

When I Was Cruel No. 2

Elvis Costello

I exit through the spotlight glare
I stepped out into thin air
Into a perfume so rarefied
"Here comes the bride"

Not quite aside, they snide "She's number four"
"There's number three just by the door"
Those in the know, don't even flatter her,
They go one better
"She was selling speedboats in a tradeshow when he met her"

Look at her now
She's starting to yawn
She looks like she was born to it
But it was so much easier
When I was cruel

She reaches out her arms to me
Imploring: "Another melody?"
So she can dance her husband out on the floor
The captains of industry just lie there where they fall

In eau-de-nil and pale carnation creation
A satin sash and velvet elevation
She straightens the tipsy head-dress of her spouse
While her recalls a honey house

There'll be no sorrows left to drown
Early in the morning in your evening gown
But it was so much easier
When I was cruel

The entrance hall was arranged with hostesses and ushers
Who turned out to be the younger wives nursing schoolgirl crushes
Parting the waves of those few feint friends
Fingers once offered are now too heavy to extend

The ghostly first wife glides up stage whispering to raucous talkers
Spilling family secrets out to flunkeys and castrato walkers
See that girl
Watch that scene
Digging the "Dancing Queen"

Two newspaper editors like playground sneaks
Running the book on which of them is going to last the week
One of them calls to me
And he says, "I know you"
"You gave me this tattoo back in '82"
"You were a spoilt child then with a record to plug"
"And I was a shaven headed seaside thug"
"Things haven't really changed that much"
"One of us is still getting paid too much"

There are some things I can't report
The memory of his last retort
But it was so much easier
When I was cruel

Look at me now
She's starting to yawn
She looks like she was born to it
Ah, but it was so much easier
When I was cruel