushes a baggage cart through the door into the arrivals lounge at Barajas and momentarily stops to visually search the crowd for Oscar. There is an especially large group of children with signs and whole families, a high volume background noise of chatter, all making it difficult to locate anyone. After what seems a long time Bella sees Oscar at the back of the crowd near the exit to the street and waves. They make eye contact. She's hardly able to contain her elation but he's looking worried and grim. She makes her way around to him.

BELLA

Hey what's wrong? Have you been waiting a long time? Didn't you get my message about the delay?

OSCAR

Hi

(Looks to the floor then kisses her cheek and takes control of the baggage cart)

I just didn't sleep much.

(Pause)

It's hard to assimilate you're finally here after all the waiting and the delays.

BELLA

Well, I'm disappointed you didn't smile when you saw me but at least you didn't come to the airport with flowers. Then I would know something was seriously wrong.

OSCAR

Why do you say that?

(They walk out and towards the parking lot)

10 – BARAJAS PARKING LOT (Spanish)

BELLA

Men only give women flowers when they feel guilty about something.

OSCAR

Hmm. Come on, the car is this way.

He stops at the machine to pay for the parking and while he is distracted by it she looks him up and down, smiling like she's won a prize.

BELLA

Anyway, I can't wait to get back to the apartment.

(She keeps looking at him while they walk but he seems preoccupied and apparently seeks the car)

My stuff is on its way and the carrier said it should arrive on Tuesday. They'll deliver it all to the apartment.

(Another longish pause while they continue to walk through the parking lot)

So what's up? What have you been up to lately? It's been a while since we actually had a conversation.

OSCAR

You look good. Been going to the gym?

BELLA

Towards the end there that was pretty much all I did. Go to the gym, wait for confirmation from the firm that I had a job, arrange the move. I'm down to 10% body fat, but I don't know how long I'll be able to keep it up considering the hours they want me to work at the firm. They have a two and a half hour lunch so they don't finish till at least 8 in the evening, assuming it's a regular day with no urgent deadlines. Long enough to get really bored but too short to go anywhere or do anything other than window shop. You? How are the exams going?

OSCAR

Here we are.

They put the bags in the trunk of the old, beat up and dirty car- he grimaces at the weight of the carry on - and they get in. He closes the door with his left hand then reaches up to the sun visor on his side and pulls out a pack of cigarettes. He looks at it pensively and then hands it to her.

11 – INTERIOR CAR ON THE WAY BACK TO THE FLAT (Spanish)

OSCAR

This is the same pack I had when I left you here last year. I couldn't bear to finish them or throw them away. They must be really dry by now but if you want one...

(Starts the car and backs out)

BELLA

Actually, I haven't had a cigarette for nearly six months, but you can go ahead.

I don't mind.

OSCAR

Maybe later. Hold on to them for now. See this?

(Shows her the ring she gave him in the flashback that he has on a heavy chain around his neck)

I put it on this chain the day after you left and I haven't taken this off. It was pretty embarrassing in the gym the first couple of times the guys commented on it.

BELLA

I didn't tell you you had to wear it. By the way, it looks pretty dirty.

(Smiling)

Are you sure you haven't dragged it through mud?

OSCAR

(Annoyed)

No. I've had it on the whole time, even in the shower. But you know what; now that you're here you should have it back.

(Takes it off and hands it to her before putting the chain back on himself)

BELLA

Whatever.

(Takes tissue from the car door and begins to clean it)

What matters is now we can talk to each other and be together. How have you been?

OSCAR

(Putting the card in the slot to leave the parking lot)

I've been fine.

Oscar turns on the radio and an annoying top 40 announcer blares nonsense. He winces then turns it off.

BELLA

How is everything?

OSCAR

OK

Oscar looks forward to drive out and from here on they are driving on the M-30 north expressway toward the other side of Madrid.

BELLA

You know, I've been writing you A LOT but you have been calling less and less and I feel like I've lost track of what you're up to. I know you know pretty much everything that's happened to me up until last week, you know all about my professors, the people I hung out with, the movies I've seen... I'd really like to know how things are going. Or did you not get the letters I sent?

OSCAR

(Calmer)

Yes, I got the letters. My mother would get really happy every time one came and I collected them all.

(Slightly remorseful)

She's crazy about me being with you and the idea of us.

BELLA

OK, so how are you?

(Not entirely satisfied with the ring but she puts it on)

OSCAR

I've been thinking about giving up on the exams. The other guys that are training are way ahead of me and I don't think I would be able to get better scores than any of them so I am not sure it's worth it to keep trying.

BELLA

Just because the others seem to be doing well doesn't mean you should give up. Who knows how they will actually do on testing day.

OSCAR

Well, I don't really want to talk about that right now.

BELLA

It's OK. We have plenty of time now.

(Looking out the window at the scenery like she's seeing a long lost friend again)

Not too much today though. I have to try to get everything unpacked so I'm ready to go to work the day after tomorrow. I'll probably have to clean a lot of dust too since the apartment has been closed up.

OSCAR

How did you manage that? How did you get a job so easily? Did you contact connections of your father's?

BELLA

(Irrked she looks back toward him)

Absolutely not. I really don't have any relatives close enough for that kind of favour. Even if anyone here might remember him you don't think I'd bother to ask them for something like that do you? I'm lucky the lawyers in the US did the paperwork right or I might have had problems getting the apartment. No one even showed for his funeral...

OSCAR

So?

BELLA

I sent my resume to every single firm in the city of Madrid over the last six months. I only got one positive response but that was all I needed. It's a firm with American clients that wants someone to work as a go-between to improve and maybe increase that part of their business.

OSCAR

(Condescending)

So really you're going to be somebody's personal assistant or secretary.

BELLA

(Defensive)

No. The official title is apprentice, but that's just a word. The job description is just like any job I would've gotten if I'd stayed in the US, only I of course won't be paid like in the US. But hey, I just need to get my foot in the door to be able to show them what I can do. If the firm is growing the way it seems to be from their client list, then it can't be too long before I can move up or move on to something better.

OSCAR

OK. If that's what they told you, but you're not being realistic. We don't need to argue right now.

Bella is visibly angry but she bites her tongue. By now they're reaching the metal arches by the Vaguada. Oscar stops at a red light at an intersection and an old man with a cane and a cap begins to cross SLOWLY. Incessant honking begins from behind, and we see there are only a few cars behind them. Oscar rolls down the window.

OSCAR

(Yelling out the window)

Go to hell. I'm not going to block the box.

(Grunts – notices the old man)

Can't you see someone is crossing?

(Then exasperated to Bella)

You know the more roads they build in this city the worse the traffic gets. It's like the number of cars on the road multiplies every time a new stretch is opened up.

The light changes and they continue on.

BELLA

Now I know you haven't slept enough. Did you go out with the guys last night?

(He doesn't answer)

Are you really hung over? Did you at least have a good time?

(He starts to grimace and looks like he's thinking of what to say but is still quiet)

What's wrong?

OSCAR

I've been thinking a lot about things. About everything. About you. My mother keeps asking me when the date will be. My friends keep digging at me for thinking things might work out with an American girl. Especially after you said last month that you weren't coming yet I thought for sure you had changed your mind.

BELLA

(Head cocked)

But you knew I couldn't move until I had a job locked down. I've already got loans to think about. I couldn't very well just move and take a chance on starving before I found something. And I don't see what where I am from has to do with it so long as we want to be together and will do what it takes to make it work. It's not like we don't speak the same language or any insurmountable cultural obstacle exists here. Come on.

OSCAR

(Stops the car in front of Bella's building)

Well, you better go upstairs and I'll go park. I'll take the big suitcase up.

12 – BELLA'S MADRID FLAT (Spanish)

Same flat as in scene 4 but the table, chairs and TV are huddled under a sheet in the middle of the sitting room and there is a sheet over the dresser. No sheets on the bed. The blinds on the street window are down so there is only a weak yellowish light from the sitting room chandelier. The unpacked suitcases are by the foot of the bed and Oscar is sitting at the table head in hands.

OSCAR

When you didn't come ... something changed. I had to admit to everyone that they were right and I was an idiot for thinking you'd come back, and realise that it was unrealistic to think you would really move.

BELLA

But I'm here now aren't I? So fuck what "they" think they know because they don't know what we have. Anyway, I don't know who all "they" are but obviously "they" are either cynical or just plain jerks to knock you down instead of support you, don't you think? Come on, snap out of it. I'm here now and you can parade me around all you want until "they" shut-up.

(Going to the bedroom window to raise the blind)

OSCAR

You're not getting what I'm trying to tell you.

BELLA

Well maybe if you'd express yourself with a little more precision or just come out with it...

OSCAR

Listen, I just realised that it's a stupid idea to think it might work. You have a degree now and I never even finished school. You're going to be working in some fancy office and I'm going to be working in a warehouse if I'm lucky. There just isn't any future for a couple like us. It's not like we're actors or rock stars. We just don't belong together.

BELLA

I can't believe this you're dumping me?

(Incredulous, tears welling in her eyes)

I spent a lot of the last year convincing people I knew what I was doing and that you were sincere and after focusing on this for so long you're telling me NOW –after I've moved and have no way out but forward– that we won't make a good couple?

CATS' CRY

OSCAR

I think it best for both of us. I mean, I still want to have fun going out with the guys.

BELLA

WHAT? Are you kidding me? Are you making this up as you go? Did you decide this while you were waiting in the arrival hall of the airport or is there something about the way I look that is making you say these things?

OSCAR

(Mumbling)

I've been thinking about this for a while now but I wasn't sure until I actually saw you again.

BELLA

(Suppressing tears and angry)

Leave. Now.

OSCAR

Don't be like that.

BELLA

I mean it, get out.

(He doesn't move so she begins to pull at him and gets angrier as he resists)

Get up and get the fuck out. GO.

OSCAR

What are you doing?

(He stands and she begins to push him toward the door, but she's not very effectual)

How can you treat me like this?

BELLA

That's really rich. How can I treat YOU like this? Get OUT.

He appears sad as he looks at her but leaves the sitting room and shortly we hear the heavy sound of the main door to the apartment. Upon hearing it she comes out and locks it slowly (several sliding bolts and a chain), still angry with her own impotence, begins crying as she stumbles back toward the bathroom. She takes the ring off and begins to scrub at it with a nailbrush but can't see through the tears. She leaves the ring by the sink and goes toward the bed, collapsing on the floor as her weeping turns to howls.

CREDITS

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