

EYES WIDE SHUT

by

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FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

INT. BILL & ALICE'S APT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It is a week before Christmas. The tree is decorated and Christmas cards stand open everywhere in the comfortable Central Park West apartment.

Settled into the couch in the living room, watching TV, are seven year-old , HELENA, and the BABY-SITTER, a young college girl.

BEDROOM

BILL and ALICE HARFORD, an attractive couple in their thirties, are in evening clothes preparing to leave for a party.

ALICE
(looking in mirror)
How do I look?

BILL
You look great.

ALICE
My hair okay?

BILL
Perfect.

ALICE
You're not even looking at it.

Bill kisses her neck.

BILL
It's absolutely beautiful. You always look beautiful.

ALICE
Oh, shut up... OK, let's go.

They walk into the living room. The baby sitter gets to her feet.

BABY-SITTER
Oh, you look so-ooo lovely, Mrs. Harford.

ALICE
(laughs)
Thank you, Roz.
(to Helena)
All ready for bed?

HELENA

Yes, Mommy. I took my bath and
brushed my teeth.

AD-LIBS of praise as BILL and ALICE kiss HELENA goodnight.

BABY-SITTER

What time do you want Helena to go
to bed?

HELENA

Please, Mommy, can I stay up late
tonight and watch the
(name of TV show)
Ple-eease.

ALICE

When is it on?

HELENA

Ten-thirty.

ALICE

Okay, darling, but just for tonight.

HELENA

Thank you, Mommy.

The house intercom rings. BILL goes to answer it.

DOORMAN (VOICE)

Doctor Harford?

BILL

Yes.

DOORMAN

The car is here.

BILL

OK, we'll be right down.

Bill returns to sitting room.

BILL

OK the car's here - let's go.
(to Baby-sitter)

Roz, we might be late tonight but
I'll hold the car to take you home.

BABY-SITTER

Oh, that's great, Doctor Harford.
Thanks very much.

AD-LIBS of Good nights and have a good time.

EXT. HIRED CAR DRIVE-BY (CPW TO 5TH) - NIGHT (2ND UNIT)

INT CAR - NIGHT

BILL takes ALICE's hand and gives her a loving wink.

EXT. ZIEGLER MIDTOWN MANSION - NIGHT

BILL'S car pulls up behind a stretch limo.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The driver hands Bill a clip board with a form attached to it.

DRIVER

Can you sign this, Doctor?

The doorman, carrying an umbrella, opens the car door.

BILL

(signing)

Okay, thanks..

DRIVER

Thanks.

(handing his card)

Just phone about half hour before you want to be picked up.

BILL

OK. Fine.

DRIVER

Have a good evening.

BILL and ALICE exit the car and enter the house.

INT. ZIEGLER MANSION - NIGHT

Big party already in progress.

Sound of a dance band off.

Many guests still arriving.

Two ladies seated at a table confirm that Doctor and Mrs Harford are on the invitation roster.

Their coats are taken.

The hosts, VICTOR ZIEGLER, a fit, sun-tanned, man in his mid-fifties, and his wife, ILLONA, a Hungarian beauty, stand to one side greeting their guests in the large entrance hall.

ZIEGLER
 (speaking above the
 noise)
 Bill!...Alice!... I'm so glad you
 could come. It's wonderful to see
 you both,

AD-LIBS of further greetings while they shake hands and kiss on both cheeks.

ZIEGLER
 And Alice, my dear, forgive the
 pitiful understatement but you look
 totally beautiful.

Victor and Alice exchange if-there-was-world-enough-and-time smiles.

ZIEGLER
 And Bill, that osteopath you sent me
 to? He was wonderful. You should
 see my serve now.

BILL
 Yes, he's the top man in the world.

ANOTHER FABULOUS ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

BILL and ALICE, carrying champagne glasses make their way through the glitterati.

They stop to admire the 17 foot Christmas tree trimmed with colored lights and antique ornaments.

BALLROOM - BILL & ALICE DANCING

BILL's attention is caught by one of the musicians on the bandstand.

BILL
 I don't believe it.

ALICE
 What?

BILL
 The guy at the piano. That's Nick
 Nightingale, I went to medical school
 with him.

ALICE
He's plays pretty good for a doctor.

BILL
He's not a doctor. He dropped out.
I'm going to have to say hello to
him.

ALICE
Okay, I'll go and get us some more
champagne.

BILL
I'll see you at the bar.

BILL walks over to the bandstand as they finish a set.

BILL
Nick!.. Nick Nightingale!

NICK
Hey! Bill Harford! What a surprise.
How the hell are you?

AD LIBS of greetings as they shake hands.

BILL
God, how long has it been?

NICK
Ten years?

BILL
And a couple.

NICK
How's life been treating you?

BILL
Not too bad. And you've become a
pianist.

NICK
My friends call me that.

BILL
(laughs)
And how do you happen to playing
here tonight?

NICK
I know my Cole Porter and I work
cheap.

They both laugh.

NICK

How about you. Still in the doctor business?

BILL

You know how it is, once a doctor, always a doctor.

NICK

In my case, never a doctor, never a doctor. You don't know how that is.

BILL

I never did understand why you walked away.

NICK

No? It's a nice feeling. I do it a lot.

The BAND LEADER comes over and gives NICK a nod and BILL a polite smile.

NICK

Okay, we're off again. Listen, if I don't catch you later, I'm down in the Village for the next two weeks, at the Cafe Sonata. Come by if you get a chance.

BILL

(nods)

Cafe Sonata, right. Okay, and listen, it was great seeing you again.

NICK

Same here. Take care.

The band starts up again.

The ballroom is crowded and BILL starts to make his way around the dance floor to the bar.

ALICE is at the bar waiting for him.

She reaches absently for her champagne glass... and finds she is holding - or touching - a man's hand.

ALICE

(smiles)

I think that's my glass.

SZABO

I'm absolutely certain of it.

SZABO is a handsome man, in his mid-forties with a slight Central European accent.

He drinks slowly from ALICE'S glass and looks directly into her eyes as he does so.

SZABO

Did you ever read the Latin poet
Ovid on The Art of Love?

ALICE

Didn't he wind up all by himself,
crying his eyes out in some place
with a very bad climate.

SZABO

But he also had a good time first.
A very good time. By the way, my
name is Sandor Szabo.
I'm Hungarian.

ALICE

Pleased to meet you. My name is
Alice. I'm American.

SZABO

Would you like to dance, Alice?

ALICE notices BILL across the room talking to two beautiful models.

ALICE

Why not? - Sandor.

ACROSS THE ROOM - BILL & THE MODELS

GAYLE, the taller model, shouts to BILL above the music.

GAYLE

Nobody likes you?
(louder)
Nobody likes you, is that the problem?

BILL

Put it this way, nobody wants to
admit how much they like me. But
I'm confident it can still happen.

GAYLE

(laughs)
Do you know Nuala Windsor?

GAYLE asks, putting her arm around her friend's waist.

BILL

(smiles)

Nuala...I certainly feel like I do.
How do you spell, Nuala?

NUALA

N..u..a..l..a.

BILL

Is that a Hawaiian name?

NUALA

No, it's an agency name.

They all laugh.

GAYLE

You were very kind to her once.

BILL

Only once? That sounds like an oversight.

NUALA

I was on a shoot, modelling at Rockefeller Center, on a very windy day. You happened to be passing by.

BILL

(remembering)

And you got something in your eye?

NUALA

Just about half of 5th Avenue. You were such a gentleman.

BILL

That can happen when you're in a hurry.

NUALA

You actually had a handkerchief - which was also clean!

BILL

That's the kind of hero I can be sometimes!

ALICE is dancing with the Sandor. He holds her close to him.

SZABO
What do you do, Alice?

ALICE
Well, actually, I'm looking for a job at the moment. I was an editor at a publishing house but they went broke.

SZABO
Perhaps I can be of some help. I know a few people in publishing.

Alice doesn't reply to this.

SZABO
And you're married?

ALICE shows him her wedding ring.

SZABO
And you're here tonight with your husband?

ALICE
I am, indeed..

SZABO
How sad.

Alice makes a that's-life face.

SZABO
But of course I should have guessed that. If you weren't with your husband tonight you wouldn't be so careful.

ALICE laughs.

SZABO
May I ask why a beautiful woman who could have any man in this room wants to be married?

ALICE
You can ask.

SZABO
You know why women used to get married, don't you?

ALICE
Why don't you tell me.

SZABO

It was the only way they could lose their virginity's and be free to do what they wanted with other men. The ones they really wanted.

ALICE

Fascinating.

SZABO

Victor and Illona have a fabulous art collection.

ALICE

They do, don't they.

SZABO

Have you ever seen the Impressionist stuff upstairs?

ALICE

I don't think so.

SZABO

There are a couple of magnificent Bonnards up there.

ALICE

Are there?

SZABO

Do you like Bonnard?

ALICE

Yes, I do.

SZABO

Would you like me to show them to you?

ALICE

Well, maybe not just right now.

SZABO

We won't be gone long.

ALICE smiles and shakes her head.

BILL AND THE MODELS

NUALA slowly leading BILL to the door.

NUALA

Do you know what's so nice about doctors?

BILL

Usually a lot less than people think.

NUALA

They look so... knowledgable!

BILL

They are very knowledgeable - about all sorts of things.

GAYLE

But I'll bet they work too hard. I bet they miss out on a lot of fun.

BILL

You're absolutely right. Where we going, girls?

NUALA (laughs)

Where the rainbow ends. BILL slows down a little.

GAYLE

Don't you want to go where the rainbow ends?

BILL

Do I want to go where the rainbow ends?

Before he can answer, a big man who looks like he stepped right out of The Godfather walks up - HARRIS, Ziegler's personal assistant.

HARRIS

Excuse me, Doctor Harford. May I trouble you for a moment?

BILL

Sure.

HARRIS

(nods towards the door)

Could you spare a minute, please?

BILL

What's up?

HARRIS
 Could you come with me, please?

GAYLE
 It's something for Me. Z.

BILL
 Okay.

GAYLE
 Come back soon.

The girls blow kisses. Bill smiles.

ALICE AND SZABO DANCING

SZABO
 Alice, you're a fascinating woman.

ALICE makes a can't-help-that face.

SZABO
 I'd really like to see you again.

ALICE
 I don't think that would really be a good idea.

SZABO
 You are cruel. What about lunch, later this week?

BILL AND HARRIS - CORRIDORS AND STAIRCASE

Muffled sounds of the music echo from the ballroom below.

HARRIS stops in front of a large door and knocks quietly.

ZIEGLER (O.S.)
 Yes?

HARRIS
 It's Harris, sir.

After a few seconds the key is turned in the lock and the door slowly opens revealing a barefoot ZIEGLER wearing only his pants and undershirt.

ZIEGLER
 Thanks very much for coming up, Bill.

He gestures BILL in. HARRIS waits outside.

A strikingly beautiful, half-naked woman in her late twenties, is sprawled face up, her clothing scattered on the floor.

BILL
What happened?

ZIEGLER
She OD'd on coke.

ZIEGLER gestures to the cocaine paraphernalia on the night table.

BILL
(checking her pulse)
How long has she been like this?

ZIEGLER
Maybe ten minutes?

BILL feels her carotid artery.

BILL
Has this happened before?

ZIEGLER
Not sure, but probably.

BILL turns her face to the light of a table lamp to check her pupils. The woman stirs.

BILL
She's starting to come around.

The woman makes a few unintelligible sounds.

BILL takes her wrist again and looks at his watch.

BILL
Good...Well...I don't think there's
really anything to worry about.
Coke wears off in half an hour or
so.

ZIEGLER is visibly relieved.

BILL continues to watch her in silence.

BILL
Someone should stay with her, though,
until she's fully herself again.

ZIEGLER
Okay.

BILL
Some cold towels on her face wouldn't
be a bad idea.

ZIEGLER
Okay.

BILL
Anyone here with her to take her
home?

ZIEGLER
I'll take care of that... She's a
friend of the family.

Bill nods and watches her for a few moments longer. Then he
makes moves like he wants to go..

BILL
She'll be all right, Victor. Okay
if I leave the rest to you?

ZIEGLER
Sure... And listen, Bill, I don't
know how to thank you enough for
this.

BILL
It was nothing. Glad to be of help.

ZIEGLER
And, Bill - I know I don't have to
say this but I trust this is just
between the two of us.

BILL
Of course.

BALLROOM

BILL re-enters the ballroom and looks around for the two
models but he doesn't see them.

Then... a woman's arm slips through his.

He looks down at the wedding-ringed hand.

It's ALICE.

She is flushed and glad to have found him.

ALICE
Haven't I seen you someplace before?

BILL
 Could be. What's your name again?

She kisses him.

ALICE
 Can we go home now?

BILL AND ALICE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ALICE stands naked in front of her dressing table mirror rubbing face cream. BILL comes up behind her, kisses her shoulder and runs his hands lightly over her breasts.

V.O.
 That night they were more blissful
 in their ardent love than they had
 been for a long time.

SHOTS TO ILLUSTRATE V.O.

Getting up.

Alice and Helena in the kitchen.

Bill in his office with patients.

V.O.
 The gray of morning awakened them
 only too soon. Alice had to take
 Helena to school. And Bill had a
 number of early appointments. So
 the evening hours passed in the
 predetermined daily routine of work,
 and the events of the night before
 began to fade.

BILL'S APARTMENT - HELENA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

HELENA reading aloud to BILL and ALICE from "A Child's Garden of Verses". She finishes her poem and yawns.

BILL
 And now, my darling, time for bed.
 What do you say?

HELENA smiles and puts her arms around BILL.

BILL and ALICE kiss her goodnight, turn out the lights and go into the living room.

LIVING ROOM

ALICE sighs comfortably.

ALICE
So, how do you feel about wrapping
some presents?

BILL
Kind of negative. We can do it
tomorrow.

Bill drops down on the couch, picks up the TV controller and starts switching channels.

Alice snuggles up to him.

ALICE
Anything good on tonight?

BILL
Have you got the paper?

Alice puts her arms around him.

ALICE
I don't feel like watching TV.

They kiss.

ALICE
Let's break the law a little first

BATHROOM - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Bill takes a Band-Aid box from the bathroom medicine cabinet and removes a small plastic bag of pot.

BEDROOM

Alice skillfully rolls two joints.

MINUTES LATER

Bill and Alice sitting in bed, partly undressed and smoking the joints.

Alice inhales and leans back with an ashtray in her lap.

She is high.

ALICE
How about the truth game?

BILL
Always a bit dangerous with pot.

ALICE
Isn't that the fun?

BILL
I'm putty in your hands.

ALICE
Okay, let's start with who were those
those two gorgeous women at the party
last night?

BILL
Don't really know. One of them just
started talking to me.

ALICE
I thought they might be patients?

BILL
No such luck. They're models. One
of them said I once removed something
from her eyes on windy day in
Rockefeller Plaza.

ALICE
Always on the job.

BILL
That's me.

ALICE
And what did they want from you this
time?

BILL
My body - what else?

ALICE doesn't find the remark particularly amusing.

BILL
Hey, come on - all I did was talk to
them... Anyway, who was the guy you
were dancing with?

BILL is not that interested and just wants to change the
subject.

ALICE
Sandor?

BILL
Sandor... Who is he?

ALICE
A friend of the Zieglers.

BILL
And what does he do?

ALICE
I never actually found out?

BILL
Rich?

ALICE
Talked like he was.

BILL
And what did he want?

ALICE
Sex. Upstairs. Then and there.

The pot makes ALICE think this is hilarious.

BILL
Well, I guess that's understandable.

ALICE
Understandable?

BILL
Well, you're a beautiful woman.

ALICE
Oh, I see. So does exhaustive
research show that every man I meet
wants to screw me?

BILL
There might be some exceptions.

ALICE
Does that mean that all men, with
possibly some exceptions, want to
screw all beautiful women, married
or otherwise?

BILL
I suppose, basically, yes.

ALICE
So does that mean you wanted to screw
the two models?

BILL
I did say with some exceptions.

ALICE
And of course you're an exception?

BILL
Yes.

ALICE
How come?

BILL
Because I love you.

ALICE
Any other reasons?

BILL
Because we're married.

ALICE
Any others?

BILL
And because I wouldn't lie to you or hurt you.

ALICE
So basically what it comes down to is that you wouldn't screw the two models out of consideration_for me, but otherwise you would.

BILL
Hey, is this thing on Court TV?

BILL feigns looking around for cameras.

ALICE
Why don't you just give me a straight answer?

BILL
Hey, come on, honey. The pot's making you aggressive.

He takes her cigarette and puts it out.

ALICE
I'm not being aggressive at all and how about you not putting out my --

BILL
Okay. Okay. Okay.

ALICE
Now try to be honest. When some really great-looking woman comes in to your office to have her tits checked out, don't you ever think about screwing her?

BILL
Come on, give me a break. I'm a doctor. It's all very impersonal. And anyway my insurance requires that a nurse is always present.

ALICE
You're being evasive. When you're feeling her tits, is it never any more than sheer professionalism?

BILL
Basically, that's all it is.

ALICE
Just basically?

BILL
Oh, come on. There are no absolutes in anything.

ALICE
No absolutes... Okay. Fine... And does the same thing go for women? While they're having their tits squeezed, do you suppose your lady patients ever wonder what your dick might be like?

BILL
Definitely not.

ALICE
And why is that?

BILL
Because they're too worried about what I might find.

ALICE
You know what I mean.

BILL
No, again. Not most of them.

ALICE

Why?

BILL

Well, I suppose that most women are programmed differently from men.

ALICE

Oh, yes, I forgot. Millions of years of evolution - right? Men have to put their sperm into as many women as they can, but women stay at home with pretty pink things and take care of the children?

BILL

A bit oversimplified but something like that.

A dispirited smile passes over her face.

ALICE

Oh, if you men only knew.

The look in her eyes changes, becoming cool and impenetrable, and BILL allows her hands to slip from his.

BILL

If we knew -? What do you mean by that?

ALICE

(in a strangely harsh voice)

About what you imagine, my dear.

BILL

Hey, Alice, hey, look at me... The truth. Is there something you've kept from me?

ALICE looks down with a strange smile.

BILL

You're just trying to wind me up.

ALICE

If you say so.

BILL

If I say so? Wait a minute. I'm not going to let you get away with that... Seriously... Is there's something you haven't told me?

ALICE stops short of saying something.

BILL

Say it.

ALICE nods.

ALICE

Well, last summer at Cape Cod - I don't suppose you remember one night in the dining room, there was a young Naval officer sitting near us. He was with two other officers.

BILL

As a matter of fact, I don't But what about him?

ALICE

The waiter brought him a message during dinner, at which point he left the table?

Bill waits for her to continue.

ALICE

Well... I first saw him that morning in the lobby. He was checking in and he was following the bellboy with his luggage to the elevator. He glanced at me as he walked past but didn't stop until he had gone a few more steps. Then he turned and looked at me. He didn't say anything. He didn't smile. In fact, it seemed to me that he scowled. Maybe I did the same thing.

ALICE stops for a moment.

ALICE

I was very stirred by him. That whole day I lay on the beach, lost in dreams.

She stops.

BILL

Go on.

ALICE thinks about how to continue.

BILL stares at her.

ALICE

That afternoon you and I made love and talked about our future, and our child. Later we were sitting on the balcony and he passed below us without looking up. Just the sight of him stirred me deeply and I thought if he wanted me, I could not have resisted. I thought I was ready to give up you, the child, my whole future. And yet at the same time - if you can understand it - you were dearer to me than ever, and I stroked your forehead and kissed your hair, and at that moment my love for you was both tender and sad. At dinner I wore a white rose and you said I was very beautiful. It might not have been just an accident that he and his friends sat near us. He didn't look up but I actually considered getting up, walking over to him and like someone in a movie, saying, 'Here I am, my love, for whom I have waited - take me.' Well, it was about then that the waiter brought him the envelope. He read it, turned pale, said goodbye to his friends - and glancing at me mysteriously, he left the room.

ALICE stops for a moment.

ALICE

I barely slept that night and woke up the next morning very agitated. I didn't know whether I was afraid that he had left or that he might still be there... But by dinner I realized he was gone and I breathed a sigh of relief.

Long silence.

BILL

And if he hadn't left?

Alice doesn't reply.

ALICE

I don't know.

BILL doesn't say anything but there is a scornful expression around his mouth.

The phone rings.

BILL
Hello?...Oh... When did they call?...
No, I have the address...If they
call again say I'm on my way.

He hangs up the phone and starts to put on his shoes.

BILL
Lou Nathanson just died.

ALICE
Oh, that's too bade. But you were
expecting that, weren't you?

BILL
Yes...

Bill starts to get dressed.

BILL
I have to go over there for a while.

ALICE
Now?

BILL
I have to show my face.

BILL silently getting dressed.

ALICE
Obviously, it was a mistake to have
told you.

BILL
(coldly)
Not at all.. We must always tell
each other everything.

ALICE
It was the pot.

BILL
It doesn't really matter. Nothing
happened. Just a passing fancy.

EXT. MARION'S APARTMENT HOUSE - NIGHT

BILL's taxi pulls up to the stylish, lower 5th avenue
apartment.

Doorman opens the door.

INT. MARION'S LOBBY

Bill walks to the elevator

INT. MARION'S PRIVATE ELEVATOR - LOBBY

Bill exits elevator and find's her door ajar.

He knocks softly and enters without waiting for a reply.

BILL
(softly)
Marion?

He walks through the quiet apartment.

MASTER BEDROOM

The body of LOU NATHANSON lies on a large bed with an oxygen cylinder and other medical paraphernalia on tables on each side of the bed.

MARION, the dead man's daughter, a pretty girl in her late twenties, sits at the foot of the bed, exhausted, her arms hanging limply at her side.

She starts to get up but BILL stops her with a movement from his hand, and she merely greets him with a nod, her eyes large and sad.

BILL moves to the head of the bed and mechanically places his hands on the forehead of the dead man and on his arms.

He shakes his head a couple of times and his shoulders drop with a slight expression of regret.

BILL
I hope his last moments were peaceful.

Marion gives him a despairing look.

He puts his hands in his pockets and his eyes wander about the room until they finally rest again on Marion.

BILL
Well, Marion, at least you weren't
entirely unprepared for this.

She holds out her hand to him. He takes it sympathetically.

Marion sighs, woefully.

MARION
Dad seemed pretty good today.

MARION

Around nine o'clock he said he felt like taking a nap. So I went into the living room to watch television. I don't think I was out of his room for more than half-an-hour.

Marion starts to weep.

MARION

When I went back, at first I thought he was still asleep... Then I realized he wasn't breathing... I did everything you had told me but... he was....

She can't bring herself to say, dead, and she shakes her head, despairingly.

MARION

I called the emergency people... But when they got here they just said he was...dead and asked whether I wanted them to take him away.

She breaks down sobbing.

BILL draws up a chair and sits down opposite her.

BILL

Marion, from what you've said, it sounds like your father died in his sleep. He wouldn't have suffered.

MARION

Oh, God...I hope not... I've been so afraid of the actual... dying business... But he made it so easy, just as he tried to make everything else in my life easy.

BILL takes her hands.

BILL

Have you notified any of your relatives?

MARION

I phoned Carl - my fiancée.

She does not look BILL straight in the eye when she says, fiancée.

MARION

He's going to make some calls for me
and then he's coming over.

BILL

Oh, that's good.

MARION

I think you've met Carl here a few
times? We're planning to get married
in April.

BILL

Oh, that's wonderful. I'm very happy
for you.

They sit for a few moments without speaking.

V.O.

I certainly do remember Carl. So
she's going to marry him, Bill thought
to himself. I wonder why? She surely
can't be in love with him. He's
nothing to look at, and he hasn't
got any money... He's just an
assistant in professor of something
or other... But then it's none of
my business. Still... if she were
my mistress, her hair would be less
dry and her lips would be fuller and
redder.

Marion suddenly starts to talk.

MARION

Dad had so many worries and
disappointments. My mother was never
well... And my brother...he was
such a disappointment... I don't
even know where he is. The last we
heard from him was from some small
town in Mexico. I can't even remember
where.

In spite of himself, BILL places his hand on her head,
caressing it. He feels her body begin to tremble and her
sobs become louder and finally quite unrestrained. All at
once, she slips down from her chair and kneels in front of
him, clasping his legs with her arms and pressing her face
into them.

She looks up at him with large eyes, wild with grief, and
whispers ardently:

MARION

I don't want to leave here... Even
if you never return... Even if I am
never to see you again... I want,
at least, to live near you.

BILL looks touched rather than surprised.

BILL

Please - get up, Marion.

He says this softly, and bending down he gently raises her
up.

He glances at the dead man on the bed and only puts his arms
around her in a very hesitant embrace and kisses her on the
forehead.

At the same time, without knowing why, a sense of anger wells
up against ALICE.

Jealous fantasy image of Alice and the Naval officer. The
door bell rings.

He hastily kisses Marion's cheek, as if in gratitude, and
goes to the door.

It's CARL standing there - a very ordinary looking man with
an umbrella in his hand and a serious face appropriate to
the situation.

The two men greet each other much more cordially than is
called for by their actual state of acquaintance.

They walk to the bedroom and CARL has an embarrassed look at
the deceased.

CARL

Oh, my poor, dear Marion. I am so
sorry.

He puts his arms around her.

BILL goes into the next room to write out the death
certificate.

When he finishes, he returns to the bedroom where the engaged
couple sit, hand in hand, by the bed of the dead man.

The door-bell rings.

CARL

I'll get it.

While he is out of the room, Marion, with her eyes on the floor, says, almost inaudibly:

MARION

I love you.

BILL merely pronounces her name tenderly.

BILL

Marion.

CARL returns with Marion's UNCLE and AUNT and aunt, whose presence gives BILL the opportunity to make his goodbyes and leave.

At the door.

CARL

I hope we'll see you soon.

EXT. MARION'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bill walks outside. It has become even milder. A gentle breeze carries from the nearby park to the street. BILL inhales the fresh air.

DOORMAN

Taxi?

BILL

No thanks. I think I'll walk for a bit.

EXT. STREET TO PARK - NIGHT

Bill walking.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Walking through the park, BILL notices on some of the benches in the shadows, that couples are kissing, just as if Spring had actually arrived and no danger lurked in the deceptive warm air.

A tramp lies full length on a bench wrapped in newspapers with his hat over his face.

V.O.

The image of the tramp made him think of the dead man he had just left, and he shuddered and felt slightly nauseated at the thought that decay and decomposition had already begun their work in the body he just left.

V.O.

He was glad he was still alive and in all probability that these ugly things were still far removed from him, and that he was, in fact, still in the prime of life, had a beautiful wife and could have several women in addition, if he wanted to, although doing so would require more free time than he had.

BILL notices a group of rowdy college boys coming towards him, six of them taking up the whole walkway.

He moves aside to keep out of their way.

But as they pass, one of them, a tall boy with an open overcoat, deliberately bumps into him with his raised elbow.

BILL involuntarily stops.

The tall student takes two more steps and turns.

They glare at each other for a moment with only a short distance separating them.

Suddenly, BILL turns around again and walks.

He hears a short laugh behind him.

He wants to turn around and fight but he feels his heart beating strangely.

V.O.

Had he become a coward, he asked himself, and noticed his knees were shaking a little bit. Ridiculous! Why should he get involved in a street fight with some drunken college student who had five friends with him.

BILL keeps walking without looking back.

V.O.

He, a man of thirty-five, a practicing physician, a married man and father of a child. He might wind up in the hospital or worse and tomorrow be in the same position as the man he just left... Then he thought about his profession?

V.O.

There were dangers lurking there,
too, everywhere and at all times -
except that one usually forgets about
them.

EXT. STREET - ON WAY DOMINO - NIGHT

BILL walking.

V.O.

Surely, it had been nothing but common
sense to avoid a ridiculous fight
with the student... but if he ever
meet the Naval officer with whom
Alice...

JEALOUS FANTASY IMAGE - ALICE AND NAVAL OFFICER V.O.

V.O.

But what insanity! After all, nothing
happened... What was he thinking
about?... But then, wasn't it really
just as bad as if she had actually
fucked him - she might just as well
have. Wasn't it even worse, in a
way. What a joy it would be to teach
him a lesson.

EXT. STREET - DOMINO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bill passes a young girl, DOMINO, who falls into step beside
him.

DOMINO

Hi.

BILL slows down and looks at her. She is very pretty with
dark red lips.

BILL

Hi.

DOMINO

How're you doing?

BILL

Fine. How are you doing?

DOMINO

I'm doing great...Listen, how would
you like to have a little fun?

BILL
I'm sorry?

DOMINO
Have a little fun. Come inside with
me? I just live over there.

She points to a nearby doorway.

BILL a little off balance.

BILL
Come inside with you?

DOMINO
Yes. It's a lot nicer than it is
out here.

BILL
Do you live there?

DOMINO
Yes.

BILL
By yourself?

DOMINO
I have a roommate but she's not home.

She gently takes his arm.

DOMINO
It's okay - no one will bother us.

BILL smiles, uncertainly.

DOMINO
Really, it's okay. Come on.

BILL allows himself to be led to the door.

DOMINO
(gently)
Come on.

INT. DOMINO APARTMENT LOBBY - NIGHT

She leads BILL through the small, dingy entrance lobby lit
by a flickering fluorescent tube to a ground-floor rear
apartment.

BILL
Should we talk about the money?

DOMINO
How does sixty sound? BILL nods, a
little uncomfortably.

BILL
Sixty. Sounds good.

DOMINO laughs.

DOMINO
(laughs)
I don't keep track of the time.

She unlocks the door and they go inside.

It's a clean, reasonably tidy, ex cold-water railway flat.

The girl smiles sweetly, and walks ahead of BILL into the narrow bedroom where there is a neatly made king-size bed without a bedspread...

BILL
By the way, what's your name?

DOMINO
Domino.

BILL
Domino. That's an unusual name.

DOMINO
Well, it's my, uh...professional
name.

BILL
Right.

DOMINO
And what's your name?

Bill hesitates.

BILL
Bill.

DOMINO
Hi, Bill.

BILL
Hi, Domino.

DOMINO
Would you like a drink or some grass?

BILL
No thanks. I'm fine.

She puts on some music.

BILL
Nice little place.

DOMINO
Yes, it's okay.

BILL
Is this really your place?

DOMINO
That's the second time you asked.

BILL
No, it just that I was under the
impression that most girls didn't
use their own apartment - too much
hassle.

DOMINO
That's true but I don't do this that
much.

BILL
Oh, how's that?

DOMINO
I only work when I get too far behind
with my student loan.

BILL is a little surprised.

BILL
What school are you going to?

DOMINO
NYU.

BILL
NYU. What are you studying?

DOMINO
Sociology.

BILL
Good sociology department?

DOMINO
Pretty good. Ever hear of Pearlstein
and Johnson?

BILL
To be honest, I'm not much into
sociology.

She slowly starts to undress.

DOMINO
What do you do?

BILL
I'm a doctor?

DOMINO
A doctor?

BILL
Yes.

DOMINO
GP?

BILL
Yes.

DOMINO
My father's a GP.

BILL
No kidding? I hope I don't know
him.

DOMINO
He practices in New Jersey.

BILL
New Jersey...

She steps out of her panties and tosses them on the table.

BILL
Listen, I know it's a little late
for this but do you mind if I ask
how old you are?

She stands naked before him with her arms outstretched.

DOMINO
How old do you think?

BILL
Well, to be honest, I would have
said sixteen or seventeen but
obviously if you're going to
college... eighteen?

DOMINO

Nineteen.

She puts her arms around his neck again and gazes into his eyes.

DOMINO

Well, shall we?

Bleep-bleep.

BILL's cellular phone.

Bleep-bleep. He fumbles in his pockets for the phone and DOMINO has to get off his lap for him to get it out.

BILL

Hello?

It's ALICE.

BILL

Hi, honey. Yes, everything's okay...
I'm not sure... We're waiting for
some relatives to show up... It
could be late... No, don't wait up.
Can't really talk... Okay, as soon
as I can... Same here.

He disconnects and puts the phone back in his pocket.

DOMINO

Was that Mrs. Doctor Bill?

BILL thinks for a moment and nods. Then he sighs and gets to his feet.

DOMINO

(not a question)
You have to go.

BILL

I'm afraid so.

DOMINO

What a shame.

He gets out his wallet and starts to count out sixty dollars.

DOMINO

Oh, look, you don't have to...

BILL

No, that's all right.

DOMINO
Really. It's okay.

BILL
No, no. Listen, we need more good sociologists.

They both laugh.

DOMINO
Okay but you've got a raincheck.

BILL
That's a deal.

EXT. STREET TO CAFE SONATA - NIGHT

BILL walks aimlessly through the wintry night.

V.O.
Where shall I go now, he asked himself? The obvious thing was home to bed. But he couldn't persuade himself to do that. He thought of going back to the girl but that somehow seemed ridiculous now. He was overcome with a sense that he was moving farther and farther away from his everyday existence into a completely different world.

By the chance, he passes a small nightclub, Cafe Sonata, and notices Nick Nightingale's name and photograph outside.

He stops and looks at it.

The DOORMAN drifts over.

DOORMAN
The band's about to wind up but they're still serving.

BILL nods and goes in.

INT. CAFE SONATA - NIGHT

The place is about a quarter full. BILL sits down at a table near the band.

Nick sees him and winks.

BILL gestures hello, orders a beer.

The band finishes their last number and take a perfunctory bow to a scattering of applause.

NICK comes over to the table.

NICK
Hey, Bill!

They shake hands and ad-libs of greetings.

The WAITER swoops in with BILL's beer.

BILL
What are you drinking?

NICK
Scotch and soda.

The WAITER nods and hurries off.

NICK
So what brings you out at this hour?

BILL
Just happened to be passing by. I have a patient in the neighbourhood.

NICK
Do you live in the Village?

BILL
No, we've got an apartment on Central Park West.

NICK
You're married?

BILL
Nine years.

NICK
That was the great looking woman you were dancing with at the party?

BILL
Yes.

NICK
Lucky man.

BILL nods.

NICK
Any kids?

BILL

An eight year old daughter. How about you?

NICK

I've got a wife and four boys in Seattle.

BILL

That's great. So is this your band?

NICK

No, I'm just filling in.

BILL

Who do you normally play with?

NICK

Anybody. Anywhere. As a matter of fact, I've got another gig later tonight.

BILL

You're playing somewhere else tonight?

NICK

(shrugs)

They only get started there about two.

BILL

In the village?

NICK

I don't actually know the address yet.

BILL

How come?

NICK

It's in a different place every time, and I only get it about an hour or so beforehand.

BILL

A different place every time?

NICK

So far.

BILL

What's the big mystery? Nick opens his palms in a parody of innocence.

NICK
I just play the piano.

BILL
What kind of a function is it?

NICK
What kind of a function is it?...
Well, to be completely honest, it's
not easy to describe.

BILL
But you've worked there before?

NICK
True.

BILL
And it's not easy to describe?

NICK
I play blindfolded.

BILL
What?

NICK
I play blindfolded.

Something near the entrance door attracts Nick's attention.

NICK
(stands up)
Back in a minute.

He walks to the front window of the club and looks out into the snowy street. He doesn't see what he's looking for and returns.

NICK
Sorry about that. I'm supposed to
meet somebody here.

BILL
With the address?

Nick shrugs, meaning, yes.

BILL
Listen, you're putting me on about
that blindfolded business, aren't
you.

NICK

No, that's the truth. They're very strict about that.

BILL

This is getting curiouser and curiouser.

NICK

Maybe so, but listen, I was sworn to secrecy, and please, just forget I said anything at all about it.

BILL

Nick, you can trust me. I won't say a word about this to anyone but since you've told me this much, you can't stop now.

NICK

No, really, this is not a joke. I'm not saying anything else.

BILL

Nick, you can't do this to me. I'll wonder about this for the rest of my life. Trust me.

NICK is very uncomfortable about this but is also dying to talk about it.

NICK

Okay, well this is just between us.

BILL

Absolutely.

NICK

Well...first of all, although I am blindfolded I can of course still hear... and the sounds...

NICK closes his eyes and lets the provocative innuendo sink in.

NICK

And...the last time the blindfold wasn't tied on that well.

NICK also lets that sink in.

NICK

Bill...I've seen a few things in my life but never anything like this... And I have never seen such women.

BILL

What does it cost to get into this place?

NICK

Forget it.

BILL

What do you mean, forget it.

NICK

Forget it.

BILL

Look, I don't care what it costs.

NICK

It's not a matter of money. These people aren't interested in money. It's a completely closed affair.

BILL

These people. Who are these people?

NICK

Put it this way - if I knew their names it would be worth more than my life to say them out loud.

BILL

Nick, don't you think you might just be over-dramatizing this a little bit? There must be some way you can get me in.

NICK

(shakes his head)
It would be too dangerous.

BILL

Dangerous?

NICK

These are not people you fuck with - if you'll pardon the pun.

Nick sees someone looking through the plate glass window.

NICK
I'll be right back.

He gets up and hurries outside to the street.

BILL watches him through the window, hunched up against the cold, stamping his feet up and down, talking to a man and writing something down.

Nick returns blowing on his hands.

Bill gives him an inquiring look.

BILL
Was that the address?

NICK
And the password.

BILL
Password?

NICK
Yes. You can't get in without the password and they change it every time. And, listen, I'm going to have to get weaving pretty soon.

BILL
(said with a smile)
Nick, you son-of-a-bitch, you know you are definitely going to have to take me with you tonight. You know that, don't you.

Nick sighs and shakes his head.

BILL
Look, I'll tell you what - you give me the password and the address and I'll go there by myself. There won't be the slightest connection with you, whatsoever.

NICK squirms.

NICK
Look, even if I were crazy enough to do that, you couldn't get in the way you're dressed, anyway.

BILL
Why not?

NICK
Everyone there is always masked and
in costume.

BILL
Masked and in costume?

NICK
Always.

Bill looks at his watch.

BILL
Okay. Point taken. But there's a
possibility I know a place that might
still be open.

NICK
Bill, you're out of your mind. No
costume place would be open at this
time of night.

BILL
Look, Nick, what the hell. Just
give me a chance. Let me try. If I
can't get the gear I'll forget about
the whole thing. Scouts honour.

NICK looks ready to give in.

BILL
Okay?

NICK sighs in resignation.

BILL
Okay. So, let me have the address
and the password, and tell me what
kind of costume I need?

EXT. BUSY GREENWICH VILLAGE STREET - NIGHT

BILL's taxi pulls up in front of a costume shop. A sign
says: 'Formal Dress and Costumes.'

The place is closed.

BILL
Shit.

He thinks for a moment, pays the driver and gets out.

He notices a sign that says: "In case of emergency ring
apartment 3."

He looks up and sees a light on in the apartment above the store.

He rings the bell for apartment 3, which has the name, Gibson..

After a couple of rings, a voice comes over the intercom.

GIBSON

Yes, what is it?

BILL talks to the TV security camera.

BILL

Mister Gibson?

GIBSON

What do you want?

BILL

Mister Gibson, I'm very sorry to disturb you at this hour. I'm a Doctor. My name is Harford. I need to see you. It's important.

Bill holds up his New York State Medical Board card to the doorway TV security camera.

GIBSON

Somebody hurt?

BILL

No one's hurt but it's important.

GIBSON

What kind of important?

BILL

It would really be better if I could come upstairs for a moment and talk to you.

GIBSON

You better come back tomorrow.

BILL

Mr. Gibson, tomorrow will be too late. I really need to see you now. It won't take long.

Silence.

Then the door buzzer sounds.

BILL pushes open the door and goes upstairs two at a time.

A door opens on the chain and a man in his fifties, wearing flannel pyjamas and a heavy bathrobe, who has the looks and manner of a road-company ham actor peers out.

BILL
Mr. Gibson?

GIBSON
Yes.

BILL holds up his New York State medical card again.

BILL
Good evening, Mister Gibson. This is my New York State Medical Board card, just so you know who I am.

Gibson looks at the card and at BILL.

GIBSON
Okay, so you're Doctor Harford. What's this all about?

BILL
Mister Gibson, you may not find it that easy to understand the urgency of this, but basically, uhm... I need...a costume and a tux..

Gibson stares at him in disbelief.

GIBSON
You need a costume and a tux?

BILL
Yes.

GIBSON
I'm sorry, but do you honestly expect me to open my shop for you, at this hour?

BILL
I can imagine how this may seem to you, Mister Gibson, and I am prepared to pay an extra two hundred dollars for the inconvenience.

Gibson doesn't reply.

BILL
How does that sound to you?

Judging from his expression, this sounds pretty good to Mr. Gibson.

INT. COSTUME SHOP - NIGHT

A short while later, Gibson leads BILL through the shop to the dimly lit costume section.

GIBSON

Okay, now let me get this straight. You want a tuxedo, a black monk's cassock and a mask that completely covers your face?

BILL

That's it.

GIBSON

I have to tell you doctor, I've had some very strange requests in my day and this is certainly one of them.

BILL

It's for a good cause.

GIBSON

Okay, you're the doctor.

GIBSON chuckles at his own witticism.

GIBSON

Now, let me get this straight. You want a tuxedo, a monks cassock and a mask that completely covers your face?

BILL

That's it.

Suddenly BILL hears the clink of glasses from somewhere ahead of him.

GIBSON flips a light switch.

A light come on in a little office at the end of the passage.

The desk is covered with plates, glasses and bottles.

Two JAPANESE MEN, wearing blonde female wigs, naked except for Japanese kimonos, spring up from their chairs besides the desk.

At the same moment, the semi-naked figure of a graceful GIRL disappears under the desk.

GIBSON rushes forward with long strides, reaches across the desk and grabs one of the blond wigs.

Simultaneously, the young GIRL, maybe fourteen, wriggles out from under the desk and runs along the passage to BILL who catches her in his arms.

GIBSON drops the wig and grabs the two kimono garbed men.

At the same time he calls out to BILL.

GIBSON
Hold on to that girl for me, please.

The GIRL presses against BILL as if now sure of her protection. Her pretty little face covered with powder and a smile of impish desire in her eyes.

GIBSON
(shouts)
Gentlemen, you will stay here while
I call the police.

KIMONO 1
Gibson, have you gone mad?

KIMONO 2
We were invited by the young lady.

GIBSON
You will have to explain this.
Couldn't you see the girl is
unbalanced?

Then GIBSON he turns to BILL.

GIBSON
Sorry to keep you waiting.

BILL
That's okay.

BILL looks down with fascination at the GIRL, who looks up at him with alluring and childlike eyes, as if spellbound.

The two KIMONO MEN start to argue with each other in Japanese..

GIBSON turns to BILL.

GIBSON
I'm sorry, did you say a brown or
black cassock?

BILL

Black.

YOUNG GIRL

(with gleaming eyes)

No. You must give this gentleman a cloak lined with ermine and a doublet of red silk.

GIBSON

(to girl)

Don't you budge from there.

(to Bill)

What size are you?

BILL

I take a 38 jacket.

GIBSON picks up a brown monk's cassock hanging nearby and holds it up for BILL'S approval.

GIBSON

This will fit you.

BILL

Fine.

GIBSON

Okay, let's go and try on the tux..

The two Japanese men are still in the glass partitioned office.

GIBSON locks them in._

KIMONO 1

Gibson, this is preposterous!! You will have to let us out at once.

GIBSON

I'm afraid that's out of the question, gentlemen. This is now a police matter. You will kindly wait here until I return.

Ad-libs of further protest from the two men. The girl skips lightly up the stairs ahead of them.

GIBSON

Now go to bed at once, you depraved creature. I'll talk to you as soon as I've settled with those two.

The girl gives BILL a sad shake of her head and exits.

INT. FRONT OF COSTUME SHOP - A LITTLE LATER

Bill has changed into a black tuxedo and waits for Gibson to write up the bill. His clothes and the costume are in two large plastic shopping bags.

GIBSON

Okay - that's a hundred and fifty for the rental. Three hundred deposit. And the two hundred inconvenience money. That's six hundred and fifty bucks..

BILL

Okay.

BILL hands him his credit card and his driver's license.

GIBSON

I'd prefer cash.

BILL

Sorry, I don't carry that kind of money.

Gibson takes the credit card.

BILL

Thanks. And - by the way - I hope you won't be too hard on the child.

GIBSON

I'm sorry doctor but I'm not sure what business it is of yours.

BILL

Well, it's just that I first heard you say the girl was unbalanced, and then you called her depraved. Those things are a little contradictory.

GIBSON

(a bit theatrically)

Well, aren't insanity and depravity the same in the eyes of God?

The last thing BILL wants right now is to get into an argument with GIBSON, so he replies in his most professional manner.

BILL

Well, in any event, there are things that can be done that might help the situation. Maybe we can have another talk about it tomorrow.

Gibson laughs mockingly without uttering a sound.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE COSTUME SHOP - NIGHT

Bill, carrying two plastic shopping bags with his clothes in them, hails a taxi.

He checks at a slip of paper with the address on it.

BILL

How do you feel about going out to
Sands Point Long Island?

The driver makes a face.

BILL

How about twenty bucks over the meter?

CAB DRIVER

(shakes his head)
I'll have to come back empty.

BILL

How's fifty?

CAB DRIVER

Fifty's good.

EXT. VARIOUS TAXI DRIVE-BYS - NIGHT (2ND UNIT)

Brooklyn Bridge L.I. Expressway

INT. CAB BILL - NIGHT

V.O.

Bills Thoughts: Variations of, "I
must be mad."

EXT. LONG ISLAND MANSION ROAD - NIGHT

The cab drives slowly down a wooded road.

INT. CAB

BILL looking out for the house.

Up ahead, he sees a stretch-limo with darkened windows pulling into a drive protected by iron gates flanked by two gatehouses.

As they drive slowly past the gates, BILL sees a sign that says, 'Bletchly Manor'.

BILL
Okay, driver - that's the place.
Stop a little way down the road.

The car comes to a stop.

The meter says \$75.50 BILL takes out his wallet.

BILL
Okay, here's eighty dollars and...

BILL carefully tears a hundred-dollar bill in half and gives one part to the driver.

BILL
...I promised you fifty bucks over the meter but I'll make it a hundred if you wait for me. Let the meter run and you'll get the other half plus the meter when I come back... Okay?

The driver gives BILL a wary look.

CAB DRIVER
How long will you be?

BILL
That's the thing - I'm not sure. I could be ten minutes. I could be an hour or so. But look, I'm leaving all my stuff in the back. Okay?

The cab driver takes half of the torn hundred-dollar bill.

CAB DRIVER
Okay.

BILL gets out of the cab, puts on the monk's cassock, throws his coat over his shoulders and walks back to the gates.

EXT. GATES - NIGHT

The iron gates are closed and no one is in sight.

Security cameras look at him.

The road leading to the Manor House curves away into a small wood which covers the house.

BILL rings a bell at the side of the gate and two men promptly come out of the gate house.

GATEMAN 1
(polite and well-spoken)
Good morning, sir.

BILL
Good morning.

GATEMAN 1
Can we be of any help you?

BILL
I suppose you'd like the password?

GATEMAN 1
If you wouldn't mind, sir.

BILL
(slowly)
Fidelio Rainbow...

GATEMAN 1
Thank you, sir.

The gate is opened.

GATEMAN 1
Is that your taxi down there, sir?

BILL
Uh - yes. Yes - my chauffeur came
down with the flu at the last minute.

GATEMAN 1
The cabby could have driven you right
to the door.

BILL
Listen, I'm lucky I got here at all.
The guy's straight from Bulgaria.

Bill laughs uncomfortably without getting a penny's change
from the men.

GATEMAN 1
(pointing a car)
If you'd like to get in the car,
sir. We'll run you up to the house.

BILL
Okay. Thanks.

They get into the car.

Gateman 2 remains at the gate.

INT. CAR

Bill sits silently next to the driver.

POV - THE LONG ISLAND - MANOR HOUSE - NIGHT

INT. CAR

GATEMAN 1

(tactfully)

This might be a good time to put on
your mask, sir.

BILL

(casually)

Oh, yes. Of course.

BILL takes the mask from his pocket and puts it on.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE - NIGHT

The car pulls up and BILL gets out.

BILL

Thanks.

He walks up the stone steps and the front doors are opened
before he reaches them.

INT. HOUSE

BILL enters a large, candlelit, mirrored vestibule where two
servants in black suits, their faces covered by grey masks,
whisper in unison:

SERVANTS

Password?

BILL

Fidelio Rainbow.

SERVANT 1

Thank you, sir. One of them takes
his coat, while the other opens a
door.

BILL enters a long room, dimly lit with candles, with high
ceilings and walls covered with black silk.

A line of mirrored doors on each side run the length of the
room.

There are about fifty men and women dressed as monks and
nuns, their faces completely covered by masks.

Gently swelling strains of Italian liturgical music comes from an organ playing somewhere.

As his eyes become accustomed to the dim light, BILL sees that the women are naked beneath the full-length, black veils that flow down from their head bands.

His eyes wander from voluptuous bodies to slender bodies, from delicate to richly developed figures, and he is filled with inexpressible desire.

Occasionally, eyes turn towards him but immediately look away as soon as he notices them.

A monk brushes against him and nods a greeting, but from behind the mask BILL sense a searching and penetrating glance.

A strange, heavy perfume, as of southern gardens, pervades the room.

Again an arm brushes against him, but this time it is that of a nun.

Her face is fully masked, and like the others, naked under the black transparent lace of her veil.

THE WOMAN

You don't belong here. There's still a chance for you to get away.

BILL is momentarily unnerved by this but he is also completely captivated by the beauty and sensuality of this woman.

BILL

I'm terribly sorry but I think you've mistaken me for someone else.

THE WOMAN

Please don't be foolish about this. You must leave at once.

BILL

Who are you?

THE WOMAN

It doesn't matter. You must go.

BILL

Will you come with me?

THE WOMAN

That's impossible.

BILL
Impossible?

THE WOMAN
Impossible.

BILL
Is there someplace else here we could go?

THE WOMAN
Absolutely not. Please believe me, if you are discovered it will go hard with you.

BILL moves closer to her but she steps back.

ANOTHER WOMAN
What's the matter. Why don't you dance?

BILL sees two men watching him from another corner and suspects that this woman has been sent to put him to the test.

He smiles.

BILL
I would love to dance.

But just at that moment, THE WOMAN returns.

She pretends that she has just noticed him and says in a voice that can be heard by the two men.

THE WOMAN
Returned at last.
(she laughs)
All your efforts are useless. I know you.

Then turning to the other woman she whispers:

THE WOMAN
Let me have him first - just for a while.

The other woman smiles agreement, and with a light step goes to join the two men who have been watching.

THE WOMAN
Don't ask any questions, and don't be surprised at anything.

THE WOMAN

I have tried to lead them astray but you can't fool them for much longer. Go before it is too late, - and be careful that no one follows you. No one must know who you are. There would be no more peace for you. Go!

BILL

Is there any way --

THE WOMAN

There is no way.

He takes her hand and draws her closer to him.

BILL

I must see you again.

She whispers, despairingly.

THE WOMAN

Go.

BILL

Is there no way I can ever see you again.

THE WOMAN

No. We must never meet again. It could cost your life and mine.

Just at that moment, a tall man stops before them, and with a slight bow, courteous but imperative, says:

TALL MAN

Will you dance with me?

THE WOMAN hesitates but the TALL MAN puts his arm around her waist and leads her away the adjoining room.

A moment later, a voice whispers behind BILL.

ELEGANT MAN

Password!

BILL turns around and sees two men.

One, heavy-set, the other, slim and elegant.

ELEGANT MAN

Password!

BILL
Fidelio Rainbow.

ELEGANT MAN
That's right, sir. That's the
password for admittance, but may I
ask what is the password for the
house?

BILL is stuck. He takes a deep breath...

ELEGANT MAN
Won't you be kind enough to tell me
the password of the house?

This time it sounds like a threat.

BILL can't think of anything to say. He shakes his head and
shrugs.

BILL
Sorry. It looks like I must have
forgotten it.

The elegant man walks to the middle of the room and raises
his hand.

Everything gradually comes to a stop.

Blindfolded, Nick stops playing when someone places a hand
on his shoulder and whispers something to him.

With all eyes on him, the two men walk back to BILL.

ELEGANT MAN
The password, sir! I must demand
that you give it.

BILL
Look, I'm terribly sorry but I've
told you, I must have forgotten it.

ELEGANT MAN
That's unfortunate. For here it
doesn't matter whether you have
forgotten it or if you never knew
it.

The rest of the men slowly gather around BILL.

BILL
Well, gentlemen, I seem to owe you
all an apology.

ELEGANT MAN

It is too late for apologies.

BILL

Well, be that as it may, you have my most sincere regrets for not remembering the second password.

ELEGANT MAN

I'm afraid this is not a question of regret but of expiation.

BILL

Well, gentlemen, you must excuse me now. I am leaving.

ELEGANT MAN

I'm afraid that is no longer possible.

BILL

Gentlemen, don't you think this farce has gone far enough?

BILL looks for a way out but no one makes way for him.

ELEGANT MAN

You will kindly remove your mask.

BILL looks around at the masked faces surrounding him.

ELEGANT MAN

(sharply)

Please remove your mask.

BILL slowly removes his mask and puts it in his pocket.

THE WOMAN

I am ready to redeem him.

There is a murmur of surprise in the room. THE WOMAN reaches for the veil, which is wrapped around her head, face and neck and unwinds it with a wonderful circular movement.

It sinks to the floor, leaving her naked, her dark hair falling in great profusion over her shoulders, breasts and hips.

ELEGANT MAN

You are ready to redeem him?

THE WOMAN

Yes, I am.

There is a low gasp from the assemblage.

ELEGANT MAN

You know what you're taking upon
yourself in doing this?

THE WOMAN

Yes.

Another murmur from the room.

The elegant man turns back to BILL.

ELEGANT MAN

You are free. Leave this house at
once. But first I must warn you
that if you make any further inquiries
or inform anyone about what you have
seen here tonight, there will be the
most serious consequences for yourself
and your family. Do you understand
that?

BILL doesn't reply immediately.

BILL

How is this woman to redeem me?

ELEGANT MAN

That has nothing to do with you.

BILL shakes his head.

BILL

I can't let this woman pay for me.

ELEGANT MAN

You would be unable, in any case, to
change her fate. When a promise has
been made here there is no turning
back.

THE WOMAN

Go! You cannot save me.

As she says this, she tears off the mask, allowing BILL a
momentary glimpse of her face.

Then he is seized by irresistible arms and pushed out.

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It is four o'clock in the morning.

BILL, now changed back into his own clothes, enters his
apartment.

Everyone is asleep.

He goes into his study and locks the costume and tux in a closet.

In order not to wake ALICE, he undresses before going into the bedroom.

BEDROOM

ALICE is asleep, lying with her arms folded under her head. Her lips are half open and painful shadows surround them.

It is a face BILL does not know.

He bends down over her, and at once her forehead becomes lined with furrows, as though someone had touched it, and her features seem strangely distorted.

Suddenly, still in her sleep, she laughs so shrilly that he becomes alarmed.

BILL
(involuntarily)
Alice.

She laughs again, as if in answer, in a strange, almost uncanny manner.

BILL
Alice?

She opens her eyes, slowly and with difficulty.

She stares at him, as though she does not recognize him.

BILL
Alice?

As she wakes up, an expression of fear, even of terror comes into her eyes.

Half awake, and seemingly in despair, she raises her arms.

BILL
What's the matter?

ALICE stares at him, still frightened.

BILL
Alice, it's me.

ALICE breathes deeply, tries to smile, drops her arms on the blanket.

ALICE
(in a far away voice)
Is it morning yet?

BILL
It will be very soon. It's a little
past four o'clock. I've just come
home.

She nods but barely seems to have heard or understood him.
She stares into space, as though she can see through him.
He bends over and touches her forehead.
She shudders slightly.

BILL
What's the matter?

She shakes her head slowly and he passes his hand gently
over her hair.

BILL
Alice, you laughed so strangely.
What's the matter?

ALICE
(distantly)
I've been dreaming.

BILL
(gently)
What have you been dreaming?

ALICE
Oh, so much, I can't quite remember.

BILL
Perhaps if you try.

ALICE
It was all so confused - and I'm
tired. You must be tired, too.

BILL
Not really. I don't think I'll go
to bed at all. You know, sometimes
when I come home so late it's better
to just go straight to work.

ALICE nods without interest.

BILL

But why don't you tell me about your dream?

He smiles a little artificially.

ALICE

You really ought to lie down and take a little rest.

BILL hesitates a moment, then he stretches himself beside her, though he is careful not to touch her.

They lie there silently with open eyes, and they feel both their closeness and the distance that separates them.

After a while he raises his head on his arm and looks at her for a long time, as though he can see much more than just the outlines of her face.

BILL

Tell me about your dream.

Bill says this, once more, as if she had been waiting for his invitation.

She holds out her hand to him, he takes it, and as he had often done before, he holds it and plays with her slender fingers, more absent-mindedly than tenderly.

ALICE sighs and begins to speak uncertainly.

ALICE

I think it started in my parents house. They weren't there. I was alone. That surprised me because our wedding was the next day and I didn't have a wedding dress. Then you and I were floating above a ancient city. It was a kind of crazy mix of ancient architectural styles. Oriental, Egyptian, Greek and Roman architecture. And it was completely deserted. The streets were empty - no people, no animals. And I remember thinking, so this is our honeymoon. Then it was night and the sky was so full of stars, and so blue and wide it seemed like it was painted. You said it was the ceiling of our bridal chamber and you took me in your arms and made love to me and said you would love me forever.

BILL

I hope you loved me, too.

BILL says this with an invisible, malicious smile.

ALICE

Even more than you did me. We made love and it was wonderful, though there was a sadness to it, and a presentment of sorrow. Suddenly it was morning and we were somewhere in the strange city. We were still completely alone. But something terrible had happened - our clothes were gone. I was terrified as I had never been before, and felt such a burning shame that it almost consumed me. At the same time I was furious with you because I thought it was your fault. And this sensation of terror, shame and fury was more intense than any emotion I had ever felt before. You felt guilty and rushed away naked, to go and get clothes for us. As soon as you were gone I felt wonderful. I neither felt sorry for you, or worried about you. It was heavenly to be alone. I was lying in a lush garden, stretched out naked in the sunlight, and I was far more beautiful than I ever was in reality. And while I lay there, a young man walked out of the woods. He was the young Naval officer I told you about from the hotel. He looked different but I knew it was him. He stopped in front of me and looked at me searchingly. I laughed seductively and wantonly, as I have never laughed in my life, and he held out his arms to me and sank down beside me. ALICE falls silent. BILLS throat is parched. In the darkness of the room he can see she has concealed her face in her hands.

BILL

A strange dream, but that's not the end, is it?

ALICE doesn't reply.

BILL
Was that the end?

ALICE
No.

BILL
Then why don't you tell me the rest
of it?

ALICE
It's not easy. Some things are not
easy to say.

BILL
It's was only a dream.

ALICE sighs and continues, hesitantly.

ALICE
He looked at me...and slowly took me
in his arms...and we began making
love. I seemed to live through
countless days and nights - there
was neither time nor space. And the
more we made love the more our hunger
for each other increased. And just
as that earlier feeling of terror
and shame went beyond anything I had
ever felt, so nothing can be compared
with the freedom and happiness and
the... desire that I now felt.
Then I realized there other couples
around us - hundreds of them, and
they too were making love. Then I
was making love to the other men,
and as soon as my longing was
satisfied with one, I wanted another.
I can't say how many I was with.
And yet I didn't for one moment forget
you. And all this time, you were
buying the most beautiful clothes
and jewelery you could find for me.
Then you were being followed by a
crowd of people who were shouting
threats. Then you were seized by
soldiers, and there were also priests
among them. Somebody - a gigantic
person, tied your hands. You were
still naked. I knew you were going
to be crucified but I felt no sympathy
for you. I still blamed you for
everything that had happened.

ALICE

I felt that I was far removed from you but I knew you could see me naked in the arms of countless men in this sea of nakedness which foamed around me. The soldiers began to whip you and blood flowed down you in streams. I saw it without feeling any surprise or pity. Then you smiled at me as if to show you had fulfilled my wish and bought me everything I wanted. But I thought your actions were ridiculous and I wanted to make fun of you - to laugh in your face. They began to nail you to the cross and I hoped that you would be able to hear my laughter. And so I laughed as shrill and loud as I could... That must have been the laugh that you heard when I woke up. Neither of them moves or says anything. Any remark at this moment would seem futile.

BILL realizes he is still holding ALICE'S hand.

She remains silent and motionless.

Ready as he is to hate her, his feeling of tenderness for these slender, cool fingers is unchanged except that it is more acute.

Involuntarily, he gently presses his lips on the familiar hand before he lets it go.

ALICE'S eyes are closed and there is the trace of a happy, innocent smile playing about her mouth.

He feels an incomprehensible desire to make love to her.

He rolls over and puts his arm around her but then checks himself.

He stretches himself out beside ALICE, who now seems asleep.

As he closes his eyes, he thinks:

V.O.

Whore of her dreams. There is now a sword between us. We are lying here like mortal enemies.

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAWN

BILL rises at 6 o'clock and dresses while ALICE is still asleep. He has only had a couple of hours sleep and looks awful.

HELENA'S BEDROOM

On his way out he stops off in his daughter's room. She is asleep in her bed. He kisses her on the forehead.

STUDY

He collects his costume and leaves.

EXT. CAFE SONATA - DAY

Taxi pulls up and BILL gets out.

He takes a cab to the Cafe Sonata where he met Nick Nightingale.

It is closed but he peers in through the window and sees the chairs are stacked on the tables and the place is being cleaned.

He taps on the glass.

After a couple of "we're closed" wave-offs from the manageress working at a table in the back, the door is finally opened by one of the cleaners.

BILL

Good morning. I'd like to have a quick word with the manager, if I may.

CLEANING LADY

Someone for you, Vicki.

MANAGERESS

Okay.

Bill walks to the table she is seated at.

BILL

Good morning.

MANAGERESS

What can I do for you?

BILL

It's very important that I get in touch with Nick Nightingale.

MANAGERESS

He'll be in tonight.

BILL

It's something I need to see him
about this morning.

MANAGERESS

It's not our policy to give out
employees addresses.

BILL

Of course. I completely understand.
But I'm a doctor...

(shows her his medical
card)

...and this is a personal medical
matter. I know he'll want to know
about as soon as possible.

EXT. HOTEL JASON - DAY

BILL's taxi pulls up. It's a small, mid-town hotel.

INT. - LOBBY

There is no one in the lobby except for the DESK CLERK, a
man in his early thirties, reading a paperback.

BILL

Good morning.

DESK CLERK

Good morning, sir. How can I help
you?

BILL

Can you ring Mr. Nightingale's room
for me, please?

The DESK CLERK gives him a strange look.

BILL

Nick Nightingale?

DESK CLERK

I'm sorry, sir, but he's checked
out.

The DESK CLERK has a slight, gay lisp.

BILL

He checked out?

DESK CLERK

Yes.

BILL

Did he leave a forwarding address?

DESK CLERK

No, I'm afraid not.

BILL

When did he check out?

DESK CLERK

About five o'clock this morning.

BILL

Five o'clock. That's a pretty early check out, isn't it?

DESK CLERK

It is a little bit on the early side.

BILL

Did you happen to notice whether there was there anything strange about him when he left?

DESK CLERK

You aren't a detective, by any chance?

BILL

No, I'm a doctor. Nick and I are old friends.

DESK CLERK

Well, since you ask, there was something very strange about the way Mr. Nightingale left.

BILL

What was that?

DESK CLERK

Well, he came in at about four-thirty a.m. There were two men with him - big guys.

The DESK CLERK bends his elbows and clenches his fists to make a 'big-guy' gesture.

DESK CLERK

And I noticed he had a bruise on his cheek I'm sure he didn't have the night before.

DESK CLERK

The two men with him were well-dressed and well-spoken, but they weren't the kind of people you'd want to fool around with, if you know what I mean. Mr. Nightingale said he would be checking out and went up to his room with one of the men. The other one stayed in the lobby and settled his bill, which was a couple of weeks overdue. When they came down, I thought Mr. Nightingale looked... well - scared. Very scared, if you ask me. He tried to pass me an envelope but they saw him and took it away and said any mail or messages for him would be collected by a person properly authorized to do so. When they took him outside, I could see there was a car waiting for them.

BILL

No idea where they might have gone?

DESK CLERK

None at all.

EXT. COSTUME SHOP - DAY

BILL enters.

INT. COSTUME SHOP - DAY

GIBSON

Ah-hhh, the good doctor.

BILL

Good afternoon.

GIBSON

Did you enjoy your evening?

BILL

Yes, it was fine.

BILL hands him the clothes. Gibson carefully takes the them out of the bag and lays them out on the counter to check them.

GIBSON

I think you've forgotten the mask.

BILL
Oh - isn't it there?

GIBSON
It's not here. Maybe you left it at
the party.

BILL
I don't know. I must have lost it.
Just put it on the bill.

GIBSON
Okay and if it turns up just bring
it in and I'll give you a refund.

BILL
Fine.

BILL watches as GIBSON writes up the bill.

BILL
I wonder if this might be a good
time to have a word or two about
your daughter?

The question a peculiar expression about Gibson's nostrils.

GIBSON
A word or two about my daughter?

BILL speaks with outstretched fingers resting on the desk.

BILL
Well, it's just that last night I
think you said that your daughter
was not quite normal, mentally. The
situation in which we found her
certainly suggests something like
that. And since I took part in it,
or was at least a spectator, I feel
I should recommend that you get some
medical advice.

GIBSON smiles at BILL, insolently.

GIBSON
And I suppose you yourself would
like to take charge of the treatment?

At this moment, a door which leads to one of the inner rooms
opens, and a young man with a top-coat over his evening
clothes steps out.

BILL recognizes him as one of the KIMONO men from the night before.

He also catches a glimpse of the YOUNG GIRL, in bra and panties getting dressed, behind him before the door closes.

The KIMONO MAN seems taken aback when he sees BILL, but he regains his composure at once.

He lights a cigarette with a match from Gibson's counter, waves goodbye and leaves the shop.

BILL
So that's how it is.

GIBSON
(with perfect
equanimity)
What did you say?

BILL
Last night you were going to call
the police.

GIBSON
We've come to another arrangement.

Gibson slides the credit-card slip across the desk.

BILL looks it over.

GIBSON
Okay. It's a hundred and fifty for
the basic rental. Two hundred for
the inconvenience. Twenty five for
the mask. And I've credited the
three hundred deposit. Okay?

BILL nods.

GIBSON
And if the doctor should ever want
anything again...
(smiles)
...it needn't be a monk's costume.

EXT. BILL'S SURGERY - DAY

BILL hails a taxi and makes a another deal to go to the house in Long Island.

EXT. VARIOUS POV'S - DAY

- 59th street Bridge.

- L.I. Express way.

EXT. LONG ISLAND MANSION - DAY

When the cab arrives there, nothing suspicious is in sight, no cars or pedestrians.

It stops a little past the house and BILL get out and walks to the gates.

The big gates are locked and there is no one in sight.

He hears the faint whine of the zoom lens motor on one of the surveillance cameras.

He looks up anxiously but is determined to carry out his inquiry.

He rings the bell mounted on one of the gate pillars.

He hears the motor on another surveillance camera, as it pans on to him.

He waits.

A few moments later, a car slowly approaches down the road from the house and stops at the gate.

An elderly servant gets out and walks slowly to the gate.

He holds a letter and without a word pushes it through the iron bars to BILL, whose heart is beating wildly.

BILL

For me?

The servant nods, walks back to the car and drives back up the road.

BILL looks at the envelope and sees: 'Dr. William Harford' written on it in a neat, dignified handwriting.

How did they know his name?

He opens the envelope and unfolds a sheet of writing paper. "Give up your inquiries which are completely useless, and consider these words a second warning. We hope, for your own good, that this will be sufficient."

BILL stands there looking at the note.

EXT. CAB - DAY

Driving back to New York

INT. CAB - DAY

BILL looks up from the letter, thoughtfully.

V.O.

Second warning? Why the second warning - and not the last? The tone of the note was strangely reserved and seemed to show that the people who sent it by no means felt secure. The note disappointed him, though, in a way, it reassured him, just why he couldn't say. But, at least, he now felt the woman had come to no real harm, and that it would be possible to find her if he went about it cautiously and cleverly.

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BILL is eating. ALICE and HELENA with him, keeping him company at the table.

Some simple, natural dialog will be worked out for the action, over which the V.O. will be heard.

V.O.

He had gone home, feeling a little tired but surprisingly cheerful, with a strange sense of security, which somehow seemed deceptive. He was in an excited and cheerful mood and he felt unusually fresh and clear in spite of spending the last two nights without sleep. At the same time, he felt that all this order, this normality, all the security of his existence, was nothing but deception and delusion.

POV of ALICE smiling.

V.O.

And, he thought, there she sits with an angelic look, like a good wife and mother - the whore of her dreams who made love to a hundred men the preceding night and laughed when he was crucified, and to his surprise he didn't hate her.

ALICE

Do you have to go out tonight?

BILL
I'm afraid so. I've got some patients
to see in the hospital.

EXT. MARION'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BILL gets out of a cab.

INT. MARION'S LOBBY - NIGHT

He meets, her fiance, Carl, on his way out. Carl holds out
his hand cordially and they exchange greetings.

BILL
How is Marion?

CARL
Only so-so.

BILL
I was hoping she would have begun to
come to terms with things by now.

Carl shakes his head.

CARL
She's taken it very hard. And when
came for the body...it was just
terrible.

BILL
I suppose her relatives are with her
now?

CARL
No, they won't be coming until
tonight. She'll be very glad to
have some company. I'm taking her
to stay with my mother in Connecticut
tomorrow.

BILL
That's probably just what she needs.

CARL
(putting out his hand)
Well, good to see you again. It's
unbelievable how much there is to do
to arrange a funeral.

INT. MARION'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marion opens the door.

She is dressed in black. Her face becomes slightly flushed.

MARION
(smiling wearily)
You made me wait a long time.

BILL
I'm sorry, Marion. This was a particularly busy day for me.

In the living room, Marion smiles and offers him a seat on the couch, sitting down next to him.

BILL takes her hand in his and looks at her warmly.

She makes little attempt to hide her desperate love.

BILL
I bumped into Carl downstairs. He said you're going to Connecticut tomorrow.

She gazes into his eyes, mournfully.

MARION
I won't go if you don't want me to.

BILL gives her a long look, leans forward and kisses her on the lips.

They embrace and fall back on the couch.

MARION
Oh, Bill, I love you. I love you so much.

He kisses her and starts to fondle her breasts and other regions.

MARION
(whimpers)
Oh, Bill, I love you. I love you.

BILL
Marion.

BILL just pronounces her name softly and continues to undo her clothes.

Then she begins to weep.

BILL tries to ignore this but she doesn't stop.

BILL
(whispers)
What's wrong?

At first, MARION doesn't reply.

BILL
What's wrong?

MARION
(smiling through her
tears)
Nothing.

BILL
Nothing.

BILL sits up.

BILL
Marion, what is the matter?

MARION
Oh, Bill, it's just that it all seems
so hopeless.

BILL frowns.

MARION
What's going to happen to us?

This is definitely not what BILL had in mind and he looks
away.

MARION
Are you angry with me for saying
that?

BILL
No, of course not.

MARION
You are angry.

BILL
I'm not angry.

She rests her chin on his shoulder.

MARION
Oh, Bill... Say something nice to
me. I am so confused.

BILL doesn't move.

BILL

Marion, I guess this is crazy. I'm a happily married man with a child, and you are engaged to Carl.

Marion's shoulders droop.

BILL

I'm sure the best thing for you to do is to go Connecticut tomorrow with Carl as you had planned. A complete change of environment and the fresh air will do you a world of good.

Marion sits motionless and tears begin to stream down her face.

BILL sits in silence for a few moments, feeling impatience rather than sympathy.

Then he looks at his watch and gets to his feet.

BILL

Marion, my dear, much as I regret it...

He would gladly say something kinder to her, but finds it difficult to do so.

BILL

If we don't see each other before the wedding, let me offer you my most sincere congratulations and best wishes.

She doesn't move, as though she understands neither his congratulations nor his farewell.

He holds out his hand but she refuses it, and he says almost reproachfully:

BILL

I hope you'll keep in touch and let me know how you are.

She sits there as if turned to stone.

BILL

Goodbye Marion.

He leaves the room, stopping for a second in the doorway, as though giving her a last opportunity to call him back.

But she turns her head away.

EXT. STREET - ON WAY TO DOMINO - NIGHT

BILL walks.

INT./EXT. BAKERY - BILL BUYS A CAKE - NIGHT

Seen through the window.

EXT. DOMINO STREET - NIGHT

Bill walks down the street where he was picked up the night before by the young prostitute, Domino.

He carries a small cake-box tied with a blue ribbon.

He finds the address and rings the bell. The buzzer sounds and he goes in.

INT. DOMINO STAIRCASE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

An arty looking woman in her forties opens the door on the chain.

ARTY WOMAN

Hi. What can I do for you?

BILL

Good evening. I'm looking for Domino.

ARTY WOMAN

Domino?

BILL

Yes. Is she in by any chance?

An attractive girl in her twenties, wet hair and wrapped in a towel robe, pokes her head out.

SALLY

(smiles)

You're looking for Domino? You'll have to excuse the way I look. I just got out of the bath..

BILL

Yes. Is she in?

SALLY takes the door off the chain.

SALLY

Come in for a minute.

INT. DOMINO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bill enters the apartment.

SALLY
Hi. I'm Sally. This is Pietra.

Ad-libs of hellos.

Bill looks around - no Domino.

SALLY
Well, as you can see, Domino's out.

BILL
Okay. Do you expect her back soon?

SALLY
I don't think so.

ARTY WOMAN
Maybe tomorrow.

BILL
Okay. Well, I'll just leave this
cake for her, if I may.

ARTY WOMAN
(takes the cake)
Okay. Great. We'll see that she
gets it.

BILL
Is she out of town?

ARTY WOMAN
Uh--no, actually, she's in the
hospital.

Sally gives her a look.

BILL
Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. I hope
it's nothing serious.

ARTY WOMAN
We're not really sure. It was for
some kind of tests.

Sally gives her another look and moves close to BILL, her
towel robe parting a little to show her naked underneath.

SALLY

Listen, I'm not sure what's was on your mind but if it was more than cake, there's nothing wrong with me.

BILL hesitates.

BILL

Look, I'd love to but some other time. Okay? I was just passing by with the cake.

SALLY

You sure?

BILL

I've really got to go.

EXT. DOMINO STREET - BILL WALKING - NIGHT

V.O.

Was this another and final sign that everything he put his hand to was bound to turn out a failure for him? But why should it be. Wasn't the fact that he had just escaped a possibly fatal infection from the girl a good sign? Everything now seemed so unreal; his home, his wife, his child, his profession, and even himself. Bill felt choked with tears. He had not slept for two days and his nerves were gradually giving way. He intentionally struck up a quicker pace than he was in the mood for.

EXT. STREET - BILL FOLLOWED - NIGHT

Suddenly, BILL feels he is being followed.

He glances back and sees a man about half a block behind him walking at the same rapid pace.

As soon as the man notices BILL has seen him, he stops and looks in a shop window.

SHORT SEQUENCE OF THE MAN FOLLOWING BILL - SEVERAL STREETS

STREET - NEWS-STAND NEAR COFFEE SHOP BILL stops at the news-stand and buys a paper.

He looks back again.

The man is still there, walking slowly towards him.

BILL goes into a nearby Coffee Bar.

INT. COFFEE BAR - NIGHT

Bill sits down at a table against the wall, keeping an eye on the door.

A waitress comes over with a glass of ice water and a plastic menu.

WAITRESS

Hi. Would you like to order now?

BILL

Sure.

BILL manages a tired smile and looks at the menu.

BILL

I'll have...a cup of coffee
and...maybe a cheese Danish.

WAITRESS

Okay, great.

She leaves, taking away the menu.

BILL opens his eyes as wide as possible, arches his neck and drinks some water. He looks terrible.

He idly picks up the newspaper he just bought and starts to look through it.

A story catches his eye.

EX-BEAUTY QUEEN IN HOTEL DRUGS OVERDOSE

Kelly Curran, 30, a former Miss Wisconsin, was taken to New York Hospital this morning in critical condition after taking a drugs overdose. She was found unconscious when police broke into her room at the San Carlos hotel after she failed to respond to efforts to contact her.

The night manager told police she had returned to the hotel at four o'clock in the morning accompanied by two unidentified men.

V.O.

Four o'clock in the morning! The
same time he returned home!
And accompanied by two men!

V.O.

Wasn't it two men who took Nick Nightingale from his hotel only an hour later? There was no compelling reason to believe that Kelly Curran and a certain other woman were one and the same. And yet - his heart throbbed and his hand trembled.

BILL looks for the waitress to get his check.

At the same time, he notices the man who had been following him sitting at another table.

The man slowly raises a newspaper, partly covering his face.

BILL pays his check.

At the door, he turns to look for the suspicious character at the table but he is already gone.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

ESTABLISHING SHOT

INT. HOSPITAL

BILL the signs to the Emergency Room Waiting Area.

He walks up a young black woman at the information desk.

BILL

Good evening, I'm Doctor Harford.
I'd like to see a patient of mine
who I believe was admitted this
morning.

He shows her his identity card.

CLERK

Okay, thanks, Doctor. What did you
say the name was?

BILL

Curran, Kelly Curran.

CLERK

C..u..r..r..a..n?

BILL

Yes.

The woman keyboards the letters into her computer.

Something comes up on her screen that makes her stop.

CLERK
Kelly Curran, right?

BILL
That's right.

CLERK
I'm sorry, doctor, but I'm afraid
she died this afternoon.

BILL
What?

CLERK
Yes, at three-forty five, p.m.

BILL stares at her.

He feels strangely relieved.

BILL
Is the body in the hospital morgue?

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR ON WAY TO MORGUE

BILL follows a black male orderly down a hospital corridor.

INT. MORGUE

The morgue is a brightly lit, white-tiled room with six autopsy tables and fifty numbered crypts. There is no one else working in the room.

The black orderly checks a slip of paper and goes to that crypt.

He opens the door, slides out the pallet and pulls down the sheet covering the body.

BILL stares down at the naked body of a young woman.

The orderly gives BILL an inquiring look. BILL nods and the orderly crosses the room and lights a cigarette.

BILL lifts the woman's head a little.

Her face is white. Her half-closed eyes stare at him. The lower jaw hangs down limply, the narrow upper lip is drawn up, revealing bluish gums and a beautiful set of white teeth.

He gently lays her head back on the pallet.

His eyes follow the lines of her body.

He touches her forehead and her cheeks, her shoulders and her arms, doing so as if compelled and directed to by an invisible power.

He twines his fingers about those of the corpse, and rigid as they are, they seem to make an effort to move, to seize his hand.

He bends over her, as if magically attracted.

V.O.

Was this the woman he was seeking? Were these the eyes that had shone at him the day before with so much passion? Was this the alluring body for which, only yesterday, he had felt such agonizing desire? He bent lower, as if he could extract an answer from the rigid features. But he had only seen her face for an instant, and he knew that if it were her face, and her eyes, he would not, could not - and in reality did not want to know. He also realized that from the time he read the account in the newspaper, he had imagined her as having the features of his wife. And he shuddered to realize that his wife had constantly been in his mind's eye as the woman he had been seeking.

He frees his fingers from those of the corpse, and taking her thin wrists, places the ice cold arms alongside the body very carefully.

He looks at the orderly.

BILL

Okay - thanks. I'm finished.

Bill watches the orderly slide the pallet back into the crypt and close the door.

ORDERLY

Want to wash up, Doc? He gestures to a row of sinks.

BILL

Thanks.

BILL goes over and carefully washes his hands with disinfectant.

His cellular phone goes off.

BILL
Hello... Yes... That's perfectly all right... Okay... Oh, I guess about twenty minutes... Okay... Goodbye.

EXT. ZIEGLER MANSION - NIGHT

BILL's taxi pulls up.

There are only a few lights on inside, giving the house a more sombre appearance from the night of the Christmas party.

The butler opens the door and takes BILL's coat.

Ziegler's assistant, HARRIS, appears.

HARRIS
Good evening, Dr. Harford.

BILL
Good evening.

HARRIS
Thank you for coming over so quickly.

BILL
What seems to be the problem?

HARRIS
I'm afraid I don't know. Will you follow me, please?

BILL follows HARRIS. Their footsteps sound loud in the quiet house.

They stop in front of the library door and HARRIS knocks.

ZIEGLER (O.S.)
Come in.

HARRIS opens the door for BILL and closes it behind him, remaining outside.

ZIEGLER gets up from an armchair and shakes hands.

ZIEGLER
Hi, Bill. Sorry to drag you over here at this time of night.

BILL
No problem.

ZIEGLER
What are you drinking?

BILL
Well, I suppose a brandy would be nice.

ZIEGLER
(going to the bar)
It was lovely to see you and Alice the other night.

BILL
It was a wonderful party and we had a great time.

ZIEGLER
It's a shame you had to leave so early.

BILL
We hated to go but I had a couple of early appointments.

ZIEGLER hands him his brandy and they touch glasses.

BOTH
Cheers.

BILL
Nice..

ZIEGLER
Napoleon, 1935.

BILL looks suitably impressed.

BILL
So - what seems to be the problem?
Someone under the weather?

ZIEGLER looks into his brandy glass.

ZIEGLER
Can I be frank, Bill?

BILL
Of course.

ZIEGLER
I'm afraid what I've got to say is a
bit awkward to talk about.

BILL
I'm your doctor.

ZIEGLER rotates his brandy.

ZIEGLER
This isn't a medical problem.

BILL
Oh.

ZIEGLER
No.

BILL looks at him, quizzically.

ZIEGLER nods and returns a tense smile.

ZIEGLER
I'm not exactly sure how to begin
this. But maybe the best thing is
to just to put the cards on the table
and say that I happen to know quite
a lot about what you've been doing
for the past twenty-four hours.

He lets this sink in.

BILL
Sorry, Victor but may I ask what the
hell are you're talking about?

ZIEGLER
(quietly)
Bill, please believe me, I know this
is awkward - perhaps as awkward for
me as it is for you. Okay?

Bill says nothing.

ZIEGLER
Okay?... Now, the reason I wanted
to talk to you is that I think you
may be harbouring one or two
misapprehensions about last night,
which I would like to clear up.

SILENCE.

ZIEGLER

Okay. I think I should also tell you that I was there. At the house.

ZIEGLER says this in a very matter-of-fact way.

ZIEGLER

I saw everything that happened.

A long pause.

BILL

Well, what an amazing coincidence.

ZIEGLER

The words practically right out of my mouth. An amazing coincidence. That's what I first thought. But then I remembered seeing you and your musician friend, Nick, renewing old acquaintances at the party, and it didn't take me very long to realize that the rotten little prick was the reason you were there.

Bill gets to his feet. There's no point in denying anything and he has to protect Nick.

BILL

Look, Victor, this was all my fault. Nick did his best to talk me out of it.

ZIEGLER

Yes, I know. He told us. But the fact remains that the little cocksucker told you in the first place and gave you the password and the address.

BILL

It was all down to me pressurising him.

ZIEGLER

Maybe so, but I recommended him to these people and he betrayed my trust.

BILL hesitates.

BILL

I went to his hotel this morning.

ZIEGLER

I know.

BILL

How's that?

ZIEGLER

That was my man following you. He told me you spotted him.

BILL shakes his head incredulously.

BILL

Why did you have me followed?

ZIEGLER

For your own good? To avoid any foolishness?

BILL

The hotel clerk said two men took him away at five-thirty this morning.

ZIEGLER

That's right. They gave him an airline ticket and took him to the airport. By now he's probably back with his family in Seattle.

BILL

The clerk said he had a bruise on his cheek.

ZIEGLER

Is that all?

BILL

Is he okay?

ZIEGLER

He's a lot better than he deserves to be.

BILL

Nothing else?

ZIEGLER

He's okay. Phone him in Seattle if you're concerned. I'll give you his phone number.

ZIEGLER pours more brandy.

BILL

Nick never said anything about a second password. Was that what gave me away?

ZIEGLER

There was no second password. You gave yourself away as soon as you arrived. Invited guests come in limos not taxis, and they don't get out of their cars half a block from the gate. After the servants took your coat, one of our people went through your pockets and found the receipt for the rented tux and cassock made out to Doctor W. Harford, a name obviously not on the guest list.

ZIEGLER sips some brandy.

ZIEGLER

Bill, these were not just ordinary people. I don't think you have any idea how fortunate you are to have got out of that situation as easily as you did. Someday you can thank me for that.

BILL

What about the woman?

ZIEGLER

Not at all what you think.

BILL

Why did she try to warn me?

ZIEGLER doesn't answer immediately.

BILL

Why was she willing to sacrifice herself for me?

ZIEGLER

Bill, are you so sure she was the kind of woman for whom the things you imagined were actually a sacrifice? If she attended these affairs and knew the rules so well, do you suppose it would have made any difference to her whether she belonged to one of the men, or to all of them?

ZIEGLER

Bill, she was just a thousand-a-night-hooker - no more, no less.

BILL stares at him blankly.

ZIEGLER

Bill, tell me, did you never consider the possibility that the whole thing might have been nothing more than a charade?... A charade played out for the benefit of someone who didn't belong - to frighten them and make sure they keep quiet?

BILL takes a deep breath and tries to absorb what he has just been told Then takes the newspaper from his pocket with the story about the drugs overdose.

BILL

What about this?

ZIEGLER

What about it?

BILL

Is it her? I went to the morgue but I couldn't tell.

ZIEGLER

It is her.

BILL

(quietly)

Is this what she meant when she said she would redeem me?

ZIEGLER

No - it wasn't. But I was afraid you might think it was, and that's why I wanted to see you.

BILL

You say it was a charade but isn't it a bit strange, a woman offers herself as a sacrifice and the next morning she's dead?

ZIEGLER

That was a coincidence. An amazing coincidence, perhaps but a genuine coincidence, nonetheless. Bill, please believe me, nothing happened to her that hadn't happened before.

ZIEGLER

She got a lot of attention, that was certainly true, but nothing she didn't want. And later, when my people left her at the hotel, they said everything was absolutely okay. What then happened in her room, she did to herself, as she had done many times before. But, sadly, this would be the last time. She OD'd on crack, like the papers said. No chance for foul play. Her door was locked from the inside and the police had to break it down. No, I'm afraid for her it was always going to be just a matter of time - you said as much yourself when she passed out in my bedroom at the Christmas party.

BILL

My God, was that her?

ZIEGLER nods, yes.

Several moments of strained silence go by.

Then ZIEGLER stands up with a comfortable end-of-conversation-sigh.

ZIEGLER

So, Bill, I hope you understand why I thought it was important to tidy this up. But now I think all the dishes are washed and put away. Nobody killed anybody. Someone died. That's sad. But life goes on. It always does. Until it doesn't. Okay?

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bill quietly enters and goes to his study to undress, as he did the night before.

He enters the bedroom as quietly as possible.

He hears ALICE breathing softly and regularly and sees the outline of her head on the pillow.

Unexpectedly, his heart is filled with a feeling of tenderness and even of security.

Then he notices something dark quite near ALICE'S face.

It has definite outlines like the shadowy features of a human face, and it is lying on his pillow.

For a moment his heart stops beating, but an instant later he sees what it is, and stretching out his hand, picks up the MASK he had worn the night before.

V.O.

He thought he must have dropped it in the morning when he packed the costume away, and Alice had found it and placed it on the pillow beside her, as though it signified his face, the face of a husband who had become an enigma to her. All at once he reaches the end of his strength. Clutching the mask, he utters a loud and painful sob - quite unexpectedly - and sinks down beside the bed, buries his head in the pillows, and cries. A minute later he feels a soft hand caressing his hair.

He looks into ALICE'S worried eyes.

BILL

I will tell you everything.

ALICE raises her hand, as if to stop him, but he takes it and holds it.

BILL

No, I will tell you everything.

BEDROOM - IT IS NOW DAWN

The grey light creeps through the curtains.

ALICE sits expressionlessly at a small table near the window, finishing a cigarette. A full ashtray next to her.

BILL sits miserably on the edge of the bed staring at the carpet...

He sighs and looks at Alice.

She smiles at him sadly and reaches out her hand.

He gets up slowly and goes over to her.

BILL

What are we going to do now?

She gazes into his eyes.

ALICE

I think we should both be grateful
that we have come unharmed out of
all our adventures, whether they
were real or only a dream.

BILL kneels down in front of her.

BILL

Are you really sure of that?

She takes his hands in hers and looks at them.

ALICE

Only as sure as I am that the reality
of one night, let alone that of a
whole lifetime, is not the whole
truth.

BILL

And no dream is entirely a dream.

She presses his head to her breast.

ALICE

But I think we're awake now.. And
for a long time to come.

BILL

Forever.

Almost before he finishes the word, ALICE lays her fingers
on his lips.

ALICE

(whispers as if to
herself)

We should never look into the future.

They kiss tenderly and lie down on the bed, dozing a little,
dreamlessly, close to one another - until with the usual
noises from the street, and a victorious ray of sunlight
through the opening of the curtain, there is a knock on the
door and their seven-year-old daughter, HELENA, runs into
the room and, laughing, jumps into their bed. And a new day
begins.

THE END