

I CAN TELL YOUR HANDBAG IS FAKE

A short play
by
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I CAN TELL YOUR HANDBAG IS FAKE

CHARACTERS

HOLLY

LULA Stylish girls (20s-30s)

MAE

TIME

The present.

PLACE

A commuter train or subway.

I CAN TELL YOUR HANDBAG IS FAKE

Music. The three ladies each "pose off" in individual spotlights. As the spotlights fade to reveal five chairs an announcement plays establishing that they are in a commuter train. As the women size each other up and realize they are in identical designer fashions, HOLLY has a fantasy. A harp plays. Lights change.

HOLLY

Excuse me.

LULA
Yes?

MAE
Yes?

HOLLY

I can tell your handbag is fake.

LULA

Excuse me?

HOLLY

It's a fake—your handbag.

LULA

No it's not.

HOLLY

I can tell because of the stitching. And the pattern is crooked. And the zipper, of course. The YKK there. (LULA turns the zipper so that HOLLY can't see it.) It's a good fake, triple A quality, but it's a fake.

MAE

How rude!

HOLLY

Yours is too.

MAE
(gasps)

Oh my God!

HOLLY

I just thought you should know.

MAE

I bought mine on ebay.

HOLLY
Figures.

LULA
My husband bought it for me at Takashimaya.

HOLLY
He lied.

MAE
Bitch!

HOLLY
Were you there with him when he bought it?

LULA
No.

HOLLY
How much did he say he spent?

LULA
That's none of your business.

HOLLY
That's what I thought.

LULA MAE
Fifteen hundred Fifteen hundred
dollars! dollars!

They gasp.

HOLLY
Was it on sale?

LULA MAE
Yes. Yes.

They gasp again.

HOLLY
The bag it imitates was part of last year's Fall collection
and it retails for twenty-three hundred dollars.

LULA MAE
Twenty-three Twenty-three
hundred hundred
dollars? dollars?

They gasp yet again.

HOLLY
You sound surprised.

LULA
No. I'm not.

MAE
Why should I be?

HOLLY
Meaning that it doesn't matter if it was fifteen-hundred or
twenty-three hundred dollars?

MAE
What's the difference?

HOLLY
Eight hundred dollars.

LULA
What?

HOLLY
The difference: eight hundred dollars.

LULA
I'm not talking to you.

MAE
I'm not either.

HOLLY
All right.

LULA
(to MAE)
I bet she's not getting any.

MAE
(to LULA)
Or it's that time of the month.

HOLLY
Ahem. Can I have eight hundred dollars?

LULA
What?!?
MAE
What?!?

HOLLY
If eight hundred dollars doesn't mean anything to you, then
can I have it?

MAE
You insult us-

LULA
And then you want us to give you—

LULA MAE
Eight hundred Eight hundred
dollars? dollars?

LULA
You're absurd.

HOLLY
I didn't insult you. And I'm not absurd. I just said your
bag was fake.

LULA MAE
And you don't And you don't
think that's think that's
insulting? insulting?

HOLLY
I just wanted you to know.

LULA MAE
Why? Why?

HOLLY
Why?

MAE
Why did you want me—

LULA
"Us" to know?

HOLLY
So you wouldn't delude yourself.

LULA
Delude myself?

HOLLY
Like Santa Claus.

MAE
Santa Claus?

HOLLY
Or the Tooth Fairy.

LULA MAE
Oh. Oh.

HOLLY
You know how you felt when you found out they were fake.

LULA

My husband worked very hard for this bag.

MAE

I spent my Christmas bonus on it.

HOLLY

For fifteen hundred dollars?

LULA

Yes!

MAE

Yes!

HOLLY

Did you ever stop to think your husband might have bought it out of the back of someone's car?

LULA

No!

HOLLY

Or that it was made by some poor girl in North Korea.

MAE

No!

HOLLY

And that she gets paid about three dollars a month.

LULA

No!

MAE

No!

HOLLY

And the proceeds from it went to fund the North Korean terrorist nuclear weapons program?

LULA

NO!

MAE

NO!

Beat.

LULA

That's ridiculous.

HOLLY

No it's not.

MAE

Yes, it is.

HOLLY

Actually the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center was financed with profits made from counterfeit goods.

LULA

So?

HOLLY

So, it's the terrorists' way to play in to western elitism.

LULA
Elitism?

MAE
Elitism?

HOLLY

Yes. "Members of the elite". Or should I say wannabe members of the elite.

LULA
The elite?

MAE
The elite?

HOLLY

(A bell rings. Spotlight on
HOLLY)

The elite: members of a select group of people with outstanding personal abilities, intellect, wealth, specialized training or experience or other distinctive attributes.

Spotlight snaps to previous
lighting state.

LULA

I don't know what you're talking about. I just like these bags, OK?

MAE

They are stylish, and fashionable. I like being fashionable.

LULA

Doesn't everybody?

MAE

It's like saying to the world that you care about yourself--that you are a success at the game of life.

LULA

That you stand out from the crowd.

MAE

I don't care if it's a fake or not.

LULA

I adore it and my husband bought it for my birthday.

MAE

I spent my bonus on it. Who are you to tell me that it's a fake?

LULA

(stands)

That's like saying my husband's love is fake. That he cheated me? Are you saying he cheated me? That our marriage is a fraud? That he told me he saved his lunch money for close to a year so he could afford it and that was a lie?

MAE

(stands)

And that somehow you are better than us because your bag is real?

LULA

That you are in some way more real than I am?

MAE

That I am a fake person and you are real?

LULA

That I am an imitation!

MAE

Like imitation crab meat!

LULA

Like there is a fish at the bottom of the ocean saying-

MAE

"Wait, I do a really great crab!"

LULA

"Wait, I do a really great crab!"

They imitate a crab moving from side to side with snapping pincers.

MAE

Isn't that what you're really saying?

LULA

Isn't it?

MAE

Isn't it?

LULA

ISN'T IT?!?

MAE

ISN'T IT?!?

HOLLY

(she stands)

No.

LULA
Then what do you really mean?

HOLLY
I just thought you should know.

MAE
Okay. THANKS!

LULA
Okay. THANKS!

LULA & MAE give her "the hand".

HOLLY
You're welcome.

Lights change silhouetting the girls. Music. Slow motion sequence. In strobe or chasing lights LULA & MAE swing their bags and hit HOLLY knocking her to the floor. HOLLY stands up and swings her bag at LULA who ducks out of the way so that HOLLY swings around and hits MAE and knocks her to the ground. LULA simultaneously knocks HOLLY down with her bag.

LULA
Hits pretty good for a fake!

HOLLY
You're crazy!

MAE
You think she's crazy, get a load-a-me!

MAE & LULA swing at HOLLY who ducks out of the way. They hit each other and fall to the ground. Music ends. Spot on HOLLY.

HOLLY
That's the problem. You see? You think fashion is a mark of success? But your fashion is fake! That in the survival of the fittest, that you're more fit than the rest of us? That the rules that apply to everybody else don't apply to you? You're elite!?! But you are ashamed to answer when people ask, "Who are you wearing?" I've seen women like you on this train before. Yes, many times. And I think to myself, "If she could afford real Jimmy Choo's and real Coco Chanel and real Versace and real Burberry and real Prada and real Gucci and real Givenchy and real Louis Vuitton, then why in the hell is she riding on public transportation?!? If she could afford all that, then she should be driving a Mercedes."
(MORE)

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Or better yet, she'd have a chauffeur." But it's all a lie!
Isn't it? Isn't it? ISN'T IT?

LULA
(sobbing)
No. No. No.

MAE
(sobbing)
No. No. No.

LULA
Yes.

MAE
Yes. You're right.

Slow fade to each woman in their
own spot.

LULA
Isn't that the point? You wear designer clothes because they
make you feel special.

HOLLY
But when you know they're fake, it's like-

MAE
Taking away that special feeling.

HOLLY
Like someone telling you that Santa Claus doesn't exist?

LULA
Or the Tooth Fairy.

MAE
Or when you wear them that you feel-

HOLLY
Dirty inside?

LULA
Because you know that you could never afford the real thing.

MAE
But you know you really do deserve it.

HOLLY
So you pretend?

LULA
Because you want other people to treat you special.

MAE
And you wear them anyway because you want people to think-

HOLLY
Even if it's just for a moment—

LULA
That you are extraordinary!

MAE
Like you should be treated.

HOLLY
When they look at you they see a celebrity.

LULA
And escort you into the VIP room.

MAE
Men open doors for you—

HOLLY
And kiss your hand.

LULA
And make you believe that chivalry isn't dead.

MAE
They take down the red velvet rope for you.

HOLLY
And you are invited—

LULA
Into an amber world of rich mahogany.

MAE
And you believe you can hear--

HOLLY
Violins play as you sashay down the boulevard.

LULA
And a symphony whirs in your ears.

MAE
And you can hear the angels sing.

LULA
And that a trip to the mailbox—

HOLLY
Is your own personal Paris runway.

MAE
And you are a super model!

And life is grand... HOLLY

And money is no object LULA

And the air is perfumed. MAE

And people smell divine. HOLLY

And no one is fat. LULA

And cellulite doesn't exist. MAE

And you can eat whatever you want HOLLY

And global warming is a figment of your imagination LULA

And there is no crime. MAE

And no suffering. HOLLY

And your husband really loves you LULA

And you really love him MAE

Like when you first met HOLLY

And fell in love LULA

And the world was wonderful MAE

And you are a fashion icon. HOLLY

And your life is...epic. LULA

And for a moment you believe— MAE

HOLLY
Just because of your clothes—

LULA
And your accessories—

MAE
And the handbag you carry.

ALL
That the fantasy is real.

HOLLY
And you have arrived.

HOLLY's fantasy ends. The pools
of light fade. They sit as in
the beginning of play. Lights
change. Sound scape of train.

HOLLY
Excuse me.

LULA
Yes?

MAE
Yes?

HOLLY
Nice handbag.

LULA
Oh, thank you.

MAE
Oh, thank you.

They mime chatting and
complimenting each other on
their style, clothes and handbags
as lights fade.

END