

Wait Until Dark

Character Descriptions

Mike Talman, 25-40

At one time, Mike was a decent human being, and still has impulses that way – unlike Roat or Carlino, Mike has natural empathy and compassion, but life threw some bad things his way and he never settled into a respectable existence. He is rootless and alone in the world, and has some bad habits, gambling chief among them.

As a consequence, over the years he developed into a small-time grifter, able to squelch his kinder impulses when conning young women out of their money. He's quite good at it. He has natural charm and a good-natured style. He's easy to talk to and thinks fast on his feet. However, as a result of a double-cross at the hands of Lisa, his former partner in the con game, he and Carlino were both sent to prison. To make matters worse, he and Carlino never got their money.

Mike's been out of prison for three months, and in that time he's gotten into serious debt with a loan shark. He has to come up with \$6,000 (in 2014 dollars) right away just to keep the loan shark from hurting him severely. At the time this play starts, Mike is desperate and afraid for his life, which is why he takes the unwise risk of teaming up with Roat, and why he's able to put aside his affection for Susy for as long as he does.

Sergeant Carlino, 30-50

Carlino is a small-time grifter. He is a coarse, uneducated man who isn't bothered by much of a conscience. He lives from day to day just trying to survive in a world in which he is never the sharpest guy in the room, whatever room he's in. He's not a cruel or sadistic person, but he does what he has to do in order to survive without a lot of dithering about right or wrong. He is a fairly good con man, although he's never the brains behind any scheme – but he has an air of authority and that makes him a natural for impersonating police officers.

Unlike Mike, Carlino is not particularly weary of the small-time con, and he's practiced enough that he's smooth as long as no surprises are thrown at him. He's willing to do pretty much anything if the price is right. He seldom thinks more than one step ahead of the game, and so he very often ends up on the short end of any con.

Carlino teamed up with Mike years ago to con young women out of their money. Although he and Mike are fairly good friends, when Lisa entered the picture and the three of them formed a team, Carlino fell in love with her and harbored jealousy toward Mike whenever Lisa played one of them off of the other, as she very often did. Like Mike, he was left holding the bag after Lisa informed on them and made her escape to freedom – with Carlino's and Mike's money. Carlino, too, has just been paroled from prison and is broke. He doesn't like or trust Roat, but he can't pass up an opportunity for a big score.

Harry Roat, 30-50

Roat is a true sociopath. He has no empathy for anyone, and he has a sadistic streak a mile wide. Like many sociopaths, he is highly intelligent and manipulates people with ease. He is an excellent con man, although, unlike Mike and Carlino, that's not Roat's only game – he's a versatile and audacious criminal

and will do anything for money or even thrills. He enjoys seeing others in pain. He has no conscience whatsoever.

Roat is a master of disguise and far more athletic than he might first appear. He is very adept at using people's weaknesses to gain an advantage. He is a supreme narcissist as well – he believes other people are far, far beneath him and he enjoys playing them; they are less than ants on an ant hill in his mind. He has the ability to take command of a room and, through the force of his personality, effortlessly gets people to act against their best interests.

Roat will stop at nothing to achieve his ends. The more cowed by him people are, the more confident he becomes; he thrives on human frailty. However, when the tables are turned and he no longer has the upper hand, he can be quite cowardly and small.

Susy Hendrix, 20-30

Susy is a vivacious young woman who was blinded in a car accident a year ago. Possessed of a very strong will, she decided not long after her accident that she would not let it ruin her life. She met Sam a few months after the accident and was drawn to his refusal to see her as handicapped. His unsentimental way of dealing with her blindness gives her strength, and she loves him for it.

Susy does have her bad days, though. She is highly intuitive and a very sensitive person. These traits sometimes give her an air of vulnerability that is a counterpoint to her strong spirit. As a result, she can be irritable with Sam and, in particular, Gloria, and is sometimes depressed by her circumstances – which is when Sam's stolid determination not to let her be a victim is most valuable to her, even if it takes her a while to "lick her wounds" before bucking up and accepting Sam's drill-sergeant discipline.

Susy is still adjusting to her blindness – and to her relatively new marriage – and is happy to subjugate her natural free-spiritedness to Sam's more rigid way of living because she is grateful to him –she also happens to love, admire and respect him for many reasons. She knows they are a well-matched couple, and she is optimistic about their future together and the adventures that await them. When she is faced with the life-or-death threat that is posed by the three con men, she discovers just how strong, self-sufficient and resourceful she is.

Sam Hendrix, 25-40

Sam is a tough ex-marine and a man who has lifted himself up by his own bootstraps. He is intelligent, but not an intellectual. He's a practical man, not a dreamer or a ditherer. Having created a decent life for himself out of nothing, he is content; he never wallows in sentiment and, while he has a very sensitive side, he is not comfortable showing it, even to Susy.

He's the kind of person who makes a decision and then goes with it – he doesn't second-guess himself or wonder about the road not taken. He is a decent photographer, but not possessed of an artistic temperament. He works hard, does a good job and enjoys his life with Susy. He loves her very much and wants to see her reach her full potential as a person regardless of her blindness – as a result, he believes that he has to be hard on her sometimes.

He met Susy when he saw her trying to cross a busy street in traffic. He was impressed by her strong spirit, but the truth is that it was her vulnerability that attracted him – or, more specifically, how utterly

unaware of her own vulnerability she was. Susy is the only person Sam knows who can bring out his soft side.

Gloria, 9

Gloria is a bright child and has a good heart, but her home life is fairly rough (her mother is undependable and her father abandoned the family not long ago) and she's terribly uncomfortable in her body. Gloria wants desperately to be seen like a young woman – but she is very much still a child. She can be very petty and given to tantrums, and she has a vague crush on Sam which makes her jealous of Susy. Like most immature people in such a situation, she blames Susy for “coming between” her and Sam.

However, she also likes Susy because Susy sometimes takes the role of surrogate mother/big sister to her, offering kind words and advice (on Gloria's good days) and giving her responsibilities like doing the grocery shopping for Susy and Sam.

As a result of Gloria's mixed feelings for Susy, they have a volatile relationship. But, deep down, she loves Susy and, through the ordeal Susy goes through in this play, Gloria gains a whole new respect for Susy.

Policemen, any age

Two cops come in at the end right after the climax of the play. Both men are serious about their work and very professional. However, they've never seen anything like what greets them at 27B Grogan Street.