

Lucy McKenzie

NOT WHERE BUT WHEN

Scene 1: Café Cosmo

Glasgow, summer evening view down West George Street towards St. Georges Tron Church. Two silhouettes walk up the street to camera. A man and a woman, he tall with a broad-shouldered suit, she small and frail.

Rose Street, view of Glasgow Film Theatre (GFT). Closer view of cinema entrance. Film posters for *The Moderns* and *Drowning By Numbers* in the display case—it's 1988. We see the couple enter the cinema.

Interior of Café Cosmo, the first floor bar of the GFT. Couple are the only customers, a barman reads a paperback novel. The 1930s period interior of Café Cosmo is accentuated with lighting associated with that period and an Edward Hopper style composition. The couple sit in a corner with two untouched drinks in front of them. He, Julio, has the stylised look of a 1930s shop mannequin with slicked-back hair and a three-piece suit. Chiseled and handsome features with a little bit of make-up. She, Honey, is a middle-aged rock chic—blonde hair à la Anita Pallenberg, a Hedi Slimane for Saint Laurent type. Her look is the '70s trying to be '20s—short black dress with white collar and cuffs. He has one arm behind her along the sofa back and leans in and gazes at her. She ignores him and looks ahead with a vacant expression.

In a hallway that we can see leads into the bar, a young black woman, Sabina, comes out of a broom cupboard removing a pair of rubber gloves. Right of shot we can see a glimpse of the cinema screen through a doorway. *The Moderns* is playing.

Sabina is dressed in jeans and t-shirt with her hair tied back in a hairband and ponytail. All her clothes are French brands like Chipie, Façonnable, Cimmaron. She enters the bar. The barman puts down his novel and looks at his watch.

BARMAN

Sab, can you watch the bar for a sec, got to go and shift some stuff in the basement.
They don't seem to be budging for a while and the film's just started.

SABINA

Oui oui, no bother.

She has a French accent with a Scottish twang. She picks up his novel, examines the cover—*Lanark* by Alasdair Gray—and starts reading. Close-up of the couple. Very elegant composition. The whole air of this pair should be as cinematic archetypes, him, Julio, the leading lover, she, Honey, the disinterested beauty. But something is subtly wrong, she is too old for the part and he is too artificial. She takes out a packet of cigarettes, gives him one and they both light up.

HONEY

I don't know what the fuck we're doing here. What happened in nineteen eighty-eight?
How no nineteen ninety? Then at least we could have gotten a decent cappuccino on a terrace
and seen some decent bands play.

JULIO

You liked the Garden Festival didn't you? We sat on that nice bench and you got an ice-cream
and I sang to you?

HONEY

I didn't want to do this. I was wasted and Rebecca shoved us in together for a laugh because I find your loverboy routine a total cringe. I mean nineteen eighty-eight?

JULIO

Rebecca told me I look like David Bowie, I do don't I? I thought you loved Bowie?

HONEY

You're a nobody.

JULIO

Moving even closer and stroking her arm.

Come on Maggie May, I'm a nobody but I can be your nobody tonight.

Honey shrugs off his arms but he keeps at it. Sabina in foreground looking up from the book. Honey and Julio have started to struggle as if Julio is trying to take advantage. Sabina in focus, looking around, not knowing what to do. Sabina standing by Honey and Julio's table.

SABINA

Anything else? Are you ok?

Honey is struggling against Julio, who has puckered his lips and is holding her tightly like a vaudeville gigolo. Honey wacks him in the face. This makes his eyes light up strangely then fade—he is a robot. Occasionally throughout the film the actor should be replaced by a life-size animatronic puppet to add to Julio's artificiality. He grabs at her, driven by a kind of reflex of his operating system, grabbing her skinny pale arm too hard and ripping the skin open to reveal maggots crawling inside—she is a zombie. They both look at Sabina to gauge her reaction. Sabina stares in disbelief. She moves away from the table. Honey pulls the sleeve of her dress down to cover the open wound and maggots which have started crawling onto the table. There is no blood. She turns to Julio, who is rebooting.

HONEY

What're you like! If they find out we won't get home! That was the rule, no-one should find out, no *impact*.

Julio takes a stone-shaped object out of his pocket with some glittering lights on it.

HONEY

Is that the groundfair guys? What do they say?

JULIO

They say come back now and bring her with us.

Sabina is back at the bar holding her arm in the same spot she saw the maggots on Honey's. She looks around for the departed barman. The couple get up and come in her direction, she runs out of the bar.

Scene 2: The Chase

View again of exterior of the GFT, Sabina fleeing the building with Julio and Honey following. She runs around the corner and unlocks a racing bicycle, throws the lock on the ground and cycles off up Renfrew Street. The camera follows her. She stops in front of Glasgow School of Art, but it is deserted so she keeps cycling towards the West End. Honey can't really run with her broken zombie body. Julio stands over a Volkswagen Golf and pauses a second, listening to internal instructions, then smashes the window, unlocks it, bundles Honey in and hot-wires the motor, taking off after Sabina. View of Sabina cycling over the Charing Cross footbridge. The sun is setting spectacularly in a red, cloudy sky. Julio and Honey follow westwards in the car.

HONEY

Give me that.

Julio throws her the little device and she starts to use it like a smartphone, only with different, jerkier movements of her fingers as if it is more like a musical instrument.

HONEY

Right, they're talking ... she's heading in a good ... way ... if we can confuse her we can catch her, they'll give directives. Keep following. Look ya bam! She's there!

Sabina has cycled through the West End of Glasgow. She stops her bike on Sauchiehall Street, beside the bowling green. Close-up. She is breathing hard, looks round behind her, forwards again slowly, then she turns the bike around. She cycles back the way she came on Sauchiehall Street with Kelvingrove Museum and the red setting sun behind her. Julio and Honey's car appears in shot. She stops the bike and Julio drives up alongside her. He reaches out the window.

SABINA

Who are you?

HONEY

They say get ready. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

JULIO

Smiles and reaches to take Sabina's hand to kiss it.

I'm Julio.

Close up of Sabina and Julio touching. Honey leans over to Julio and takes his arm tightly. With her free hand she holds the device and stares at it. As they connect everything suddenly changes, the bike, the car, the road and Kelvingrove Museum disappear, and instead all three of them bump to the ground of the Piazza of the Industrial Hall of the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1901, surrounded by people in Victorian dress—bustle, lights, shouting, music.

Scene 3: Glasgow International Exhibition of 1901

Honey and Julio are lying on the ground. Honey is cackling with an unhealthy wet voice.

HONEY

Much better!

Sabina staggers away from them, looking around her in shock. A group of people, singing and laughing cut her off from Honey and Julio, who get up and dust themselves off, smiling and looking around

in wonder. Sabina walks out of the Piazza, looking around and moving through the crowds. Close-up of Sabina’s face: something has caught her attention. We see details of the International Exhibition, and people’s expressions, turning to look over their shoulders, eyeing her strange clothes and black skin. Camera moves forward as if it is her POV. More raised eyebrows. Central to the shot is a fountain, the Stewart Memorial Fountain in Kelvingrove Park.

Close-up of the fountain. Standing, leaning with one leg raised on the edge of the fountain, is Charles Rennie Mackintosh. He’s rolling a cigarette and talking to a woman with her back to us. Mackintosh stops mid-roll and stares at Sabina. His companion turns around to look at what has made him stop, and we see it’s his wife Margaret Macdonald. Sabina recognises them.

SABINA

Qu’est-ce qui s’est passé? (What’s going on?)

Cut to Honey and Julio, wandering around looking at the displays in the Industrial Hall.

HONEY

I love vintage stuff ... lassies look so cool in that kind of gear.

A waitress in uniform from Miss Cranston’s Tea House mistakes Honey, because of her black and white dress, for a fellow waitress.

WAITRESS

What are you doin’ here? ‘Mon with me! Back to work!

Honey looks at her blankly and is lead off by the waitress, who is harshly berating her. The waitress leads her down a dark back alley to the Tea House overlooking the river, complaining and scolding the whole way. As they approach the back entrance of the kitchen Honey attacks her, biting her throat.

Meanwhile Julio is looking for Sabina. He has taken one of the gondolas on the river and sees her wandering along the river’s edge, trying to get her bearings. He serenely floats beside her (briefly here the actor is replaced with a doll) and again offers his hand.

JULIO

Come with me.

Sabina, in shock, numbly takes his hand.

Cut to Honey, eating one of the waitress’s fingers and dragging her body into bushes. She spots the scene across the river. She has blood round her mouth.

SABINA

But who are you? Who are you both?

Honey appears behind her, the blood still on her face. She pushes Sabina into the gondola and jumps in after her. Again they all touch, the little device in Honey’s hand glitters, and the scene changes to the Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry of 1911.

Scene 4: Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry of 1911

They all fall into the river. A miniature airship cable car sweeps over their heads across the river and again Kelvingrove Museum can be seen in the background silhouetted against the sky. Julio climbs out and pulls Sabina and Honey to shore. Julio and Honey’s clothes are water resistant, but Sabina is wet and muddy. There are people milling around them, some in medieval costume and the surrounding buildings are faux medieval as well. Honey starts whining.

HONEY

Let’s get *hame*.

JULIO

I’m Julio, and this is Honey. She’s a friend of my mistress, don’t mind her. Will you, lovely miss, come with us? Please say you will ... oh wait, I’m getting a message from home...
We need to continue ... to the Southside. Yes, yes.

Julio is standing stock still listening to an internal communication. As he does, two men in medieval costume grab him and pick him up—again the dummy.

MAN

1

How’s a mannequin from the Palace of History here? And how did that lassie escape?
Take her back to the Village! And chuck that gleekit wee jakey oot.

Man 2 grabs Sabina roughly. She fights back and he hits her across the face. He drags Honey away by the arm too, but she does not fight back. Cut to Julio being placed in a glass case next to other mannequins in historical dress, his eyes glowing and a smile on his face. Cut to Sabina being lead through a ‘Human Zoo’—a series of huts and tents making up the West African Village, a display that is part of the Exhibition. People in traditional dress are listlessly stirring pots and sitting around. She looks at them with resigned misery, puts her head in her hands and sinks to the ground. In the mud there is a dirty pamphlet, on which we see written *Souvenir of a Visit to the West African Colonies*. She looks around her at the men, women and children and the village.

SABINA

Y a-t-il quelqu’un ici qui parle français? (Is there anyone here who speaks French?)

VILLAGER 1

Oui oui bien sûr, nous sommes Congolaises. Et vous?
(Yes, of course, we are Congolese. You?)

He approaches with a damp cloth and wipes dirt off her face.

SABINA

Je viens de Paris, j’étudie le graphisme et je suis en échange à Glasgow .
(I’m from Paris, an exchange student to the Art School, Graphic Design.)

The villagers look at her blankly.

SABINA

Je veux dire, je suis de la Guadeloupe, je suis né là ... En quelle année sommes nous?
(I mean, I’m from Guadeloupe, I was born there ... What year is this?)

VILLAGER 2

Mille neuf cent onze (Nineteen hundred and eleven)

A villager in authority arrives, looking around.

VILLAGER 3

Nous avons besoin d’une nouvelle go. En voici une nouvelle
(We need a new girl. Aha, here’s a new one)

VILLAGER 1

Guadeloupe? Caraïbes? Êtes-vous un esclave?
(Guadeloupe? Caribbean? Are you a slave?)

She is led by the authoritative villager to a stand at the edge of the enclosure where drunk people are gawping at the village. They are rowdy, shouting at the villagers who ignore them. Men are lined up in front of a sign saying *Kiss A Native: 6d*. Sabina is lead to the front of the queue. She tries to pull back, she sees how the man at the front of the queue looks at her—with pure malice. She is pushed forward and he lunges at her, but at the last moment Julio steps in, holding Honey’s hand, kisses her on the lips and they are instantly transported through time yet again.

Scene 5: Empire Exhibition of 1938

It is night, and suddenly the park is completely empty and dark. They look through some railings onto the back of the St. Andrews Building of Glasgow University. Further away a tram rumbles down Gibson Street.

HONEY

Let’s get *hame!*

JULIO

Yes ... apparently we have to take a tram ... the number three ... to the Southside,
Bellahouston Park.

SABINA

Finally losing it

Arrêtez! What’s going on? Why do I have to come with you? I just want to know! Please!

JULIO

Let me explain on the tram, come on. What’s your name?

SABINA

Sabina

There is a green and orange double-decker tram arriving at a stop when they turn onto Gibson Street and they board and sit at the back of the top deck. Sabina looks emotionally exhausted and subdued. A white-caped conductress approaches them, and as she does Honey is alerted to the small device, from an orifice it issues three 3-D digitally printed old penny coins. She gives these to the conductress. We see 1938 Glasgow rumble past—Charing Cross without the motorway, Sauchiehall Street full of shops, hotels, cinemas and theatres like the Lyric and Empire, the Beresford Hotel with people milling around outside, stepping off trams back from the Empire Exhibition.

HONEY

That’s where Sleazy’s is now.

JULIO

Sabina, we're from two thousand and eighty-eight. We're on a groundfair ride at the Great Exhibition. It meant we could time travel back to the other Exhibitions to see how people lived in the olden days. But we shouldn't have let you see that we're from the future, it's a no no.

Sabina turns from him and looks out of the window at the signs and shop windows. It is around midnight and the street are busy. She is thinking about what he has said. The tram passes the Paramount cinema on Renfield Street, the building is lit up with neon, which reflects on Sabina's face.

SABINA

Moving to Paris from Guadeloupe was like travelling into the future. Then coming to Glasgow from Paris was like stepping back into the past again. The way people behave. I want to come with you, I already feel out of place everywhere I go. Please tell me, what are you?

HONEY

He's a sex doll. He's my pal Rebecca's, but he can be anyone's—programmed to look for his mistress and if she's not there find a new one. He's a moron.

SABINA

Why does your friend need a sex doll? Doesn't she have a boyfriend?

HONEY

Ah, of course, you're from a hundred years ago, ya dinnae ken. 'Bout the time I died and came back like this, people had already stopped. Guys and girls were just totally sick of each other. Now men hang out with ladybots and all my girlfriends, the ones who are still alive, have Julios. Check him out, show her your stuff Julio.

Julio grins at Sabina and his eyes flash. He opens his mouth and his tongue extends, starts to whirl and spin around mechanically. Then he undoes his fly and pulls out an erect penis, silicone and artificial. He unscrews it and hands it to Sabina to hold but she shakes her head. He tries to feel her breasts but she pushes him away and looks around, then relents and looks at him with curiosity. A few seats in front of them are a woman and a young boy dressed in dull 1930s clothes. The boy looks around and sees Julio feeling Sabina's breasts. The mother elbows the boy.

MOTHER

Face the front! Read your bible, John.

The boy steals a few more surreptitious peeks.

HONEY

Rebecca thought I'd be into him because he looks pure like *Station*
to
Station Bowie.

SABINA

I do want to come with you. I don't care, I have nothing to stay for. Are you ... dead?

HONEY

Mmm. It doesn't matter. I was bitten by a fox just before they were elevated. There are lots of us. We work in the City Centre. It's not like this, or nineteen eighty-eight, it's all locked in. I work in the Classic Rock theme park, in a venue not far from here. A bit like that Human Zoo you were in back there.

JULIO

What makes you so sure you want to come back with us?

SABINA

I want to see lots of different things.

The tram crosses the River Clyde and the city gets darker and more sparsely populated. We see the cavernous tram depot on Albert Drive. The tram feels like a boat heading upstream through a sleeping city, we see the three figures lit up in its windows.

JULIO

We just have to get to a place called Tait's Tower, the ride we took leaves from a replica in the simulated Great Exhibition.

SABINA

Très bonne (Very good)

JULIO

You can meet Rebecca, she's lovely.

The tram pulls up outside the green metal gates of the Empire Exhibition, just as its closing and all the lights are being switched off. The three figures slip in unseen. The last image is of them walking calmly through the deserted theme park. They are smiling.