

Up a Flight (Jazz Era 20-32)

HERALD

It's 1931. HOY'S, a second floor Chinese restaurant in St. Paul, Minnesota ran by Mei Lin, it's her parent's joint, but Mei Lin runs the show. Tonight is special because HOY's is hosting its first night of jazz performances- many things are at stake: will Hoy's be the first St. Paul restaurant turned jazz venue? Will Jana be seen by the famous Kim Loo sisters?

(Jana enters through the kitchen of a busy Chinese restaurant.)

JANA

Holy shit!

MEI

We've been waiting over an hour- and I gotta make enough to pay the bills tonight- where you been?

JANA

It's raining like cats and dogs out there.

MEI

Kim Loo sisters are about to leave - they gotta be back in Minneapolis for their gig by 11pm, better get going if you want them to see you.

JANA

I need to warm up my voice.

MEI

No time, we need you on stage. Melvin's been entertaining them- don't forget to announce the drink special, if we sell 20 we should cover electricity for tonight and my folks won't kill me.

JANA

Just two minutes to warm up my voice.

MELVIN

(pokes his head in) You're here, let's go- Loo Sisters just stood up-

JANA

One sec- *(clears throat and starts to do vocal exercise or trills)*

MELVIN

I think they're leavin-

JANA

I haven't spoken to anyone all day, my voice is husky as hell like I've been smokin (clears throat).

MEI

They like it smoky- those girls always gotta put up a front, but they like the smoky vibes - you'll do fine.

MELVIN

Sing the low song.

JANA

(There's a frog in her throat) Shit. (she continues to clear her throat)

MEI

Trust me, I grew up with them, they're as smoky as the cigarettes we smoked as teenagers- and we smoked whatever we could get-which was nasty.

JANA

You grew up with them?

MEI

Yea but don't say nothin- my job is to help them keep their sweet image. America ain't ready for a bunch of smoky ass Asians.

JANA

Smoky or smoking?

MEI

Both

JAN:

God forbid we be our full selves.

MEI

Go on stage and you can be your full self and do the thing you love.

JANA

Okay. What song should I open with?

MEI

What song will rile up the crowd?

MELVIN

A low one, your voice isn't warmed up.

JANA

Who's in the crowd?

MELVIN

A bunch of white folks,

JANA AND MEI

men.

MELVIN

You ladies ready or what?

JANA

Consider This.

MEI

Yep we're comin. (Mei walks on stage to the mic to introduce Jana) Alright folks, thanks for coming out tonight, if this is your first time at Hoy's tonight, you're not alone because this is our first pop out jazz night, I'd like to introduce you to our special performer, Miss Jana Reed, everybody give it up for Jana Reed.

(Jana walks up to Melvin who's already on stage on the keyboard.)

JANA

(on the mic) Hey Melvin.

MELVIN

Hey Miss Jana, what song are we starting with?

JANA

I'll do Consider This.

MELVIN

You got it.

JANA

Good evening St. Paul... Melvin, why don't you warm us up a bit (Melvin starts to play a swing style jazzy song) I think in this day in age, we all need to be a little considerate and think less about ourselves. Don't you think Melvin?

MELVIN

(he continues to play) Yes I do!

JANA

Melvin, have you tried the special drink tonight?

MELVIN

No I haven't Miss Jana, what is it?

JANA

I'm so glad you ask, (shouts out) Mei Lin, what's the drink special tonight

MEI

(shouts from the bar) The Hoy Sling!

JANA

The Hoy Sling, anyone have one yet?

CUSTOMER

I'm on my third one. Hoy hoy hoy!

JANA

Well there you have it folks- don't forget to make your way to the bar for the Hoy Sling. Now, you ready Melvin?

MELVIN

been ready all my life

JANA

Me too, lets get started then

(Melvin continues to play jazz song on the piano.)

JANA SINGS:

Suddenly I'm awake, so consider this

Ice water bath on my face, so consider this

(Music and song fades)

HERALD
Jazz in St. Paul.

(End scene)