

Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts

Bob Dylan

The festival was over and the boys were all planning for a fall
The cabaret was quiet except for the drilling in the wall
The curfew had been lifted and the gambling wheel shut down
Anyone with any sense had already left town
He was standing in the doorway looking like the Jack of Hearts.

He moved across the mirrored room "Set it up for everyone" he said
Then everyone commenced to do what they were doin' before he turned their heads
Then he walked up to a stranger and he asked him with a grin
"Could you kindly tell me friend what time the show begins?"
Then he moved into the corner face down like the Jack of Hearts.

Backstage the girls were playing five card stud by the stairs
Lily had two queens she was hoping for a third to match her pair
Outside the streets were filling up, the window was open wide
A gentle breeze was blowing, you could feel it from inside
Lily called another bet and drew up the Jack of Hearts.

Big Jim was no one's fool, he owned the town's only diamond mine
He made his usual entrance looking so dandy and so fine
With his bodyguards and silver cane and every hair in place
He took whatever he wanted to and he laid it all to waste
But his bodyguards and silver cane were no match for the Jack of Hearts.

Rosemary combed her hair and took a carriage into town
She slipped in through the side door looking like a queen without a crown
She fluttered her false eyelashes and whispered in his ear
"Sorry darling, that I'm late", but he didn't seem to hear
He was starrin' into space over at the Jack of Hearts.

"I know I've seen that face somewhere" Big Jim was thinking to himself
"Maybe down in Mexico or a picture up on somebodys shelf"
But then the crowd began to stamp their feet and the house lights did dim
And in the darkness of the room there was only Jim and him
Starring at the butterfly who just drew the Jack of Hearts.

Lily was a princess she was fair-skinned and precious as a child
She did whatever she had to do she had that certain flash every time she smiled
She'd come away from a broken home had lots of strange affairs
With men in every walk of life which took her everywhere
But she's never met anyone quite like the Jack of Hearts.
The hanging judge came in unnoticed and was being wined and dined
The drilling in the wall kept up but no one seemed to pay it any mind
It was known all around that Lily had Jim's ring
And nothing would ever come between Lily and the king
No nothing ever would except maybe the Jack of Hearts.

Rosemary started drinking hard and seeing her reflection in the knife
She was tired of the attention tired of playing the role of Big Jim's wife
She had done a lot of bad things even once tried suicide
Was looking to do just one good deed before she died
She was gazing to the future riding on the Jack of Hearts.

Lily took her dress off and buried it away
"Has your luck turn out" she laughed at him'.

"Well I guess you must have known it would someday
Be careful not to touch the wall there's a brand new coat of paint
I'm glad to see you're still alive you're looking like a saint"
Down the hallway footsteps were coming for the Jack of Hearts.

The backstage manager was pacing all around by his chair
"There's something funny going on" he said " I can just feel it in the air"
He went to get the hanging judge but the hanging judge was drunk
As the leading actor hurried by in the costume of a monk
There was no actor anywhere better than the Jack of Hearts.

No one knew the circumstance, but they say it happened pretty quick
The door to the dressing room burst open a cold revolver clicked
And big Jim was standing there ya couldn't say surprised
Rosemary right beside him steady in her eyes
She was with big Jim but she was leaning to the Jack of Hearts.

Two doors down the boys finally made it through the wall
And cleaned out the bank safe it's said that they got off with quite a haul
In the darkness by the riverbed they waited on the ground
For one more member who had business back in town
But they couldn't go no further without the Jack of Hearts.

The next day was hanging day the sky was overcast and black
Big Jim lay covered up killed by a penknife in the back
And Rosemary on the gallows she didn't even blink
The hanging judge was sober he hadn't had a drink
The only person on the scene missing was the Jack of Hearts.
The cabaret was empty now a sign said. "Closed for repair"
Lily had already taken all of the dye out of her hair
She was thinking about her father who she was rarely saw
Thinking about Rosemary and thinking about the law
But most of all she was thinking about the Jack of Hearts.