

What Gus Can't Do

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. PLAYGROUND- DAY

A large family of trees in view. Sounds of wind flowing through. Leaves clap.

Accompanying sounds: children, their laughter, their jovial language. A beautiful, serene moment.

(beat)

GUS walks into view: early 20s, Beautiful, thought provoking, the slightest hint of danger. The coolest in the world.

He gazes toward the playground. His eyes fall in love, intrigue, and envy.

Moments go by before his fascination allows him to blink.

Another moment when he finally comes to.

To his right, a black 2004 Nissa Altima appears in the road, he runs around to the passenger side. Opens the door.

INT. DILAPIDATED BUILDING- DAY

A puddle of water and led dents the floor. VOICES from above.

The lobby door opens. Gus peers in, looks around.

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT- DAY

Clear of life. Windows surprisingly functional.

SOUND of a car outside.

Gus looks outside the window. Sees the Black Nissan: the driver's window is down. **MICKELBERRY** looks out: a straight forward redhead with matching facial hair. He briefly thumbs up.

BATHROOM

Tiny; bland. The toilet's tank is half open.

Gus leans against the wall, pulls out half a kilo of drugs from inside his jacket.

(CONTINUED)

Places them in the tank of the toilet. Closes it.

Hears a car door close from outside. His phone BUZZES. He looks at it. The name "MICKELBERRY" appears.

Gus heads out.

ABANDONED APARTMENT

Stops by the window. There's Three COP CARS outside. No sign of the Nissan. A Cop gets out of one of them.

Gus turns, hands on head. He thinks.

INT. DILAPIDATED BUILDING- DAY

HALLWAY

Gus exits the apartment, looks two stories down the stairs. The Cop enters into the lobby.

Gus heads for the upward stairs down the hall- AAAAH! A SCREAMING LADY comes down- frightens the fuck out of him. Pushes him into the wall.

She runs to the downward stairs. Still SCREAMING.

COP (O.S)
Ma'am! Hey! Stop! Hey!

Gus gets up. Goes down the stairs, calmly.

Occupied with the lady, Cop pays Gus no mind.

EXT. OUTSIDE ABANDONED BUILDING- CONTINUOUS

Gus runs, the Nissan is there.

INT. MICKELBERRY'S NISSAN- DAY

Mickelberry drives, five minutes ago still on his mind, almost impressed.

MICKELBERRY
You believe that shit?

GUS
I do. It happened.

MICKELBERRY

I know what we should call this one, "where the cop almost fucked us in the ass." That's what we should call it.

Gus grins.

GUS

Both of us?

MICKELBERRY

Something like that.

(beat)

Tell me it was some crackhead shit, that'd be fucking...

He looks at Gus. Gus is trying not to laugh. He shakes his head "nailed it."

MICKELBERRY (CONT'D)

You're kidding. You're fucking kidding me.

GUS

Irony if I ever saw it.

MICKELBERRY

How do you know she was on the shit?

GUS

She knocked me down.

MICKELBERRY

(turning)

Oh you got fucked up crackhead style. That's awesome.

Gus looks at the time on the dash. Mickelberry notices.

MICKELBERRY (CONT'D)

You got an appointment?

Gus lies his head onto his window. Nods.

MICKELBERRY (CONT'D)

Is she at least hot?

GUS

They're all hot.

(CONTINUED)

MICKELBERRY

No. They're all desperate. How much are you getting for this one?

Gus glares at him.

MICKELBERRY (CONT'D)

Alright, fuck it, man.

GUS

It's sensitive. It's very sensitive.

MICKELBERRY

There's a dick joke somewhere in there. I'm not going for it. Fuck that.

INT. APARTMENT- DAY

BEDROOM

A MATURE WOMAN lies naked in bed, face down, her bottom half covered in red sheets. She looks to her side. Notices something.

MATURE WOMAN

There you are.

Gus, naked, gets in the bed.

LATER

Gus fucks her from behind. She digs her nails into her sheets, gripping and shouting-

MATURE WOMAN

I'm cumming. I'm cumming. I'm cumming. I'm cumming. I'm cumming, I'm cumming.

LIVING ROOM- LATER

Small and uninspired. Magazines, remotes.

Gus, fully clothed, sits on the armrest of the sofa. Looks out of the mostly covered window behind him.

The Mature Woman appears, leaning against the doorway of the kitchen. She smiles at him.

Gus sees her.

(CONTINUED)

MATURE WOMAN

I already had children when I was
your age.

GUS

I was already ten when my mother
was this age.

MATURE WOMAN

God bless her.

(beat)

GUS

I hope not.

He gets up and walks out.

Mature Woman is left, digesting his comment.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE MATURE WOMAN'S HOUSE- DAY

Suburban. The leaves are caught in between summer and fall.
Little color to the neighborhood.

Gus comes out and walks away.

GUS (V.O)

My name is Gus.

INT. BUS- LATER

Gus sits near the front.

GUS (V.O)

And I do anything for money.

INT. UNDERGROUND DRUG LAB- DAY

Flasks, tubes, cauldrons, buckets. Water boiling, substances
sitting throughout.

Mickelberry, in lab attire, with a paper mask over his mouth
and nose. Goes to work.

INT. MICKELBERRY & GUS' HOUSE- DAY

GUEST ROOM

Gus digs shoes out of his closet.

Opens a patch of the wooden floorboard. Beneath: a stash of different drugs. He places some in.

EXT. STREET- DAY

Afternoon's coming. Gus comes out of a convenient store with a pack of candy. He stops.

Ahead of him. **OFFICER DAYTON:** just over 40, a rigid jaw. Easy going, but can analyze anyone in seconds.

They look at each other. It feels like Dayton's onto him. Gus sneaks a candy in his mouth.

OFFICER DAYTON
How you doin', Gus?

GUS
Special.

OFFICER DAYTON
Hmmm.

Officer Dayton looks around, a bit auncy. Hides it well.

OFFICER DAYTON
You know, I always wanted to ask you what you do. You live with your parents?

Gus shakes his head "no."

OFFICER DAYTON (CONT'D)
Yeah, you don't come off like that. You're doin' well.

Gus walks to the intersection under the streetlight. Presses for the light.

Officer Dayton just watches him.

GUS
Going to the library.

A few seconds. The light's in his favor. He takes off across the street.

INT. LIBRARY- AFTERNOON

A Nerdy Kid sits at a table by himself, flipping through the pages of his binder. He's accompanied another Nerdy Kid.

BETWEEN AISLES

Gus looks into a Nature Magazine. He takes a peek at the Nerdy Kids. They discuss over alignments of Abnormal Playing Cards.

A Woman with excellent cleavage bends over next to them. Orange top, super-tight black business skirt. She's asking for it.

Gus checks her out. But, the Nerdy Kids steal his interest again.

MICKELBERRY (O.S)

Look at this shit.

Gus looks up.

Mickelberry, wearing customer service attire, holds his right hand up. Bandaged and bloody.

MICKELBERRY (CONT'D)

Had a spat sitting too close to gas. Moved it. The shit bit me.

Gus looks into it.

GUS

Fuck, man.

MICKELBERRY

Shit looks like fucking Darkman.
But hey man, I was thinking.

GUS

Me too.

Mickelberry pauses.

Gus snickers. Places the magazine back, starts walking to the next aisle.

MICKELBERRY

I say we've been dealing with this
guy for what, about a year now?

(CONTINUED)

GUS
Fourteen months, seven days.

MICKELBERRY
His follow-up sounds like good
shit. I think he's starting to
trust us. He wasn't too big on the
last spot.

GUS
Crack does that.

MICKELBERRY
We should meet him.

(beat)

GUS
For what?

MICKELBERRY
More money.

GUS
Can't just ask him for a raise?

MICKELBERRY
You don't start doing shit like
that. Asking for shit. C'mon dude.

GUS
So I guess it's his idea.

MICKELBERRY
I wouldn't go that far.

Gus looks around. Sighs.

GUS
How deep do you wanna go, Mickey?

MICKELBERRY
Anything short of taking heads off.
I just wanna try out the
atmosphere. Network. I mean...

Mickelberry rubs his hair. Grabs a Chemistry Book from the
shelf, hands it to Gus.

MICKELBERRY (CONT'D)
Thanks for letting me squeeze you
in before "work." Sleep on that
shit, or read on it. Whatever.

(CONTINUED)

He walks away.

GUS
If it makes you feel better.

MICKELBERRY
Makes me feel awesome.

LATER

The Two Nerdy Kids pack their bags and get up.

CHECKOUT

The Nerdy Kids finish their transaction. Gus is next in line, eying them as they leave.

The LIBRARIAN, late 30s, takes the Chemistry Book and scans it. Stares at Gus.

LIBRARIAN
Are you?...

GUS
Maybe.

LIBRARIAN
Um, I know this might be a weird time.

Gus takes out a pen, and a card. He writes. She quiets.

GUS
Just call me.

He hands her the card. Anxious, she takes the it.

GUS (CONT'D)
How much?

LIBRARIAN
Yeah, how much?

GUS
The Book.

LIBRARIAN
Oh! Right! Sorry about that.

EXT. GAME STORE- EVENING

The windows covered with pages of comic books, anime posters and cards. Figurines and DVDs. Activity is noticeable behind the decorated windows. The Two Nerds from the library go in.

ACROSS THE STREET

Gus sits against a car gazing ahead.

INT. GAME STORE- EVENING

Gus walks in. Stands in the doorway as though time has slowed.

Stale walls, albeit decorated. Pictures of bug-eyed cartoon animals. Video game lure all over the front counter. Gaming and card playing accessories.

Two rows of tables on either side of the store. Gus hones in on what everyone's doing.

SERIES OF CUTS:

--A DISTINCT BRAND OF PLAYING CARDS are taken out of binders and deck boxes. Exchanged with others.

--Cards are placed on rectangular playing mats.

--Gus looks around with a numb face.

--Along with the exchange of cards, is the exchange of money.

--One Kid in a dingy hoody pulls out a wad of twenties, sliding at least eighty bucks over for one card.

--Gus raises and eyebrow.

--One guy loses a card match. Pulls out money.

END CUTS

Someone opens the door behind Gus, awakening him. Gus lets them through and runs out.