

Courier Mercury

by

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DESCRIPTION

Jukie di Gamba is a bicycle courier extraordinaire, who sees his journey through the city streets as the modern-day version of Mercury delivering messages for the gods.

CHARACTERS

- JUKIE DIGAMBA, mid-20s, bicycle courier

[Note: Could be played by man or woman, any ethnicity. "He" is used in the script for convenience.]

SETTING

- Major American city

MISCELLANEOUS

- Stool
- Bicycle courier bag
- Bike helmet
- Water bottle

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JUKIE is a bicycle courier. He sits on the stool as if on a bike; he doesn't need to mime peddling, but he should mime body movements, such as leaning into a curve on a turn. He begins by putting on the courier bag and helmet.

People just don't understand, just don't get it: I've got a vital job to do. I move information, I'm part of the city's blood, the pulse, the boom-boom-boom of high finance ramming the rod that drives the world as we know it.

Gets on the bike.

They better get outta my way.

Starts off.

Look at 'em all—sheep. Bovine. Stutter, lurch to the left, get that coffee, complain about their gnarly little gimp souls—hey, hey, hey, hey!—cow, not looking when he should have been—while I weave and juke and take the edge in a lean that threatens an asphalt dilemma until I pop vertical and suck past the clots of cars. Poetry in motion, all verb, verb, verb, verb, verb.

Yow, that was close—you can't be crossing the grain that way! Okay, over on to Congress, past Public Alley 666—there it goes—down Lornado to the Reising Building where Vinnie Testermanza holds court at the reception desk, just waiting to welcome me like the Knight Shirley Templar that I am.

Gets off the bike, makes as if he's locking it.

Can't leave the steed untethered for a moment—some people can smell an unchained bike from 16 desires away.

Takes an envelope out of his bag.

Vinnie, guardian angle, I must dee-liver. Thanks for the buzzer.

Checks the building directory.

Okay, watch him trace a wise and knowing finger down the roster, then off on the ascent. Everything that rises must need a purge. Fourth floor, go forth.

As if he's in the office.

Hello, hello, hello. Package for Mr. Parmenter, signature here. And here. And here. Initials there. Overdone, I agree—but better than half-baked. Trust, but verify.

Back into the elevator.

C'mon, c'mon. I hear my steed pining for the fields. Ping!
Goodbye, Vinnie. Parting is such a sweet sparrow. Unchain my
melody, and we're off!

We're both at the mercy of the cars, which means no mercy at all.
No one watches for the cyclist—not even a remote mote in their
eyes. See, right there, jerk dog opens the door without doing a
180 behind, and I'm almost sending him invoices for my medical
maltreatment. Doored the ultimate undignity, shows you didn't see
ahead to the blue-hair rheumy-nosed senior git launching herself
and her walker into the buzz and bluster of your path.

Okay, chug it up the hill—c'mon, one leg “yes,” the other leg “I
will.” Small package drop, then coast down the other side, best
moment, looping through the red-lighted cars, the weather
combing me. There are times when the crack and swerve and
road-jammed bones feel sweet because the free lick of the
elements tingles like a tongue painted with unbruised sugar.

Pauses, drinks from his water bottle.

Mercury, god of all couriers. Wings on his ankles, wings in his
hair, protector of thieves, decapitator of Argus, bringer of Psyche
to Olympus—he did some first class deliveries in his time.

Raises his water bottle and pours out a little.

Libation to the god of couriers, who had it easier than I did trying
to make it through a four-stop intersection three minutes to go
before some jerk needs papers to mortgage his soul to a bank that
could give two shits—no, only one—no, none—about the quality
of his soul and his prospects for inner peace. All the gods have
been dipsticked into logos; commerce and proctology are
synonyms.

Gets back on bike.

But some of us—we flow along the ancient beds, keep the prick
and gnaw of the unruly soul alive. Each juke left, each dodge right,
each drone brushed back, each minion made to jump away keeps
the revels fed, the unraveling sewn. Mercury, mentor, lend me
your lyre—we have music to make as we cut our way through this
city of sodden people and graveyard whistles. Play the pipes and
guide me—oh, guide me to home!

