

Mood Indigo

By Jackson Hyland-Lipski

Characters:

Albert: Polish man, 86 years old, messy thin white hair, baggy dark clothing, and fairly short

Sam: Therapist, well dressed, 40 years old

Sue: Sam's wife, dark hair, fair complexion, black skirt, black tights, dark red long-sleeved shirt, and black high-heeled shoes, 35 years old

Bartender: White tucked-in shirt with a black vest over it, balding, 58 years old

Scene 1:

*Inside a dark bar, the old man, Albert, and Sue sit at the dark, laminated wooden counter with the bartender facing them behind the bar. The bartender is facing away from the audience, while all of the other characters are directly facing the audience, although the bartender blocks them from view individually once in a while. There are two vacant seats between them. Albert is very scruffy and dirty looking. He rests his head in his arms on the counter, asleep. A cigarette lies smoking in the ashtray by his right elbow on the counter. He has an empty glass just to his left with a couple of ice cubes remaining.*

Sue:

*(She swishes around what's left of her drink in her hand with her nose in the air. Directed at the bartender, flirtatiously smiling, gesturing toward Albert). He fell asleep waiting for another drink, are you gonna force me to do the same? (She gulps back the rest of her drink and smoothly pushes her empty glass toward the bartender).*

*He begins to fill up her glass. Gin. Sam enters stage left, coming of a two-way door marked "Men's". The door flaps back and forth behind him. He stops half way to the counter, looking at the bartender, who is pouring another drink. Sam sees that Sue is laughing quietly toward the bartender, and Sam forces a smile.*

Sam:

*Sue? (He sees that he has her attention). Hey, could you come over here for a sec?*

*She spins her chair in Sam's direction, gets up, and, after one quick look at the bartender, walks over to him.*

Sue:

*(Placing one hand on his chest) What is it?*

Sam:

*Well, (leaning closer in) I told you to take it easy, or at least slowly, (glances at the bartender) with the drinks?*

Sue:

*(Softly pushing him away, with a smile) Oh Sam, don't worry yourself.*

*Sue turns and sits back down at the counter as the bartender hands her the drink. Sam sits down next to her, leaning back in his backless stool, grasping the counter to keep balance. Sue is slouching with one arm flat on the counter and the other holding up her chin. Sue waves her husband closer. Sam pulls himself toward the counter, and she whispers something in his ear. We see Sue look at Albert with a toothed grin as she lazily points at Albert with the hand that is holding up her head.*

Sue:

*(In a voice louder than she should)* Oh but just look at him Sammy he's pitiful!  
*Sam gestures for her to keep her voice down, and widens his eyes toward Albert.*

Sue:

*(Rolling her eyes exasperatingly, and in a louder voice)* Hello? SIR? *(No response from Albert).* You see? Well anyways he obviously needs help. You should talk to him Sam;  
you know you should!

Sam:

*(Leaning forward on his stool, he brings his head toward the counter and looks sideways over at Albert, trying to get low enough to see Albert's face).* Well what do you want me to say? *(In a sarcastic voice)* How are you feeling? How was your relationship with your mother? Oh, not good? Oh I see, yes, yes, oh interesting,  
mhmm...

Sue:

Well all that talk worked on me didn't it? *(She looks off into nowhere)* I remember when you were still just Dr. Johnston to me...My girlfriends were all so jealous; I bagged a *doctor!*

Sam:

Yeah well I bet it wasn't the kind of doctor they had in mind.

*Sue laughs a little too loudly at first, startling Albert from his sleep. He lifts his head slowly and, unaware, throws his hands upon his face, pulling it down, and in*

*exasperation wakes up. As he makes a space to peek out between his fingers, moaning groggily he peers at the couple, ending with a cough.*

Sue:

*(Extending her arm on the counter toward Albert, maintaining her grin) Oh I'm sorry,*

*I didn't-*

Albert:

*(Interrupting, overdramatically, mumbling and slurring words) No, no...(He shakes his head and slams his hand on the counter while he tries to contain his coughs. He takes a large breath and looks back at her again. He then turns his attention to his empty glass. He picks it up and slightly gestures it toward the bartender, who quickly takes the gin and fills his glass)*

Sue:

*Well, I am sorry...*

*Albert takes a large swig of his gin and wheezes out a cough, as he loudly puts it back on the counter. Sam raises his arm to get the bartender's attention, and the bartender quickly pours him a glass as well.*

Sam:

*(Looking down at his drink and then back at the bartender) Thank you.*

*Albert stands up shakily and walks toward the jukebox, which is on the back wall, stage right, next to a few booths with dark green upholstery on the seats. He puts Mood Indigo by Charles Mingus on and sits back down (it is a sluggishly slow jazz song).*

Sue:

*(She lifts her nose in Albert's direction)* No wonder you're so tired...

Sam:

*(Putting his hand on her back)* Sue...

*Albert laughs a grunting short laugh and pulls out a loose cigarette from his coat pocket. The bartender takes out a zippo and lights it for him. Albert bows his head in gratitude.*

Sue:

*(Snidely)* What? Am I wrong? If this is the mood tonight, please. Kill me now. *(She swishes around what's left of her drink in her hand, gulps back the rest and pushes her empty glass toward the bartender, who reaches for the gin. Sue stands up and walks toward Albert. She puts a hand on his shoulder).* You know, you look like you need, well, my husband there, he helps people like you who are, well, a mess. He helped me out of *(putting her hand covering one side of her mouth secretively)* a lot of bad shit, *(she removes her hand from her face)* and look at me now, huh?

Sam:

Darling, please come sit down.

Albert:

Yeah, listen to yer hubby ma'am.

*Frustrated at her lack of help, she sits back down and quickly drinks the gin that the bartender has refilled for her. The bartender walks toward her, anticipating the end of her drink.*

Sam:

*(He extends his palm toward the bartender, who puts the gin bottle down without filling her glass)* Darling, please, we really don't know how alcohol mixes with it yet, but they told me to tell my patients, well, and to tell you I suppose, that at least for now – just take it slowly, okay? We don't even know the side effects.

Sue:

*(Sarcastically)* Oh yes sir, doctor! *(She slouches back into her stool)*. I'm not one of your patients anymore Sammy; I'm your wife. *(She signals for the bartender to bring her a drink, and he does so)*. I know it's not approved yet. It's still in its, 'testing phase'. *(She says mockingly)*. But, you said it worked on your patients, or that one woman that you help at least, right? The one you said has problems with her ex? Well, you said she was happy, and she didn't have any side effects, right? I mean you said she hasn't tried jumping off anything recently right? Well then I'll be fine. I told you not to worry yourself. *(She takes an exasperated breath and looks at the bartender)* Jeez, what are the chances? I marry a shrink, turns out he's a bad listener.

*A few minutes pass by in silence as the three characters drink their drinks, get new ones, drink those, and begin the next. Sam is a little ahead of the others and lifts his empty glass up, getting the waiter's attention. The waiter comes and takes his glass away.*

Sam:

*(He looks over at Albert, peeking his head up)* Sir? E-excuse me, sir? *(Albert looks over)*. Yes, well...you wouldn't happen to have another cigarette, would you?

Albert gently pats the seat of the stool next to him, inviting Sam over.

Sam:

*(While walking over, laughing with a now drunken smile)* I couldn't tell you how long it's been...*(he plops down on the stool next to Albert)*. Yeah, I quit, well now, pfff, what do you think, honey, ten months ago? Er Nine? I really think it's been ten, but you know, I just can't really be sure. Oh hey, honey? H-honey?

Sue:

I'm listening dear, what is it?

Sam:

Wasn't it, the, my last cigarette, or until since now, at that party wher-

Albert:

So yerr a shrink?

The song ends, and the characters are left in silence again. Sam glances at his wife and then back at Albert, who is holding out a cigarette for Sam.

Sam:

*(Dazing off into space)* Um, yes, I'm a shrink...



*The Bartender comes over and holds out the zippo in front of his face. He switches the flame on, and the sound slightly and momentarily sobers Sam.*

Sam:

I mean, well, I'm a therapist, a psychiatrist.

Albert:

Oh, a psychiatrist! A therapist! *(He shimmies on his stool, mocking the formality of the term. He stands up and walks toward the jukebox laughing, putting on the same song, 'Mood Indigo').*

*Sam gets up, looks fed up, obviously not caring about the old man, and stumbles back onto the stool next to his wife. Sue leans in and kisses him, laughing.*

Sue:

Ah, we should go home. I could fall asleep and this music isn't helping. *(Yelling over to Albert)* Don't you know any other songs? *(She closes her eyes, holding her head up with her hands. She giggles).* Sam, Sam...when I close my eyes, I think, I can still see you, and the old man, and the bartender, or at least your silhouettes or something. *(She closes her eyes tightly)* I see you! *(She points at Albert)* I see you, old man! *(She slouches further down on her stool, almost tripping and falling off, still laughing)*

Sam:

Ah, we better lay you down. *(He tries to help her up).* Come on, Sue.

*Together, they stumble to the middle booth and he, as gently as is drunkenly possible, drops her down on the cushion. He plops down on the edge, at her feet, looking*

*exhausted as well. She sits up with a slight burst of energy and pulls him down with her. She kisses his face and grabs at his body and clothes, grinning. Sam looks at Albert, who glances at them and looks back toward the bar, taking a swig of his gin. Sam starts grabbing at her body as well, and they both laugh, excitedly and blatantly intoxicated. She reaches down his pants at his crotch and they awkwardly maneuver their position. Sue quickly pushes him off her and stands up. She faces toward the jukebox, which is still playing 'Mood Indigo' and vomits on it. She falls to the floor and remains in a twisted position.*

Sam:

Ah, shit...

*Sam positions her on the floor more comfortably and lies down in the booth. After some silence, Albert turns around and sees the resting couple. He turns back around and swigs the rest of his drink. The bartender reaches for his glass to fill it, but Albert extends his hand and places his palm over the top of the glass, covering the opening, signaling he's had enough. He takes out another cigarette and the bartender lights it for him.*