

## BURLESQUE

Written by

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2/20/09

### TITLE SEQUENCE OVER MUSIC

A series of tight CLOSE-UP shots of dancers moving in high energy fast paced sexy choreography. Very provocative. Legs. Arms. Butts. Boas. Sequins. Costumes. High heels. A kaleidoscope of images and colors.

### END TITLES ON A BLACK SCREEN

FADE IN sounds of PEOPLE TALKING -- GLASSES CLINKING -- all the BACKGROUND SOUNDS of a BUSY, HIP NIGHTCLUB. SUDDENLY..

.a

loud DRUM ROLL.

and

CAMERA is low, moving through BACKSTAGE, passing CURTAINS

the WINGS, flying out onto a shiny black STAGE awash in light. PUSH IN on FOOTLIGHTS which are now blinding us, blasting into camera as they form the word...

### BURLESQUE

DRUM ROLL ends with a CYMBAL CRASH. The SCREEN goes BLACK. Then we hear an opening MUSIC "INTRO", a bawdy QUARTET. EXTREME CLOSE UP: RED LUSCIOUS LIPS... speaking directly

into

CAMERA in a smoky, sultry voice.

### TESS

Once upon a time ...a long, looong time ago... there was a good little girl...and they called her...

REVEAL ...TESS. A stunner with impossibly long lashes, theatrical make-up and a sequined, skin-tight band-aid of a dress. She works the tight stage of the club, toying with the AUDIENCE.

### TESS (CONT'D)

Burlesque.

bass

MUSIC BLARES from a HOT YOUNG BUMPER BAND -- sax, drums,

-- wearing bowler hats, suspenders and lots of ink. The

crowd HOOTS. Lane streamers EXPLODE from the stage.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Some say she up and died-of  
neglect. Abandonment.

**(WHISPER)**

.old age.  
The club's red booths are about half-full with a hip crowd.  
Walls cluttered with photos. Celebrities tucked in shadows.

2.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

But I say...no matter how hard you  
try, you can't keep a good girl  
down. And I've got a bevy of 'em.

**INT. BACKSTAGE DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

A DOZEN gorgeous, leggy GIRLS fight for the mirror. Miles of  
skin. Heavy make-up. Lashes. Boobs. Butts. Fishnets.  
Boas. And SEQUINS. Oceans of them. It's definitely  
decadent. Completely cabaret.

**TESS (O.S.)**

Come to think of it, none of them  
are all that good, which isn't all  
that bad...

SEAN (31), a cute gay guy with an armful of accessories  
pushes his way through the girls and in a blur, tightens a  
corset, tosses a boa, adjusts a garter just so.

**TESS (O.S.) (CONT'D)**

Eight shows a week. Sixteen  
gorgeous girls. Thirty-two towers  
of luscious legs...

**BACK ON TESS --**

Behind her, our GIRLS slink onto the stage one by one.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Say hello to Scarlett. Jesse.  
Anna. Coco-puff. And Georgie-Girl.

The girls gather at the edge of the stage, lit by footlights, moving in place to the beat of the INTRO MUSIC. Hips sway. Fingers snap. Tess weaves playfully between them.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

All of them the creme-de la creme.

**(CYMBAL CRASH)**

De la creme.

The girls strike nasty, (but funny) provocative poses, etc...

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Each one a bastion of bodacious...

(Coco bends over, peers between her legs)

Elegance.

TWO GIRLS upside down on chairs NAIL aerial splits.

**3.**

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Not to mention their other...

(smacks Coco on the ass)

Ass-ets.

Coco raises a brow, moves her butt to a LOUD BUMP-AND-GRIND.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Welcome to the Burlesque Lounge, dead smack in the center of the Sunset Strip-- did I say "strip?" (cat calls from audience)

I meant TEASE...

FOOTLIGHTS FLARE, UPLIGHTING THE GIRLS. They shift their weight, hitting the beats with risque moves and hip-thrusts as they MOVE DOWNSTAGE suggestively toward the audience to the MUSIC...

**EXT. MAIN STREET, GRUNDY, IOWA - NIGHT**

of A small, grime-streaked steel town, hanging on by the skin its teeth. Boarded-up storefronts, a run-down A&P. CAMERA

MOVES past an old sign: WELCOME TO GRUNDY!!! and lands on a broken neon sign that reads "DWIG 'S BAR" It flickers so you can read the name: DWIGHT'S. Then goes back to DWIG.

**INT. DWIGHT'S BAR - SAME**

Chipped paint. Old beer posters. A few pathetic customers. Beer on tap. Pinball standing lonely in the corner. A REGULAR drains his beer, tosses down a quarter and starts to leave. Someone stops short at the table.

**ALI**

Uh, excuse me? You forgot something.

He turns. Sees:

ALI ROSE. One hand holding a bar rag, the other planted on her hip. Ali has a look that's all her own: short shorts, white platform sandals, hair piled up high, more make-up

than

the rest of Grundy's women combined. She's young -- 22 -- but has a confidence that's got nothing to do with age.

**REGULAR**

No, that's your tip.

4.

**ALI**

Huh. See, now that's interesting -- you and I must do math completely differently, cause me? I start with the six beers I brought you, add the four spills I cleaned up, the five times I refilled your peanuts, plus the three times you "accidentally" touched my ass, then I tack on lying to your wife when she called looking for you, twice, and I come up with a sum that's a hell of a lot more than twenty-five cents.

Before the Regular can respond, Ali is joined by LORETTA -- 30's wearing every one of those years hard.

**LORETTA**

She's just teasing, Ike. You go on home now, and tell Kay I said hi. The Regular leaves. Loretta picks up the quarter.

**LORETTA (CONT'D)**

It's better than nothing.

**ALI**

Nothin's cheap. A quarter's an insult.

**LORETTA**

It'll cover half a load down at the Spanky Clean.

**ALI**

There's only one thing a quarter is good for. Ali takes the quarter and heads to the back of the room, passing a GEEZER who's sitting by himself, drinking alone.

**LORETTA**

Oh no, hon, now you know how Dwight feels about that.

**ALI**

Dwight isn't here. Ali stops in front of the rinky-dink karaoke machine.

**LORETTA**

He could come back any minute.

5.

**ALI**

Tough. I'm not working here for the tips Loretta. She pops the quarter into the machine and chooses a song. She picks up the microphone and, after a few opening beats, starts singing ETTA JAMES'S "SOMETHING'S GOT A HOLD ON ME".

**ALI (CONT'D)**

**OOOOOOOOH, SOMETIMES I GET A GOOD**

**FEELING, Y-E-A-H**

And now we see where the confidence comes from. She's got a voice that's way too big for this town-- the kind that reaches way down inside you and rattles things loose. WE HEAR the same song continue as we INTERCUT with:

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - ON STAGE - NIGHT**

The Girls undulate at the footlights as they sing the chorus:

**BURLESQUE GIRLS**

**YEEEEEEEEAAAAAAHHHHHH...**

**WE INTERCUT:**

IN DWIGHT'S BAR, Ali is belting now. Loretta is torn between enjoying listening and watching the door for Dwight.

**ALI**

**I GET A FEELING THAT I NEVER,**

**NEVER, NEVER HAD BEFORE, NO, NO ...**

ON THE BURLESQUE STAGE the Girls belt out a raucous chorus.

**BURLESQUE GIRLS**

**YEEEEEEEEAAAAAAHHHHHH...**

As other ENTERTAINERS appear onstage:

**TESS**

The insatiable La Puccini Triplets! Death-defying daredevils Missy and Kitten DeVille! The Countess of contortion, Eva Destruction! And how about a little love for those bad boys of burlesque, our naughty-bawdy bumper band! THE TATTOOED BAND blares as the troupe kicks in unison

IN DWIGHT'S BAR, Ali sings, with a powerful vocal quality reminiscent of Etta James, Sarah Vaughn, Billy Holiday.

**ALI**

**I JUST WANT TO TELL YOU RIGHT NOW,**

**THAT, OOOH ...**

ON THE BURLESQUE STAGE, the GIRLS and the BAND, loud and bawdy.

**BURLESQUE GIRLS**

**OOOOOOOOOOHHHHHHH!!**

IN DWIGHT'S BAR, Ali, letting loose now. Wailing.

**ALI**

**I BELIEVE, I REALLY DO BELIEVE THAT**

**SOMETHING'S GOT A HOLD ON ME,**

**YEAH.**

ON THE BURLESQUE STAGE, the BURLESQUE GIRLS move in a line toward the audience, confident, sexy. The BARTENDERS, WAITRESSES and people working at the club sing along.

**ALL**

**OH ... IT MUST BE LOVE!**

**BARTENDERS**

**BA-DA, BA-DA, BA-DA:**

IN DWIGHT'S BAR, Ali, letting it rip. The Geezer sips his beer, unmoved.

**ALI**

**I'VE GOT A FEELING, I FEEL SO**

**STRANGE. EVERYTHING ABOUT ME SEEMS**

**TO HAVE CHANGED, STEP BY STEP, I**

**GOT A BRAND NEW WALK, EVEN SOUND**

**SWEETER WHEN I TALK. I SAID, OH.**

ON THE BURLESQUE STAGE, The Girls.

**BURLESQUE GIRLS**

**OOOOH.**  
IN DWIGHT'S BAR, Ali.

**ALI**

**OOOH. HEY BABY, IT MUST BE LOVE!**  
ON THE BURLESQUE STAGE, The Girls form a line.

7.

**BURLESQUE GIRLS**

**YOU KNOW IT MUST BE LOVE.**  
IN DWIGHT'S BAR, Ali sings.

**ALI**

**YOU KNOW IT WALK LIKE LOVE. IT TALK**  
**LIKE LOVE. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE**

**NIGHT, MAKE ME FEEL ALRIGHT:**  
IN THE BURLESQUE LOUNGE, The Girls, Tess, the other  
Entertainers, Busboys, Waitresses, Bartenders and entire  
company do a BIG FINISH.

**ALL**

**BA-DA, BA-DA, BA-DA, BA-DA!**  
IN DWIGHT'S BAR, Ali finishes the song. Loretta CLAPS. The  
Geezer, unimpressed, gets up and leaves.

**LORETTA**

People around here wouldn't know  
talent if it bit 'em in the  
Danglies. Where you gotta go is Des  
Moines. They got karaoke bars  
where you can win a hundred bucks a  
night.

**ALI**

Loretta-- when I get out of this  
butt-hole of a town, I sure as shit  
won't be heading for Des Moines.

She hops up onto the bar, spins around on her butt, one leg up in the air like a Varga girl, then hops down on the other side then gets back to work.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

into

The audience is still applauding as the Performers crowd the backstage area, squeezing past the Puccini Triplets preparing their act. Tess comes off stage and bumrushes Sean.

**TESS**

Where the hell is Nikki?

**SEAN**

Rehab, if there's a God.  
The BACKSTAGE DOOR BURSTS OPEN revealing--

8.

**NIKKI**

I heard that.  
Nikki, a stunning, feisty brunette, sashays in--

**TESS**

Jesus, Nikki, you're later than Georgia's period! Where were you?

**NIKKI**

Weave, wax, paws and claws.  
She drops her bag, quickly peels her clothes off, holds out her arms as Sean slips her corset onto her--  
Tess eyes Nikki's body--

**TESS**

Hold it right there. Weigh in.  
Nikki unwillingly steps on the scale. Tess shakes her head.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Put on five pounds or I bump you.  
Nikki protests as Sean double-takes at Georgia -- who FLITS BY with a slightly protruding belly.

**EXT. TRAILER PARK - IOWA - NIGHT**

Ali winds her way through the trailers, carrying a bag of  
take-out, with a swing in her step -- moving to music  
playing  
in her head. She reaches a double-wide, lets herself in.

**ALI**

Nanna? Got your pot roast here!

**INT. ALI'S TRAILER - NIGHT**

TV noise. She comes in, kicks off her heels.

**ALI**

They were out of steak fries, so I  
got you some of those...  
Then she stops in her tracks. Nanna -- 80's, housecoat,  
oxygen tank -- is slumped in her chair. The TV remote is on  
the floor. "ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT" is blaring.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Nanna?

9.

**EXT. CEMETERY - IOWA - DAY**

Loretta and Ali, at the grave with a MINISTER who looks to  
be  
about 17. A CEMETERY WORKER is nearby, picking his teeth  
with a toothpick.

**YOUNG MINISTER**

Dear Lord, we gather here today not  
to mourn, but to celebrate the life  
of Alison Rose.

**ALI**

Arlene.

**YOUNG MINISTER**

What?

**ALI**

She's Arlene. I'm Alison.

**YOUNG MINISTER**

Oh, shit.

(then, befuddled)

Can I start over?

Ali rolls her eyes.

**LATER,**

The Minister and the Cemetery worker walk away, leaving Ali and Loretta alone.

**LORETTA**

You were real good to her, Ali.

**ALI**

No, she was good to me.

She rearranges the flowers resting on the plot, fixing it

up.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

And she wasn't even my real Nanna.

**LORETTA**

What...?

**ALI**

Foster care. She took me in for the checks. When I turned eighteen, the money stopped coming. She could've kicked me out, but she didn't.

**(BEAT)**

**(MORE)**

10.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

She had a lot of pain at the end. Nothing she talked about, but I could tell.

**LORETTA**

Well, then I guess this is a blessing. Now she's free.  
ON ALI, thinking realizing:

**ALI**

(talking about herself)  
Yeah. I guess she is.

**INT. ALI'S TRAILER - DAY**

Nanna's clothes - mostly flowered housedresses -- are folded in paper bags. Her belongings are stacked up in the corner. CLOSE ON ALI'S MATTRESS, as she pulls a WAD OF CASH out from under it.

**HEAR MUSIC OVER: "HONEY ROCK."**

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - ON STAGE - NIGHT**

Nikki leads a GROUP OF GIRLS in a raucous routine to "HONEY ROCK". Very Moulin Rouge.

**BURLESQUE GIRLS**

**HONEY:::**

In the wings, Tess watches with Sean.

**TESS**

Girls look good tonight.

**SEAN**

Amazing what a pink spotlight can do. Hides more cellulite than a burka.

**BURLESQUE GIRLS**

**GO, HONEY, GO!..'**

**INT. ALI'S TRAILER - DAY**

MOVE IN ON ALI, as she counts the money. Shit. Not enough. Then she looks around the trailer and realizes - tough shit. Stuffs the money in a pocket, then pulls out a suitcase.

11.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - ON STAGE - NIGHT**

The Burlesque Girls tease the crowd.

**BURLESQUE GIRLS**

**GO, HONEY, GO!..'**

**INT. ALI'S TRAILER - DAY**

THE SUITCASE, as Ali throws in her belongings. When it's full, she grabs a stack of records -- Jazz and Soul -- tries to fit them into the suitcase, but it won't close. She picks one: ETTA JAMES. She sticks it in the suitcase and zips it up.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT**

**BURLESQUE GIRLS**

**OH, HONEY!**

**INT. ALI'S TRAILER - DAY**

Ali reaches into a drawer, pulls out a FRAMED PHOTO of A YOUNG WOMAN, 20's, short dress, heavy make-up, holding hands with a 7-year-old girl. Ali slips it into the suitcase pocket. She takes one last look around the trailer.

**BURLESQUE GIRLS (O.S.)**

**GO, HONEY, GO!..'**

**EXT. GRUNDY MAIN STRIP - DAY**

CLOSE ON ALI'S WHITE PLATFORMS, strutting down the street.

**INT. DWIGHT'S BAR - DAY - MUSIC FADES OUT**

Ali enters. DWIGHT is at the bar: 50's, beer gut, humorless.

**DWIGHT**

You're three days late.

**ALI**

I had a death in the family.

12.

**DWIGHT**

And what, people stop drinking  
cause your grandma died? Get your  
apron and get to work.

**ALI**

I'm not here to work. I'm leaving.

**LORETTA**

You are?

**ALI**

Yeah.

**(TO DWIGHT)**

I just came for my back pay.

**DWIGHT**

Payday's the end of the month.

**ALI**

But, I won't be here then. And you  
owe me for three weeks.

**DWIGHT**

I don't owe anyone anything till  
the end of the month.  
Ali sets down her suitcase and marches over to him.

**ALI**

You know what, Dwight? Contrary to  
what you've been told, there's no  
law in Grundy that says you have to  
spend every waking minute being a  
tight-fisted, cheap-ass prick --

**LORETTA**

(trying to intercede)  
Ooh, hon, I'm not sure that  
particular approach is gonna --

**ALI**

I've spent three years of my life

**HERE--**

**DWIGHT**

--And you'll probably spend another three. You want to quit? Good riddance. I'll replace you before you hit the county line, but I sure ain't gonna pay for the privilege. He walks out the back door, slamming it behind him.

**13.**

ANGLE ON: THE CASH REGISTER. Ali opens the drawer, pulls out a wad of cash. Peering out back to make sure Dwight isn't coming in, Ali counts out some money.

**LORETTA**

What are you doing?

**ALI**

I'm only taking what he owes me.

**(THEN)**

How much was that bike you been wanting for little Keith?  
Ali STUFFS a few TWENTIES into Loretta's apron-- pockets the rest.

**LORETTA**

Ali-- where are you gonna go?

**ALI**

Somewhere I can breathe. Now gimme a hug, I gotta get out of here before he gets back.  
Loretta hugs her tight, then looks Ali in the eye, concerned.

**LORETTA**

You can't just head off into the sunset without a plan.

**ALI**

**(RESOLUTE)**

Watch me.

Ali gives her one more hug, then grabs her bag and leaves.

**MUSIC BACK UP: "HONEY ROCK"**

**EXT. DOWNTOWN GRUNDY - DAY - CARRY MUSIC**

Ali takes off down the street. She passes TWO OLDER WOMEN waiting for a bus. A beat as they watch her pass. Then:

**OLDER WOMAN**

She'll be back.

As Ali heads off, we HEAR:

**BURLESQUE GIRLS**

**GO, HONEY, GO!..'**

**14.**

**INT. GREYHOUND BUS STATION - GRUNDY, IOWA - DAY**

Ali is at the ticket counter.

**ALI**

How much to Los Angeles?

**TICKET BOOTH GUY**

One way or round-trip?

**ALI**

You're kidding, right?

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - ON STAGE - NIGHT - CARRY MUSIC**

Cabaret chairs as they DROP FROM THE CEILING. The girls CATCH them, SPIN them around, SLAM them down and LAND ON

THEM

**IN VARIOUS LAYOUTS.**

IN THE WINGS, Tess hands Sean her corset as she slips into a slinky dress. He takes her cigarette holder and grips it

between his teeth as he zips her in.

**SEAN**

They're loving you tonight.

**TESS**

They're loving you.

**SEAN**

Oh, shucks, I just tell myself I'm writing for a big old drag queen.

**TESS**

Eat me.

As he heads off with her discarded costume:

**SEAN**

A big old foul-mouthed drag queen!  
Tess looks in a mirror. As she makes the necessary adjustments, VINCE SCALI appears. 35, scruffy-handsome.

**VINCE**

Good show tonight.  
She glances up, sees him. Gets icy. Goes back to primping.

**VINCE (CONT'D)**

Too bad the club's half-empty.

15.

**TESS**

Half-full.

**VINCE**

I got another call from Marcus Gerber.

**TESS**

And you told him we weren't selling.

**VINCE**

He wants to raise his offer. I told him we'd hear him out.

time. Tess spins around, looking him in the eye for the first

**TESS**

Vince, I don't care what the number is; the only way Marcus Gerber will get this club from me is by prying it out of my cold, dead, heavily-jeweled fingers.  
She pivots away and sweeps into the club.

**BURLESQUE GIRLS**

**OH, HONEY!!.**

Big finish, the number on stage ends.

**INT. GREYHOUND BUS - NIGHT**

Ali's on the bus, in a seat by herself. A LITTLE GIRL in front of her is peering over the chair, watching Ali. Ali smiles at her. The Little Girl's mother notices, gets the girl to sit down by tickling her. Ali unzips the pocket on her suitcase, takes out the FRAMED PHOTO of the mom and girl, looks at it. Then she looks out the window and watches America fly by as DAY TURNS TO NIGHT.

**EXT. CITY FREEWAY - DAY - THE BUS - SPEEDING BY**

Over which we HEAR someone channel surfing radio static--

**INT. BUS - SAME**

Ali sits with her radio headset, searching stations as...

16.

**RADIO**

102.7 KIIS FM. Broadcasting from Hollywood and Vine...

Ali perks up-- looks out the window as the bus rounds a bend and... THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN comes into view. NEW MUSIC UP:

**EXT. STREET - HOLLYWOOD BLVD. DAY - CARRY MUSIC**

The rush of tourists and traffic. Through a sea of people moving down the crowded sidewalk we FIND ALI as she emerges through the crowd, carrying her bags. Looking around at this exciting city. She SPOTS a SHITTY HOTEL with a sign: "\$49.00 a night." She looks up at it. Then heads across the street--

**INT. ALI'S HOLLYWOOD HOTEL ROOM - DAY**

Cramped, dingy carpet, chipped paint. Key in the door. The MIDDLE-EASTERN HOTEL MANAGER -- 40's -- leads Ali in, pointing out the features of the room, speaking fast in an impossibly thick Kurdish accent. Ali nods along, not understanding a word. When he stops:

**ALI**

Okay!

**(THEN)**

Well. Good luck with that.  
He drops her suitcase on the bed and stands there. Waiting.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Oh, hang on.  
She digs into her purse. All she has is twenties. She peels one off and holds it out.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

If I could just get a little --  
But before she can finish, he pockets it, nods and leaves, closing the door behind him. To the closed door:

**ALI (CONT'D)**

-- change.  
She pulls open the blinds, they fall off the wall with a CRASH! Ali stares at them. Then she opens the window. The SOUNDS OF HOLLYWOOD pour in.  
She digs out her cash, sticks it under the mattress. Then she reconsiders.

**17.**

She removes the money, takes a Ziploc bag full of make-up from her purse, dumps the make-up onto the bed, seals the money up in the Ziploc, and takes it into:  
THE BATHROOM. She lifts the lid of the back toilet tank and

slips the Ziploc of cash under it, catching the bag in the lid as she sets it back down, so it won't fall in. She goes back into the main room to find a CALICO CAT sitting on the window sill. It MEOWS, hops into the room.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Hey. I thought this was a single.  
The cat curls up next to her. She checks his junk.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Typical. First guy I meet is neutered.

**(THEN)**

You don't happen to know anyone in the music business, do you?

**CLOSE ON "BACKSTAGE WEST" MAGAZINE,**

WANT Ali sips coffee from a paper cup as she reads TRADES and ADS spread over the floor. She refills the lid of the cup, which the cat laps up.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Singer/Actress... Singer/Songwriter  
.Singer/Scuba diver? Perfect.  
ON ANOTHER AD: It says: "SINGER/WAITRESS WANTED." MUSIC UP:

**EXT. THEME RESTAURANT - DAY**

Ali cruises toward the address, dressed in her Iowa best, full of confidence. She rounds a corner and sees:

**A LONG LINE OF 165 GORGEOUS, IMPECCABLY GROOMED GIRLS.**

Ali stops in her tracks. Tougher competition than she was expecting. She heads for the back of the line, passing girls doing vocal warm-ups. One girl is belting out a riveting "SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW". Just as Ali gets in line, the door opens and a SKINNY GUY sticks his head out.

**SKINNY GUY**

Sorry, ladies, that's all the applications we're taking today.  
CLOSE ON: an ad: "DANCERS WANTED. PRETTY GIRLS ONLY."

18.

**INT. ALI'S HOLLYWOOD HOTEL ROOM - MORNING**

Ali circles the ad, sips coffee. Looks at the cat.

**ALI**

I can dance.

**INT. SEEDY NIGHTCLUB - AFTERNOON**

Ali breezes in-- SEES ...a bunch of stripper poles, seedy drunk guys in the audience. She PIVOTS, and walks right back out. As she leaves, a DRUNK GUY turns to A SEEDY GUY.

**DRUNK GUY**

She'll be back.

**CLOSE ON: A FLYER, BEING SNATCHED OFF A BULLETIN BOARD:**

**"BACKGROUND SINGERS FOR URBAN GROUP."**

**INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY**

Ali enters, full of energy, as 65 hot LATINA and AFRICAN-AMERICAN girls in butt-baring, hootchie, hip-hop garb, turn in unison and eye her, in her denim shorts and white platforms. Not her crowd.

**CLOSE ON: A PEN CIRCLES: "SINGER/DANCERS WANTED FOR TOUR."**

**INT. ALI'S HOLLYWOOD HOTEL ROOM - MORNING**

Ali, eyeing the ad, sips a cup of coffee. Looks at the cat.

**EXT. EDGE DANCE STUDIO - DAY**

hootchie,

Ali, dressed like the girls at the video audition:

street -- opens the door to find 30 CLASSICAL BUN-TOPPED BALLERINAS stretching, warming up. A Degas painting. They turn in unison and eye her. Again, not her crowd.

**EXT. THE CAPITOL RECORDS BUILDING - HOLLYWOOD - DAY**

Gleaming in the California sunshine. Ali stares up at the glittering shrine to recording. Takes in the whole swirling, crazy scene around her.

19.

**EXT. SUNSET STRIP - NIGHT**

Ali wanders down the sidewalk chugging an iced latte. The Strip hums with SLICK NIGHT LIFE. Expensive cars pull up to valets. Hipsters swish past velvet ropes. Ali moves through the throngs, alone, anonymous, invisible. She passes a CONSTRUCTION SITE for a 15-STORY-TALL BUILDING, all lit up, guys working at night. A BUS pulls out, spewing exhaust. As the smoke clears, Ali sees, across the street: A BEAUTIFUL, STATUESQUE GIRL standing on the landing of a fire escape under a street lamp beside a NONDESCRIPT CLUB. Ali catches glimpses of her as the Sunset traffic whizzes

by:

full make-up, spangled burlesque costume, impossibly high heels, awesome. This is Coco. Coco makes the dirty streetlight look like a movie-quality Kleig. Everything

about

her shimmers.

Intrigued, Ali looks for a break in the traffic and crosses the street. As she nears the club, she hears a MAN'S VOICE:

**ALEXIS**

Like I said, LOOK BUT DON'T TOUCH!

ALEXIS, drag queen/door whore, also in full costume and

make-

up, TOSSES a GUY out the front door onto the street, then heads back inside--

Ali smiles to herself. Then turns back to look at COCO who disappears inside a BACK DOOR as...NIKKI walks out. Lights a ciggie. She has on full make-up. Lacquered lips. Lashes like peacock feathers. She sees Ali staring.

**NIKKI**

Didn't your Mama tell you it's not polite to stare?

**ALI**

Sorry, you're just -- so DAMN beautiful.

**NIKKI**

**(WARMING)**

In that case, screw your Mama,  
stare away.  
Nikki strikes a pose, campy, showing Ali her best side. They  
both laugh.

**ALI**

No one would ever guess.

20.

**NIKKI**

What?

**ALI**

That you're a dude.  
Nikki's face turns to stone. Her eyes widen in horror. Ali  
sees the mistake she made. She's mortified.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Oh, shit.

**NIKKI**

"Shit's" right, you little half-wit

**TWAT--**

Nikki is about to unleash when the stage door opens.

**SEAN**

Bitch! You're on!  
Sean grabs her and drags her inside. As he does, a STRAND OF  
CRYSTAL BEADS comes off her costume, falls to the ground.

**ALI**

I'm really sor--  
The stage door slams shut. Ali picks up the strand of beads.  
Holds them up in the light, watching them shimmer.  
She goes to the front of club, where a smattering of L.A.  
HIPSTERS enter. There's a GLASS DISPLAY CASE full of photos  
of the acts. Ali looks at the pictures of the Girls in their  
elaborate costumes and provocative poses.  
She's unintentionally made her way to the front door. Black  
curtains obscure her view inside. She peers in. HEARS cool  
music emanating. The sounds of a nightclub. Intriguing. She  
ventures inside...

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT**

Ali MOVES down a DIMLY LIT HALLWAY. More beautiful photos of women in elaborate costumes, drawings, sketches, paintings clutter the walls. Ali follows the photos down the hallway. MUFFLED SOUNDS penetrate the darkness: people talking over each other, glasses clinking. 1930's Berlin style music.

**ALEXIS**

**I.D.?**

Alexis sits on a stool, glaring down at her.

**21.**

**ALI**

What is this place? A strip club?

**ALEXIS**

Strip club? Honey, I ought to wash your mouth out with Jaegermeister. The only pole you'll find in here is Natasha the shot girl. Ali looks back at the photos.

**ALEXIS (CONT'D)**

**(IMPATIENT)**

Babycakes, shit or get off the throne, I got a club to fill here. Ali digs her ID out, hands it over. Alexis scans it --

**ALEXIS (CONT'D)**

Twenty bucks. Ali looks in her wallet. Sees one lone twenty inside. She hands it to Alexis. He nods for her to go ahead. Ali descends a staircase INTO THE CLUB... .and is BOMBARDED by: colors, chaos, laughter, scandal -- all shimmering, as if someone dunked the place in glitter. And over it all, an incredible mash-up of old music with a contemporary beat tying it all together. Ali ENTERS, rounds a pillar, staring out into the room as a SPOTLIGHT finds the stage where half a dozen OSTRICH FANS

**PART REVEALING--**

**TESS**

Smoother than honey and twice as sweet. Each girl lovelier than the next. Gentlemen, hold onto your hats. Ladies, hold on to your gentlemen. We may not have windows.. .but we DO have the best view on the Sunset Strip!

MUSIC KICKS IN AS LIGHTS FLARE from the back of the stage, where Three Girls stand, backs to the audience, Fosse-style. Coco, Georgia, and Nikki strut downstage. Behind them, Girls MOVE AND DANCE on cabaret chairs. Totally raunchy,

completely

timeless.

**22.**

The girls hit the beats, turning upside-down on cabaret chairs, arched backs, legs reaching upward, bending over, asses to the audience, bodies writhing in air-tight choreography: thrusting hips, whipping heads, stomping feet. Ali watches, exhilarated, as the music builds and SWELLS to

a

full on performance with the entire ensemble--

**JACK**

Get you a drink?

She turns. A bartender is watching her watch. JACK - 25, punky, dark hair, eyeliner, one arm half-sleeved with tats.

**ALI**

Only if you're buying.

**JACK**

(slides her a beer)

Welcome to L.A.

**ALI**

**(DISAPPOINTED)**

Is it that obvious?

**JACK**

You still have that new-car smell.

**ALI**

Not brand new. But still under warranty.

**JACK**

Where you from?  
She looks back at the stage, mesmerized.

**ALI**

Iowa.

**JACK**

Oh, yeah? Kentucky. We're practically related.

**ALI**

I thought you looked familiar.  
He smiles. As Ali sips her free beer, Jack stacks drinks on  
a tray for a DITSY WAITRESS. He slides the tray to her. She  
doesn't notice. He barks at her:

**JACK**

Hey\_. Go.

**23.**

The Waitress picks up the tray -- almost spilling the drinks  
- then heads off. Ali looks around the place-- wowed...

**ALI**

**(TO HERSELF)**

Damn...

**JACK**

They don't build 'em like this in Iowa, huh?

**ALI**

Hell no. I wouldn't have left.

She stares up at the stage, marvels at the dancers.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

So tell me -- who does a girl flirt  
with to get from here...  
(points to the stage)  
to there?

**JACK**

Is this you flirting?

**ALI**

With someone wearing more eyeliner  
than me?  
He laughs. Points across the club to A DOOR leading  
backstage.

**JACK**

Ask for Tess. She's your guy. Flirt  
away.  
As she heads off--

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Hey, Iowa-- use my name.  
He hands her a card. She looks at it:

**ALI**

Thanks, Jack.  
She smiles, slips it in her cleavage and heads for the  
door.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS**

Ali enters into a frenzy. Legs, costumes, boobs, heels,  
eyeliners -- all flying around like a flock of birds.

**24.**

In the middle of the maelstrom sits Tess, at a mirror,  
quietly applying lipstick.

**ALI**

Excuse me. I'm looking for Tess.

**TESS**

(glued to the mirror)  
So am I. And sometimes, when the  
lights are dim, and I squint my  
eyes ...I can still see her.  
She switches to mascara. Sean, arms heavy with corsets,  
catches eyes with Ali, nods toward Tess: "that's her." Ali  
steps closer to Tess.

**ALI**

Hi. I'm a friend of Jack's, and I'm-

**TESS**

New in town.

**ALI**

Yes, and I'm--

**TESS**

Looking for a job.

**ALI**

Yes, and I--

**TESS**

Want to perform here.

**ALI**

Yes.

Tess glances at Ali in the mirror. Then goes back to her  
mascara, unimpressed. Silence.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

I'm a singer. A good one.

**TESS**

This is a dance show.

**ALI**

I can dance.

**TESS**

(a quick glance)  
Really? You a professional?

25.

**ALI**

I'm a quick study.

**TESS**

Not on my dime.

Tess stands, a final check in the mirror. Ali sees her  
chance

**SLIPPING AWAY--**

**ALI**

Okay, I get that you're busy so I  
won't waste any more of your time--  
but this place-- I've just never  
seen anything like it before and I  
know I belong here. So, how can I  
be a part of it?

**TESS**

Twenty bucks at the door can make  
all your dreams come true.  
Tess strides out, not looking back. Ali sees the Girls  
trading glances, amused. She turns and leaves.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT**

The Bumper Band plays as Ali makes her way back toward the  
bar, dejected. Across the room, the Ditzzy Waitress, holding  
an empty tray, flirts with a table of YOUNG HIPSTER GUYS.  
Ali sees ANOTHER TABLE OF CHIC CLUBSTERS trying to get the  
waitress's attention. The Waitress ignores them.  
Ali sees the trays on the end of the bar. She grabs one,  
goes  
to the TABLE OF CLUBSTERS, clears their empties, takes their  
order. She finds Jack at the bar, unloads the empties.

**ALI**

One Dewar's neat, one shot of  
Patron, and get this, tough-guy in  
the hat? He wants a Cosmo.  
Jack looks at her, surprised. Impressed.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

One night. If I'm not 20 times  
better than boobs-for-brains over  
there, you don't have to pay me.

**MUSIC UP: WAGON WHEEL WATUSI**

26.

**ON ALI'S WHITE PLATFORM SANDALS,**

weaving their way through the tables. WIDEN to see she now wears a Burlesque Lounge Cocktail Waitress get-up. She delivers a heavy tray to a table. She heads back to the bar with empties, eyes glued to the stage, where Coco and the GIRLS are dancing to "Wagon Wheel Watusi." As Ali hits the bar, Coco nails a stunning kick.

**ALI**

Her leg went behind her head!

**JACK**

Yeah, Coco's the real deal.

**ALI**

I want to do that.

**JACK**

She used to dance with the Joffrey Ballet. Nikki sang opera. Eva performed with Cirque. Everyone here's a pro.  
(slides a tray of drinks)  
And you're on!

**BACKSTAGE,**

Nikki, lined up with the other girls, peers between the curtains, spots Ali serving the drinks to a table.

**NIKKI**

What's she doing here?!

**(POINTS)**

I want that bitch out. Now.

**SEAN**

What'd she do to you?

**NIKKI**

She thought I was a drag queen!  
Stifled giggles from the girls.

**SEAN**

Can't be the first time THAT'S  
happened.

Nikki is about to haul off on Sean when the CURTAIN OPENS,  
and WHOOMP!

**27.**

she turns, flashing her best stage smile as she joins Coco  
and the Girls onstage in the sexy, high-energy Fosse-style  
"Wagon Wheel Watusi."

From the floor, Ali serves drinks, takes care of customers,  
all the while watching the spectacle on stage, mesmerized.

**INT. ALI'S HOLLYWOOD HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

The door opens. Ali enters, exhausted, but on Cloud 9,  
singing "TOUGH LOVER" to herself.

**ALI**

When he kisses me I get a thrill...

The Cat MEOWS and slinks out from behind the bed. Ali pulls  
the crystal beads out of her pocket

**ALI (CONT'D)**

And when he does that wiggle I  
can't keep still  
(ties the beads around the

**CAT'S NECK)**

Cause he's a tough lover.. .

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - ON STAGE - NIGHT**

"Prince Nez" by Squirell Nut Zippers plays as Eva  
Destruction, dressed as a naughty-sexy ballerina, does a  
bawdy -- and technically flawless -- ballet number on a  
cabaret chair, on pointe.

ON THE FLOOR, Ali delivers a tray of drinks to a table of  
MUSIC-INDUSTRY GUYS. One of them drops a bill on her tray.

**ALI**

Thanks.

She heads back to the bar. As Jack loads her tray up, she  
stuffs her tips into her pocket-- SEES Sean, looking her up  
and down.

**SEAN**

Okay, girl, time for Sean to give you a real tip.  
He ties her shirt up higher, undoes the top few buttons...

**SEAN (CONT'D)**

You got lips that could suck the chrome off a Peterbilt, but that matte is about as sexy as a bedpan.

**28.**

As Sean wipes off Ali's lipstick, then whips out a tube of lip gloss and paints away, Jack and Ali share a smirk. Sean steps back, assesses his work. Pleased.

**SEAN (CONT'D)**

Now baby, go show 'em what you got.  
He heads off. While Eva performs onstage, Ali delivers the drinks to a table of SCENESTERS as Eva winds up her act in a flurry of fierce ballet moves, finishing to APPLAUSE as...  
Ali notices someone waving her over. MARCUS GERBER. 31, boyishly handsome in jeans and a ringer tee. Gold Rolex, status sneakers. Charming. Charismatic.  
When Ali gets to him:

**MARCUS**

Dewar's on the rocks for me.  
Bottle of Dom for the table and--  
(tosses a black AmEx on her tray, noticing her)  
--And tell Nikki I'm here.  
Ali starts away, then--

**ALI**

And you are?

**MARCUS**

(nods toward the card)  
A member since 1991.  
Oh-kay. He smiles, wickedly handsome. Ali pivots and heads back to the bar. Before she can tell Jack the order:

**JACK**

Dewar's rocks, bottle of Dom, keep  
it coming.

**ALI**

So Asshole's a regular?

**JACK**

Marcus Gerber. Real estate guy.

**ALI**

He's with Nikki?

**JACK**

This week.

Vince goes over to Marcus's table, shakes hands, joins him.

29.

**ALI**

Who's that with him?

**JACK**

Technically your boss: Vince Scali.

Tess's partner. And ex...

Jack is about to lift the AmEx off the tray, when Sean

swoops

by and intercepts it.

**SEAN**

A black AmEx! The backstage pass to  
life!

He sees Coco walking by, swipes the AmEx in her cleavage.

She shudders, then turns around and tips her ass up at him.

He swipes the card again.

**COCO**

Access denied!

**SEAN**

Now there's a first!

Jack sees Ali laughing at their banter. She heads off with  
the tray of Dewar's and Dom as the "Prince Nez" number ends.

**ON STAGE**

LIGHTS UP on TESS, CENTER STAGE as she begins a new number, "Long John Blues." A singing/spoken hilarious interlude. The Girls back her up.

**TESS**

I GOT A DENTIST, HE'S OVER SEVEN FEET TALL.

HIS NAME IS DR. LONG JOHN,

AND HE ANSWERS EVERY CALL.

I WENT TO LONG JOHN'S OFFICE,

I SAID, "DOCTOR, THE PAIN IS KILLIN' ME."

HE SAID, DON'T WORRY BABY,

IT'S JUST YOUR CAVITY, NEEDS A LITTLE FILLIN'... .

As she continues...

ON THE FLOOR, Nikki is sitting in Marcus's lap, nibbling his neck. Vince sits down beside Marcus. Marcus pats Nikki on

the

butt, excusing her. As she heads off:

**VINCE**

She's on the verge.

30.

**MARCUS**

That's what you said last time.

**VINCE**

She has no choice. We owe a balloon payment of 100 grand on the first, she took out a second to buy me out of the condo. And she just got turned down for another loan today.

**MARCUS**

There's a handful of these clubs around town, I could buy one of them tomorrow.

**VINCE**

But it wouldn't be in the heart of  
the Sunset Strip.

**ON STAGE TESS AND THE GIRLS TOYING WITH THE AUDIENCE...**

**TESS**

.HE TOOK OUT HIS TRUSTY DRILL,  
TOLD ME TO OPEN WIDE.  
HE SAID HE WOULDN'T HURT ME,  
THEN HE FILLED MY HOLE INSIDE.  
LONG JOHN, DON ' T YOU EVER GO AWAY.  
CAUSE YOU THRILL ME WHEN YOU DRILL ME,  
AND I DON'T NEED NO NOVOCAINE TODAY.  
HE SAID IF IT EVER STARTS A'THROBBIN',  
COME BACK AND SEE OL' LONG JOHN,  
**AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN AND AGAIN:1:**

A RIM-SHOT and BLAST from the band as the audience laughs.  
From the stage, Tess notices Vince shake Marcus's hand and  
leave. A flicker of irritation-- nothing anyone in the  
audience would notice -- but it's there.

**AT THE BAR,**

Ali brings a tray of empties over. Sean is there.

**ALI**

She's funny.

**SEAN**

Thanks. My lines. Our secret.  
Jack gives Sean his drink. He walks off. MUSIC UP: An  
insanely cool version of Sly and Family Stone "Everybody Is  
Star" mashed up with a Fosse-esque Burlesque rap.

31.

Jack notices Ali watching the stage... she lights up and melts, enraptured by the girls as they vamp to choreography in a tight group.

**BURLESQUE GIRLS**

**(WHISPER RAP A'LA FOSSE) ...**

Song CONTINUES over a SERIES OF SHOTS:  
IN ALI'S HOTEL ROOM, Ali plops down a bunch of BOOKS, OPENS "The Golden Age of Burlesque", lays on her bed, petting her cat with her foot. She locks in on a photo of 20's-era Burlesque dancers over which we HEAR--

**SLY AND FAMILY STONE**

**EVERYBODY IS A STAR ...**

IN THE CLUB, BURLESQUE GIRLS strike a similar pose

**BURLESQUE GIRLS**

**(WHISPER RAP A'LA FOSSE)**

**ALI CHANNELING THE CHOREOGRAPHY AS SHE:**

- wipes down tables with Jack in the club after hours,
- flips through old Soul records at a used LP store,
- pokes her way through the scruffy street folks that hang out by her hotel.

**IN THE CLUB**

**BURLESQUE GIRLS (CONT'D)**

**(WHISPER RAP A'LA FOSSE)**

ON ALI'S BED, Ali flips to a picture of Mae West  
IN THE CLUB, Tess cracks up the crowd

**BURLESQUE GIRLS (CONT'D)**

**(WHISPER RAP A'LA FOSSE)**

IN ALI'S HOTEL ROOM, Ali eats Chinese take-out as she pores over the book. Turns the page to a photo of OLD SCHOOL ACROBATS over "Everybody Is A Star"...  
IN THE CLUB, Daredevils Missy and Kitten DeVille nail an

**AERIAL MOVE**

**BURLESQUE GIRLS (CONT'D)**

**(WHISPER RAP A'LA FOSSE)**

**32.**

IN ALI'S HOTEL ROOM, Ali, in the bath, still reading, turns the page to a gorgeous image of Josephine Baker

**SLY AND FAMILY STONE**

**EVERYBODY WANTS TO SHINE. OOH AND**

**COME OUT ON A CLOUDY DAY ...**

IN ALI'S HOTEL ROOM, Ali vamps, dancing to the song in her room in a t-shirt and undies.

The cat watches her, yawns and slinks away.

IN THE CLUB, The Burlesque Girls thwack down on chairs.

**BURLESQUE GIRLS**

**(WHISPER RAP A'LA FOSSE)**

IN ALI'S HOTEL ROOM, Ali thwacks down on an old mustard-colored chair.

**SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE**

**EVER CATCH A FALLIN STAR. AIN'T NO**

**STOPPING TIL IT'S IN THE GROUND...**

IN THE CLUB, AN OVERHEAD SHOT, THE BURLESQUE GIRLS now in different costumes in a BUSBY BERKELEY cluster, AS CAMERA BOOMS DOWN ON THEM and they separate to reveal:

ALI, center stage, belting UP AT CAMERA:

**ALI**

**EVERYBODY IS A STAR:::**

**SLAM CUT TO --**

FIND Ali, in her waitress outfit, watching the girls on stage, lost in her fantasy. She catches herself, then moves along serving drinks while the Girls work the stage.

The Burlesque Girls continue their Burlesque Rap. When the girls thrust out their hips in unison, Ali does too, unconsciously dancing along with them.

AT THE BAR, Jack notices. Watches. Tries to focus on pouring drinks, but his eyes keep drifting to Ali's hips.

NEARBY, Sean notices Jack noticing. Looks from Jack to Ali. Eyebrow goes up. Interesting.

33.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

the Backstage mayhem. Girls scurry, Sean fusses, Tess sits at mirror, applying a fake eyelash as WE HEAR a surprisingly good woman's voice BELTING a SONG! It's Nikki. Late again.

**TESS**

Nikki, do you even own a watch? Or do you measure time in Patron shots?

Ali enters with a tray of drinks. Nikki swipes one.

**ALI**

Hey, no, that's for --

Nikki opens a bottle, pops 3 pills in her mouth, washes them down with the drink, and sets the empty glass on Ali's tray.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

You, I guess.

Ali

Nikki turns to the mirror and starts getting to work. As hands out the other drinks:

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Tess? Do you have a second?

Tess doesn't answer. But a slight glance at Ali in the mirror shows she's half-listening.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

I was thinking -- see, I grew up listening to all this music, I'd play the records over and over --

**TESS**

Fast-forward, babe. I gotta rebuild Rome in the next two minutes--

**(CALLING OUT)**

--SOMEONE TALK TO DAVE ABOUT THE

VOCALS ON THE NEW TRACKS!!!

**ALI**

Now see-- that's what I've been thinking about. There's one thing I don't get.

**TESS**

Just one?

34.

**ALI**

It's the vocals. You have the girls lip-synching. which is fine, I guess, but wouldn't it be so much better if they actually sang? The Girls trade looks, knowing Ali's overstepping here. Ali doesn't feel the vibe-shift, surges ahead.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

I've been reading up on it, and back when burlesque started, that's what they did. Silence. Nobody moves. All eyes on Tess.

**SEAN**

Oh, no she didn't? Tess slowly spins around in her chair to face Ali. Peers at her with a supercilious gaze.

**TESS**

"When burlesque started"? Which was...when?

**ALI**

(searching her memory)  
Oh. Well... this book said it came after...

**TESS**

Vaudeville -- is the word you're looking for. Derived from the 15th-century French expression "voix de ville" -- "voice of the city". Popular songs of the time that were strung together into stage shows. Which, over time, gave birth to another kind of show in which talented girls showing a bit more skin danced, did skits, and, \_ yes, sang. In addition to being raunchier, these shows were funnier, hence the new name. "Burlesque": "comical" in French. Ali sees the Girls enjoying this dressing-down immensely. Tess stands, peers down her nose at Ali.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Dance major. Juilliard. I did my thesis on Burlesque.

**35.**

**ALI**

Oh. Ok. It's just-- It's just that ...I CAN sing and--

**TESS**

We can all sing. But they don't come to hear us sing. They come to see the best dancers in town backed by the greatest singers in history. (then, condescending)  
But tell you what: when you find someone with better pipes than Sarah Vaughn, Billie Holiday and Etta James-- you let me know. She sashays out leaving Ali standing there with what's left of her dignity and an empty cocktail tray. The Girls launch back into prepping for the show.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Ali pushes in, pissed off, and hears the sound of PUKING.

She sees Georgia's BOOTS sticking out from under the stall.

**ALI**

Georgia? You okay in there?  
A FLUSH. The stall door opens. Georgia comes out shakily with mascara-smudged eyes, sweet as ever.

**GEORGIA**

I don't know why they call it morning sickness when it hits at every freakin hour of the day. She rinses her mouth out at the sink.

**ALI**

There aren't many women who could dance the Charleston on a chair at -  
- what are you, three months?  
Georgia turns sideways to the mirror, inspecting her bump.

**GEORGIA**

Four. Can you believe my boyfriend hasn't noticed yet?

**ALI**

You haven't told him?

36.

**GEORGIA**

I guess as long as he doesn't know, I can still imagine he'll be happy about it.  
(looks in the mirror)  
Oh my God, look what the cat dragged in.  
She gets to work wiping away her smudged mascara.

**ALI**

You look pretty hot to me.  
Georgia reaches into her corset, yanks one breast skyward, then does the same to the other.

**GEORGIA**

Yeah, well -- you take what Mother

Nature gave you and milk the hell  
out of it, right?  
Coco enters carrying a glass of tonic for Georgia.

**GEORGIA (CONT'D)**

Thanks, Coco.

**COCO**

**(TO ALI)**

Shouldn't you be on the floor?

**ALI**

I had to pee. Is that okay with  
you?

**COCO**

Not when you're blocking my mirror  
it's not.  
Ali sees she's in the way. As she steps aside:

**COCO (CONT'D)**

(re. the music)  
That's us. You okay, or are you  
gonna puke on me during the number?

**GEORGIA**

I can't make any promises.  
Coco drags her out, leaving Ali alone. Ali looks at herself  
in the mirror. Reaches into her shirt and does the boob-

hoist

that Georgia did. Looks again. Better.

**37.**

**INT. ALI'S HOLLYWOOD HOTEL BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Ali trudges up the stairs, tired. Suddenly, TWO YOUNG THUGS  
barrel down the stairs, past her, almost knocking her over.

**ALI**

Hey!  
They tear past her. She shakes her head, reaches her  
landing, heads down the hall toward her room, then sees:

HER HOTEL ROOM DOOR, ajar. The lock broken.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

No. No!  
She runs down the hall.

**INT. ALI'S HOLLYWOOD HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Ransacked. Ali rushes in, goes straight into:

**INT. ALI'S HOLLYWOOD ROOM - BATHROOM - NIGHT**

The lid is off the toilet tank. Her Ziploc of money is gone.

**ALI**

No!!! God damn it!!!  
She looks out the window, SEES the ROBBERS running off,  
disappearing down the street. She kicks the trash can. It  
flies across the room.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Damn it! Damn it, damn it, damn  
it, damn it, damn it!  
She sees the cat watching her from behind the bed.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

A lotta help you were.  
The cat creeps out, slinks around her legs. Ali plunks on  
the bed.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Shit.  
Then she sees, on the floor, the PHOTO she took from  
Nanna's.  
She picks it up. The glass has cracked, tearing the picture.

**38.**

out  
She takes the picture out of the broken frame, smooths it  
-- then looks around her trashed room. Fighting despair.

**EXT. WEST HOLLYWOOD STREET - NIGHT**

FOLLOW a motorcycle up the street. The DRIVER has a KEYBOARD

on his back. He parks, gets off, takes off his helmet. It's Jack. He heads for his apartment, but slows when he sees: ALI, sitting on his steps, her bags at her feet. Head low.

**JACK**

Ali? What's wrong? You okay?  
She tries to speak, but can't -- so she just nods.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Really? Cause, in my experience--  
when you're on someone's doorstep  
surrounded by everything you own,  
there's usually a not-so-good story

**THAT--**

**ALI**

**I-- WAS--**

And as she expected, as soon as she talks, she starts to  
cry.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

--RO-0-0-0-0-OBBED.

**JACK**

Shit. No way!

**ALI**

(halting, gaspy sobs)  
Came in -- busted the lock-- and  
stole all my MO-NEY-EY-EY-EY!!!  
She sobs--trying to talk, with high-pitched SQUEAKS only  
heard by birds. Jack winces, trying to follow--

**ALI (CONT'D)**

(more gaspy sobs)  
And there's no way I-- sleep there--  
with-- like that-- the manager said--  
- not till Monday-- and I don't--  
anyone else-- but then-- so I  
remembered I had...but it went  
straight to...so I...  
She reaches in her pocket, pulls out a card. It's Jack's  
that  
he gave her in the club. It has his address on it.

39.

**JACK**

Okay. I have no idea what you just said, but come on in here and we'll get it sorted out.

She looks at him. Wiping her tears. He picks up the heaviest of her bags and leads her to:

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Tiny one-bedroom. Very "done." Floral sofa. Curtains that match the area rug. Candle groupings.

**JACK**

Have a seat. I'll get us BOTH a drink. Here --  
He hands her his phone. She looks at it.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

-- call whoever you want, long-distance, whatever--

**ALI**

I can't.

**JACK**

Sure you can. Go ahead.  
Her chin starts quivering all over again.

**ALI**

I.. .don't ...have anyone.

**JACK**

What do you mean?

**ALI**

To call.

**JACK**

No parents?  
(she shakes her head)  
Siblings? Aunts? Uncles?

**(NO AGAIN)**

Friends?

**ALI**

**(THROUGH TEARS)**

No one! No one, okay? Do I have to spell it out for you? I am -- completely -- alone!

**40.**

Jack susses out the situation.

**JACK**

**(REALIZING)**

So...you're not here to use my phone.  
She starts to cry again.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Okay. Wait. No, stop, stop, stop, it's okay, it's fine. You'll crash here. No problem. Just, please -- no more crying.  
She nods. He grabs a bottle of Tequila and a couple of glasses. Pours them a couple. They both take a drink.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Better?  
She nods.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Okay. Good.  
She wipes her eyes.

**ALI**

Just for one night, I swear. Just till it's light outside and I can figure out my next move.

**JACK**

Deal.  
Then she opens her small bag and the cat strolls out.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Whoa, whoa, you didn't say anything about a cat.

**ALI**

What? You don't like cats?  
It slinks around his leg. He shakes it off.

**JACK**

I hate cats.

**ALI**

How can you hate a cat?

**41.**

**JACK**

It's easy, I'll show you.  
The cat bolts into the bedroom.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Where's it going? If that thing  
pees on my bed --

**ALI**

He goes outside. We just have to  
open a window. He's very  
independent.  
She opens the window. The cat scurries back in, leaps onto  
the ledge. Ali pets him. Looks at Jack, smiles.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

I don't have a name for him yet.  
It purrs. Jack eyes it warily.

**JACK**

One night?

**ALI**

One night.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - LATER**

IN THE LIVING ROOM, the lights are low. Ali's on the couch,  
under covers, cat at her feet. INTERCUT WITH:  
THE BEDROOM. Jack at his keyboard, playing from sheet music,  
learning a song. When he pauses, from the living room:

**ALI**

You're good.

**JACK**

Thanks.

**ALI**

Why don't you play at the club?

**JACK**

Make more money bartending.

**ALI**

You in a band?

**42.**

**JACK**

Was... Guitarist moved to Reno,  
Drummer went to med school, bassist  
is in rehab. I'm subbing around  
town till I regroup. This is for a  
punk fusion band -- their  
keyboardist is a flake, so they  
call me a lot.

**ALI**

**(SARCASTIC)**

A flaky punk-rock-fusion  
keyboardist? No way.  
He smiles. Continues playing.  
HIGH ANGLE, seeing both of them on either side of a wall.  
Her listening, him playing. After a few measures:

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Hey...  
He stops playing again.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Why'd you leave Kentucky?

**JACK**

Why'd you leave Iowa?

**ALI**

Cause I looked around and realized there wasn't one person whose life I wanted.

**JACK**

Exactly.  
A beat. Then as he starts playing again:

**ALI**

Hey Jack?  
He stops again.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Thank you. I'm really glad I'm not alone tonight.  
He smiles.

**JACK**

Get some sleep.

**43.**

He continues playing. She closes her eyes.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING**

Light rain on the window.

CLOSE ON: THE CAT'S FACE, staring right into camera.

REVERSE ON: Jack, waking up. As his eyes open, the Cat licks him on the mouth.

**JACK**

Auuuuugggghh.  
He hurls the cat away and bolts out of bed, disgusted.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Jack straggles in, wiping his mouth. The sofa's made up, blankets folded. Ali is making breakfast, her back to him. He can't help but notice she's only wearing a tiny tank top and undies. She hears him clear his throat.

**ALI**

Morning. Coffee?

**JACK**

**(NODS)**

Black. Like my soul.

She pours him a cup. Sees a picture of a BEAUTIFUL GIRL on his fridge.

**ALI**

She's pretty. Your sister?

**JACK**

My fiancée. Natalie.

**ALI**

Fiancée? You're straight?

**JACK**

Of course I'm straight. You thought I was gay?

**ALI**

Yes?

**JACK**

Why?

**44 .**

**ALI**

I don't know, the...make-up?

**JACK**

It's a look.

**ALI**

Okay.

**JACK**

A straight look.

**ALI**

Okay.

**(THEN)**

And the floral couch...?

**ALI/JACK**

Natalie.

As Ali realizes she's barely dressed in front of a straight guy.

**ALI**

I should put on pants.

**JACK**

Probably.

She bolts out to the living room, starts digging through her bag, bent over. She's in the doorway, so from the kitchen, all he can see is her cute little ass sticking out.

**ALI**

Where is she?

**JACK**

New York. Doing a play.

**ALI**

For how long?

**JACK**

Six more weeks.

She can't find pants. She shifts, so now her ass is facing him directly. He tries not to look--

**ALI**

**(KEEPS DIGGING)**

Oh, God, now I feel bad about this.

**I'M SORRY--**

**45.**

**JACK**

For what?

**ALI**

I don't know. Now that you're straight and engaged, it feels weird that I came here.

**JACK**

Well, you did, and it was fine. Aha! Pants. She pulls them out, starts putting them on. He looks out. Her foot is caught in the pants leg. As she hops around, trying to untangle it--

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Or at least it will be as soon as you get dressed. She tumbles out of view, thumps against some furniture. She appears in the doorway, pants on, pulling on a sweater. She slips her feet into her shoes.

**ALI**

Alrighty then-- I'll get outta your hair now...

**JACK**

Wait, where're you headed?

**ALI**

Oh, don't worry about me. I've got a plan.  
(scoops up the cat)  
Come on, cat.  
She zips the cat into the bag he came in.

**JACK**

Hang on, let me at least spot you some cash. I'm a little strapped, but I could --

**ALI**

No, I'm good, if you could just She nods at the door. He opens it for her.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Thank you. For everything. You are my knight in shining... eyeliner.

**(MORE)**

46.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

(out the door)  
I'll see you at the club.

**JACK**

Cool.  
She leaves. He closes the door behind her. Stands there.

**EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY**

her Ali looks at the rain. Then marches out into it, lugging  
stuff. Goes about 15 yards in one direction, then stops.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - SAME**

Jack watches her out the window as she marches 15 yards in  
another direction, then stops. Pondering. She sees a bus  
stop across the street. She crosses to it and sits.

**EXT. BUS STOP - DAY**

Ali peers down the street for the bus. Jack appears beside  
her, getting soaked in the rain.

**JACK**

So, this plan of yours?

**ALI**

.was to sit here at the bus stop  
and come up with a plan.

**JACK**

Come back inside.

**ALI**

No, Jack, I--

**JACK**

**ALI--**

**ALI**

I'll figure it out, this is not

**YOUR PROBLEM--**

**JACK**

It's pouring!

**ALI**

It's only water for chrissakes--

**47.**

**JACK**

**GOD DAMN IT! GET YOUR ASS BACK IN  
MY HOUSE! NOW!**

**ALI**

Jack-- you've done enough and--  
In ONE MOVE he SCOOPS HER up as she lets out a WHOOOOP!

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Jack-- No! Stop it!  
He grabs her bags and carries her back across the street--

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY**

The DOOR KICKS OPEN-- they ENTER, Jack carrying Ali,  
dripping wet.

**ALI**

**PLEASE PUT ME DOWN--**

He sets her down--

**JACK**

Look, you have nowhere to go, I  
have a couch. You may as well stay  
here for a few days.

**ALI**

You really don't need to do that.  
I'll be fine --

**JACK**

You'll be homeless. You always have this much trouble saying yes when someone is trying to help you?

**AL I**

It's never happened before.  
The Cat jumps up on the back of a chair, all wet, and  
SHAKES,  
splattering them with wet cat smell.

**JACK/ALI**

Aaaaargh!  
As his PHONE RINGS.

**JACK**

There's a towel in the bathroom--  
dry yourself and that damn cat off.

**48.**

Ali collects the cat-- heads for the bathroom. Jack checks his phone. Answers.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

**(INTO PHONE)**

Hey, baby, how's it going?...  
Really? That's awesome...

**ALI (O.S.)**

**(CALLING OUT)**

**DO YOU HAVE A BLOW DRYER?**

**JACK**

**(INTO PHONE)**

That...? Just this person from work  
What? No, she's just a friend,  
I'm helping her out. Nat, it's  
nothing.

O.S. MUSIC UP: "BABY YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES" by Brook  
Denton and Dinah Washington over...

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - ON STAGE - DAY**

CLOSE ON A HEAVILY MADE-UP GIRL as she screams and drops out of the shot in a flying split. Behind her, a ROW OF DANCERS do the same. Typical, fantastic, old-school can-can. WIDEN to see Tess and Sean, on the floor, auditioning them. The club is brightly lit, none of its evening aura. Scattered around the club are other HOPEFULS in groups, waiting for their turn.

**MUSIC CONTINUES OVER:**

**EXT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - DAY**

Jack's motorcycle pulls up to the club, with Jack driving, and Ali riding on back.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - DAY**

Ali and Jack enter as the auditions are under way. As they set up the bar, Ali watches the stage, intrigued. MONTAGE: the dancers auditioning, in small groups. All shapes, sizes. Ali watching. Finally only a few are left.

**49.**

**TESS**

Okay, front row, thank you very much.

They walk off stage, dismissed. Tess turns to Sean.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

What happened to all the great dancers in L.A?

**SEAN**

They're busy "Dancing with the Stars."

(to the waiting dancers)

Last group, please.

HALF A DOZEN DANCERS move to the stage. Ali watches from behind the bar, thinking. Then, on her face, we see: an idea forming.

ON THE FLOOR, Tess and Sean check their clipboards,  
organizing for this next set. They look up and start in:

**TESS**

All right, ladies, and five, six,  
seven -- whoa.  
There, in the back row, is Ali, in her white platform shoes.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

What the hell do you think you're  
doing?  
Coco and Georgia ENTER-- surprised to see Ali on stage.

**ALI**

Trying out.

**TESS**

I don't think so.

**ALI**

Tess, I've been singing and dancing  
my whole life and--

**TESS**

The girls here have years of  
training and experience. This stage  
is for serious and professional

**DANCERS WHO--**

50.

**ALI**

(angry, interrupting)  
Hey\_. This is your club and you can  
be as rude as you want--but don't  
you dare tell me I'm not serious.  
Sean's eyebrows reach for the ceiling as Nikki enters, SEES  
Ali on stage.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

I may not have been to a  
professional dance school, but I  
have a lot of talent and I came to

this town to do something with it.  
And the only reason I've been  
putting up with all the bullshit  
"attitude" I get from you is cause  
I want to do it here.

**(BEAT)**

For the first time in my life, I  
don't want to be someplace else. So  
you're gonna give me MY shot. Right  
here. Right now.  
Everyone in the club just stands there. Jaws dropped. Tess  
just looks at her, blinks, incredulous.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

One song. You don't like it, I'll  
quit and do us both a favor.

**(BEAT)**

Your call, lady. I know every  
number in the show.  
Sean, eyes big as saucers, looks from Ali to Tess, then back

**AGAIN--**

**TESS**

**(DOUBTFUL)**

You know every number.

**ALI**

Which one do you wanna see?  
Tess looks at her in disbelief.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

I said, which one do you wanna see?  
Ali just stares at her. Calling her bluff, Tess yells up to  
DAVE in the sound booth--

**51.**

**TESS**

Tough Lover!  
Tess plops down in a booth-- crosses her arms indignantly.

ON STAGE, the music starts. Ali readies herself, starts to dance. Behind a beat to two. She's got the steps right, but it isn't clicking. She's thinking too hard. No personality. After a few measures, Tess has seen enough.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Okay then, next?

**ALI**

Hang on.

(to Dave in the booth)

Start it again, please?

As Dave resets the music. Ali regroups: takes her hair down and shakes it loose.

Nikki ENTERS, SEES Ali on stage--

**NIKKI**

**(TO GEORGIA)**

What the hell's going on?

**COCO**

Shhhh.

On stage, Ali takes a beat; inhales, breathing in attitude. Then she looks up at the booth again.

**ALI**

Anytime.

The MUSIC starts in again. And this time, Ali comes alive. She may not have perfect technique or the best extension,

but

she exudes an ambition and sexuality no one has seen from

her

before. It's like she becomes a woman before our eyes. She misses a step or two, but who the hell cares?

On the floor, Sean gapes, eyes popping. Tess is poker-faced.

Coco and Georgia's expressions turn from dubious to

respectful. Nikki's eyes narrow.

At the bar, Jack freezes, a huge rack of glasses in his arms

-

- unable to tear his eyes away.

**52.**

As the SONG CLIMAXES, Ali finishes with an alluring toss of

her ass, then lands in a sexy layout on a chair, owning the stage. The music ends. A stunned silence. The only sound is Ali's heavy breathing.  
Then Georgia jumps up, APPLAUDING EFFUSIVELY.

**NIKKI**

What are so you happy about, that's your replacement.

**GEORGIA**

Yeah, but she's really good.  
Tess and Ali are in a stare down.

**TESS**

I want so badly to say something bitchy, but nothing's coming.

**SEAN**

There's a first.  
Tess sighs, not wanting to give Ali any props.

**TESS**

You were off the whole second half.

**ALI**

So, I was spot on the first half?  
Tess narrows her eyes at Ali. Then looks over at Nikki, Coco and Georgia. Georgia gives an effusive THUMBS UP-- then suddenly becomes overcome by nausea, covers her mouth and RUNS to the bathroom to puke--  
Tess rolls her eyes, looks back at Ali.

**TESS**

Oh, you're gonna be such a pain in my ass.  
Ali tries hard not to beam--

**ALI**

Do I have the job, or not?

**TESS**

You're not great. What you are is lucky. Because I need someone tonight.

53.

**ALI**

And I know all the routines.  
As Tess turns and leaves--

**TESS**

Even in those shoes that time  
forgot.

**SEAN**

Theeere's bitchy.  
Nikki watches Tess go-- turns and pours herself a shot.

**NIKKI**

Well-- this totally sucks ass.  
Sean jumps up on the stage.

**SEAN**

Congratulations. The last time  
someone showed Tess balls like  
that, she married him.  
(looks Ali over)  
You look like a checker at a Mal  
Wart in Wichita. Just tripled your  
salary. Get a new look.

**ALI**

Hey, I happen to like the way I  
look.

**SEAN**

Really? That's a fascinating story.  
And then what happens?

**(ALL BUSINESS)**

Backstage in five.

**(WALKING OFF)**

Welcome to the family.  
Ali jumps off the stage, runs to the bar, where Jack is  
still  
standing, slack-jawed. She throws her arms around him.

**ALI**

Sorry for the short notice, I quit!  
(plants a big kiss on him)  
But hey-- with my raise I'll be off  
your couch in a week.  
She squeezes him tight-- then heads backstage leaving him  
standing there, really turned on.

54.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - BACKSTAGE - DAY**

gills Sean swings open A DOOR, revealing a room packed to the  
with costumes: feathers, sequins, fishnets, corsets, jammed  
up against each other. Sean tosses her clothes in a blur.

**SEAN**

First number, second number, third  
number...  
She catches the clothes. He dumps shoes on top of them,  
holding them up as he tells her what they go with:

**SEAN (CONT'D)**

With the sequined bustier. With  
the shorts and garters. With the  
beaded number. And those --  
(points to hers)  
I never want to see again.

**(REMEMBERING)**

Oh! And --  
He hands her a prop GOLD MACHINE GUN.

**SEAN (CONT'D)**

For "Miss Otis Regrets". Just be  
sure you don't --  
Ali pulls the trigger. BOOM -- GLITTER SPLATS all over Sean.

**SEAN (CONT'D)**

Pull the trigger.

**MUSIC UP: "RICH MAN'S FRUG". CARRY MUSIC OVER:**

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - ON STAGE - NIGHT**

The chic audience watches the Girls doing a swingin' sixties  
shimmy and shake number. CAMERA MOVES ACROSS the girls'  
faces as drums roll and their heads turn to each drumbeat.  
The last face to turn is ALI'S. In FULL STAGE MAKE-UP, she  
looks like a gorgeous classic burlesque dancer. The girls,

dance in 20's revealing bathing suits and stilettos, kick and  
downstage in a line. Ali struggles a little to keep up  
A WAITER CROSSES FRAME and we WIPE TO:  
- ANOTHER NIGHT. SAME MUSIC, different costumes. Ali's  
dancing is improving. WAITRESS CROSSES FRAME and we WIPE TO:

**55.**

- ANOTHER NIGHT. SAME MUSIC, yet another set of costumes.  
Ali's as good as anyone else up there. AN AUDIENCE MEMBER  
crosses frame and we WIPE TO:

- ANOTHER NIGHT. SAME MUSIC, another set of costumes. Ali  
knows the steps now, she's not thinking about them. She's  
all performance, vamping to the audience, selling like

crazy.

She NAILS a final layout on a chair, it's flawless.  
Tess and Sean are watching from the wings. They notice the  
extra whip in Ali's head, the bump in her grind.

**SEAN**

Admit it. You like her. It kills  
you, but you like her.

Tess meets his eye, then walks away. The number ends. The  
girls rush offstage and peel their costumes off.

**ALI**

My tits are up around my ears, my  
thong's about a mile up up ass,  
this corset is so tight, I haven't  
breathed since Tuesday and these  
lashes are thick enough to kick up  
a stiff wind.

**SEAN**

It's fun being a girl, huh?

**ALI**

**(BIG SMILE)**

Yeah.

She hands him the last bits of her costume.  
FOLLOW Ali as she heads to the dressing room. As she grabs  
her T-shirt and jeans:

**JESSE**

I'm starving, who wants to go grab  
some pizza before the next show?  
A general chorus of "Yeah?" and "I'm in."  
FOLLOW Ali to the bathroom as she throws on her clothes and  
washes off her make-up, humming "Rich Man's Frug" to

herself.

She heads back out to the dressing room to find:  
EVERYONE IS GONE. She looks around. Feels like an fool.  
She plunks down in a chair. Drops her bag on the floor.  
Looks at herself in the mirror.

**56.**

the

She sees a picture of A CLASSIC BURLESQUE BEAUTY taped to  
mirror. Notices her eye make-up -- strong, thick eyeliner.  
Ali picks up a brush, dips it in eyeliner, and tries to  
duplicate the look on her own eye. After a first try:

**TESS (O.S.)**

Your brush is for shit.  
She turns and sees Tess in the doorway. Tess comes over,  
takes Ali's brush. Looks at it.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Where'd you get this, the 99 cent  
store?  
She chucks it in the trash.

**ALI**

Hey.

**TESS**

Make-up is like wine. The good  
stuff costs a fortune but is worth  
every penny. Where is everyone?

**ALI**

All the girls went out for pizza.

**TESS**

Aren't you one of the girls?

**ALI**

Apparently not.  
Tess reads her like a book. Knows what went down. She turns to leave, then pauses at the door. Turns back.

**TESS**

Don't take it personally. Their love's the kind you gotta earn. Ali meets her eyes in the mirror. Then Tess grabs a brush from her own station, tosses it to Ali.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Dip it in water first, or you'll never get a clean line. She leaves Ali alone.

57.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY**

then  
Jack enters in boxers, kicks them off, opens the shower, freezes.

**JACK**

**ALI!!!**

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Ali is just waking up.

**JACK**

Your stupid cat peed in the tub!

**ALI**

What...?  
(sees the window closed)  
You closed the window, what do you expect?

**JACK**

Your cat pees in the house, and it's my\_ fault?!  
Ali scoops the cat up.

**ALI**

Awwww. Poor guy, you must have been desperate.

**JACK**

Goddamn cat. And you used my towel again.

(then, pointed)

How's that apartment hunting coming?

He GRABS the newspaper and tosses it in front of her-- she glares at him, then glances at the paper--

**ALI**

**(EYES WIDENING)**

A thousand bucks for a studio?

**JACK**

Can you really put a price on privacy? Freedom? Your own bathroom? With clean towels?

58.

**ALI**

Okay, Jack-- I get it--  
His cell phone rings. As he checks who's calling:

**JACK**

Natalie.

(then, into phone:)

Hey, baby, how are you?

He heads into the bedroom, closes the door. Ali shakes her head, begins to peruse the classifieds.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY**

Ali, in pajamas, is at the table, combing the classified apartment ads. The cat is beside her.

**ALI**

Guest studio, Hollywood, \$900, with

a yard, and -- oh. No pets.  
(to the cat)  
Screw them.  
She scans the ads some more. Finds a good one.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Ooh?  
Jack walks in. Looks like he's got something on his mind.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

I think I found my new place.  
Where's Pomona?

**JACK**

Go to Hell, turn left, it's three  
miles down on the right.

**ALI**

Really. How's Beachwood Canyon?

**JACK**

Great, if you have a car.

**(BEAT)**

Truth is, you should get a car  
first. This is L.A. You don't  
exist without a car. Plus, you  
can't really afford a decent place  
yet.

**(THINKING)**

Tell you what.

**(MORE)**

**59**

**JACK (CONT'D)**

I'm gonna suck it up and let you  
stay here a little longer. Just  
throw in a little something for  
rent.  
She looks at him, curious.

**ALI**

What about the "God damn" cat?

**JACK**

Hey, I don't like the cat. And I don't like my towel being wet. I don't like the lack of privacy. But you're in a jam -- and I'm the kind of guy, if a friend's in trouble, I help. It's just who I am.

**ALI**

**(SUSPICIOUS)**

What did Natalie have to say?

**JACK**

Nothing, you know just... hi.  
She narrows her eyes at him. He concedes.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

And...her play got extended three more months, so since she has to pay rent there, she can't also keep up her part of the rent here.

**ALI**

Ah-hah.

**JACK**

So if you could stick around and chip in, it would --

**ALI**

Save your ass?

**JACK**

-- help.  
Ali looks down at his shoes.

**ALI**

Well, will you look at that? The shoe, on the other foot!

**JACK**

**OKAY --**

60.

**ALI**

One minute I'm a freeloader with a God damn cat, the next, I'm the only thing standing between you and

**EVICTION --**

**JACK**

Just -- yes or no?

**ALI**

What's the proposal, exactly?  
Jack looks at her-- realizes he's screwed.

**JACK**

The bedroom, with private bathroom access, for 600 a month, including utilities.

**ALI**

Closet?

**JACK**

Half .  
Ali picks up the paper, reads an ad.

**ALI**

Ooh, look! Hot tub!

**JACK**

Fine. The closet, too.  
She weighs it. Makes him suffer. Then:

**ALI**

Okay.

**JACK**

Thank you.

**ALI**

**(MOCKING HIM)**

Hey, I'm the kind of girl, if a friend's in trouble, I help. That's just who I am.  
We HEAR an AUDIENCE laugh O.S. as we...

**EXT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT**

Small crowd outside.

**61.**

**TESS (O.S.)**

So I said to the sailor, I may not  
be as good as I once was...

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT**

Through a transparent scrim, the Puccini Triplets perform a sexy harem scene in silhouette, casting larger than life shadows-- Tess walks behind the scrim playfully, in and out of view. The Bumber Band plays off to the side.

**TESS**

But you can bet your sweet ass I'm  
better ONCE than I ever was...  
The crowd laughs. Tess points to a woman who isn't laughing.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Drink up, sister! You're a tad  
behind.  
(to a waiter, re: woman)  
Be a dear and bring Mommy over  
there another scotch.  
The crowd chuckles as the Bumper Band kicks in and the harem  
scene evolves into a sexy tongue-in-cheek silhouetted dance.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

Tess comes off stage. Sean bustles up to her.

**SEAN**

The distributor's holding back the  
booze unless we cut him a check.

**TESS**

Ply him with drinks, send Scarlett  
over to flirt, and try to finagle  
him down to a half.

**SEAN**

How's a third?

He produces a check, all filled-out, for her to sign.

**TESS**

Have I told you lately that I love you?

**SEAN**

Got any brothers?

**62.**

He bustles off with the check. Scarlett, Coco and Nikki approach the stage wearing leather, strappy Gaultier corsets with gloves and fishnets --post-modern Germanesque -- Nikki is carrying a glass of tequila. Tess eyeballs her--

**TESS**

Drinking already?

**NIKKI**

Yes, Mommie.

**TESS**

You're drunk.

**NIKKI**

No. But I'm working on it.

Nikki totters a little. Tess looks her over.

**TESS**

I'm pulling you from this number.  
Go home, wring yourself out, and  
come back tomorrow.

**NIKKI**

You can't pull me--  
Tess SPOTS Ali heading for the dressing room--

**TESS**

Ali! Take Nikki's spot.

**NIKKI**

WHAT?! That bitch can't dance my part!

**TESS**

Ali-- get dressed NOW!  
Ali looks at Nikki-- who GLARES at her--

**ALI**

But, wait-- Tess-- that's always been Nikki's number.  
Tess looks at her-- she's really had it with these girls--

**TESS**

But this is MY club, and now it's your number.  
Ali looks between the two of them, Nikki glaring at her--

63.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Is there a problem? You said you know the whole show.

**(CHALLENGING HER)**

You can do anything, right?  
Tess just looks at Ali. Nikki stares at Tess, livid, then storms off.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - SAME**

Marcus ENTERS the club and joins Vince at a table. A LOUD

**DRUM ROLL. MUSIC UP.**

**THE STAGE**

Ali and the other dancers hit the stage and start in on the vampy "TOUGH LOVER."  
AT THE BAR, Jack is busy mixing drinks. He glances at the stage, then DOUBLE-TAKES on Ali, looking crazy gorgeous. She vamps forward with the girls, they rotate singing into the prop mic.

**JESSE**

(LIP-SYNCHING)

WELL, I WANT A LOVER WHO MOVES ME

SO\_

COCO

(LIP-SYNCHING)

WHO SURE KNOWS HOW TO ROCK N ROLL--

ALI

(LIP-SYNCHING)

I WANT A TOUGH LOVER--

INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - SOUND BOOTH - NIGHT

DAVE, the sound guy, looks up as Nikki comes in.

**NIKKI**

Tess needs you. She said it was urgent.

**DAVE**

I can't leave here now --

**NIKKI**

Fine, but don't say I didn't warn you...

64.

**DAVE**

Shit, okay --

He checks his sound board -- then bolts from the room. Nikki watches him go LOOKS DOWN onto the STAGE as ALI STEPS to

**THE MIC--**

**ALI**

**(LIP-SYNCHING)**

**WHEN HE KISSES ME I'LL GET A**

**THRILL, AND WHEN HE DO THAT WIGGLE--**

Nikki reaches out and FLIPS A SWITCH.

THE SOUND DROPS OUT. THE PLAYBACK STOPS. The girls freeze in awkward poses, unsure of what to do.

MURMURS in the room as the audience looks around, confused.

BACKSTAGE, Tess looks up at the sound booth, sees it's

empty.

Dave appears at her side.

**DAVE**

You wanted to see me?

ON STAGE -- Ali looks at flustered Tess...the girls...the audience. Panic.

On the floor, Nikki watches with satisfaction as she makes her way over to Marcus. Enjoying the train wreck she caused. Then -- in a flash, Ali turns to the audience, and SINGS a 'capella from the TOP OF THE SONG.

**ALI**

**OH--OH--OOOOOOOOOH.**

She looks around. Silence. Mouths agape. Tess approaches in

**THE WINGS--**

**TESS**

(to a stage hand)

Close the Goddman curtain!

**SEAN**

Hold on...

Ali starts to sing again, her version, slow, and sexy...

**ALI**

**WELL I WANT A LOVER TO MOVE ME SO,**

**WHO SURE KNOWS HOW TO ROCK N**

**ROLL...**

65.

Tess looks at Ali, you could knock her over with a feather. Sean looks at Tess. Scarlett looks at Coco. Jack stares at the stage. Everyone stunned by the sound coming out of this girl. And now the song really takes off!

SUDDENLY, one of the BAND BOYS grabs his sax and plays. Ali jumps in, seamless, as the guys on Bass and Drums join in. Ali picks up the choreography. The girls fall in with her.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

**I WANT A TOUGH LOVER, YEAH, YEAH. I**

**NEED A TOUGH LOVER. WHOOO. I WANT A**

**TOUGH LOVER. YEAH-YEAH. TOUGH**

**LOVER. UH-HA...**

Coco and Scarlett chime in on back-up. Hearing them, Jessie and Anna join in as well. Ali takes off, holding nothing back. The girls feed off her confidence, and soon all of them are hitting the backs of their cabaret chairs, stomping their feet to the music. The girls singing back-up.

In his seat, Marcus sits up a little straighter -- suddenly paying more attention. Unable to take his eyes off Ali. The BAND plays along. The BARTENDERS accompany them with hand-claps. All except Jack, who's too spellbound to move.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

**WHEN HE KISSES ME I'LL GET A THRILL**

**AND WHEN HE DO THAT WIGGLE, I WON ' T**

**KEEP STILL ...**

ON THE FLOOR, Nikki watches, aghast, as the crowd engages like we've never seen them.

**ALI/GIRLS**

**I WANT A TOUGH LOVER, YEAH, YEAH. I**

**NEED A TOUGH LOVER. WHOOO. I WANT A**

**TOUGH LOVER. YEAH-YEAH.**

**BARTENDERS/GIRLS**

**TOUGH LOVER. UH-HA...**

The girls come alive, finally able to sing a song they've been faking for so long

ALI

THE SEVEN SISTERS GOT NOTHING ON  
HIM, I 'M TALKING ABOUT A LOVER  
WHO ' S FAST AS THE WIND. EVER YONE ' LL  
TALK HOW HE'S GOT ME FIXED, IT  
AIN'T VOODOO IT'S JUST THAT TWIST.

(MORE)

66.

ALI (CONT'D)

HE'LL BE THE GREATEST LOVER EVER  
COME TO PASS, DON JUAN AIN'T GOT  
HALF A CHANCE. HE'LL MAKE ME LAUGH  
AND HE'LL MAKE ME CRY, HE'LL BE SO  
TOUGH HE ' LL MAKE VENUS COME ALIVE.  
HE 'LL DO ANYTHING THAT HE WANTS TO  
DO, STEP ON JESSIE JAMES' BLUE  
SUEDE SHOES.

ALI/GIRLS

I WANT A TOUGH LOVER, YEAH, YEAH. I  
NEED A TOUGH LOVER. WHOOO. I WANT A  
TOUGH LOVER. YEAH-YEAH.

BARTENDERS/GIRLS

**TOUGH LOVER. UH-HA::!**

a- The room ERUPTS IN APPLAUSE, knowing they caught a once-in-lifetime performance. Marcus stands, clapping, whistling. Ali basks in it, jubilant, rapturous. She glances to the wings and sees Sean, clapping and jumping in place. Then she sees Tess beside him, stone-faced.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

The Girls exit the stage in a flurry, everyone congratulating Ali -- a whirlwind of hugs, kisses. Ali reaches Tess.

**ALI**

Tess, when the music stopped--

**TESS DAVE**

Why didn't you tell me you I have no idea what happened. could blow like that?

**ALI (CONT'D)**

I did.  
Tess spots a TATTOOED BAND GUY in the door.

**TESS**

Do you boys know all the music?

**TATTOOED BAND GUY**

Hell, yeah.  
Nikki wanders in, drink in hand. Tess looks at them all. Plants her hands on her hips.

67.

**TESS**

Okay, then. Tomorrow night, Ali sings lead, everyone else is back-up. Questions?  
Ali can't keep from beaming as she shakes her head, no!

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Good.

The Girls file into the dressing room. Tess heads out, past Nikki.

**NIKKI**

"People don't come to hear us sing."

**TESS**

No. But they'll come to hear her sing. Dry out and maybe you can back her up.  
She leaves. Nikki scowls. Sean grabs Ali.

**SEAN**

Bitch, you SANG that damn song!  
He heads off to the dressing room, too, leaving Nikki and  
Ali alone together. Their eyes meet.

**NIKKI**

One of us has clearly underestimated the other.  
She tosses her glass in the trash and leaves Ali alone.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT**

She Ali trots out from backstage, spots Jack behind the bar.  
heads over to him. Before she gets there:

**MARCUS**

Where'd you learn to sing like that?  
She turns. Marcus is there. Handsome, charming and devious  
as ever.

**ALI**

You can't learn to sing like that.

**68.**

**MARCUS**

Well, you're too good to be singing

here.

**ALI**

I just got into the show and suddenly I'm too good for it? Shrugs, "but, you are" then--

**MARCUS**

How about a drink?

**ALI**

Sure. Jack's at the bar. Tell him I sent you. It's on me.

**MARCUS**

But I hate lines.

AT THE BAR - Jack looks up, SEES Ali and Marcus talking. BACK ON MARCUS who looks Ali up and down.

**MARCUS (CONT'D)**

Seriously. You sound even better than you look. Which is saying a lot.

**ALI**

Talk about a "line."

She smiles, amused, and heads away from him, toward the bar. He watches her go. Tess intercepts Ali.

**TESS**

What did he want?

**ALI**

Directions to the bar.

As Ali heads off. Tess glances back at Marcus, mistrustful.

**INT. EMPTY BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT**

After hours. The club is closed. Jack, Ali, Coco, Sean and Georgia are sitting around the bar as Jack closes up.

**JACK**

You blew me away! Who knew you could sing like that?

69.

**COCO**

Who knew any white chick could sing like that? You channeled that shit.

**SEAN**

How the hell do you do that, girl?

**ALI**

I don't know, I can't explain it. It's like -- I start singing, and something starts to move inside me. It's in my hands, my feet, my gut,

**MY THIGHS**

She runs her hands over her body as she describes it. Jack watches her -- holy smokes. Sean notices his gaze on her.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

and it just builds and builds till I feel like I'm gonna explode.

**GEORGIA**

Trust me, I know what that feels like. I have to pee. Again. She hops off the stool and scurries to the back. Coco stands, to leave. Looks at Ali.

**COCO**

Wanna grab something to eat? Ali looks back at Coco -- validated. Accepted. At last.

**ALI**

Yeah. Lemme get my bag. Ali moves off. Coco goes to get her coat. Sean sees Jack still watching Ali as she walks across the room.

**SEAN**

Well, will you look at that.

**JACK**

What?

**SEAN**

You looking at that girl the way I looked at you all those years. Only difference: you actually stand a chance with her.

**JACK**

I have a fiancée.

70.

**SEAN**

Three thousand miles away.

**JACK**

We talk every day.

**SEAN**

Let me guess what about: her, her  
and...oh! Her.  
Jack shoots him a glare.

**SEAN (CONT'D)**

All I'm saying is, this one's  
beautiful on the inside too. And  
she won't be on the shelf forever.  
Ali comes back, ready to go. Feels them stop talking and  
look at her.

**ALI**

What?

**SEAN**

I was just explaining to Jack that  
even opportunity has a shelf life.  
Jack grabs a trash bag and takes it out back. Sean looks at  
Ali more closely. He brushes her hair out of her face. Then  
he holds it off her shoulders and raises that gay eyebrow.  
- INT. SALON - DAY - Ali sits in front of a mirror while

Sean

gives the HAIRDRESSER very specific instructions.

- INT. JACK'S APARTMENT, AT HIS KEYBOARD, Jack plays a high-  
energy style piano which runs over a QUICK SEQUENCE: It's

the

instrumental music to: "BUT I'M A GOOD GIRL."

- INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - The Burlesque Girls dance on

stage,

performing a high-energy tap dance, coupled with a European  
slap-dance, with the slapping of each other's bodies and  
faces integrated with tapping and music. It's very cabaret,  
but modernized with contemporary STEPPING. CARRY MUSIC:

- INT. SALON - LATER - The HAIRDRESSER spins the chair around. Ali's her hair is platinum blonde, with bangs and a Louise Brooks bob that frames her face beautifully. Her smoky eyes pop like never before. Ali studies herself:

**ALI**

Where have I been all my life?

71.

- INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT - CAMERA MOVES OVER THE

AUDIENCE, the brass section kicks in giving the piano a BIGGER, BAWDY, SHOW-STOPPING BOISTEROUS SOUND as Ali APPEARS with her new look. Amazing. Like Helmut Newton meets Carnaby St. circa 1965. As she begins this HIGH ENERGY SONG-- Jack

is

looks up from the bar. Totally blown away.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

THE DRESS IS BOHAN. THE SHOES ARE  
JOURDAN. THE BAG NORTH AFRICAN, AND  
SO IS THE TAN. MY ADDRESS TODAY,  
FABER ST. HONERE, TOMORROW RIO, THE  
CONCORDE THE WAY. MY RING IS  
BULGARI, IT MAKES THEIR HEADS  
TWIRL, THEY ALL SAY, 'DARLING, WHAT  
DID YOU DO FOR THAT PEARL?' WHAT? I  
AM A GOOD GIRL. NEW YORK 54. CREON,  
COTE D 'AZUR. L. A. POLO LOUNGE, FOR  
BREAKFAST FOR SURE. PARIS, LA  
PLAZA, OR MAYBE THE RITZ. IN LONDON

THE PLAYBOY, IN TRUTH IT'S THE  
PITS. YOU KNOW I HAVE FOUND, THE  
WORD 'S GONE AROUND. THEY ALL SAY MY  
FEET NEVER DO TOUCH THE GROUND.

WHAT?. I AM A GOOD GIRL.

Ali finishes the song to big applause. Takes her bow. Makes her way off the stage and ACROSS the club to...

JACK AT THE BAR - he turns to see Ali.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Hiya, big boy.

She spins herself around on a bar stool, so he can see all angles. Jack likes plenty. Way too much.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

What do you think?

**JACK**

**(FLUSTERED)**

It's...I think-you look...I mean,  
yeah... do you like it?

Not the reaction she was looking for.

**ALI**

Jack. It's okay for you to think I  
look hot. We're friends for  
chrissakes. It's not like we're  
brother and sister.

**72.**

She rolls her eyes, gets up, and heads backstage. Jack watches her go--

**JACK**

**(TO HIMSELF)**

No. We certainly are not.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

The Burlesque Girls are prepping for the show.

**NIKKI**

Why the hell is everyone having a conniption over her? She's just a tacky, pushy girl from a --  
Ali -- sexy, sophisticated, gorgeous -- enters.

**NIKKI (CONT'D)**

-- fly-over state.  
Ali pretends she didn't hear. She sits at her mirror. The girls stare at her, mouths agape. Ali picks up her mascara wand, looks down the mirror at Nikki's reflection.

**ALI**

**(FAUX INNOCENT)**

What's a fly-over state?  
Ali takes a deft stroke of her wand over her lashes, then bats them at Nikki. Nikki walks out. Coco smiles with appreciation. Whistles long and low. The girls all laugh.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT**

Tess glad-hands guests, then spots Vince, waving at her. She starts over, then sees Marcus in the booth with Vince. She turns and walks the other way. Vince catches up to her.

**VINCE**

**TESS --**

**TESS**

Vince, if I were going to sell, I'd have sold to those idiots building that monstrosity across the street. I said no.

73.

**VINCE**

Which made Marcus bump his offer up

again. It's obscene, what he wants to give us. At least hear him out.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - TESS'S CLUTTERED OFFICE - NIGHT**

Tess, at her desk, reads a contract. Marcus and Vince sit across from her, watching.

**MARCUS**

It's very simple. I buy you out and pay you a million off the top. (motions to Vince) Five hundred grand each. Tess looks up from the contract, squints at Marcus.

**TESS**

Why do you want this club so badly?

**MARCUS**

Best view on the Sunset Strip.

**VINCE**

Do you know what you could do with that money, Tess?

**TESS**

Do you know what you can do with that money, Vince?

**VINCE**

Be reasonable. We're rolling vendors ninety days out.

**MARCUS**

The club's not even worth what you paid for it. You've got a second mortgage, you can't get a third. Tess looks at Vince, betrayed.

**TESS**

Did you also tell him about the tattoo on my ass?

**VINCE**

It's business, Tess. Not personal.

74.

**TESS**

My business. Which I built from  
the ground up.

**MARCUS**

You're not gonna get another  
opportunity like this.

**TESS**

Exactly.

all

She looks at a photo on her wall: the Burlesque Girls, in  
their glory.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Which is why I'll never let it go.  
She gets up, opens the door, ushering them out. Marcus  
shoots Vince an angry look as they head downstairs.  
IN THE STAIRWELL, Vince reassures Marcus:

**VINCE**

Don't worry. The balloon payment's  
due on the first. She doesn't have  
the money. She has to sell.  
IN TESS'S OFFICE, Tess stands in the doorway, having heard.  
Then she walks back to her desk and sits, dejected. Head in  
her hands. For the first time ever, looking worried and  
defeated. Something she'd never show anyone. A beat. Then:

**SEAN**

Well. We've had a pretty good run.  
She looks up. Sean is in the doorway.

**SEAN (CONT'D)**

Maybe it's time to just.. .hang it  
up. Let it go. Call it a day.  
Tess's eyes go steely with determination.

**TESS**

No. You cannot say that to me. I  
can eat these "sky is falling"  
dipshits for breakfast, lunch, and  
dinner, but not YOU. You cannot be  
that person. I've scoured dirty  
flea markets for costumes, stayed  
up all night sewing till my fingers  
bled, painted and repainted every  
goddamn wall of this place myself.

**(MORE)**

75.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

I choreographed every step of every number. I've played nursemaid, sister, mother and shrink to every girl who's ever danced here. I've hocked every keepsake I've ever owned to keep this place afloat. Because this club is the last of it's kind, and if it goes away, one day there won't be anything like it - and THAT would be a tragedy. So you cannot say that to me. Because now someone's gotta believe in me, Goddamnit. And I need that person to be you. So don't you ever let me hear you say that again. I will never let this club go. Never. Sean looks at her...a wry smile.

**SEAN**

There she is. Thought I'd lost you for a minute.

Tess just looks at him, and smiles. He grabs a boa, throws

it

around his neck and exits. When he's gone, Tess's smile fades.

IN THE CLUB, the place is empty. Jack is wiping down the bar cleaning up. He starts stacking some chairs in the house as..SEAN CROSSES the floor.

**SEAN (CONT'D)**

Night, Jack.

**JACK**

Night.

Sean EXITS as Jack carries a stack of chairs to the side of the room, sets them down near the piano. STOPS, grabs a

chair

for himself and sits down. Begins to play an original song.

ACROSS THE ROOM, Ali ENTERS from backstage. Her dance bag over her shoulder. She HEARS the piano, peers around a column, SEES Jack playing. She stays in the shadows and watches as he sings and plays a beautiful song. (TBD)  
The song ends. Ali applauds slowly. Impressed. Jack looks

up,

surprised that she is there.

**ALI**

Beautiful. You write that?

**JACK**

Just some sentimental crap. Ready?

**76.**

her

She smiles at his modesty. Nods. He crosses to her. Grabs dance bag and they EXIT together.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON**

night

Jack enters, unloading his keyboard from his back. He hears Ali in the bedroom. He quietly moves over to the ajar bedroom door -- peeks in and sees:

ALI, in bra and undies. She hums the song he played the

before in the mirror as she gets dressed.

ON JACK, watching, mesmerized. His eyes travel her body. She moves out of view. He leans against the wall to try to keep seeing her -- and steps on the CAT. It MEOWS. He flattens against the wall. Ali looks up.

**ALI**

Jack?

Jack zips back to the door, opens it quietly, then SLAMS it.

**JACK**

Hey! Just got home!

Ali grabs a dress from her bed, slips into it.

**ALI**

In here! Can you zip me up?

In a nanosecond-- Jack enters the bedroom.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Hey. Where you been?

**JACK**

Rehearsing. I'm playing a late show tonight.

As he zips up the back of her dress, he sees the PHOTO propped against the lamp on the bedside table.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Who is that?

She picks up the picture. Looks at it.

**ALI**

Me and my mom on my 7th birthday. She died just a few weeks later.

77.

**JACK**

She was so young.

**ALI**

24. There was so much she never got to do. Sometimes I feel like, if I make the most of my life, part of her will get to live a little more, too.

**JACK**

Wow. You must miss her.

She puts the photo down. Turns back to him. They're close.

**ALI**

Every single day, something happens I want to tell her about.

**JACK**

What was today's?

A beat. Their eyes connect.

**ALI**

Don't know. Hasn't happened yet.

They stand there, close to each other. Jack sees a strand of

hair caught in the earring. He pulls it away, freeing it. His fingers move through her hair. She closes her eyes, feeling his fingers against her neck. Then she opens her eyes, looks at him. He looks back, unable to look away. Until:  
His CELL PHONE RINGS. Breaking the mood. He pulls it from his pocket. Checks who's calling. Looks back at Ali.

**JACK**

I should... it's... Natalie.  
Ali steps away from him, disappointed. He answers the phone.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Hey, babe, how are you?  
Ali watches him walk away from her, falling into the conversation with Natalie.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Yes, she's still here-What do you want me to do, it's not like you're here helping out, you know...

**78.**

Ali grabs her bag and jacket, heads for the door.  
MUSIC UP: An incredibly sexy saxophone which takes us to:  
FULL CLOSE UP: ALI steps into frame, starts singing.

**ALI**

**A GUY WHAT TAKES HIS TIME...**

PULL BACK to reveal she's on stage at the club with the BURLESQUE GIRLS. Finger waves and 1920's sexy clothes.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

**I'LL GO FOR ANY TIME. I'M A FAST  
MOVIN' GAL WHO LIKES THEM SLOW.  
GOT NO USE FOR FANCY DRIVIN', WANT  
TO SEE A GUY ARRIVIN' IN LOW. I'D  
BE SATISFIED TO KNOW A GUY WHAT**

**TAKES HIS TIME...**

**THE SONG CONTINUES OVER:**

sits  
He  
her  
off

- INT. JACK'S LIVING ROOM - Ali lies on her stomach on the floor perusing a Fashion Magazine. Across the room, Jack on the couch, PLAYING HIS KEYBOARD--UNDERSCORING THE SONG. looks at Ali. Watching her. Without looking up, she takes a pencil, gathers her hair, and puts it up expertly. A few strands fall back onto her neck. Sexy. Ali feels his stare. Looks up at him. Smiles. He smiles back. She goes back to magazine. ON JACK. Loving that she's there.

- INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - DRESSING ROOM - Ali, the Girls and Sean getting ready. Georgia bursts into the room, showing an ENGAGEMENT RING. Everyone jumps up, congratulates her.

- INT. BURLESQUE STAGE - The GIRLS and Ali vamp, singing:

**ALI (CONT'D)**

**A GUY WHAT TAKES HIS TIME, I'D GO**

**FOR ANYTIME. A HASTY JOB REALLY**

**SPOILS A MASTER'S TOUCH ...**

AT THE BAR, Jack watches as he pours drinks.

- EXT. STREET. AFTERNOON - Ali on the back of Jack's motorcycle, puts her arms around his waist. Jack revs the engine. Weaving through traffic on the Strip. The wind in their hair. Her scarf tears away, lifting into the air...

- INT. BURLESQUE STAGE - Ali and Burlesque girls continue...

79.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

**I DON'T LIKE A BIG COMMOTION, I'M A  
DEMON FOR SLOW MOTION OR SUCH. WHY  
SHOULD I DENY, THAT I WOULD DIE, TO**

**KNOW A GUY WHAT TAKES HIS TIME ...**

- INT. JACK'S LIVING ROOM - Ali, Sean, Tess, Scarlett, Anna, Georgia, DAMON (her fiance), hanging out in the living room, decorated with party gear. The lights dim and Jack and Coco enter with a birthday cake. They set it in front of Ali. Ali looks around at her friends, drinking it in. She locks eyes with Jack -- then closes her eyes and BLOWS.  
- INT. BURLESQUE STAGE - Ali, still singing her song.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

**I CAN SPOT AN AMATEUR, APPRECIATE A  
CONNOISSEUR IN HIS TRADE, WHO WOULD  
QUALIFY, NO ALIBI, TO BE THE GUY,  
WHO TAKES HIS TIME...**

PULL BACK to reveal A PACKED HOUSE. The audience goes nuts. Marcus is at his table, clapping, whistling, her biggest

fan.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - AT THE BAR - LATER**

Ali walks up to the bar.

**ALI**

Hey -- when can you cut out? I'm about to fall asleep standing up.

**JACK**

I have that gig, remember? In fact, I gotta head out or I'm gonna be late.  
(checking his watch)  
I can maybe swing you home before.

**ALI**

No, that's okay, you go. I'll grab a ride with Coco.  
He grabs his jacket from under the bar. As he heads out:

**JACK**

By the way -- you killed.

**ALI**

(looks at him, smiles)  
Thanks.

**80.**

He disappears out the back exit. Ali turns around and finds herself face to face with Marcus.

**MARCUS**

You ready?

**ALI**

For what?

**MARCUS**

I'll drop you off.

**(BEAT)**

Coco left five minutes ago.  
She realizes he was listening to her conversation.

**ALI**

Excuse me?

**MARCUS**

Sorry-- I was coming to talk to you  
and caught the end of your  
conversation.

**ALI**

(putting on her coat  
reaching for her bags)  
Talk to me about...?

**MARCUS**

Dinner. With me. Gimmie that.  
He swoops down and GRABS her dance bag and purse, turns and  
heads out.

**MARCUS (CONT'D)**

**(WALKING AWAY)**

If you ever expect to see this bag  
alive again... you'll come with me.

**ALI**

Hey...! Come back here...!

**INT. MARCUS'S BENTLEY - NIGHT**

ON Ali, looking out the window with her arms crossed. WIDEN to REVEAL, she's in car with Marcus, zipping along Sunset.

**ALI**

Where are you taking me?

**81.**

**MARCUS**

I told you-- to dinner.

**ALI**

Dinner? What about Nikki-- What's up with you and Nikki?

**MARCUS**

We're friends.

**ALI**

Where I'm from friends don't chew each other's earlobes.

**MARCUS**

Aren't you glad you left?  
(then, remembering)  
Oh, damn!

**ALI**

What?

**MARCUS**

I just remembered I have to make a quick appearance at a party.

**ALI**

You just remembered.

**MARCUS**

It's on the way. We'll be quick. Ten minutes, tops. Do you mind?

**ALI**

And if I do.

**MARCUS**

Then you've been kidnapped.  
He turns off Sunset and heads up into the hills.

**EXT. MODERN HOUSE - HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT**

Sprawling 60's modern. Walls of glass. Jetliner views.  
Valets running around out front.

**INT. MODERN HOUSE - HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT**

Fabulous party underway. Packed with glitterati. Music  
blares, caterers weave through the hip crowd. Marcus leads  
Ali in and guides her through the crowd.

82.

**ALI**

Wow. Nice house.

**PARTY GUEST**

Hey, Marcus --

**MARCUS**

Hey, how you doing?  
He shakes the guy's hand and moves on through the party.  
Someone else calls out to him.

**ANOTHER GUEST**

Marcus!

**MARCUS**

Hey, let me get a drink, I'll be

**BACK --**

Marcus pulls Ali in the opposite direction, avoiding another  
GROUP trying to greet him. He grabs two wine glasses off a  
tray, gives one to Ali, then pushes through a door into:

**INT. MODERN HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Bustling, food and booze everywhere. Marcus spots several  
trays of hors d'oeuvres. He picks up two of them.

**ALI**

Marcus -- you can't just take that.

**MARCUS**

**SHHH --**

He hands her one tray, sticks a bottle of wine in one  
pocket,  
throws an opener in another.

**ALI**

They're gonna throw us out of here.

**MARCUS**

Not if we sneak out first, come on.  
He kicks open a back door.

**EXT. MODERN HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT**

A sky full of stars, hovering over an expansive back yard.  
Music from the party drifts out. Marcus looks around, up --

**83.**

**MARCUS**

Up there.  
He starts up some steps to an outdoor gazebo. Ali follows.  
They pass AN INCREDIBLY WELL-DRESSED COUPLE coming down.

**GUY**

Hey, Marcus --

**MARCUS**

Hey, Guys. Greg, Marla, this is  
Ali.  
They exchange hellos. Ali notices:

**ALI**

Ooh. Killer shoes.

**MARLA**

Aren't they? Louboutins.

**GREG**

**(TO MARCUS)**

Great party, as always.

**MARCUS**

Glad you could come.

Ali stares at Marcus. He smiles, takes her hand, keeps leading her up the stairs.

**AL I**

You had to make an appearance at your own party?

**MARCUS**

Would've been rude not to, right? You'd like those guys. Greg's the entertainment editor at the Times, and Marla's a designer.

Ali glances back at Marla again, locks in on her shoes.

**AL I**

I'm gonna dream about those shoes.

**MARCUS**

Thousand dollars a pop.

**AL I**

Jesus. Who can afford that?

**84.**

**MARCUS**

I can.

**ALI**

Hey, I saw them first.

He laughs as they reach the top of the stairs and a BREATHTAKING PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE ENTIRE CITY is revealed. Ali pauses, taking in the glittering, massive view of L.A.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Whoa. L.A. looks one hell of a lot prettier from up here.

**MARCUS**

It should. That view cost me three times what the house did.

**(POINTING)**

See that strip mall down there?

**ALI**

You own that too?

**MARCUS**

No. I own everything above it.

**ALI**

There is nothing above it.

**MARCUS**

Exactly.

**ALI**

You own...air?

**MARCUS**

Air rights. The guy who owns the strip mall was having money issues and almost had to sell. Whoever he sold to would have put in a huge tower. So I bought the air rights. Now no one can ever build above one story.

**ALI**

Aren't you the sly puss.

**MARCUS**

Mall guy gets to keep his property. I get to keep the second best view in L.A.

85.

**ALI**

What's the first?  
He gazes at her. She rolls her eyes.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

How many girls have you used that on?

**MARCUS**

None who ever called me on it.  
He smiles. Looks at her. Then...

**MARCUS (CONT'D)**

What do you want, Ali? In life.  
Girl like you, gives up everything,  
gets on a bus heading for total  
uncertainty-- she's got a dream. I  
want to know what it is.

**ALI**

Why?

**MARCUS**

Because you're talented enough to  
get whatever you want. And I'm  
smart enough to help make it  
happen. So? What do you want?  
A beat. She thinks about it. Looks him in the eye.

**ALI**

I want to be the best singer I can  
be. I want to give as much joy as I  
get when I perform. And I want to  
die knowing I made the most of  
every opportunity life gave me.

**MARCUS**

That's ...so beautiful.

**AL I**

There wasn't a dry eye in the house  
when I said it at the Grundy County  
Junior Miss Talent Show.  
His eyes narrow.

**MARCUS**

Why do you women always take  
advantage of nice boys?

86.

**ALI**

Oh, please. You are SO not a nice boy.

He clinks her glass. Smiles at her. Devilish and sexy.

**INT. MARCUS'S HOUSE - WEE HOURS - NIGHT**

Party's over. Lights low. Ali walks through the almost-empty house, passes a COUPLE making out on a couch, a GUY

who

holds out a joint. She motions "no thanks", heads into the: LIVING ROOM, where Marcus is asleep on a Bertolli chair, drink in hand. An OLDER GUY is playing the piano quietly. Ali takes the drink from Marcus's hand, sets it on the

table.

She hears the pianist start a new song: (TBD). She smiles. Goes over to him.

**ALI**

Ooh, I love this song.

The Piano Player scoots to make room. She sits beside him.

He

starts humming along. She does too. Then he sings a line. She sings one back. And they fall in together. Not vamping, not performing. Just feeling the beauty of the music in the middle of the night.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - CARRY MUSIC**

Jack quietly lets himself in. He sets his keyboard down,

then

sees the bedroom door cracked, the light on.

**JACK**

Ali?

He looks in. Empty. He checks the clock: 4:45. He hears a "meow", and sees the cat. He picks it up, turns out the light, and leaves the room.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

Sean, Coco, Nikki, Jesse, and the rest of the girls in early stages of getting ready. Ali enters.

**COCO**

Someone has a package!

Ali sees A GIFT BOX at her station. She reads the card: "You saw them first." She opens the box and sees the Louboutins.

87.

**JESSE**

Ooh. Faboo.  
Nikki picks one up -- checking their authenticity.

**NIKKI**

Who's the sucker?  
All eyes turn to Ali. She's saved by Tess entering.

**TESS**

Coco-puff, shake a leg, you're on  
in five, Georgie-Girl, Ali-Cat --  
move, move, move --  
Tess exits.

**ALI**

Ahh. My Nanna used to call me her  
Ali-Cat.

**SEAN**

Yet another fascinating story.

**NIKKI**

Why doesn't Tess have a nickname  
for me?

**COCO**

Oh, she does.  
A knowing look amongst the girls.

**NIKKI**

She never uses it.

**SEAN**

Sure she does.

**NIKKI**

When?

**SEAN**

Just after you leave the room.  
Nikki gives him the finger and walks out. A beat. Then:

**GIRLS TOGETHER**

Coke-whore.

They crack up. CUE MUSIC: "STRANGE THINGS HAPPENING"

**88.**

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - ON STAGE - NIGHT**

Ali and the Burlesque Girls vamp forward and perform  
"STRANGE THINGS HAPPENING", a decadent, rockin' dance/singing number. Scantily-clad girls pose and dance on chairs with images projected onto them -- a rock fantasy with burlesque moves (like Bob Fosse's "All That Jazz")

**ALI**

**WELL I STAY OUT LATE AT NIGHT. I**

**DON'T TREAT MY BABY RIGHT. THERE'S**

**STRANGE THINGS HAPPENING EVERY**

**DAY...**

**MUSIC CONTINUES OVER:**

- INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - Jack, playing his keyboards. Ali comes in, wearing the Louboutins.

**JACK**

You were out late last night.

**ALI**

I got a ride home with that guy--  
Marcus-- we went to a party. It was  
fun.

**JACK**

Marcus the Asshole?

**ALI**

Yeah. Turns out he's not so bad.  
She heads past him, toward the kitchen. He notices:

**JACK**

New shoes?

**- INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - ON STAGE - NIGHT**

Ali, singing. Marcus in the audience, watching her.

**ALI**

**THE LOVE THAT YOU REFUSE, SOME  
OTHER GUY CAN USE, STRANGE THINGS  
ARE HAPPENING EVERY DAY ...**

**- INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT**

Ali performing. Marcus watching from his table. With him is GREG (from the party). Jack watches from the bar.

**89.**

**ALI (O.S.) (CONT'D)**

**OOH EVERY DAY ...**

All the Bartenders sing, except Jack, who keeps his eyes on Marcus.

**BARTENDERS**

**EVERY DAY!**

**ALI**

**EVERY DAY.' THERE ' S STRANGE THINGS  
HAPPENING EVERY DAY ...**

**- INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Ali getting dressed to go out. She's wearing the Louboutins,

sofa. crossing back and forth in front of Jack, who's on the

**JACK**

There's only one reason a man buys  
a woman shoes, you know.

**ALI**

So what if I'm getting a little  
male attention.

**JACK**

You get a lot more than a little.

**ALI**

Not from anyone who matters.

**JACK**

**(CLEARLY IRRITATED)**

I just think that you should be  
careful.  
Ali stops in front of him. Hands on her hips.

**AL I**

And I just think that -- if you  
really feel the need to tell a girl  
what she should and shouldn't do,  
you should pick up the phone and  
call your fiancée.

**- INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT**

Ali continues to sing.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

**WELL, I'D NEVER MISS MY WATER,**

**UNTIL MY WELL RUNS DRY...**

**90.**

AT THEIR TABLE, Greg leans into Marcus and whispers  
something, impressed. Marcus nods back: "Told you."

ALI (CONT'D)

STRANGE THINGS HAPPENING EVERY DAY.

- EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

Marcus drives Ali up the windy roads, into the hills.  
They're talking animatedly.

ALI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

.THEY WON'T BE SATISFIED, 'TIL

THEY SEE TEARDROPS IN MY EYES ...

- INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jack staring at a note: "Jack: going out, see you tom'w. -

A"

ALI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

STRANGE THINGS ARE HAPPENING

EVERY DAY.

- INT. BURLESQUE STAGE - NIGHT

Ali moves in sync with the Girls. Tess watches from the  
wings, pleased.

ALI (CONT'D)

STRANGE THINGS ARE HAPPENING EVERY

DAY, OOH EVERY DAY!

BARTENDERS

EVERY DAY!

ALI

EVERY DAY. THERE ' S STRANGE THINGS

HAPPENING EVERY DAY ...

- INT. FABULOUS PARTY - NIGHT

Marcus leads Ali through a party, introducing her to  
everyone, making sure she knows people and is known by them.

ALI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

WELL YOU THOUGHT I WAS A FOOL, BUT

I GOT NEWS FOR YOU ... STRANGE

THINGS ARE HAPPENING EVERY DAY.

- INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT

Nikki watches from the wings, seething, as Marcus delights

in

Ali's performance.

91.

ALI (CONT'D)

I THINK I FOUND SOMEONE NEW ...

- INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wee hours. Ali comes in, shuts the door as quietly as she can, then tiptoes past Jack, asleep on the couch.

ALI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

AND I THINK IT'S THROUGH WITH

YOU...

After she passes... Jack's eyes open.

- INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT

Ali, owning the stage and the room.

ALI (CONT'D)

STRANGE THINGS ARE HAPPENING EVERY

DAY ... YEAAAAHHH: STRANGE THINGS

ARE HAPPENING!! HAPPENING .1

The SONG ENDS in a flourish. There's a CAMERA FLASH!  
FREEZE FRAME on the image: ALI, belting onstage, with the  
Burlesque Girls striking a pose behind her.  
WIDEN to see it's a photo on the front page of the L.A.

TIMES

Calendar section. The headline: "BURLESQUE HAS A VOICE:".

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - MORNING**

Jack, sleepy, in boxers, stares at the newspaper,  
bewildered.

**JACK**

Hey. Have you seen this?

**ALI**

What?

Ali wanders out of the bathroom, brushing her teeth. He  
shows her the paper. She SCREAMS.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - BACKSTAGE - AFTERNOON**

The Burlesque Girls (minus Ali) crowd around the paper.

**NIKKI**

That's bullshit.

92.

**SCARLETT**

No. That's major.

**NIKKI**

(pointing to photo)

Look again. The only thing major is  
the size of your ass.

Nikki walks off-- Scarlett pick up the paper, looks closer--  
Ali enters, dance bag over her shoulder, running late. The  
Burlesque Girls and Sean all APPLAUD (except Nikki) Ali  
smiles. Embarrassed. She curtsies sarcastically.  
Coco points to a BOUQUET OF ROSES at Ali's station.

**COCO**

From Monsieur Louboutin, I presume.

Ali reads the card: "To the best view in L.A. - M". Sean shoves her down in her seat, pulls her coat off.

**SEAN**

Shake your tail, Alicat, you still got a show to do.

**EXT. THE BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT**

A PACKED LINE of chattering hipsters snakes down the block.

**MUSIC UP: "JUNGLE FEVER" BY THE CHAKACHAS. (REVAMPED BERLIN**

**MUSIC)**

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - ON STAGE - NIGHT**

Daredevils Missy and Kitten DeVille, in striped stockings, corsets, and tons of cleavage, swing on a trapeze over the audience. Playing the comedy, grabbing each other in all the right places. Classic Burlesque, unusually bawdy. Equally suggestive, funny, and skillful.

Tess, all dolled-up, weaves through the tables, greeting, welcoming, reveling in the crowd.

FIND Ali as she strides over to Marcus's booth. He stands, hands her a glass of champagne.

**MARCUS**

To the girl of the hour.

93.

**ALI**

I'm starting to think you'll go to any length.

**MARCUS**

**(INNOCENTLY)**

I just made a call to Greg at the Times.

**ALI**

Well-- I appreciate the kudos.

(re: crowded room)  
And Tess appreciates the business.

**MARCUS**

This has NOTHING to do with Tess.  
This is about you. And me.

**ALI**

You are so full of it.  
He laughs-- takes her arm--

**MARCUS**

I've got another friend I want you  
to meet.  
She sees HAROLD SAINT sitting in the booth. He's in his  
60's, still dressing like Robert Evans in his heyday.

**MARCUS (CONT'D)**

Ali Rose, Harold Saint.

**ALI**

**(SHOCKED)**

Harold Saint? Shut up. You worked  
with Etta James.

**HAROLD**

Her, she chewed me up and spat me  
out, that one. But with her voice,  
I forgive her everything.

**(THEN)**

You got a set of pipes on you, too,  
little girl. I like your sound.

**ALI**

Thank you.

**(SMILES)**

I like yours.

**HAROLD**

You ever recorded?

94.

**ALI**

Not yet.

**HAROLD**

We should do something about that.  
He stands. Turns to Marcus.

**HAROLD (CONT'D)**

See you round, kiddo.  
He points his finger, gun-style, which would seem cheesy,  
but he's old school, so instead it's weirdly cool. He leaves.

**ALI**

Holy shit. Harold Saint.  
AT THE BAR, Jack watches Ali and Marcus talking excitedly.  
Not liking what he sees. Sean breezes by, grabs a drink.

**SEAN**

You snooze, you lose, pretty boy.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

Sean grips the drink in his teeth as he bustles through the  
backstage, gathering costumes. He passes Tess going the  
other way.

**TESS**

Can you believe this crowd?  
He dumps the costumes in her arms.

**SEAN**

'bout time. These poor babies are  
begging for your glue-gun.  
Tess walks off with the armful of clothes, so happy, humming  
to herself, passes her OFFICE-- OPENS the door to SEE--  
VINCE is sitting at her desk. He flinches at the sight of  
her-

**TESS**

Can you believe the crowd out  
there? Never thought I'd see-  
She stops in her tracks, spotting Vince's PANTS on the  
FLOOR,  
and a TRAIL OF WOMEN'S CLOTHES to...  
THE NEW COCKTAIL WAITRESS, peering out, half-dressed, from  
behind the curtains--

95.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

**(DISGUSTED)**

In my god damn office?  
She shakes her head-- GRABS HER PURSE-- and walks out.

**EXT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

Tess, pissed off, carries the damaged costumes out to her car. Nikki is behind her, following her out.

**NIKKI**

Tess. We need to talk.  
Tess rolls her eyes, doesn't slow.

**TESS**

Not now, Nikki.

**NIKKI**

Yes, now. I've been here since the beginning. We built this club together. And then some girl shows up out of nowhere-- who hasn't even paid her dues--

**TESS**

I'll get her to write a check tomorrow.

**NIKKI**

And suddenly it's her show?

**TESS**

No, it's not her show. It's my show. But people want to hear her sing. She's bringing them in off the streets. You better believe I'm building a show around her!

**NIKKI**

I can sing too! And you know it. But you don't give a shit. You always say this is a dance troupe,

now suddenly it's not?

**TESS**

**NIKKI--**

**96.**

**NIKKI**

And you expect me to dance behind a girl who struts in with a new pair of shoes she got for sleeping with Marcus Gerber?

**TESS**

(unlocking her car)  
Nikki, you're wasted. Go home.

**NIKKI**

I won't be upstaged by some slut with mutant lungs!  
Tess hurls the costumes in the trunk of her car, furious.

**TESS**

So don't be! Leave! If you don't want to be a part of what's happening here, then I don't want you around.

**NIKKI**

**(AGHASST)**

You'd destroy our friendship and break up the group over some girl you barely know?

**TESS**

Since when do you care about friendship? Or this group? You're a trainwreck, Nikki! You put tequila on your breakfast cereal! I'm struggling to survive here, and you show up too drunk to dance! You call that loyalty?

Nikki just looks at her--

**NIKKI**

Okay, then. I quit!  
Nikki stomps off. Tess sighs --

**TESS**

**NIKKI-- WAIT--**

**NIKKI**

Marcus says you're losing the club  
anyway!

**(MOCKING HER)**

"They don't come to hear us sing"

**(MORE)**

97.

**NIKKI (CONT'D)**

**(SOTTO)**

Stupid bitch.  
Nikki flips her off and keeps walking. Then turns once more:

**NIKKI (CONT'D)**

By the way: I slept with Vince the  
day after your honeymoon.  
Tess's eyes narrow. She grabs a HIGH-HEELED PUMP and HURLS  
it. It flies through the air and hits Nikki in the back of  
the head. Nikki SCREAMS, whips around, incredulous, to see:  
TESS, running right at her. Nikki bolts, heading for her  
car. She jumps in, locks the door just as Tess SMASHES her  
fist on the window and KICKS the door. Nikki starts the car.

**NIKKI (CONT'D)**

You crazy bitch!  
Nikki screeches off, leaving Tess alone in the parking lot.  
Tess stands there a moment, then HEADS back into the club.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT**

side

The club is totally empty. Everyone is gone. Tess ENTERS, GRABS her bag as she spots a cabaret chair lying on it's side on stage. She crosses onto the stage. Picks up the chair as...

**DAVE (O.S.)**

Night, Tess.

Tess looks up, Dave is closing up the sound booth.

**TESS**

Night, Dave.

Dave FLIPS a big lever, and almost all the lights go OUT, leaving one shaft of light across the stage. We HEAR Dave leave, as the street door closes shut. Tess alone on stage.

**BEGIN TESS SOLO SONG NUMBER. TO BE WRITTEN.**

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Ali enters quietly, all dressed up. She slips off her heels and tiptoes to the bedroom. She slowly opens the bedroom door, then stops when she sees:

**98.**

JACK, asleep in the bed. Ali looks at him, then looks at the couch. Empty. She closes the door, fluffs the pillow, lies down on the couch, and pulls the blankets up over her. She lies in the darkness. PUSH THROUGH the wall to see Jack, lying awake in the bed, the cat on his lap.

**EXT. LOS ANGELES - WIDE PANORAMA - MORNING**

**THE SOUND OF A COFFEE GRINDER**

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - MORNING**

CLOSE ON Ali, sleeping on the sofa-- abruptly wakes to the deafening grinding of coffee. She gets up, drags herself to the kitchen. Sees Jack, grinding the coffee way longer than is necessary.

**ALI**

You really need to do that at 6 in  
the morning?  
He turns, sees her.

**JACK**

Little overdressed for breakfast.

**ALI**

My pajamas were in my bedroom.  
Which was occupied.

**JACK**

Well, you're never here so... it's  
stupid for me to crash on the couch  
every night when there's a  
perfectly good empty bed.  
Jack grinds the coffee beans again. Ali winces.

**ALI**

So -- you want the bedroom back?  
Is that what you're saying?

**JACK**

The bed should be used by someone.

**ALI**

Hey, I'm home every night. Maybe  
not when you think I should be, but  
last I checked, you were my  
roommate, not my mother.

**(MORE)**

**99**

**ALI (CONT'D)**

However, since it's an issue, what  
the hell, take the bed, I'll sleep  
on the sofa. I don't care.

**JACK**

Fine.

**ALI**

Fine.

**JACK**

You'll have to move all your shit.

**ALI**

I realize that.

**JACK**

Cause the room's a total mess --

**ALI**

I'll move my stuff, God --

**JACK**

Clothes, make-up, shoes, hair things.

**ALI**

Jesus, Jack, what is your problem? Ever since I started hanging out with Marcus, you've been acting like a class-A prick. Is there something you want to say?

**JACK**

What? No. What do I care? You're ambitious, he can make things happen, go ahead, make a deal with the devil, what's it to me?

**ALI**

First of all: He's not the devil. He's a smart businessman. And oddly enough-- a gentleman.

**(JACK SCOFFS)**

Second: I'm gonna take the couch, and you're gonna 86 the attitude. Or I'm finding another place to live.

She storms out of the kitchen, tripping over the cat-- a

LOUD

MEOW! as the cat scurries away, Jack intercepting him--

**JACK**

And try not to kill the cat!

**100.**

A SLAM of the bedroom door. MUSIC UP: INSTRUMENTAL to "BABY IT'S YOUR by The Shirelles.

**EXT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - NIGHT - CARRY MUSIC**

CLOSE ON: A DIAMOND RING as it's placed on the hand of A VERY PREGNANT GEORGIA. Wearing an adorable mini-skirt maternity wedding dress. She looks at DAMON with devotion. Ali, Tess, Coco, Sean and Jack, all watching the ceremony. Ali looks over at Jack. He looks at her, then away.

**EXT. SUNSET TOWER HOTEL - NIGHT - CARRY MUSIC**

The reception is underway. GUESTS are drinking, dancing with the iconic backdrop of Hollywood behind them. Ali, Sean, Coco and Tess stand together drinking, overlooking the city. ACROSS THE TERRACE, Jack is talking on his cell phone.

**JACK**

What do you mean, you're still in New York? ...So you just -- decided not to come? You think you might've wanted to, I don't know, let me know??? We haven't seen each other in six months.

ACROSS THE TERRACE, Ali sees Jack yelling into his phone. Sean sees her watching.

**BACK ON JACK**

**JACK (CONT'D)**

.why does every conversation we have end up being about YOUR future...

Jack looks across the terrace at Ali. Moonlight on her shoulders. A breeze in her hair.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

.you know what, you're right. We both should be thinking about our futures. And I might just be looking at mine right now. Break a leg baby.

Jack hangs up with finality and marches toward the bar-- His cell phone immediately rings again.

**101**

He sees it's Natalie, sends it to voicemail, and shuts off his phone. As he PASSES Sean and Coco--

**JACK (CONT'D)**

I guess Natalie's not coming after all.

**SEAN**

Oh, please, that girl? Show up at a party where she's not the center of attention?

AT THE BAR - LATER - Jack drains one drink and orders another, getting very drunk. Ali sidles up to the bar.

**ALI**

**(TO BARTENDER)**

Shot of Patron.

Jack raises his brow. Ali drinks the shot, and without looking at him--

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Lookin' kinda lonely.

**JACK**

**(BOOZEY)**

No. Not lonely. Liberated, yes.

Libated, absolutely. But never

lonely. Cheers, baby--

He raises his glass-- she rolls her eyes, walks off-- he follows her, playfully PUSHING her from behind.

**ALI**

Hey-- what're we, in junior high?

**JACK**

You still mad at me, Iowa? C'mon.

Bring it on.

She starts to say something as-- THE SHIRELLES start to sing "BABY IT'S YOU"-- Jack turns to the DJ, points both fingers at him and YELLS:

**JACK (CONT'D)**

**I LOVE THIS SONG, MAN!!!**

Everyone stares at the drunk guy. Ali rolls her eyes and walks off-- Jack swings her around, PULLING her close-- she just looks at him. Starts to laugh at how drunk he is-- Jack wraps her in his arms and starts to sing quietly in her ear.

**102.**

**JACK (CONT'D)**

.Many many many nights go by, I sit alone, at home and cry, over you...

**ALI**

Well, you're quite the crooner. He looks her in the eye.

**JACK**

I'm sorry for being a class A prick.

Ali smiles, surprised at his candor. He breathes a sigh of relief.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

And as of about...  
(bleary look at his watch,

**CAN'T FOCUS)**

.some time ago, I am officially a single man.

**ALI**

You and Natalie split up?

**JACK**

That we did. So. That explains what I'm doing here all alone. What are you doing here all alone?

**ALI**

Do I look alone to you?  
They share a look. Then he spins her around in his arms. She laughs.

AT THE BAR, tipsy Sean and Coco stand side-by-side. Coco is watching the DJ spin. The DJ glances down at them.

**COCO**

That DJ's hot.

**SEAN**

You think?

**COCO**

He keeps looking at me.

Coco smiles up at him, flirty. The DJ smiles back.

**103.**

**COCO (CONT'D)**

Hmmm...I think he's cuckoo for Coco-puffs.

They look at each other, then crack up like giggling schoolgirls.

**EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

CLOSE ON: A KEY TRYING TO GO INTO A LOCK. Then it disappears from view. We hear it CLANK to the ground. Then giggles.

**ALI (O.C.)**

Whoopsie daisy --

PULL BACK to find Jack and Ali, drunk, staring at the keys

on

the ground.

**JACK**

Whoopsie daisy?

**ALI**

My Nanna used to say that all the time. That and upsie jumpsie.

**JACK**

Upsie jumpsie?

(running it together)

Upsie jumpsie, whoopsie daisy,  
upsie jumpsie, whoopsie daisy,

upsie jumpsie --

**(ABRUPTLY STOPS)**

When would she say that?

**ALI**

When she wanted her dog to get on  
the bed with her. That is --

**(DRUNKEN WHISPER)**

when she was alive.

Their eyes meet. A connection. Then, staring into her eyes:

**JACK**

(trying to be serious)

The dog, or Nanna?

Ali bursts out laughing. So does Jack, as he pushes the door  
open, and they fall into the apartment.

**104.**

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Jack and Ali stumble in, Jack knocks the lamp over trying to  
turn on the light. It BREAKS. Ali giggles as she plops down  
on the couch, struggling to take off her leather boot. No  
luck. She holds her legs out.

**ALI**

Help me.

Jack gets the lamp to standing, then grabs one of Ali's  
boots, slides it off, dumps it. Then he tries the second --  
it sticks -- he pulls harder -- the boot pops off and he  
careens backwards, crashing into the lamp, knocking it over  
again. Ali cracks up. He turns to the lamp.

**JACK**

(like to a dog)

Stay.

He turns back to Ali, regains composure, bows

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Good night.

He backs away, into the bedroom. Ali looks confused.

**ALI**

Oh. Okay.

**(BEAT)**

Good night.

Jack disappears into the bedroom and closes the door. Ali stares at it, surprised. Then resigned. Oh, well. She undoes her bra, threads it through her top and out the arms. Then Jack's door opens. He stands in the doorway in matching "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" pajamas, leaning against

the

doorframe like Hugh Hefner in his finest silk smoking

jacket.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Cute jammies.

**JACK**

A gift from my mother. Never worn them.

**ALI**

Go figure.

Jack walks past Ali, toward the door.

**105.**

**JACK**

Forgot to lock up.

**(HE DOES)**

Okay. Night.

**ALI**

Night again.

He walks back into the bedroom and once gain shuts the door. Ali smiles to herself, plumps her pillow. The door flies open again -- Jack's there in just the pants, no top.

**JACK**

Water. No hangover.

He stumbles past Ali to the kitchen, drinks from the tap. After a moment he returns to the bedroom, nodding to Ali.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Night.

Ali just nods. He closes the door. Ali smiles, waiting.  
After a beat, the door opens again. Jack is there, in

boxers.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Hungry.

He walks past her to the kitchen, opens a box of cereal,  
pours it into his mouth. Grabs some milk from the fridge,  
pours it into his mouth, too. Returns to the bedroom,  
crunching. He closes the door. Then -- very quickly -- he  
opens it again and walks out.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

I know I forgot something else, but  
I just can't remember what...

**(TO HIMSELF)**

Door locked, water, food...

He wanders out into the room, past Ali, and we see from  
behind he is butt-ass naked. She cracks up.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

What's so funny?  
She covers her face. He glances down.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Well I never!

He strides back to the bedroom, shutting the door. After a  
moment, he comes back out dressed in an old, flowered  
bathrobe and fur-lined orange hunting cap.

106.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

I remembered what I forgot to do.

**ALI**

What?

**JACK**

**(SERIOUS)**

Kiss you goodnight.

He crosses to her, takes her in his arms, and kisses her.

She kisses back, making up for all their lost time.

MUSIC UP: "PRISONER" a big, soulful ballad.

**PAN OFF THEM TO:**

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - ON STAGE - NIGHT**

Ali steps into frame on stage, singing:

**ALI**

**I ' LL NEVER BE LONELY. I'LL NEVER**

**LOSE YOU. I 'LL NEVER BE BLUE**

**OR BE ALL ALONE. JUST DON'T EVER**

**LEAVE ME. SO MY HEART WON'T GRIEVE**

**ME. AND OUR GOOD LOVIN**

**WON'T END IN VAIN...**

**CARRY MUSIC AS CAMERA PANS UP OFF ALI AND DRIFTS BACK**

**DOWN TO:**

**JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Jack and Ali in bed, in post-coital bliss.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Well, it's official.

**JACK**

What?

**ALI**

You are definitely not gay.

He smiles at her, drunk with lust. CAMERA PANS UP AND OFF OF

**THEM... THEN DRIFTS BACK DOWN TO:**

**THE CLUB - NIGHT**

Ali on stage, lights blasting.

107.

ALI (CONT'D)

OH YOUR LOVE. HAS GOT ME IN  
CAPTIVITY-- YEAH. YOU'LL NEVER  
LEAVE ME, AND I ' LL TELL YOU WHY--  
YEAH. IN OTHER WORDS, IN OTHER  
WORDS, LISTEN, THIS IS FOREVER BABY  
I 'LL NEVER HAVE TO HEAR YOU SAY  
GOODBYE...

CAMERA PANS UP OFF ALI AND DRIFTS BACK DOWN TO:

JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ali and Jack in bed, in different positions, wrapped in  
sheets. Jack traces the outline of her lips with his  
finger.

JACK

I've been wanting to do this since  
you first walked in the club.  
She cocks an eyebrow at him.

ALI

Sure got a funny way of showing it.  
He smiles at her.

JACK

I'll show you an even funnier way --  
you ready?  
He disappears under the sheets. She SQUEALS, starts laughing  
hysterically. CAMERA PANS UP AND OFF OF THEM THEN DRIFTS

BACK DOWN TO:

BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT

Ali, on stage, belting:

ALI

WE'RE JUST PRISONERS. OF OUR GOOD

LOVIN. WE'RE JUST SLAVES, BOUND IN  
CHAINS. NO, NO, I DON ' T WANT TO  
EVER BE FREE, SO DON'T EVER LEAVE  
ME. AND OUR GOOD LOVIN,  
WON'T END IN VAIN...

CAMERA PANS UP OFF ALI AND DRIFTS BACK DOWN TO:

JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY

108.

Jack in bed, sitting against the headboard, wearing only a hat. Ali's leg in the foreground, a la The Graduate, as she pulls on one fishnet stocking. Jack watches, mesmerized.

ALI (CONT'D)

So, what about Natalie...?

JACK

Natalie who?

Ali smiles. Rolls the stocking up over her shapely thigh, then slowly takes it off. Looks at Jack. He strikes his chest, struck by cupid--

JACK (CONT'D)

Do it again.

She giggles, repeats the sexy act for him. CAMERA PANS UP

AND

OFF OF THEM... THEN DRIFTS BACK DOWN TO:

THE BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT

Ali on stage, the big finish:

ALI

OH YOUR LOVE. HAS GOT ME IN

CAPTIVITY-- YEAH. YOU'LL NEVER

LEAVE ME, AND I ' LL TELL YOU WHY--

YEAH. IN OTHER WORDS, IN OTHER  
WORDS, LISTEN, THIS IS FOREVER BABY  
I 'LL NEVER HAVE TO HEAR YOU SAY  
GOODBYE.. . YEAH, YEAH, YEAH, YEAH,  
YEAH. WE'RE JUST PRISONERS, WE'RE  
JUST PRISONERS, OF OUR GOOD LOVIN,  
OF OUR GOOD LOVIN, WE 'RE JUST  
SLAVE, WE'RE JUST SLAVES

BOUND IN CHAINS, BOUND IN CHAINS!

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING**

Jack and Ali, twisted up in the sheets, their respective  
eyeliners smeared. Ali's platinum bob sticks up in all  
directions. Half of a fake eyelash stuck on her cheek.

**EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT - THE FRONT DOOR - DAY**

CLOSE ON THE LOCK as a key is inserted. The door opens.

109.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY**

A PAIR OF WOMEN'S HEELS enter the apartment and pick their  
way over last night's discarded clothes and head for:

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY**

at  
Where Jack and Ali are sleeping, entwined. The heels stop  
the base of the bed. A beat. Then, enraged:

**NATALIE**

**I KNEW IT!**

Jack bolts up in bed. Stares.

**JACK**

Natalie!

Ali blinks awake. Confused.

**ALI**

Natalie?

Jack scrambles for something to put on.

**NATALIE**

YOU are a LIAR. You're a sneaky,  
pathetic LI-AR!

**ALI**

(quiet, to Jack)  
What 's she doing here:

**JACK**

I don't know!

**NATALIE**

I LIVE HERE, you bleached out  
tramp, what the hell are YOU doing  
here?!!

**ALI**

**(TO JACK)**

You were engaged to this woman?

**JACK**

(finds his boxers)  
Nat, can we talk about this in the  
living room --

110.

**NATALIE**

I can't BELIEVE I bought your  
bullshit: "It's nothing, she's just

this chick from work, she's nothing."

**(TO ALI)**

That's what he called you.  
"Nothing. She's not even pretty.  
(sizing Ali up)  
Well, at least you were honest  
about one thing--

**ALI JACK**

You said that? No, I didn't --

**NATALIE (CONT'D) JACK**

He most certainly did! Nat-- shut the fu--

**ALI NATALIE**

Jack?!? Don't even say his name!  
As Ali grabs for a shirt--

**JACK**

Listen, Ali-- let me just-- would  
you mind --

**ALI**

What?!?

**JACK**

Giving us a little privacy?

**AL I**

**(OFFENDED)**

You want me to leave?

**NATALIE**

Yes you! I'm the fiancee. You're a  
booty call. You go.

**JACK**

Natalie, Jesus, STOP IT!  
Ali grabs some pants from the floor, pulls them on.

**ALI**

Fine, I'm out of here--  
(seething to Jack)  
You said you split up!

**NATALIE**

In one phone call? Please, you don't dump a girl like me on the phone.

**JACK**

Both of you-- STOP IT!  
As Ali quickly grabs a few things--

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Ali-- I'm really sorry-- I--

**ALI**

So am I.  
She gathers up more things, really pissed--

**JACK**

Wait-- do you need money for a Motel or...  
Ali stifles him with an incredulous glare-- can't believe  
this is going down. She looks at him, so incredibly hurt.  
Grabs her suitcase and brushes past him, stuffing her belongings into it. Jack goes after her--

how

**JACK (CONT'D)**

Ali, wait a second-- don't--  
(as the door SLAMS)  
--go.

**(BEAT)**

Shit.  
Jack looks at Natalie. She folds her arms.

**EXT. SEAN'S APARTMENT - MORNING**

Ali knocks on a door, suitcase in hand. A beat. Then a good-looking guy, who's obviously just woken up, answers with a blanket wrapped around him. He is the DJ from the wedding.

**ALI**

Oh. I'm sorry. I think I have the wrong apartment. I'm looking for Sean?  
(off his blank look)  
Brown hair? 5'10n? Early 30's?

**DJ**

Oh, Sean! I thought he said John.  
He's asleep. Come in.

**112.**

The DJ shuffles inside. Ali follows as he leads her to the bedroom. He points to Sean in the bed.

**DJ (CONT'D)**

That him?

Ali nods. Sean's eyes pop open, confused to see her.

**SEAN**

What are you doing here?

**ALI**

Long story.

Sean notices the guy in the blanket.

**SEAN**

Ali, this is Mike.

**DJ**

Mark.

**SEAN**

Mark???

**(THEN)**

Oh. Anyone want coffee?

**ALI**

I'll make it. You two get acquainted.

**INT. SEAN'S KITCHEN - DAY**

Ali makes coffee, looking out the window at Hollywood. Her phone rings. She answers right away, thinking it's Jack.

**ALI**

**HEY--**

**MARCUS (OVER PHONE)**

Hey gorgeous.

**ALI**

Oh. Marcus.

**MARK**

**(WANDERING IN)**

Is the coffee ready?

**MARCUS (OVER PHONE)**

Who's that?

**113.**

**ALI**

Mark. Or Mike. Jury's still out.

**MARCUS (OVER PHONE)**

Should I be jealous?

**ALI**

Only if you had your eye on Sean.

**MARCUS (OVER PHONE)**

You okay? You sound down.

**ALI**

Mmm. Maybe a little.

**MARCUS (OVER PHONE)**

I know just the cure.

**ALI**

What's that?

**MARCUS (OVER PHONE)**

Me. But you turned me down.  
She thinks for a moment. Then:

**ALI**

Haven't you heard? No is the new  
yes.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - ON STAGE**

behind A curtain lifts revealing a black box, FIVE GIRLS from  
seem to be floating in blackness, their curves illuminated.  
They begin to move to the music (think WABASH BLUES, CRAZY  
HORSE SALOON) The group turns toward us--

**ALI**

**WHAT DO YOU KNOW, HOW DO YOU DO, I**

**LIKE THE WAY YOU LOOK AT ME WITH**

**THOSE EYES, CONFIDENTLY WISE...**

**EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY**

**ANOTHER SLAMMING DOOR.**

NATALIE'S HEELS storm away from the apartment. Carrying her  
bags, really PISSED, she kicks a big, fat rose blossom off a  
bush, and continues on.

**INTERCUT WITH THE SPOTLIT STAGE**

**114.**

The girls continue the number. Post modern Gaultier bondage  
cages on top, bowler hats and black shorts. A HUMONGOUS moon  
hangs at the back of the theatre, the black stage awash in  
golden light.

**ALI**

**PLEASURE I'M SURE, I ' VE MET YOU**

**BEFORE, BUT MAYBE NOT HERE, MAYBE**

**IT WAS, SOME OTHER TIME. THIS AIN'T**

**NO KIND OF PLACE FOR YOU, YOU**

**BETTER MOVE ALONG...I MET A GOOD**

OLE' BOY WHO CAN. 00000, DON'T

FOLLOW ME DOWN. IT'S A RUSE...

**EXT. SEAN'S APARTMENT - DAY - CARRY MUSIC**

Marcus is waiting in his Bentley. Ali gets in. Marcus looks at her. She forces a smile. The Bentley rounds the corner as we HOLD and see JACK'S MOTORCYCLE thunder up. He gets off, runs to the building.

**EXT. SEAN'S APARTMENT - STAIRWELL - DAY**

Sean and Mark exchange awkward good-byes.

**SEAN**

Well. Bye.

**MARK**

You... Take care. Sean.

Mark turns, heads down the stairs as Jack rushes up,  
calling:

**JACK**

Is Ali here?

**MARK**

Just left.

Mark continues down. Jack whips around, looks at him, then  
up  
at Sean, who nods.

**JACK**

Where'd she go?

**SEAN**

With Marcus.

**JACK**

What?

115.

**SEAN**

I told you, opportunity doesn't  
knock forever.

Jack burns, frustrated, then heads slowly down the stairs.  
Sean shakes his head and turns to go back inside. Then  
pauses, noticing:

Mark, looking up at Sean's apartment, hesitating. Then he  
opens his car to get in. Sean stands there, realizing he's  
doing the same thing. He steps onto the stairwell. Calls

out:

**SEAN (CONT'D)**

Hey! You!

**MARK**

**(LOOKS UP)**

It's Mark.

**SEAN**

Mark. You wanna have breakfast?  
Off Mark's smile:

**INT. MARCUS'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

Ali follows Marcus through the kitchen, to the fridge.

**MARCUS**

My mother always said there's only  
one thing to do when you're feeling  
blue...

He opens the fridge and pulls out a bottle of CHAMPAGNE.

**ALI**

She was a poet.

**MARCUS**

And a drunk.

Ali smiles. Marcus pops the cork, fills two glasses, hands  
her one. Clinks.

**MARCUS (CONT'D)**

To your new place.

**ALI**

What new place?

116.

**INT. MARCUS'S HOUSE - GUEST HOUSE - DAY**

A lavish, 1000-square-foot guest house. Marcus ushers Ali  
in.

**MARCUS**

All yours.  
(off her look)  
Unpack. Move in.

**ALI**

Marcus, I can't just--

**MARCUS**

Sure you can.  
Marcus plops her suitcase on the bed.

**MARCUS (CONT'D)**

Unpack. You're home.

**ALI**

It's not even on the bus route.

**MARCUS**

Okay, that is the first and last  
time the term "bus route" will be  
spoken in this house.  
(motions out window)  
Four cars. Which do you want?

**EXT. MARCUS'S GAZEBO - SUNSET**

Ali lies on a chaise overlooking the panoramic view of L.A.  
against a fiery red sky. Marcus comes out of the house, with  
a bottle of wine. Crosses and sits next to her on the  
chaise.

Marcus refills their wine glasses. An empty bottle already  
there. She sips as she leans back and relaxes.

**MARCUS**

Better?

**ALI**

**(SMILES)**

Better.  
She looks out at a giant billboard at eye level.

**MARCUS**

You're gonna be on one of those  
someday.

**117.**

**ALI**

Yeah, right.

**MARCUS**

Sooner than you think, too. Harold  
Saint called me today. You made  
quite an impression on him.

**ALI**

Really? What'd he say?

**MARCUS**

He wants to make a demo with you.

**ALI**

Are you serious? When??

**MARCUS**

He found a little studio time on  
Tuesday.

**ALI**

This Tuesday?

**MARCUS**

Too soon?

**ALI**

No! Oh my god, no, that's amazing.  
You're amazing.

**MARCUS**

I like making you happy. Your whole  
face lights up.  
Their eyes meet. He pushes some hair out of her face.

**ALI**

I think you're way too nice to me.

**MARCUS**

And that's a problem because...

**ALI**

I've had a lot to drink. And my judgment is off.

He touches her face, their chemistry palpable.

**MARCUS**

Hey, I'm a gentleman. Which means I'd never kiss a lady when she's... vulnerable.

**118.**

She looks at him.

**ALI**

Liar.

She leans in and impulsively pulls him into a kiss.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Jack, alone now, collects the clothes Ali left behind. He reaches under the couch and sees the PHOTO of Ali and her mother. He picks it up, smooths out the cracks. Traces 7-year-old Ali's face with his fingertips.

**INT. MARCUS'S HOUSE - GUEST HOUSE - DAY**

Ali lies in a tangle of 1000-thread-count sheets. Her eyes blink open. She sits up alone, getting her bearings.

**ALI**

Where am I?

She sees a Warhol-esque PRINT OF MARCUS on the wall. She raises her brows then sees her disheveled reflection in a huge mirror: smeared mascara, hair askew.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Who am I?

She sees her and Marcus's clothes in a trail on the floor

and

bites her lip, remembering last night.

**INT. MARCUS'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING**

Ali, freshly showered, enters, a stranger in a strange land. STAFF is milling around. She HEARS a SPLASH. Looks out the glass windows, sees Marcus swimming laps. The HOUSEKEEPER passes her, nods "morning". Ali smiles.

Then she notices a long table full of miniature MODELS of BUILDINGS. She takes them in, pausing at a tall, sleek MODEL of a glass HIGH-RISE, towering over the other models.

She runs her finger lightly over it, intrigued. Then she sees the address marker: 7800 Sunset Blvd.

Ali stares, stunned. Marcus enters, toweling himself dry.

**MARCUS**

Morning.

**119.**

He comes up behind her, nuzzles her neck.

**ALI**

What is this?

**MARCUS**

Now it's a model. But when it grows up, it'll be a mixed-use space: retail and residential.

**ALI**

This is the address of the Burlesque Lounge.  
Marcus shrugs, dries his hair.

**MARCUS**

Best view on the Sunset Strip, with no windows. When I'm done with it, it'll have a thousand.

**ALI**

You can't tear down the club.

**MARCUS**

Actually, I can.

**ALI**

But what about the history? That place is a landmark.

**MARCUS**

Not according to the city.

**ALI**

Does Tess know about this?

**MARCUS**

What Tess knows and doesn't know isn't a big concern of mine.

**ALI**

What makes you think she would ever sell the Lounge?

**MARCUS**

She has no choice. She's going under.

**ALI**

But that club is her life!

120.

**MARCUS**

Oh, come on, you get this. It's business. It's not personal.

**ALI**

Not personal? It's pretty god damn personal for Tess! And Coco and Sean and Alexis. And what about Jesse? And Dave the lighting guy?

**MARCUS**

**ALI --**

**ALI**

And what about me? It's pretty God damn personal to me.

She turns to leave.

**MARCUS**

Where are you going?

**ALI**

To the club. Where I work.

She marches out of the room, resolute--

**MARCUS**

Ali-- wait!!!

At the door she turns back and looks at him. As he starts to speak, she SLAMS the door shut as we HEAR "THAT'S LIFE".

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - ON STAGE - LATE AFTERNOON**

as  
Eva Destruction does a sexy contortionist number on stage

shot  
the Tattooed Bumper Band plays "THAT'S LIFE" with her.  
CLOSE ON - a LINE OF SHOT GLASSES. Tequila is poured. The  
Bartenders behind the bar, Jack sits on a stool on the other  
side, his bags packed beside him. They all pick up their

glasses, toast and drink as they begin to sing "THAT'S LIFE"  
in a rousing, fun, guys number.

**THE BARTENDERS AND JACK**

**THAT ' S LIFE, THAT ' S WHAT ALL THE  
PEOPLE SAY.**

**YOU'RE RIDING HIGH IN APRIL,**

**SHOT DOWN IN MAY**

**BUT I KNOW I'M GONNA CHANGE THAT TUNE,**

**WHEN I'M BACK ON TOP, BACK ON TOP IN JUNE.**

121.

**EXT. PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON - CARRY MUSIC**

Tess pulls into the lot-- gets out of her car dressed to the nines in a tailored business suit, hair up, professional.

She

HEADS into the club--

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - SAME**

As Eva performs and the Bartenders and Jack sing, SEAN looks up at Dave, and MOTIONS for the SPOTLIGHT on Jack. Dave

nods,

and SWINGS the SPOTLIGHT hitting JACK. The Bartenders push Jack up onto the bar as he TAKES THE LEAD--

**JACK**

**.I SAID THAT'S LIFE, AND AS FUNNY**

**AS IT MAY SEEM**

**SOME PEOPLE GET THEIR KICKS,**

**STOMPIN' ON A DREAM**

**BUT I DON'T LET IT, LET IT GET ME DOWN,**

**'CAUSE THIS FINE OL' WORLD IT KEEPS**

**SPINNING AROUND...**

**I'VE BEEN A PUPPET, A PAUPER, A**

**PIRATE, A POET, A PAWN AND A KING.**

**I'VE BEEN UP AND DOWN AND OVER AND**

**OUT AND I KNOW ONE THING:**

**EACH TIME I FIND MYSELF, FLAT ON MY**

**FACE, I PICK MYSELF UP AND GET BACK**

**IN THE RACE...**

The whole club is with him now, as Jack channels Sinatra, standing on the bar-- the Bartenders sing back-up.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

**THAT'S LIFE. THAT'S LIFE AND I**

**CAN'T DENY IT. MANY TIMES I THOUGHT**

**OF CUTTING OUT, BUT MY HEART WON'T**

**BUY IT. BUT IF THERE ' S NOTHING**

**SHAKIN' COME THIS HERE JULY...**

**I'M GONNA ROLL MYSELF UP IN A BIG**

**BALL AND DIE. MY, MY.**

Applause, hoots and hollers. Jack high-fives and fist pumps his buddies, hugs Sean, grabs his bag and suitcase and EXITS out the back as...

Tess ENTERS. SEES Sean is at the bar. He looks up--

**SEAN**

How'd it go?  
(sees her face)  
Oh, shit.

**122.**

She grabs a bottle of Tequila and a glass, turns to walk  
off.

**SEAN (CONT'D)**

What are you gonna do?

**TESS**

Right now? Get really drunk.  
THE FRONT DOORS OPEN, and Ali ENTERS, spots Tess, rushes  
over  
to her.

**ALI**

Tess! I have to talk to you!  
Tess keeps walking.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Marcus Gerber is trying to buy the lounge, and he's gonna tear it down and build a twenty-story skyscraper!  
Tess stops. Slowly turns and stares at Ali, who's suddenly embarrassed to admit...

**ALI (CONT'D)**

I just saw the plans.  
Tess looks at Ali. Stunned. Ali stands there, breathless,  
waiting for her reaction. But Tess just turns, continues up  
to her office, and shuts the door. Ali turns to Sean-- then  
starts after her--

**ALI (CONT'D)**

She has to do something! She can't  
just let him --

**SEAN**

**(STOPPING HER)**

Let it go, girl. She just got  
turned down for another loan. It's  
either foreclose, or sell to  
Marcus.

**ALI**

So that's it? It's over?

**SEAN**

The circle of life, baby. All good  
things must come to an end.

**ALI**

But she can't just give up!

**123.**

**SEAN**

She's not giving up. She's going  
down with her ship. With dignity.  
Ali sits on a barstool, in disbelief.

**SEAN (CONT'D)**

I've got something for you.  
He pulls out the photo of Ali with her mother. It's in a new  
frame.

**ALI**

Where'd you get this?

**SEAN**

Jack. He dropped it off on his way to the airport.

**ALI**

Where's he going?

**SEAN**

New York on the red-eye.

**ALI**

To be with Natalie?

**SEAN**

Pedal faster, baby, he and Natalie are over. You're the one he's been looking high and low for.

**ALI**

**(TOUCHED)**

Really...?

**(THEN:)**

Then why's he going to New York?

**SEAN**

(duh!)

Get your ass over to LAX and ask him yourself!

Ali nods, jumps up from her stool, and races for the door, then stops, realizing:

**ALI**

I don't have a --  
Sean tosses her his CAR KEYS.

**124.**

**SEAN**

American to JFK. Go!

Ali catches the keys and TAKES OFF.

- EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT - Ali (in a Prius) peels out of the lot, weaving through traffic as she lifts her cell.

- INT. AIRPORT - NIGHT - CLOSE SHOT: a CELL PHONE in a

plastic bowl moves through a security X-ray machine.

**JACK'S VOICE**

This is Jack. Leave me a message.

FIND Jack on the other side, as his belongings come down the conveyor belt. He grabs them, turns off his cell.

past

- EXT. STREET - NIGHT - ALI skids through a light, veers cars.

- INT. CONCOURSE - NIGHT Jack reaches gate 43, sees a long line. Gets in back.

- INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - NIGHT - Ali bolts through the front door, frantically checks the DEPARTURES MONITOR. Finds: NEW YORK JFK, GATE 43: NOW BOARDING.

- INT. TERMINAL - NIGHT - Ali races up the escalator, approaching SECURITY.

**SECURITY GUY**

Boarding pass?

**AL I**

I have to talk to someone, he's --

**SECURITY GUY**

No one's allowed past this point without a boarding pass.

**ALI**

But I have to speak to him!

**SECURITY GUY**

I'm sorry, miss.

**ALI**

**I HAVE TO GET TO GATE 43!**

**SECURITY GUY**

There's Gate 43, right over there.

**125.**

He points. It's the first gate beyond Security. Ali sees Jack, in line, about to board the plane. He's wearing his iPod headset, deaf to the world.

**ALI**

**JACK! JACK! JACK!**

ALL HEADS TURN to look at her, except Jack, who can't hear. A PLUMP WOMAN in front of him looks at Ali. Ali points to Jack. The woman taps Jack and points. He looks to see:

ALI, on the other side of Security. Jack takes his earphones off and smiles. He crosses over to her, carrying his bag. They are separated by several feet of security ropes.

**JACK**

What are you doing here?

**ALI**

Sean told me you're going to New York. Please don't go!

**JACK**

I have to. I got an offer from that band -- the Punk Fusion group. They want me to tour with them.

**ALI**

Really?

**JACK**

They finally had it with the flaky keyboardist. I'll be back in five weeks. Will you be here?

**ALI**

Yes! Yes. Absolutely.

**JACK**

What about Marcus?

**ALI**

.Marcus who?  
They share a smile, separated by the ropes.

**JACK**

I'm trying to figure out if I should kiss you now, or make you wait five weeks.

**ALI**

Five weeks?! That's forever!

126.

ANGLE ON: A MALE AND FEMALE SECURITY GUARD, listening to the whole exchange.

**ATTENDANT (ON P.A.)**

**FINAL BOARDING FOR FLIGHT 673 TO**

**NEW YORK, JFK AT GATE 43**

**JACK**

I gotta go, that's me.  
He picks up his bags. It's killing Ali.

**JACK (CONT'D)**

I'll call you when I get there.  
Take care of Miles Davis.  
(off Ali's confusion)  
Our cat. I named him.  
They smile again. Neither wanting this moment to end. She waves. He nods. Then he turns and walks off to board. Ali watches him go.  
ON JACK, walking back to the gate--then -- he stops. Turns back to see Ali, but she's gone.

**FEMALE SECURITY GUARD**

Boy, you get out there and kiss that girl! Now!  
Jack looks at her, then quickly turns to walk past the Male Security Guard.

**MALE SECURITY GUARD**

Go ahead-- but you're gonna have to come back through Security again.

**JACK**

But then I'll miss my flight!

**FEMALE SECURITY GUARD**

Martin! Don't you dare keep that boy from kissing his girl!  
Martin looks at Jack. Then:

**MALE SECURITY GUARD**

Ah, hell. Go ahead. Bag stays here.  
Jack drops his bag, takes a running JUMP over the ROPES and

last

RUNS through the crowded concourse -- startling everyone.  
ON ALI, as she walks through the concourse, reliving her  
sight of Jack. As she's about to get on the escalator:

127.

**JACK**

**ALI!**

move,  
kiss

She turns. Jack is there. In one fantastically romantic  
he pulls her into his arms, kisses her deeply -- an epic  
that makes passersby stop and stare.

**ATTENDANT (ON P.A.)**

**FINAL BOARDING CALL FOR FLIGHT 673**

**TO NEW YORK JFK AT GATE 43.**

Jack looks at Ali.

**ALI**

Well, go get 'em, Jack.  
He smiles, then disappears into the crowd. Ali stands there,  
watching him, gobsmacked by the kiss.

**EXT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - LATE NIGHT**

Sean's car whips into the parking lot. Ali jumps out and  
heads for the front entrance. The CONSTRUCTION WORKERS from  
the towering building across the street HOOT and CAT-CALL at  
her. She waves to them and nods: that's right, boys.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT**

Ali enters just as Tess, in a spotlight on stage, turns  
toward the audience. She looks fabulous. Only someone who  
knows her really well could tell she's dying inside.

**TESS**

Smoother than honey and twice as  
sweet. Each girl lovelier than the

next. Gentlemen, hold onto your hats. Ladies, hold on to your gentlemen. We may not have windows.. .but we DO have...

(motions to the girls)

.the best view on the Sunset Strip.

The audience hoots as the Burlesque Girls ENTER the stage dancing. (SONG TBD)

ON ALI-- a lightbulb going on! As Tess exits the stage, Ali pushes through the crowd and races backstage.

128.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT**

Tess is arriving in her office, defeated, as Ali bursts in behind her.

**ALI**

Tess!

**TESS**

You could knock-- this is still my office--at least for another 48

**HOURS--**

**ALI**

But this is really, really -- Tess holds up a hand.

**TESS**

Not. Now.

**ALI**

**BUT--**

**TESS**

I said -- NOT --

**ALI**

Yes now! God damn, you are one

stubborn mule of a woman. Anyone else in their right mind would have figured out by now, when I have something to tell you, you listen! I told you I could dance, did you listen? No. Big mistake. I told you I could sing, did you listen? No. Big. mistake. This time you are going to hear what I have to say if I have to tie you up with your corset strings and scream it in your God damn ear.

For the first time someone silences Tess. Ali takes a breath.

**ALI (CONT'D)**

Have you ever heard of air rights?

**EXT. LOFT BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY**

TWO SETS OF FIERCE HEELS and LEGS stride in unison down a sidewalk. PAN UP as Tess and Ali enter:

**129.**

**INT. LOFT BUILDING - SALES OFFICE - DAY**

A smartly-dressed BUSINESSMAN sits at his mahogany desk deep in a phone conversation as WHAM! The door to his office flies open and Ali and Tess stride in, an overwrought assistant on their heels.

**BUSINESSMAN**

**(INTO PHONE)**

Jim -- Jim -- hang on, I'm gonna have to call you back -- Jim! Damnit, Nancy, get him back. Assistant scurries out. Businessman turns to Tess.

**BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)**

Back with more noise complaints?

**TESS**

You offered to buy my club a few years back. I said no.

**BUSINESSMAN**

And now you've changed your mind.

**TESS**

Not exactly.

Tess smiles at him. Looks at Ali, who's not smiling. She elbows her. Ali starts smiling. Tess walks up to the desk

and

sits herself down. Ali does the same.

**BUSINESSMAN**

I'm confused.

**TESS**

Go with me, there's a good ending, I promise. How much will these condos you're building sell for?

**BUSINESSMAN**

They start at one million and go up, depending on the view.

**TESS**

What if I told you a twenty-story high-rise was going up where my club is?

**(TO ALI)**

Would twenty stories block his view?

**130.**

**ALI**

Ten stories would. Twenty would decimate them. Leaving behind a lot of angry homeowners staring across the street at fluorescent light bulbs and dirty windows.

**TESS**

So. Mr. ?

**BUSINESSMAN**

Anderson.

**TESS**

Mr. Anderson. Your pretty million-dollar ocean views are going away because I'm selling my building to a developer tomorrow who'll have his twenty stories all framed up by the time you start selling --

**ALI**

Trying to sell--

**TESS**

Trying to sell these condos.

**(BEAT)**

Or. I can put you in a position where your buyers could be guaranteed their million-dollar views forever.

**BUSINESSMAN**

I'm listening.

**TESS**

As am I. As long as you're telling me you'll have a check to me by 5:00 today.

**INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - EVENING**

The BUMPER BAND PLAYS. Vince sits with his POSSE. His cocktail waitress/girlfriend approaches with an empty tray. She whispers to him:

**COCKTAIL WAITRESS**

Sorry, baby, they cut you off at the bar. Said you have to pay cash.

**VINCE**

What? I co-own this goddamn place--

**131.**

Tess comes up behind him.

**TESS**

Not anymore you don't. I'm buying you out.

**VINCE**

You can't do that.

**TESS**

Actually, according to page 4 of our contract, I can.

**VINCE**

**(SCOFFING)**

In the next 48 hours?

**TESS**

Why postpone joy?

She hands him a CASHIER'S CHECK. Vince stares at it.

**VINCE**

What the hell is this?

**TESS**

I realize it's been a while since you've seen one, but it's called a check.

He stares at it, stunned. Then at her.

**VINCE**

Where'd you get this?

**TESS**

Not your business anymore. And neither is the lounge.

**(POINTS)**

I'm sure you know where the door is. It used to be half yours.

(re. the waitress)

And take HER with you.

Tess turns and goes over to the bar, where Ali spins around on her barstool, having heard the whole thing.

**ALI**

How'd that feel?

**TESS**

Not half bad.

**132.**

Tess parks it next to her. Looks at Ali. Smiles, then breaks into a giggle. Ali smiles. Tess laughs even harder, tears in her eyes now. They are just two girls laughing hysterically at the bar, Tess keeps trying to say something, but can't

get

it out, until she looks Ali square in the eye...

**TESS (CONT'D)**

It felt pretty God damn awesome!  
And they crack up again. Then...

**ALI**

And to think, you didn't even want me around.

**TESS**

Oh, Jesus, here it comes.

**ALI**

.What was it you said to me that first night? "Twenty bucks at the door will make all your dreams come true." That was sweet of you.

**TESS**

Are you finished?

**ALI**

(loving needling her)  
Kinda ironic, when you think about it. I started off begging you to make my dreams come true, and here we are --

**TESS**

All right already! You want me to say it, I'll say it.  
She looks at her.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

This place is the love of my life.  
The only dream I've ever had. I  
don't know what I would have done  
if I had lost it.

**(HEARTFELT NOW)**

Thank you.

A moment between them... as Tess SPOTS NIKKI ENTER the club  
carrying her dance bag--a little fresher than we've seen her  
before, and sober. Nikki looks over at Tess... then  
approaches. Ali turns away on her bar stool, respectfully.

**133.**

**NIKKI**

**(SHEEPISH)**

I crossed the line.  
Tess crosses her arms, and with a smirk on her face--

**TESS**

Again.

**NIKKI**

Again, and I wanna come home--

**TESS**

**AGAIN--**

**NIKKI**

Yes, again! Did you fill my spot or  
what...?

**TESS**

What do you think?  
Tess and Nikki share a look.

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Curtain's up in 20. Shake a leg.  
Nikki smiles, hikes her dance bag over her shoulder and

heads

**BACKSTAGE--**

Ali looks at Tess quizzically--

**ALI**

Just like that?

**TESS**

If I had a dollar for every time  
she's quit...

**ALI**

Really?

**TESS**

We all fight. Bitch. Love and hate.  
And then make up. Just like  
sisters.

**ALI**

I never had a sister.

**TESS**

Me neither. THANK GOD.

**(THEN)**

**(MORE)**

**134.**

**TESS (CONT'D)**

Now get your cute little ass and  
big ole' voice up on stage, cause  
this is Burlesque, baby girl, where  
the women are always on top, and  
the men like it that way. Like I've  
always said --

**ALI/TESS**

You can't keep a good girl down.

**BACKSTAGE DRESSING ROOM**

Ali walks into the dressing room. Sits down in front of her  
mirror. Across the room, Nikki is sitting at hers. Ali looks  
at Nikki in the reflection of her mirror. Their eyes meet.

Then Nikki nods. And Ali nods back. For the first time, a mutual respect.

All the other girls begin to pour into the dressing room. Chatting, gossiping, changing their clothes. The legs,

boobs,

fishnets, etc. Things back the way there were, and the way they'll always be.

ON ALI. She looks at herself in the mirror. Picks up the

make-

up brush Tess gave her. Dips it in water. Then applies a

line

on her eye expertly. She smiles to herself. MUSIC UP: A

heavy

bass drumlin beat which takes us to...

### **INT. BURLESQUE LOUNGE - NIGHT - CARRY MUSIC**

A SPOTLIGHT. MOVING down the smoke-filled shaft of light as-

-

A FIGURE RISES into view at the back of the stage. Over the contemporary BEAT, we HEAR a beautiful classic opera (Carmen?) REVEAL...it's NIKKI! She sings a line or two in an amazing operatic voice that totally blows us away. Then ...a DANCE BEAT KICKS IN as COCO comes into view, and sings another line. Then Jessie. Then Scarlett. And FINALLY... Ali RISES into view, wearing a diamond studded Gaultier-type harness top and sequined hot-pants. This song (to be

written)

is a contemporary dance song about BURLESQUE with a vintage feel to it. Nikki and the Burlesque Girls, in similar costumes, back Ali as she SINGS her big finale. CAMERA MOVES through the packed house as we SEE Georgia, Sean, Mark (the DJ) and Tess, who double-takes at MR. ANDERSON (the Businessman) who sees her and smiles.

ON STAGE, ALI and the entire company explode in a surreal whirl of dancing. Turning. Kicking. Arched backs. Legs overhead. Rhinestones. Garters. Fishnets. The entire

company,

band and bartenders join in an all out BOLLYWOOD FINALE.

### **135.**

CAMERA MOVES INTO THE CLUB as music CROSSFADES with the SOUNDS of people TALKING. Glasses CLINKING. All the background sounds of a busy nightclub. A LOUD DRUM ROLL

takes

us to...

A LOW CAMERA moving across a black stage as we MOVE IN ON

the

footlights which become a MILLION BRILLIANT LIGHTS blasting into camera, blinding us until they form letters reading:

## BURLESQUE