

A scene from
FADING JOY

by WALTER WYKES

CHARACTERS
FAST EDDIE
JOY

SETTING
A beach

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A scene from
FADING JOY

*[FAST EDDIE puts the finishing touches on his lemonade stand—
then steps back to admire his work. JOY watches with fascination.]*

JOY

So ... what happens next?

FAST EDDIE

Well ...

JOY

Our empire. What's the next step?

FAST EDDIE

[Taken aback.]

Our empire?!

JOY

I've never built an empire before. I don't know what to do. Give me a task.

FAST EDDIE

What do you mean *our* empire?

JOY

I just want to help.

[Pause.]

FAST EDDIE

Well ... all right. I suppose there's no harm in that. You can be my assistant.

JOY

Your assistant?! Really?!

FAST EDDIE

That's right.

JOY

What would my duties be?! I mean, what exactly would I *do*—as your assistant?

FAST EDDIE

Well ... you could ... ahh ... you could be in charge of advertising.

JOY

Advertising?

FAST EDDIE

That's right. You provide the customers. I provide the lemonade.

JOY

[Hardly able to contain her enthusiasm.]

The customers! Oh! I want lots of customers!

FAST EDDIE

So do I. The more, the merrier.

JOY

I'm glad we agree! I think we should get started right away!

FAST EDDIE

All right.

JOY

What would you prefer—girls or boys?

FAST EDDIE

Huh?

JOY

You're right! What does it matter?! We'll have all kinds!

FAST EDDIE

Exactly.

JOY

But wouldn't it be nice to start with a little girl?

FAST EDDIE

What are you talking about?

JOY

I've always liked the name "Emmanuella." What do you think?

FAST EDDIE

Won't they come with names?

JOY

No, I think you have to name them. What if it's a boy? How would you feel about "Eddie Jr?"

FAST EDDIE

Now wait just a minute!

JOY

You're right. He should have his own name. We don't want him to spend his whole life trying to live up to your image. How about "Jack?"

FAST EDDIE

Are you suggesting that we ... *make* customers.

JOY

Well—how else? This beach isn't exactly teeming with life.

FAST EDDIE

I think it might be more financially viable to find customers we don't have to feed and clothe!

JOY

Yes, but think about it—they'll be customers for life! They'll be entirely dependant on us!

FAST EDDIE

That's what I'm afraid of! Look—I'm sure an attractive young woman like yourself can find *some* other way to entice customers towards our little stand.

JOY

What do you mean?

FAST EDDIE

Well ... you know ... I ... I don't ... look, this is a new operation. We'll have to sort of feel things out ... you know. Experiment.

JOY

Why do we have to experiment?

FAST EDDIE

Well ... for instance ... in your case ... to determine how best to utilize ... one's ... ahh ... one's *assets* ... or ... or rather ... to focus ... yes ... to focus one's ... one's advertising ... you know ... campaign ... to ... ahh ... to ... to one's best advantage.

JOY

You want me to utilize my assets?

FAST EDDIE

Yes.

JOY

How?

FAST EDDIE

Well ... off the top of my head ... and I'm just brainstorming here ... I'd say you should make sure to display them—your *assets*—in a prominent position, so as to attract as much attention as possible.

JOY

I'm not sure I understand.

FAST EDDIE

Well—

JOY

Aren't they displayed *now*—my assets?

FAST EDDIE

Yes ... yes, they are ... but you could display them more *prominently*.

JOY

More prominently?

FAST EDDIE

That's right.

JOY

What does that mean?

FAST EDDIE

Look—

JOY

You're not suggesting that I take off my—

FAST EDDIE

No! No! That's not what I'm suggesting at all! But it's a brilliant idea! I'm glad you thought of it! We can get you a little stool and put it—

JOY

Shame on you!

FAST EDDIE

What—I'm only thinking of the business!

JOY

What would the children think?! I mean, the customers!

FAST EDDIE

Ah-hah!

JOY

What?

FAST EDDIE

You said children!

JOY

I meant customers.

FAST EDDIE

But you *said* children!

JOY

Don't change the subject! You want me to take off my clothes!

FAST EDDIE

That's completely beside the point!

JOY

Is it?!

FAST EDDIE

Yes! Because you're trying to manipulate me into some sort of weird domestic relationship!

JOY

I'm trying to manipulate you?!

FAST EDDIE

That's right!

JOY

Okay, who showed up on whose beach pushing lemonade machines like it was the end of the world and talking about "The eyes! The eyes! We've met before!"

FAST EDDIE

Oh, give me a break! Everybody's selling something! Buying and selling, that's what it's all about! It's obvious what I'm selling! What I want to know is—what are *you* selling, lady! What load of crap are you trying to push off on *me*?!

JOY

I'm not pushing any load of crap!

FAST EDDIE

No?! What assurances do I have?! I don't know anything about you—do I? You haven't told me anything about yourself! Why is that?! I don't even know your name!

JOY

Joy! My name is Joy! You're so self-centered you never even asked!

FAST EDDIE

And where are you from, *Joy*?

JOY

Where am I *from*?

FAST EDDIE

That's right! Where are you *from*?! What is your *purpose* here on this beach?!

JOY

It's ... it's none of your business!

FAST EDDIE

What are you trying to hide?!

JOY

Nothing! I'm not trying to hide anything! I ... I don't *remember* where I'm from!
I don't *know* my purpose!

FAST EDDIE

Hah! What are you trying to pull?! Are you working for *them*?!

JOY

Them?

FAST EDDIE

Them! The tall men!

[Pause. FAST EDDIE recoils from her in horror.]

You are! You *are*! My god! You're trying to stall me until they arrive!

JOY

Why are you so afraid of these tall men?

FAST EDDIE

I'm not afraid!

JOY

Then why are you always looking over your shoulder, and ... and why are you wearing that stupid fake moustache?!

FAST EDDIE

THIS IS NOT A FAKE MOUSTACHE!!!

[His moustache falls to the ground.]

Damn!

JOY

I hope they catch you! The tall men! I hope they catch you and ... and cut off your head! I hope they tear out your liver and feed it to the fish! You probably deserve it! You're not a nice person! You've probably done something awful! Something unspeakably cruel! I'm going to close my eyes, and when I open them I don't want to see you anymore!

FAST EDDIE

Fine!

JOY

Fine!

FAST EDDIE

I'll set up shop someplace else!

JOY

Someplace far away I hope!

FAST EDDIE

Don't worry!

JOY

I'm closing my eyes!

FAST EDDIE

Good! Close them! You won't see me again!

JOY

I hope not!

FAST EDDIE

Goodbye!

JOY

Goodbye!

[Exit FAST EDDIE.]

Wait!

[She opens her eyes, but he is gone.]

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