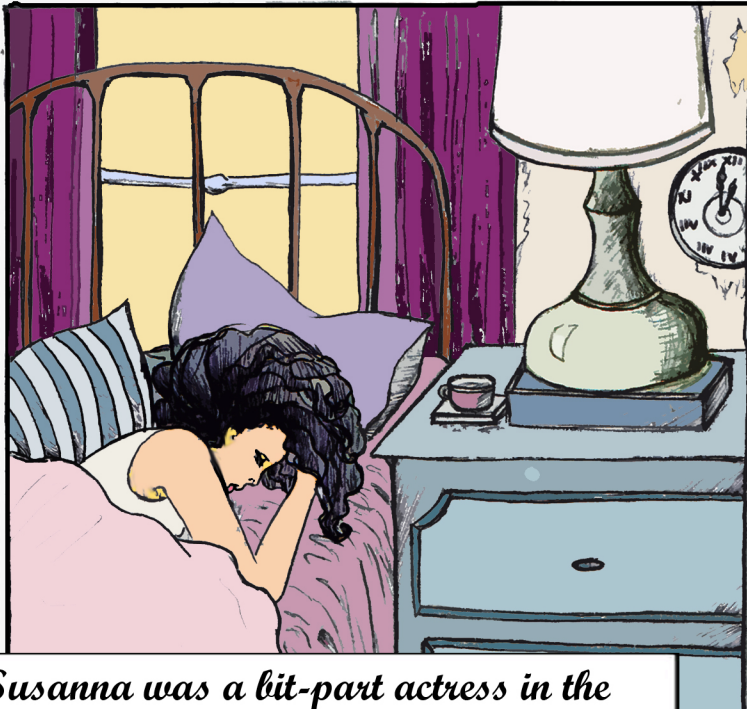
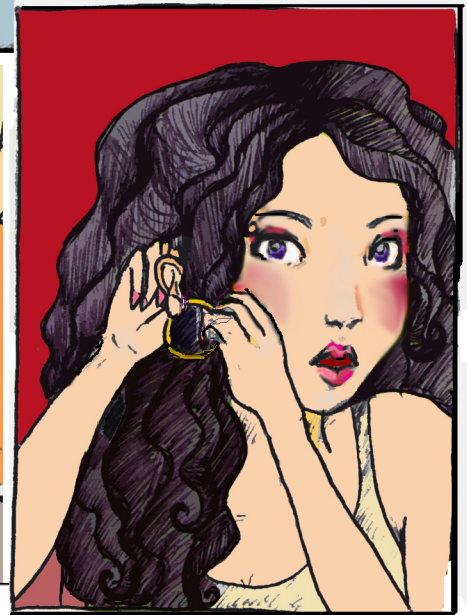


MISS TEMPTATION 1956

Interpreted by Camille Gomez



Susanna was a bit-part actress in the summer theater near the village, and she rented a room over the firehouse.



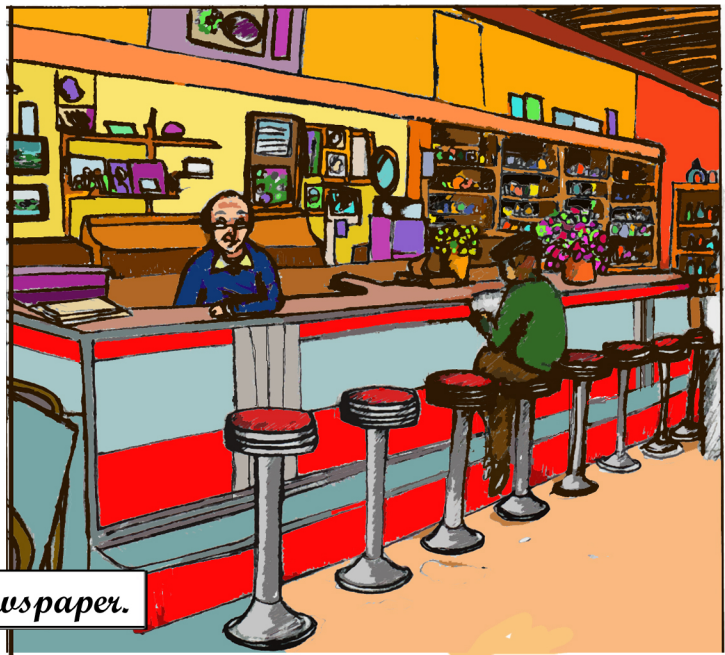
She was a part of village life all summer, but the villagers never got used to her. She was forever as startling and desirable as a piece of high-city fire apparatus.



At noon, she would begin her stately, undulating, tinkling walk-down the outside stairway, past the liquor store, the real-estate office, and the diner to the crowded drugstore.



There, she would get the newspaper.



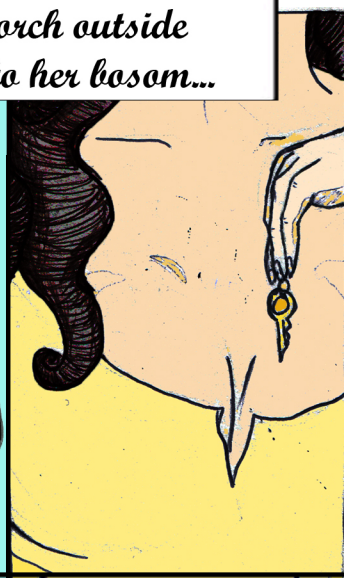
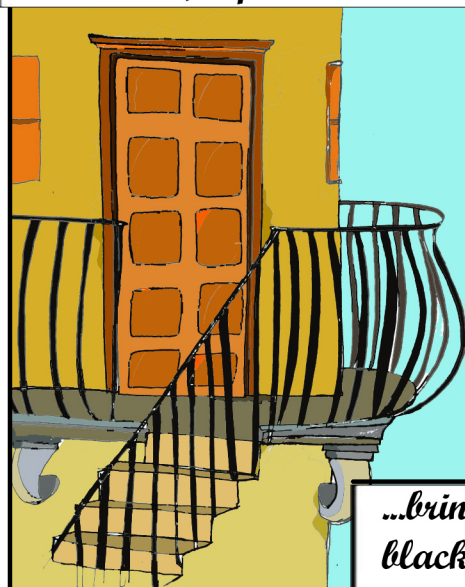


Thanks, Mr. Hinkley.
You're an angel.

Then she would take the papers and return to her nest over the firehouse.

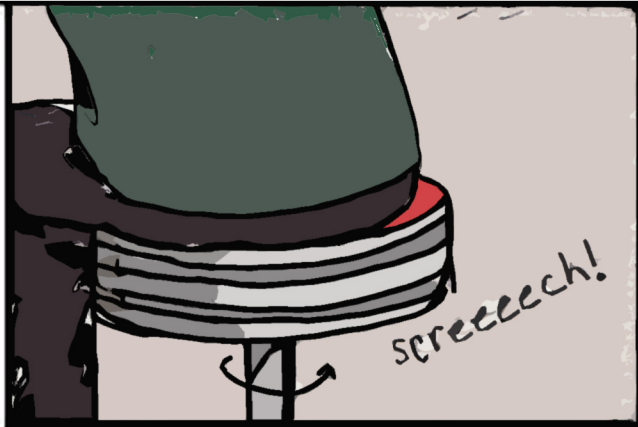


She would pause on the porch outside her room, dip her hand into her bosom...




...bring out the key, unlock the door, pick up the black cat, kiss it, and disappear inside.

The one-girl pageant had a ritual sameness until one day toward the end of summer when the air of the drugstore was cut by a cruel, sustained screech from a dry bearing in a revolving soda-fountain stool.



American women act and dress like they're going to give you the world. Then, when you stick out your hand, they put an ice cube in it.






You come in here with bells on your ankles, so's I'll have to look at your ankles and your pretty pink feet!

You kiss the cat so's I'll have to think about how'd it'd be to be that cat!

You hide your key in front of everybody, so's I'll have to think about where that key is!

Miss, you do everything you can to give lonely, ordinary people like me indigestion and the heeby-jeebies, and you wouldn't even hold hands with me to keep me from falling off a cliff.



To hell with you!!!

The door slammed a moment later, the patter of running bare feet and the wild tinkling of little bells fading away in the direction of the firehouse.



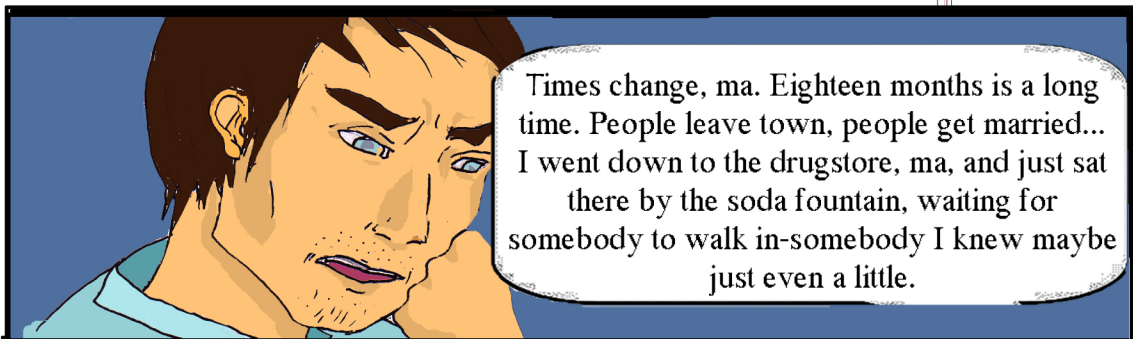
Aren't you glad to be home?

Sure.



Haven't got any friends.

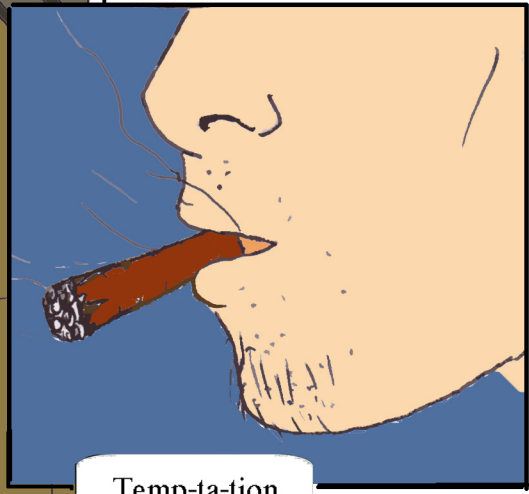
Seeing all your old friends?



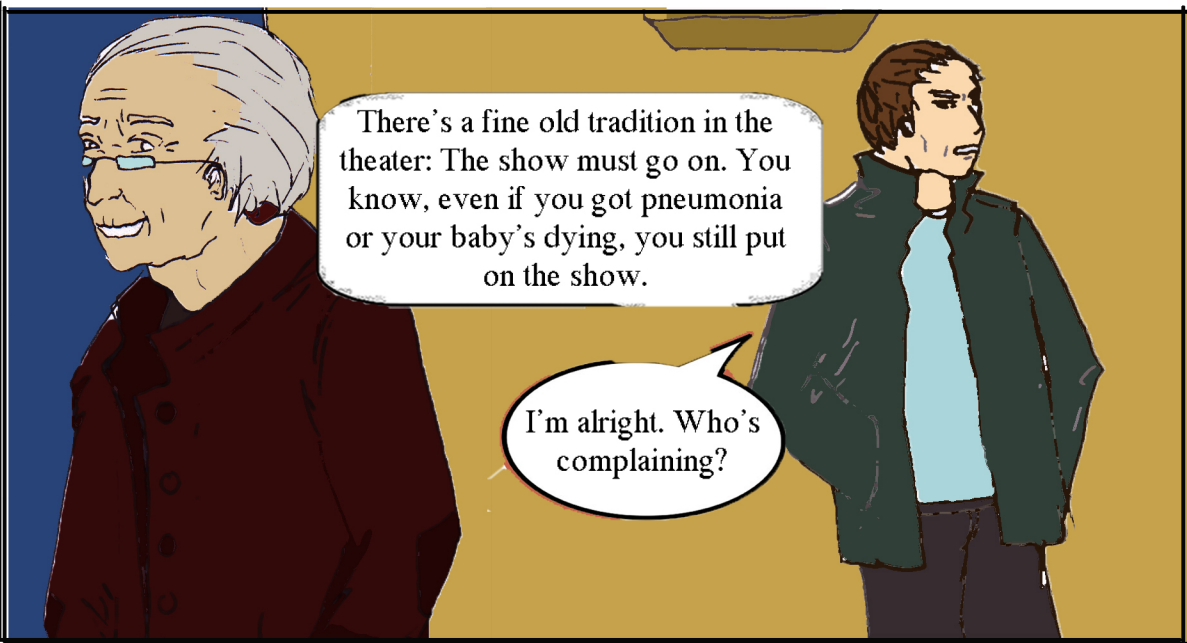
Times change, ma. Eighteen months is a long time. People leave town, people get married... I went down to the drugstore, ma, and just sat there by the soda fountain, waiting for somebody to walk in-somebody I knew maybe just even a little.



What did I speak out against...?



Temp-ta-tion.



There's a fine old tradition in the theater: The show must go on. You know, even if you got pneumonia or your baby's dying, you still put on the show.

I'm alright. Who's complaining?



Who's talking about you? I'm talking about her!

I'm sorry if it turned out this way, but she asked for it...

She really scared you stiff, didn't she?

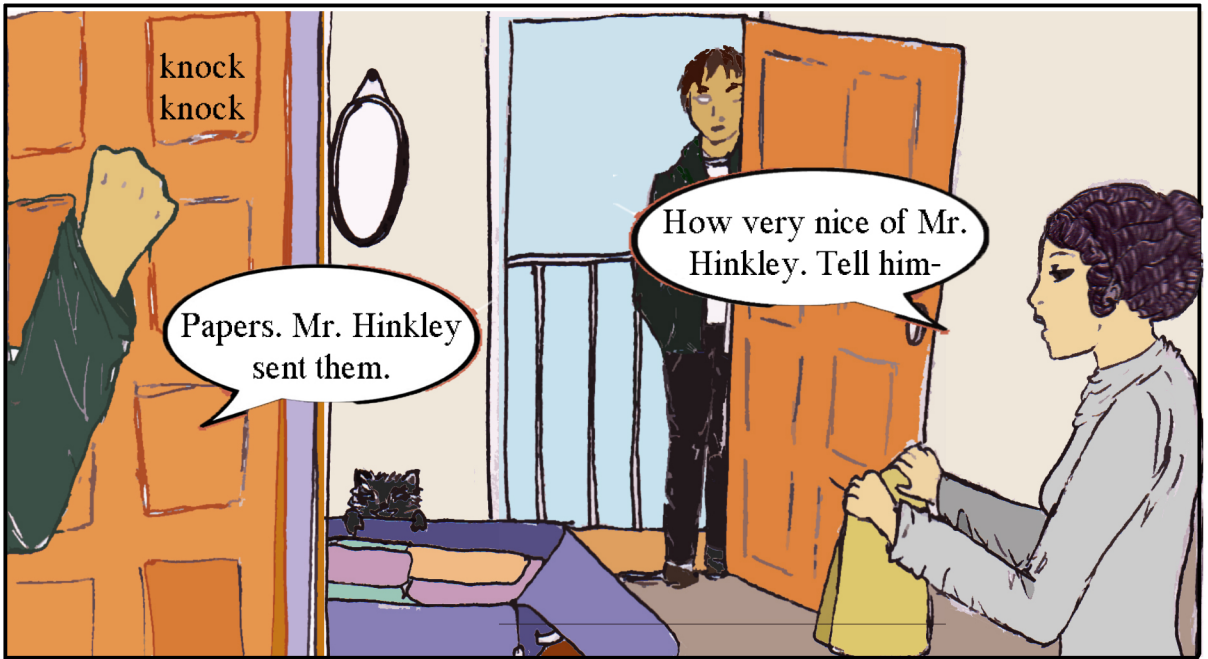


I'm not afraid!

Good! then you're just the man to take her papers to her. They're paid for.



If you're really not afraid, corporal.



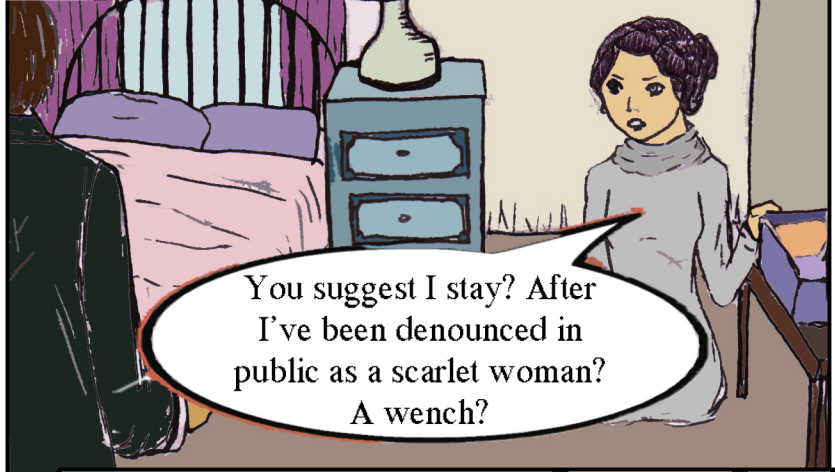
knock
knock

Papers. Mr. Hinkley
sent them.

How very nice of Mr.
Hinkley. Tell him-



I'm-I-I didn't mean to make you leave.
I didn't mean that.



You suggest I stay? After
I've been denounced in
public as a scarlet woman?
A wench?



Did you ever stop to think what it's
like to be me? There's somebody
living inside here, too, you know! I
have a soul



Just forget about me.

Forget about being run over by a truck! What makes you so mean?



Never had a chance with a girl like you-that's all.

Wait! you can't do that-just walk out, leaving me feeling so wicked.

What can I do?

You can take me for a walk down the mainstreet, as though you were proud of me. You can welcome me back to the human race.



The End

Holding Fuller's arm lightly, she led him down the stairs, and began her stately undulating, tinkling walk past the liquor store, the insurance agency, the diner, the American Legion post, and the church, to the crowded drugstore.