

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION

Written by

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INT KITTREDGE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM DAWN

JOHN FLANDERS KITTREDGE and LOUISA KITTREDGE ("FLAN" and "OUIA") , an attractive couple in their 40s, in their night clothes are in an uncharacteristic state of shock. Some sort of horrible disaster has happened to them. THEY survey their living room which under normal circumstances would appear to be a serene haven. But why are they-so aghast? And terrified? Has the apartment been violated?

The Fifth Avenue apartment, red and cozy, threadbare with the legacy of years of kids and dogs running in and out, is filled with beautiful objects chosen with care. Even though the apartment is 19th Century in feel, a lot of modern paintings hang on the walls. No. No visible disaster here. But then why FLAN and OUIA's emotional state? THEY run between the hall and the living room.

OUIA

Is anything gone?
OUIA opens the front closet with trepidation. But nothing leaps out. SHE sees a mink is still there..

FLAN

How can I look? I'm shaking.

OUIA

My god! The Kandinsky!
OUIA runs into the living room. SHE can see by the discoloration on that wall that a painting is missing.

OUIA Y

It's gone! Call the police!

FLAN

There it is!
An early abstract painting by Kandinsky leans against a

Philadelphia Chippendale chair: the painting is wild and brilliantly colored.

OUISA

Thank god!

SHE picks the painting up and flips it around. It's a double sided painting. The artist, Kandinsky, had painted in different styles on either side of the canvas.

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One side of the painting is geometric and somber; the other side is all chaos and brilliant colors.

OUISA replaces the framed canvas on the wall where it belongs, but the side she chooses to display is the geometric side. SHE admires it.

FLAN opens the door from the hall into

THE OFFICE.

A computer. Calendars. File cabinets. Bulletin boards with prints of paintings tacked on. FLAN checks - the slide projector is there. FLAN opens and closes cabinet drawers. OUISA appears in the doorway of the office.

OUISA

We could've been killed.

FLAN

Don't say that. The silver Victorian inkwell!

FLAN runs past OUISA down the hall back to the living room. OUISA follows HIM back into

THE LIVING ROOM.

FLAN looks on an antique table crowded with framed family photographs going way back in time and all kinds of mementoes.

OUISA

How can you think of things? We could have been murdered.

FLAN

I want to know if anything's gone?

HE picks up an ornate Victorian inkwell capped by a silver beaver and looks at it with great objectivity..

FLAN

There's the inkwell. Silver beaver. Why?
OUIA, drained, looks out the window down onto Central Park.

OUIA

Slashed ---our throats slashed.
Go to bed at night happy and then murdered.
Would we have-awoken up?
OUIA screams.

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But it's their pug dog licking her leg.
OUIA picks up the dog and pets it.
FLAN remembers something and buries his face in his hands.

FLAN

We have to go to the wedding.

OUIA

I am in no mood to go to any wedding.

FLAN

We have to

OUIA

They're your friends

FLAN

I beg to differ. They're Your fr -
FLAN stops, frightened suddenly, listening.

FLAN

Hello?
OUIA runs to HIM, terrified. HE holds HER.

OUIA (WHISPERS)

You don't call out Hello unless--
THEY walk softly to the dark hall.

FLAN

I think we could tell if someone else was here.

OUIA

We didn't all night.
THEY look down the silent dark hall.

INT THE WHITE WALL SOMEWHERE ELSE

We don't know where we are yet but it's certainly not the KITTREDGE'S. The rain drumming outside and the distant thunder and the soft cool jazz playing makes the air of this room with the white wall, wherever it is, claustrophobic, even erotic.

A YOUNG BLACK MAN whose name is PAUL comes into frame and leans against this white wall. Right off, you say this YOUNG MAN is a winner.

PAUL frowns, then smiles. Right into the camera.

PAUL

(SERIOUS)

Hello.

(FLIRTATIOUS)

Hello.

(QUESTIONING)

Hello?

(SUSPICIOUS)

Hello...

(ELATED)

Hello!

Yes.

Hello.

SOMEONE OFF SCREEN claps.

PAUL bows to the OFF SCREEN PRESENCE.

EXT KITTREDGE'S APARTMENT BUILDING 910 FIFTH AVENUE DAY

OUIA and FLAN run out of their apartment building, their clothes hastily pulled on, their faces swollen with shock. THEY run down the side street into

THE GARAGE.

Their car is waiting - a Mercedes - FLAN slips the attendant a bill. FLAN gets in the driver's seat.

OUIZA gets in the passenger seat.
FLAN (a statement of fact)
I'm shaking.

OUIZA

Then I'll drive.

FLAN

I have to hang on.

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OUIZA

Let's just get there

INT THE WHITE WALL

The Sound of the rain, the jazz, the thunder.

PAUL

Bottle of beer.

Bottle of beer.

Bottle of beer.

AN UNSEEN YOUNG MAN OFF CAMERA speaks - elegant phrasing.

VOICE

Bottle of beer.

PAUL

Bottle- of beer.

VOICE

Very good. You owe me.

PAUL takes off his shirt. HE's strongly built. HE throws

the shirt directly into the camera.

EXT HENRY HUDSON PARKWAY DAY

FLAN is driving terrifically fast. OUIZA puts on a tape.
MARIA CALLAS sings the death scene from La Traviata.

OUIZA

Be care - !
A CAR veers by. FLAN swerves his car.

OUIA

Let me drive!

FLAN (FURIOUS)

Driving calms me!

OUIA

When you're in one of these moods you do not
drive well and I do not want to be killed today.

FLAN

We could have been killed last night.

OUIA

Stop saying that!

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!

FLAN pulls himself together. HE moves over to the Slow lane.

FLAN

I'm driving slowly. See. Slowly.

OUIA

I went in the room first.
FLAN looks for signs.

FLAN

Where's the goddam turnoff onto the Taconic?
A truck veers and almost hits them.

OUIA

You didn't see what I saw!
FLAN puts on brakes.

FLAN

It's that fucking Maria Callas!
Turn that damn thing off!

FLAN snaps off the tape deck.
THEY resume driving.

OUIA

It's not Maria Callas. It's that truck and you.

FLAN

And last night.

THE COUNTRYSIDE speeds by.

EXT ST PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH LITHGOW, NEW YORK DAY

LOTS OF CARS parked in front of this sweet rural wooden chapel near Millbrook, New York.

THE BRIDE, 20s, gets out of a limo escorted by her FATHER. OUISA and FLAN run up to the BRIDE and kiss her.

OUISA

Happy is the bride the sun shines on

BRIDE (ALARMED)

You look horrible!

OUISA (BRIGHT)

No no! Could've been killed. All fine!

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FATHER

What?

FLAN

Wonderful wedding. Wonderful day.

THEY run into

THE CHAPEL.

This perfect country chapel with a dozen or so rows of pews is bedecked with flowers and lit by candles.

A STRING QUARTET at the side of the little altar plays Dvorak's American Quartet.

THE USHER in morning clothes, greets FLAN and OUISA and shows them to their pew.

USHER

Bride's side? Groom's side.

FLAN

Either side. I can't even remember how we met them. Why are we here?

THEY walk down the aisle, heads down.

OUIZA

Do not make a scene.
THEY kneel.

FLAN (WHISPER)

Now I lay me down to sleep - the most
terrifying words just think of it -

OUIZA (WHISPER)

I pray the Lord my soul to keep-

FLAN (WHISPER)

The nightmare part - If I should
die before I wake -

OUIZA (WHISPER)

If I should die - I pray the Lord
my soul to take -
COUPLE IN THE PEW IN FRONT turn. A
MAN, A WOMAN, strangely not unlike FLAN and OUIZA, perhaps A
few years older, perhaps more nautical as if they'd flown a
in from Nantucket, are named SANDY and CONNIE.

SANDY

Is anything wrong?

OUIZA

We were almost murdered

FLAN

THROATS SLASHED

THE PEOPLE in the pew in front gasp.
FLAN and OUIZA are serious.
THE QUARTET plays The Wedding March.
EVERYONE stands.
THE BRIDE and her FATHER walk down the aisle.
CU OUIZA'S FACE lost in thought.
Bright vivid colors fill the screen. Later we will learn
they are from a double-sided painting by Kandinsky, which

HANGS IN

THE KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM.

OUIA (VO)

Chaos.

OUIA'S face appears briefly, smiling, then is replaced by dark, geometric patterns. The other side of the painting. It is lowered to reveal OUIA very serious.

OUIA (VO)

Control.

(The painting is flipped.)

Chaos.

(OUIA smiles. Flips it again. Frowns.)

Control.

BACK IN THE CHAPEL

OUIA, still frowning at her memory, realizes the wedding ceremony is over.

THE BRIDE and the GROOM run up the aisle beaming at EVERYONE to the strains of Lohengrin.

But even THEY slow down when THEY see the state FLAN and OUIA are in.

GROOM

Is everything all

FLAN snaps out of it, putting on his party smile.

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FLAN

We always get this way at weddings.

THE BRIDE and GROOM resume their run up the aisle.

It's FLAN and OUIA's turn to leave the pew and go up the aisle. SHE is stricken.

OUIA

I do not always get this way at weddings.

FLAN

We're alive.

THEY walk up the aisle into the foyer of the chapel.

SHE puts her head into his shoulder.

OUIA

Oh, it was awful awful awful awful.
Then OUIA and FLAN put on their best smiles as THEY pass
through a receiving line, finally shaking hands with the

WEDDING COUPLE.

BRIDE

Did you say you could have been killed?

OUIA (MERRY)

Yes! Only hours ago!

FLAN (MERRY)

But we're here!

OUIA

Wouldn't miss it!
THE BRIDE and GROOM look after THEM.

EXT THE MILLBROOK GOLF AND TENNIS CLUB DAY

A spankingly bright and solid country club in Millbrook New
York situated on the golf course grounds surrounded by lots
of tennis courts.

INT MILLBROOK CLUB DAY

THE WEDDING GUESTS file into the cheery club, all bright
white and a shade of cheery green that only country clubs
seem to find.
MORE GUESTS than could f it into the CHAPEL are here in the
club waiting for the Bride and Groom.
FLAN and OUIA hesitate before going into the ballroom.

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THEY stop in the small quiet dark clubby BAR.
THEY sit at a small table, pulling themselves together.
SANDY and CONNIE (the people from the pew in front of them)
come up to THEM. A WOMAN who looks like a dormouse is with
them. SHE is named JULIA.

SANDY

We hate to pry -

FLAN

No no. You're not prying

CONNIE

But what happened -

SANDY

This is our friend Julia

FLAN

Do we know each other?

JULIA

Oh yes through...

9 FLAN

Of course. Haven't seen them in years
FLAN shakes hands with the new acquaintance.

CONNIE

We're worried for you
FLAN and OUISA look at each other.

OUISA

Tell them!
SANDY and CONNIE and JULIA sit down at the small table.

FLAN

We were having a wonderful evening last night.

OUISA

A friend we hadn't seen for many years came by
for dinner. I don't think you know him -

FLAN (PORTENTOUSLY)

Geoffrey Miller. From South Africa--

OUISA

Don't say it so portentously.

FLAN (BRIGHT)

Geoffrey from South Africa.

OUIA

Don't be ga-ga.
(THEY give their orders to THE BARTENDER.)
Something large.

SANDY

I didn't know Geoffrey was in town.

JULIA

I saw him at Susie Baxter's

SANDY

I wasn't at Susie Baxter's

CONNIE

Sandy forgets he was married to Susie Baxter.
THE WAITER goes.

SAVOY

That's no reason why she can't
invite me to a party.
CONNIE whispers to JULIA, her eyes on FLAN.

CONNIE

He's an art dealer.
JULIA nods now that's she's remembered.
FLAN (hears it)
Private sales. Purchases.
OUIA leans forward. Somehow the telling calms HER.
THE CHUMS lean forward.

OUIA

We knew Geoffrey

FLAN

through our children when Geoffrey and his
family all lived in New York.

OUIA

They've moved back to South Africa.

FLAN

He was here in New York briefly on business
and asked us to ask him for dinner.

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OUIA

He's King Midas rich. Literally. Gold mines.
THE WAITER puts down the tray of drinks.

FLAN

Seventy thousand workers in just one gold mine.

OUIA

But he is always short of cash because his
government won't let its people --

FLAN

Its white people --

OUIA

-- its white people take out any money. So it's
like taking in a War Baby.

(TO WAITER)

Thank you. That one's mine -
THEY switch drinks.

FLAN

When he called it was like a bolt from the blue
as I had a deal coming up and was short by

OUIA

TWO MILLION

FLAN puts down his drink.

FLAN

The figure is superfluous
OUIA turns to CONNIE.

OUIA

I hate when he uses the word "superfluous". I
mean, we needed two million and we hadn't seen
Geoffrey in a long time and while Geoffrey might
not have the price of a dinner he easily might
have two million dollars.

FLAN

The currents last night were very churny.

CUISA

we weren't sucking up. We like Geoffrey.

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FLAN

It's that awful thing of having truly rich folk for friends.

OUISA

Face it. The money does get in the -

FLAN

Only if you let it. The fact of the money shouldn't get in-

OUISA

Having a rich friend is like drowning and your friend makes life boats. But the friend gets very touchy if you say one word: life boat. (THE CHUMS laugh.)

Well, that's two words. We were afraid our South African friend might say "You only love me for my. life boats?" But we like Geoffrey.

CONNIE

I know who he is now.

JULIA

Lovely man.

X

SANDY

Didn't he invite us to visit him?

FLAN

It wasn't a life-threatening evening.

OUISA -

Rich people can do something for you even if you're not sure what it is`you want them to do. THEY turn at the sound of applause.

THE BRIDE and GROOM have entered the Country Club and our

table in the bar looks up as THE WEDDING PARTY passes by for a moment rushing past the Bar into the ballroom. Off in the ballroom THE SMALL ORCHESTRA strikes up "Just One Of Those Things" for the ten thousandth time. EVERYONE in the club is applauding and OUR TABLE applauds too. OUISA starts to rise.

OUISA

Should we?

CONNIE

Not on your life.

CONNIE pulls OUISA back down to the table.

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FLAN signals another round.

FLAN

Hardly a Life Boat evening -
OUISA sits, enjoying this.

OUISA (SING-SONG)

Portentous.

FLAN

But when Geoffrey called and asked us to take him for dinner, he made a sudden pattern in life's little tea leaves because who wants to go to banks?

FLAN'S VOICE takes us back to last night

INT THE KITTREDGE.'S LIVING ROOM NIGHT

FLAN (VO)

Geoffrey called and our tempests settled into showers and life was manageable. What more can you want?

GEOFFREY stands up into the frame, an elegant, impeccably British South African, more English than the English, ten years older than Ouisa and Flan.

FLAN and OUISA are both dressed very stylishly and nattily tonight. But not trendy, not so it shows.
FLAN was definitely an athlete and he still keeps himself in trim. If HE's in the art world, there's nothing arty about him.

GEOFFREY

Listen.
OUISA stops doing what she's doing which is rolling out a drink trolley with little hors d'oeuvres on plates.
FLAN stops doing what he's doing which is checking that a slide projector is in place on the desk along side the silver beaver inkwell.
FLAN and OUISA both tense.

FLAN

What's wrong?

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GEOFFREY

It always amazes me when New York is so quiet.
OUISA and FLAN relax and laugh.

OUISA

With the kids away, we get used to a lower noise quotient.
FLAN pours a drink for GEOFFREY.

FLAN

Geoffrey, you have to move out of South Africa. You'll be killed.
Why do you stay in South Africa?

GEOFFREY

One has to stay there to educate the black workers and we'll know we've been successful when they kill us.

FLAN

Planning the revolution that will destroy you.

OUISA sits back on the comfy sofa amazed at the thought.

OUIZA

Putting your life on the line.

GEOFFREY

You don't think of it like that.

I wish you'd come visit.

OUIZA takes her drink and strokes the ears of her dog.

OUIZA

But we'd visit you and sit in your gorgeous house planning trips into the townships demanding to see the poorest of the poor. "Are you sure they're the worst off? I mean, we've come all this way. We don't want to see people just mildly victimized by apartheid. We demand shock." It doesn't seem right sitting on the East Side talking about revolution.

FLAN

Only small murky cafes for Pepe le Noko here.

OUIZA

No. La Passionaria. I will come to South Africa and build barricades and lean against them, singing.

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FLAN

And the people would follow.

OUIZA

"Follow Follow Follow". What's that song?

FLAN

The way Gorbachev cheered on the striking coal miners in the Ukraine - yes, you must strike - it is your role in history to dismantle this system. Russia and Poland - you can't believe the developments in the world -

(HE remembers:) "The Fantasticks" (SINGS:) "Follow Follow Follow".

OUISA

China.
FLAN and OUISA (despair)
Oh.

GEOFFREY

Oy vay China. As my grandmother would say.
Our role in history. And we offer ourselves up

to it.

FLAN

That is your role in history. Not our role.
OUISA ponders this thought.

OUISA

A role in history. To say that so easily.
GEOFFREY suddenly gets up and looks through the telescope by
the window.

GEOFFREY'S POV

GEOFFREY flashes down nine floors into Central Park. HE
frowns in puzzlement when HE sees

A STATUE OF AN ALASKAN HUSKY

baying up into the sky.
FLAN and OUISA look at GEOFFREY's back and then at each
other. How to keep the ball rolling?
FLAN (to Geoffrey)
Do you want another drink before we--

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GEOFFREY turns into the room.

GEOFFREY

Wonderful view.

OUISA

The phrase - striking coal miners - I see all
these very striking coal miners modelling the
fall fashions.

GEOFFREY

Where should we?

FLAN

There's good Szechuan. And Hunan.

OUIA

The sign painter screwed up the sign. Instead of The Hunan Wok, he painted The Human Wok.

GEOFFREY

God! The restaurants! New York has become the Florence of the Sixteenth Century. Genius on every corner.

OUIA

I don't think genius has kissed the Human Wok. THEY finish off their drinks.

GEOFFREY

The new Italian looked cheery.
FLAN and OUIA
Good.

FLAN

We made reservations.
FLAN looks at the slide projector.

FLAN

Geoffrey, I'd like to show -
FLAN'S sentence hangs in mid-air as GEOFFREY follows OUIA

INTO

THE HALL.

OUIA burrows in the closet getting her coat and GEOFFREY's coat out of the hall closet stuffed with tennis rackets and skis and boots.

OUIA

This restaurant - they wrap ravioli up like salt water taffy.
FLAN appears behind HER to help HER.
THEY both wrestle the coats out of the closet.

FLAN

Six on a plate for a few hundred dollars.
And FLAN gets the coats. A clatter of tennis rackets falling. GEOFFREY takes his topcoat.

GEOFFREY

You have to come to South Africa so I can pay you back. I'll take you on my plane into the Okavango Swamps -

OUIA

Did you hear - to take back to Johannesburg. out in Eastharpton

FLAN

LAST WEEKEND

OUIA

a guy goes into one of the better food stores -

FLAN

Dean and DeLuca -
FLAN helps OUIA on with her coat.

OUIA

one of the Dean and DeLuca look alike. Gets a pack of cigarettes and an ice cream bar. Goes up front. Sees there's a line at the register. Slaps down two twenty dollar bills and goes out. GEOFFREY doesn't get the anecdote.

FLAN

We sent it to the Times.
GEOFFREY smiles politely.
FLAN and OUIA press a little bit too hard.

OUIA

They have the joke page of things around New York.

IV

FLAN

They send you a bottle of champagne.
THEY all laugh brightly.

INT MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

THE CHUMS listen enrapt. OUISA is serious.

OUISA

We weren't auditioning but I kept thinking Two
Million dollars Two Million dollars.

FLAN

It's like when people say -Don't think about
elephants' and all you can think about is
elephants elephants elephants.

OUISA

Two million dollars Two million dollars.

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

OUISA and FLAN laugh brightly. THE FRONT DOORBELL rings.
OUISA and FLAN look at each other. Who is that?
OUISA goes into the hall.

OUISA

What ever you do, don't think about elephants.

GEOFFREY

Elephants?
FLAN rapidly steers GEOFFREY to a chair, closes the living
room door, then wheels a projector with a carousel tray into
place.

FLAN

Louisa is a dada manifesto. About the Cezanne -
unless we're careful, it'll be sold and never
seen again -
FLAN switches off the room's lights and clicks on the
projector. The slide projection of a beautiful green
landscape by Cezanne fills the wall by the door.

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FLAN

Mid-period. Landscape of a dark green forest. In the far distance you see the sunlight. One of his first uses of a pale color being forced to carry the weight of the picture. The experiment that would pay off in the apples. A burst of color asked to carry so much-- The Japanese don't like anything about it except it's a Cezanne--

And suddenly the door in the wall opens up. A YOUNG BLACK MAN supported by the ELEVATOR MAN, (EDDIE) appears in the Cezanne forest holding his eyes against the projector's light. And OUISA behind HIM.

FLAN clicks off the projector.

OUISA switches on the living room lights.

THE YOUNG BLACK MAN - PAUL - is in his early twenties, very handsome, very preppy. His shirt front is ripped and bloodied. Fresh blood. EDDIE helps PAUL to the sofa, OUISA following at a loss.

PAUL

I'm so sorry to bother you, but I've been hurt- and I've lost everything and I didn't know where to go. Your children-- I'm a friend of --

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

THE CHUMS are transfixed.

OUISA

And he mentioned our childrens' names.

FLAN

And the school where they went.

OUISA

Harvard. You can say Harvard.

FLAN

We don't want to get into libel.

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

PAUL (exhausted and scared)

I was mugged. Out there. In Central Park. By the statue of that Alaskan husky. I was standing there trying to figure out why there is a statue of a dog who saved lives in the Yukon in Central 'Park and I was standing there trying to puzzle it out when -

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OUISA

Are you okay?

PAUL

They took my money and my brief case. I said my thesis is in there -
PAUL looks down. HE sees the blood seeping through his shirt.

FLAN

His shirt's bleeding.

OUISA

His shirt is not bleeding. He's bleeding.
PAUL holds his mouth, nauseous.

PAUL

I get this way around blood.
FLAN (leading PAUL out of the room)
Not on the rug. Eddie, get the doctor--
EDDIE turns to leave.

PAUL

No! I'll survive. Please. No doctors -
PAUL, frightened, looks at FLAN.
FLAN (To EDDIE)
We'll call if we need any -
FLAN helps PAUL out of the room down the hall.

OUISA

Thank you, Eddie -
EDDIE goes.
FLAN, followed by OUISA, supports PAUL into

THE WHITE TILED BATHROOM.

PAUL sits on the side of the tub.
PAUL takes off his blazer and pulls off his ripped shirt.
His tie is still around his neck. There is a good sized
knife slash in his side by his rib cage. OUISA and FLAN
cringe. FLAN opens the medicine cabinet.

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PAUL

I don't mind the money. But in this age of
mechanical reproduction they managed to get the
only copy of my thesis.

FLAN

Where's the first aid book!
OUISA runs into their bedroom.
PAUL looks out the bathroom door into FLAN and OUISA'S
bedroom. PAUL watches OUISA as she goes into

THE MASTER BEDROOM.

OUISA rummages through her book case and finds her Red
Cross manual. OUISA turns and sees PAUL sitting on the edge
of the tub staring at HER.
FLAN is crouched down, bathing PAUL'S slash.

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

OUISA is moved by these events.

OUISA

We bathed him. We did First Aid.

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S BATHROOM

OUISA reads from the manual.

OUISA

The Red Cross advises: Press edges of the wound
firmly together, wash area with water-

FLAN

Yes! I'm doing that - Hold on
FLAN daubs on mercurochrome.

PAUL

Owww!

FLAN

Hold still! Ouisa! I need gauze!
GEOFFREY pokes his head in the bathroom.

GEOFFREY (LEAVING)

It's been wonderful seeing you--

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OUISA (firm but cheery)
No no no! Stay!

GEOFFREY

My time is so short. Before I leave America, I
really should call -

OUISA

You darling old poop -

FLAN

Have you seen the new book on Cezanne?

GEOFFREY

NO

OUISA

An absolute revelation - this'll only take a mo-
OUISA rushes out of the bathroom after GEOFFREY.

FLAN

I need the gauze

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

OUISA

I ran down the hall to get the book on Cezanne,
got the gauze from my bathroom--

BACK AT THE KITTREDGE'S

We watch a flustered OUSIA dart about as she describes--

OUSIA (VO)

Gave the Cezanne to Flan who wanted the gauze,
gave the gauze to Geoffrey who wanted Cezanne.
OUSIA mutters under her breath as she dashes down

THE HALL.

OUSIA

two million dollars two million dollars

AND INTO

THE LIVING ROOM

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GEOFFREY stares at the gauze he's just been handed.

FLAK'S VOICE

ouisa?

OUSIA grabs the gauze out of GEOFFREY's hand.
SHE runs back down the HALL.

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

OUSIA

Two million dollars two million dollars--

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S BATHROOM

FLAN finishes bandaging PAUL's wound.
OUSIA goes into

HER SON'S BEDROOM. ,

SHE takes a pink shirt from the bureau.

THE MASTER BEDROOM

PAUL puts on the pink shirt and looks at HIMSELF in the
mirror.

FLAN

He's going to be fine.

GEOFFREY appears in the door with the book on Cezanne.

GEOFFREY

Lovely book.
FLAN looks stricken.

OUISA

Please? Stay?
GEOFFREY pauses.

GEOFFREY

Agreed.
FLAN beams.

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

OUISA

And peace was restored.

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BACK IN THE MASTER BEDROOM

FLAN holds out PAUL's blazer. PAUL winces as HE lifts his arms to put it on.

PAUL

Your children said you were kind. All the kids were sitting around the dorm one night dishing the- shit out of their parents. But your kids were silent and said No, not our parents. Not Flan and Ouisa. Not the Kittredges. The Kittredges are kind. So after the muggers left, I looked up and saw these Fifth Avenue apartments. Mrs. Onassis lives there. I know the Babcocks live over there. The Auchinclosses live there. But you lived here. I came here. OUISA, so touched, turns to FLAN and GEOFFREY.

OUISA

Can you believe what the kids said?
PAUL looks at the framed photos on wall of

0 THE HALL.

PAUL

But your kids - I love them. Talbot and Woody mean the world to me.

FLAN

He lets you call him Woody? Nobody's called him Woody in years.
THEY come into

THE LIVING ROOM.

PAUL looks around happily. HE goes to the wall by the mantlepice and looks at a dark abstract painting.

PAUL

They described this apartment in detail. This is a Kandinsky! - a double. One painted on either side. May I see - ?
OUIA lifts the painting off the wall and turns it around. Even GEOFFREY is taken by the painting.

0 26

FLAN

What makes it valuable is Kandinsky painted on either side of the canvas in two wildly different styles. One side is geometric and somr=r. The other side is wild and vivid.

GEOFFREY

My god!

FLAN

We flip it around for variety.
OUIA happily turns the painting back and forth to show off its two sides. The SCREEN is filled with the bright colors then the dark colors.

OUIA

You like? You like? Chaos? Control?
Chaos? Control?
SHE puts on a goofy happy face for the chaotic side and a dopey tragic face for the geometric. Yes. We've been here

before, through OUISA's memory, at the wedding.

PAUL

It's wonderful.

OUISA leans the painting against a chair, the chaotic side showing.

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

FLAN turns to JULIA.

FLAN

Wassily Kandinsky. Born 1866 Moscow. Blue Rider Exhibition 1914. He said "It is clear that the choice of object that is one of the elements in the harmony of form must be decided only by a corresponding vibration in the human soul". (very spiritual) Died 1944 France. JULIA nods. Ah yes.

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

PAUL looks around the apartment, so cozy, warm.

PAUL

It's the way they said it would be.

27

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

OUISA

Geoffrey had been silent up to now.

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

GEOFFREY

Did you bitch your parents?

PAUL

As a matter of fact. No. Your kids and I...we both liked our parents... loved our--Look, am I getting in the way? I burst in here, hysterical. Blood. I didn't mean to---

FLAN and OUISA
No!

OUISA

Tell us about our children.

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

FLAN (to JULIA)

Three. Two at Harvard. Another girl at Groton.

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

OUISA

How Harvard?

PAUL

Well, fine. It's just there. Everyone's in a constant state of luxurious despair and constant discovery and paralysis.

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

OUISA

We asked him where home was

FLAN

Out West, he said.

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

PAUL

Although I've lived all over. My folks are divorced. He's remarried. He's doing a movie.

28

OUISA

He's in the movies?

PAUL

He's directing this one but he does act.

FLAN

What's he directing?

PAUL

Cats.

OUIA

Someone is directing a film of Cats?

FLAN

Don't be snooty.

PAUL

You've seen it? T.S. Eliot--

FLAN

Well, yes. Years ago.

OUIA

A benefit for some disease or school---

FLAN

Surely they can't make the movie of Cats.

OUIA

Of course they can.

PAUL

They're going to try. My father'll be here

AUDITIONING-

OUIA

Cats?

PAUL

He's going to use people.

OUIA

What a courageous stand!

PAUL

They thought of lots of ways to go. Animation.

FLAN

Animation would be nice.

PAUL

But he found a better way. As a matter of fact, he turned it down at first. He went to tell the producers - as a courtesy - all the reasons why you couldn't make a movie of Cats and in going through all the reasons why you couldn't make a movie of Cats, he suddenly saw how you could make a movie of Cats --

OUIA

Eureka in the bathtub. How wonderful.

FLAN

May we ask who --

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

Can it be possible? A FEW MORE GUESTS have joined the table.

OUIA

And it was here we pulled up - ever so slightly - pulled up closer--

FLAN

And he told us.

OUIA

He named the greatest black star in movies.

SIDNEY -

FLAN

Don't say it. We're trying to keep this abstract. Plus libel laws.

OUIA

Sidney Poitiers There. I don't care. We have to have truth. He started out as a lawyer and is terrified of libel. I'm not.

INT THE WHITE WALL

PAUL, leaning against the wall, talks with great vivacity to that OFF SCREEN PRESENCE who is the POV of the camera.

PAUL

Sidney Poitier, the future Jackie Robinson of films, was born the twenty fourth of February 1927 in Miami during a visit his parents made to Florida - legally? -to sell tomatoes they had grown on their farm in the Bahamas. He grew up on Cat Island, "so poor they didn't even own dirt" he has said. Neglected by his family, my father would sit on the shore, and, as he told me many times, "conjure up the kind of worlds that were on the other side and what I'd do in them." He arrived in New York City from the Bahamas in the winter of 1943 at age fifteen and a half and lived in the pay toilet of the bus station across from the old Madison Square Garden at Fiftieth and Eighth Avenue. He moved to the roof of the Brill building, commonly known as Tin Pan Alley. Washed dishes at the Turf restaurant for \$4.11 a night. He taught himself to read by reading the newspaper. In the Black newspaper, the theater page was opposite the Want Ad page. Among his 42 films are No Way Out 1950/ Cry the Beloved Country 1952/ Blackboard Jungle 1955/ The Defiant Ones 1958/ Raisin in the Sun 1961/ Lilies of the Field 1963/ In the Heat of the Night 1967/ To Sir With Love 1967/ Shoot to Kill 1988 and, of course,

PAUSE. (THE OFF SCREEN VOICE JOINS HIM)

Guess Who's Coming To Dinner.

PAUL (LAUGHS)

He won the Oscar for Lilies of the Field and was twice named top male box-office star in the country. My father made no films from 1977 to 1987 but worked as director and author. Dad said to me once "I still don't fully understand how all that came about in the sequence it came about".

And we hear the OFF SCREEN PRESENCE applauding.

PAUL bows, happily.

HE kicks his shoe off into the camera.

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

PAUL

Dad's not in till tomorrow at the Sherry. I came down from Cambridge. Thought I'd stay at some fleabag for adventure. Orwell. Down and Out. I really don't know New York. I know Rome and Paris and Los Angeles a lot better.

OUISA

We're-going out to dinner. You'll come.

PAUL

Out to dinner?

FLAN

Out to dinner.

PAUL

But why go out to dinner?

OUISA

Because we have reservations and oh my god'what time is it? Have we lost the reservations and we don't have a damn thing in the house and it's Sixteenth century Florence and there's genius on every block.

GEOFFREY

Don't mock.
SHE kisses GEOFFREY.

PAUL

You must have something in the fridge.

FLAN

A frozen steak from the Ice Age.

PAUL

Why spend a hundred dollars on a bowl of rice?
Let me into the kitchen. Cooking calms me. What

I'd like to do is calm down, pay back your kids-

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

OUISA

He mentioned our kids names--

32

FLAN turns to a NEWCOMER.

FLAN

Two. Two at Harvard. A daughter at Groton.

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

PAUL

- who've been wonderful to me.

OUISA

They've never mentioned you.

FLAN

What are they supposed to say? We've become friends with the son of Sidney Poitier, barrier breaker of the fifties and sixties?

GEOFFREY

Your father means a great deal in South Africa.

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

OUISA

Even Geoffrey was touched.

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

PAUL

I'm glad of that. Dad and I went to Russia once to a film festival and he was truly amazed how much his presence meant -

OUISA

Oh no! Tell us stories of movie stars tying up their children and being cruel.

PAUL

I wish.

GEOFFREY

You wish?

PAUL

If I wanted to write a book about him. I really can't. No one would want to read it. He's decent. I admire him.

OUISA

He's married to an actress who was in one of-- she's white? Am I right?

33

PAUL (painful territory)
That is not my mother. That is his second wife. He met Joanna making "The Lost Man". He left my mother who had stuck by him in the lean years. X had just been born. "The Lost Man" is the only film of my father's I can't bring myself to see.

OUISA

Oh, I'm sorry. We didn't mean to -

PAUL (BRIGHT)

No! We're all good friends now. . His kids from that marriage. Us - the old kids. I'd love to get in that kitchen.

FLAN (to Ouisa)

What should we do?

OUISA

It's Geoffrey's only night in New York.

GEOFFREY

I vote - stay in.
OUIA, FLAN and PAUL
Good!

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

OUIA

We moved into the kitchen.

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S KITCHEN

THE KITCHEN is large, was built in the 205 when people had big dinners at home.

PAUL opens the refrigerators and freezers.

PAUL'S actions are synchronous with the words.

FLAN (VO)

We watched him cook.

OUIA (VO)

We watched him cook and chop.

FLAN (VO)

He sort of did wizardry

OUIA (VO)

An old jar of sun dried tomatoes--

34

FLAN (VO)

Left avers - tuna fish - olives - onions -
It's all dazzling and rapid. FLAN opens the wine. OUIA takes dishes and silver out and hands them to GEOFFREY. EVERYONE is in a picnic spirit. PAUL fills a large pot with water from the tap.
PAUL (to Geoffrey)

YOU'RE FROM

GEOFFREY

Johannesburg.

PAUSE. PAUL Studies GEOFFREY. OUIA and FLAN freeze.

Is it a tense moment?

PAUL takes a breath. PAUL puts the water on the fire, eyes

never off GEOFFREY. Then PAUL resumes chopping onions briskly and dropping them into the frying pan.

PAUL

My dad took me to a movie shot in South Africa. The camera moved from this vile rioting in the

streets to a villa where people picked at lunch on a terrace, the only riot the flowers and the birds-- gorgeous plumage and petals. And I didn't understand. And Dad said to me "You meet these young blacks who are having a terrible time. They've had a totally inadequate education and yet in '76 - the year of the Soweto riots - they took on a tremendous political responsibility. It just makes you wonder at the maturity that is in them."

PAUL opens a cabinet and takes out a Haitian candelabra that obviously hasn't been used since it was brought home as a souvenir. PAUL dusts it off.

PAUL

it makes you realize that the 'crummy childhood' theory, that everything can be blamed in a Freudian fashion on the fact that you've had a bad upbringing, just doesn't hold water. May I?

FLAN

Oh, please.

PAUL pours a brandy.

35

GEOFFREY

What about being black in America?

PAUL scoops a melange of vegetables into a glass dish and puts it in the microwave.

PAUL

My problem is I've never felt American.

I grew up in Switzerland. Boarding school.

Villa Rosey.

OUI SA

There is a boarding school in Switzerland that takes you at age eighteen months.

PAUL

That's not me. I've never felt people liked me for my connections. Movie star kid problems. None of those.

THE WATER boils. HE dumps in pasta.

The microwave timer goes off. PAUL removes the glass dish.

PAUL

But I never knew I was black in that racist way O till I was sixteen and came back here. Very protected. White servants. After the divorce we moved to Switzerland. My mother, brother and Z. I don't feel American. I don't even feel black. I suppose that's very lucky for me even though Freud says there's no such thing as luck. Just what you make.

PAUL takes the pasta off the boil and drains it, plopping the pasta into a brightly colored bowl.

OUI SA, FLAN and GEOFFREY sit at the counter, transfixed.

OUI SA

Does Freud say that?

PAUL holds out three dishes heaped with food.

PAUL

Here's dinner. All ready.

OUI SA

Shall we move into the dining room?

OUI SA opens double doors leading into

THE DINING ROOM.

36

This room has not been in use for a while. The overhead chandelier is very bright and harsh. A sewing machine is in the corner there. Bookkeeping items at one end of the long table.

Nineteenth century Victorian mythological paintings hang on the walls. FLAN adjusts the rheostat to dim the lights in the chandelier.

OUISA

Don't look at the sewing machine.
FLAN sweeps the bill things off the table onto a chair.
OUISA opens the sideboard and takes out four linen place mats and silverware and quickly sets the table.
PAUL takes out matches and lights the Haitian card"e'Yabra.
FLAN runs into the living room and returns with a vase of flowers.
THEY smile at the appearance of the sudden party in this wonderful room.
THEY sit down. THEY eat. Surprise. It's delicious.

PAUL

Is everything okay?
FLAN, OUISA and GEOFFREY
Mmrmmm .. yes.

GEOFFREY

This is the best pasta I've ever -

OUISA

The best!

PAUL

My father insisted we learn to cook.

FLAN

Isn't he from Jamaica? There's a taste of--

GEOFFREY

The islands.

PAUL

Yes. Before he made it, he ran four restaurants in Harlem. You have good buds!

GEOFFREY

See? Good buds. I've never been complimented on my buds-

R

FLAN

I am astonished!

37

PAUL leans back and watches them happily.

OUIZA

Where's yours?

PAUL

The cook never eats.

FLAN

The more for us!

THEY all laugh.

PAUL leaves the room abruptly.

FLAN, OUIZA and GEOFFREY look at each other.

FLAN stands.

FLAN

Hello?

PAUL returns with the rest of the real in brightly painted bowls.

PAUL

Seconds?

THEY laugh and are served.

OUIZA

Have you declared your major yet?

PAUL

You're like all parents. What's your major?

FLAN

Geoffrey, Harvard has all those great titles the students give courses.

OUIZA

The Holocaust and Ethics?

FLAN

Krauts and Doubts.

OUIZA

I think we're lucky having this dinner. Isn't

this the finest time? A toast to you.

GEOFFREY

To Cats!

FLAN

Blunt question. What's he like?

38

OUISA reaches for the bottle of wine.

OUISA

Let's not be star fuckers.

FLAN

I'm not a star fucker.

PAUL

My father, being an actor, has no real identity. You say to him, Pop, what's new? And he says, 'I got an interesting script today. I was asked to play a lumberjack up in the Yukon. Now, I've been trained as a Preacher, but my church fell apart. My wife says we have to get money to get through this winter. And I sign up as part of this team where all my beliefs are challenged. But I hold firm. In spite of prejudice because I want to get back to my wife. Out of this forest, back to the church... .' And my father is in tears and I say Pop, this is: not a real event, this is some script that was sent to you. And my father says ' I' m trying it out to see how it fits on me.' But he has no life--he has no memory--only the scripts producers send him in the mail through his agents. That's his past.

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

Can it be? The CROWD listening to FLAN and OUISA is even larger.

OUISA

I just loved the kid so much. I wanted to reach out to him.

FLAN

And then we asked him what his thesis was on.

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S DINING ROOM

GEOFFREY

The one that was stolen. Please?

39

PAUL

Well...

(HE takes a deep breath and leans back in

HIS CHAIR)

A substitute teacher out on Long Island was dropped from his job for fighting with a student. A few weeks later, the teacher returned to the classroom, shot the student unsuccessfully, held the class hostage and then shot himself. Successfully. This fact caught my eye: last sentence. Times. A neighbor described the teacher as a nice boy. Always reading Catcher In the Rye.

The nitwit - Chapman - who shot John Lennon said he did it because he wanted to draw the attention of the world to Catcher In the Rye and the reading of that book would be his defense. And young Hinckley, the whiz kid who shot Reagan and his press secretary said if you want my defense all you have to do is read catcher in the Rye. It seemed to be time to read it again.

FLAN

I haven't read it in years.

OUISA shushes FLAN.

PAUL

I borrowed a copy from a young friend of mine because I wanted to see what she had underlined and I read this book to find out why this touching, beautiful, sensitive story published in July 1951 had turned into this manifesto of

hate.

I started reading. : It's exactly as I remembered. Everybody's a phoney. Page two: "My brother's in Hollywood being a prostitute." Page three: "what a phony slob his father was." Page nine: "People never notice anything." Then on page twenty two my hair stood up. Remember Holden Caulfield--the definitive sensitive youth--wearing his red hunter's cap. "A deer Hunter hat? Like hell it is. I sort of closed one eye like I was taking aim at it. This is a people shooting hat. I shoot people in this hat."

40

PAUL (CONTINUES)

Hmmm, I said. This book is preparing people for bigger moments in their lives than I ever dreamed of.

Then on p. 89 "I'd rather push a guy out the window or chop his head off with an ax than sock him in the jaw. I hate fist fights...what scares me most is the other guy's face..."

I finished the book. It's a touching story, comic because the boy wants to do so much and can't do anything. Hates all phoniness and only lies to others. Wants everyone to like him, is only hateful, and is completely self involved. In other words, a pretty accurate picture of a male adolescent.

FLAN, OUISA, .GEOFFREY are transfixed.

And what alarms me about that book--not the book so much as the aura about it--is this: the book is primarily about paralysis. The boy can't function. And at the end before he can run away and start a new life, it starts to rain and he folds. Now there's nothing wrong in writing about emotional and intellectual paralysis. It may indeed thanks to Chekhov and Samuel Beckett be the great modern theme.

The extraordinary last lines of Waiting For

Godot--"Let's go." "Yes, let's go." Stage directions: They do not move. But the aura around this book of Salinger's-- which perhaps should be read by everyone ut young men---is this: It mirrors like a fun house mirror and amplifies like a distorted speaker one of the great tragedies of our times--the death of the imagination. Because what else is paralysis? The CAMERA moves closer and closer in on PAUL.

42

PAUL (CONTINUES)

The imagination has been so debased that imagination--being imaginative-- rather than being the lynch pin of our existence now stands as a synonym for something outside ourselves like Science fiction or some new use for tangerine slices on raw pork chops---what an imaginative summer recipe--and Star wars! So imaginative and Star Trek--so imaginative! And Lord of the Rings--all those dwarves--so

IMAGINATIVE---

The imagination has moved out of the realm of being our link, our most personal link, with our inner lives and the world outside that world-- this world we share--what is schizophrenia but a horrifying state where what's in here doesn't match up with what's out there? Why has imagination become a synonym for style? I believe that the imagination is the passport we create to take us into the real world. I believe the imagination is another phrase for what is most uniquely Is.

Jung says the greatest sin is to be unconscious. Our boy Holden says "what scares me most is the other guy's face--it wouldn't be so bad if you could both be blindfolded"--most of the time the faces we face are not the other guys' but our own faces. And it's the worst kind of

yellowness to be so scared of yourself you put
blindfolds on rather than deal with yourself.
To face ourselves.
That's the hard thing.
The imagination.
That's God's gift to make the act of self-
examination bearable.

PAUSE.

FLAN, GEOFFREY, OUISA are very moved.

OUISA

Well, indeed.

FLAN

I hope your muggers read every word.

42

OUISA (chiding FLAN)

DARLING

GEOFFREY

I'm going to buy a copy of Catcher i. the Rye at
the airport and read it.

OUISA

Cover to cover

PAUL

I'll test you. I should be going.
PAUL starts to go. THEY follow.
THE DINING ROOM opens into

THE LIVING ROOM.

FLAN

Where will you stay?

OUISA

Not some flea bag.

PAUL

I get into the Sherry tomorrow morning. It's not

so far off. I can walk around. I don't think they'll mug me twice in one evening.
FLAN and OUISA take's PAUL's by the arm and leads him down the hall into

THEIR DAUGHTER'S BEDROOM.

OUISA

You'll stay here tonight.

PAUL

No! I have to be at the hotel at seven AM sharp!

OUISA

We'll get you up.

PAUL

or Dad will have a fit.

OUISA

Up at six fifteen which is any moment now and we have that wedding in Millbrook-
OUISA pulls back the covers on the bed and puts the dolls on the floor.

4 3

FLAN

There's an alarm by the bed

OUISA

Your feet might hang out over the end

PAUL

If it's any problem--

FLAN

It's only a problem if you leave.
PAUL takes the alarm and sets the time.

PAUL

Six fifteen? I'll tip toe out.

FLAN

And we want to be in Cats.

OUISA

FLAN:

PAUL

It's done.
THEY shake hands.

GEOFFREY

I'll fly back. With my wife.

OUISA

Pushy. Both of you.
PAUL sits on the bed, testing it.

PAUL

He's not. Dad said I could be in
charge of the extras. You'd just
be extras. That's all I can promise.

FLAK

In cat suits?

PAUL

No. You can be humans.

FLAN

That's very important. It has to be in our
contracts. We are humans.

44

THEY all return down

THE HALL.

GEOFFREY

We haven't got any business done tonight.

FLAN

Forget it. It was only an evening at home.

OUIA

Whatever you do, don't think about elephants.
GEOFFREY puts on his overcoat.

PAUL

Did I intrude?
FLAN and OUIA
No!

PAUL

I'm sorry - Oh Christ -
GEOFFREY (to Flan)

O

There's all ways of doing business. Flanders,
walk me to the elevator.

OUIA

Love to Diana.
OUIA kisses GEOFFREY on the cheek.

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

It seems the BRIDE and GROOM have joined the people
listening to FLAN and OUIA's tale.

OUIA

We embraced. And Flan and Geoffrey left -

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S HALL

FLAN walks GEOFFREY to the elevator, leaving OUIA and PAUL
alone. PAUL and OUIA look at each other. Then PAUL breaks
the moment and goes to

THE DINING ROOM.

PAUL

Let me clean up -

OUIA follows.

OUI SA

Hal Leave it for -
PAUL looks at the table filled with dishes and bowls and glasses and napkins.

PAUL

Nobody comes in on Sunday.
PAUL snuffs out the candles with his fingers.

OUI SA

Yvonne will be in on Tuesday.

PAUL

You'll have every bug in Christendom -
The room is dark, -lit only from the living room.
THEY both reach for the dishes.

OUI SA

Let me -

PAUL takes the dishes.

PAUL

No. You watch. It gives me a thrill to be
looked at.
PAUL looks at HER. OUI SA is momentarily at a loss.
PAUL goes into the kitchen.
The service door into the kitchen swings back and forth.

DINING ROOM/KITCHEN

OUI SA in the dining room looks at PAUL's back as HE washes
dishes at the sink.
Suddenly the dining room is flooded with light.
FLAN has flicked on the light.

FLAN

He's in.

OUI SA

He's in?
FLAN parades around the table.

FLAN

He's in for two million.

OUI SA

Two million!

FLAN

He says the Cezanne is a great investment. We should get it for six million and sell it to the Tokyo bunch for ten.

OUI SA

Happy days! Oh god!
PAUL comes into the dining room.

PAUL

Two million dollars?
FLAN runs into

THE LIVING ROOM.

FLAN picks up the slide carousel and kisses it.

FLAN

Figure it out. He doesn't have the price of -a dinner but he can cough up two million dollars and the Japs will go ten!
PAUL and OUI SA come into the living room.

PAUL

Go to ten? Ten million?

OUI SA

Break all those dishes! Two million! Go to ten!
And we put up nothing?

PAUL

Nothing?

FLAN

Geoffrey sold that Hockney print I know he bought for a hundred bucks fifteen years ago for thirty four thousand dollars. Sotheby took their cut, sure but still--Two million! Wildest dreams. Paul, I should give you a commission.

PAUL

Your kids said you were an art dealer. But you don't have a gallery. I don't understand -

47

FLAN

People want to sell privately.
Not go through a gallery.

OUIA - 1½

A divorce. Taxes. Publicity.
FLAN (holding up a slide)
People come to me looking for a
certain school of painting.

OUIA

A modern.. Impressionist. Renaissance.

FLAN

But don't want museums to know where it is.

OUIA

Japanese.
OUIA, FLAN and PAUL go down the hall to

FLAN'S OFFICE.

FLAN flicks on his computer.

FLAN

I've got Japanese looking for a Cezanne. I have
a syndicate that will buy the painting. There is
this great second level Cezanne coming up for
sale in a very messy divorce.
FLAN holds up the slide.

OUIA

Wife doesn't want hubby to know she owns a
Cezanne.
PAUL looks at the slide.

FLAN

I needed an extra two million. Geoffrey called.
Invited him here for dinner.

OUIA

Tonight was a very nervous very casual very big thing.

PAUL

I couldn't tell -

48

s PAUL gives the slide very carefully back to FLAN who files it.

OUIA

All the better. 0

FLAN opens a door in the OFFICE. THE OFFICE connects to

THE MASTER BEDROOM.

PAUL follows FLAN and OUIA into their bedroom.

PAUL

I'm glad I helped -

OUIA

You were wonderful!

PAUL

I'm so pleased I was wonderful.

All this and a pink shirt.

OUIA

Keep it. Look at the time.

PAUL

It's going to be time for me to get up.

FLAN

Then we'll say our good nights now.

PAUL

Oh Christ. Regretfully. I'll tip toe.

PAUL and OUIA follow FLAN into

THE HALL.

PAUL goes into their daughter's bedroom.

FLAN and OUIA hover in the hall.

FLAN takes out his wallet.

FLAN

Take fifty dollars.

OUIA

Give him fifty dollars.

PAUL

Don't need it.

49

OUIA

Suppose your father's plane is late?

FLAN

A strike. Air controllers.

OUIA

Walking around money. I wouldn't want my kids to be stuck in the street without a nickel. PAUL sits on the bed and takes off his shoes.

FLAN

And you saved us a fortune. Do you know what our bill would've been at that little Eye-tie store front?

OUIA

And we picked up two million dollars. One billionth of a percent commission is -

FLAN

Fifty dollars.
FLAN hands PAUL the money. PAUL hesitates, then takes it.

PAUL

But I'll get it back to you tomorrow. I want my father to meet you.

OUIA

We'd love to. Bring him up for dinner.

PAUL

Could I?

FLAN

You see how easy it is.

OUISA

Sure. If Paul does the cooking.

FLAN, OUISA and PAUL laugh.

OUISA goes into the bathroom and fills a glass with water and puts it on the night table.

OUISA

Goodnight.

PAUL smiles at them.

50

THE MASTER BEDROOM/BATHROOM

FLAN and OUISA get ready for bed, undressing, hanging jacket and trousers up neatly. OUISA undoes her dress. THEY are in and out of bathroom and bedroom, -brushing teeth.

FLAN

I want to get on my knees and thank god -money-

OUISA

Who said when artists dream they dream of money?

I must be such an artist. Bravo. Bravo.

FLAN putting on pajamas, OUISA her nightgown.

FLAN

I don't want to lose our life here. I don't want all the debt to pile up and crush us.

OUISA

It won't. We're safe.

OUISA in bed turns off the light.

FLAN looks out the window onto the park.

FLAN

For a while. We almost lost it. If I didn't get this money, . Ouis, I would've lost the Cezanne. It would've gone. I had nowhere to get it.

OUISA gets out of bed and comes to FLAN.

OUISA

Why don't you tell me how much these things mean? You wait till the last minute - OUISA and FLAN get into bed.

FLAN

I don't want to worry you.

OUISA

Not worry me? I'm your partner.

FLAN

There is a god.

OUISA

And his name- is --

A

51

FLAN

Geoffrey?

OUISA

Sidney.

THEY embrace. THE CAMERA comes in very close, circling FLAN and OUISA, their love, their safety. Then THE CAMERA drifts back and away from them, travelling out through the window, out of their cocoon to

EXT THE APARTMENT BUILDING/CENTRAL PARK NIGHT

down the face of the solid apartment building and drifts away through the night down into Central Park and stops at the statue of the husky barking at the moon.

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

OUISA

I dreamt of Sidney Poitier and his rise to acclaim. I dreamt that Sidney Poitier sat at the edge of my bed and I asked him what troubled him? Sidney? What troubles you? Is it right to make a movie of Cats?

BACK IN THE MASTER BEDROOM

FLAN is asleep on his side of the bed. OUISA is wide awake, staring at A MAN in dinner clothes, who sits on the edge of her bed. His back is to the camera. Is it SIDNEY POITIER? THE CAMERA drifts in to OUISA, who is transfixed by this apparition.

"SIDNEY" (very comforting)

I'll tell you why I have to make a movie of Cats. I know what Cats is, Louisa. May I call you Louisa?

(OUISA nods Yes)

I have no illusions about the merits of Cats. But the world has been too heavy with all the right to lifers. Protect the lives of the unborn. Constitutional amendments. Marches! When does life begin? Or the converse. The end of life. The Right To Die. Why is life at this point in the 20th century so focussed on the very beginning of life and the very end of life? What about the eighty years we have to live between those two inexorable book ends?

THE CAMERA closes on OUISA. Her face, seen over "SIDNEY'S" shoulder, is all wonder.

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OUISA

And you can get all that into Cats?
THE CAMERA drifts round with OUISA'S gaze to finally see "SIDNEY'S" face. i;½,.
It is PAUL.

PAUL/SIDNEY

I'm going to try.

OUISA

Thank you. Thank you. You shall.
THE CAMERA circles off PAUL to OUISA. She is asleep.
CUT BACK to reveal
No one is sitting on the bed.
THE CAMERA moves onto FLAN's face, sleeping.
Slides of paintings by Matisse, Picasso, De Kooning, Pollock
appear over his face.

FLAN (VO)

This is what I dreamt. I didn't dream so much
as realize this. I felt so close to the
paintings. I wasn't just selling like pieces
of meat. I remembered why I loved paintings in
the first place - what had got me into this -
and I thought - dreamed - remembered-

INT AIRPLANE HANGAR

FLAN happily sits in the bright vast empty space at a slide
carousel projecting slides of paintings into the air.

FLAN (VO)

How easy it is for a painter to lose a
painting. He can paint and paint - work on a
canvas for months and one day he loses it - just
loses the structure - loses the sense of it -
you lose the painting.

A BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT shines on FLAN who turns to see
A TEACHER, in her forties, very pure and happy, hanging
beautiful and brilliantly colored children's drawings in the
air. FLAN'S VOICE echoes in this vast space.

FLAN

Why are all your students geniuses in the second
grade? Look at the first grade. Blotches of
green and black. Look at third grade.
Camouflage. But the second grade --your grade.
Matisses everyone. You've made my child a
Matisse. Let me study with you. Let me into

the second grade! What is your secret?

THE TEACHER

Secret? I don't have any secret. I just know when to take their drawings away from them.

THE TEACHER hangs pink shapes like paper versions of PAUL'S button down shirt on a clothes line stretching to the end of the hangar.

THE SCREEN is filled with the color Pink.

EXT PINK SKY DAWN

The bright pink morning sky flashes with golden blotches, abstract, until WE see it is the morning sun reflecting off windows on the West Side of Central Park.

Then we realize it is the view from

THE KIZTREDGE'S MASTER BEDROOM DAWN

THE CAMERA pulls back from the window to FLAN and OUISA in bed, cozy. SHE wakens, smiles, kisses HIM.

FLAN mumbles in his sleep and rolls over.

OUISA looks at her bedside clock. 6 A.M.

SHE gets out of bed, then pauses to take in the dawn display.

OUISA walks through

THE LIVING ROOM

and opens the front door. SHE picks up the Sunday papers and goes into

THE KITCHEN.

OUISA looks at the spotlessly clean sink and counter.

SHE flicks on the coffee machine and takes juice out of the refrigerator scanning the front page.

SHE sits at the counter and opens the magazine to the back page and begins to do the cross word puzzle.

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

THE CHUMS hang on OUISA's every word.

OUISA

I sat in the kitchen happily doing the cross word puzzle in ink. Everybody does it in ink. I never met one person who didn't say they did it in ink.

BACK IN THE KITCHEN

OUIZA fills in a word on the puzzle. is it in ink? Then looks up.

OUIZA (VO)

And I'm doing the puzzle and I see the time and it's nearly seven and Paul had to meet his father and I didn't want him to be late and was he healthy after his stabbing?
OUIZA puts the puzzle down and goes into

THE HALL.

0

OUIZA (VO)

The hall is eighteen feet long.
OUIZA walks down the hall which now seems impossibly long.

OUIZA (VO)

I stopped in front of the door.
OUIZA taps on the door of her daughter's room.

OUIZA

Paul?
SHE hears - what? - sounds of moaning?

OUIZA

Paul??

PAUL (MOANING)

YES YES

OUIZA

Are you all right?
OUIZA opens the door to

HER DAUGHTER'S BEDROOM.

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SHE turns on the light. SHE screams.
A GUY mid 20s, buck naked except for ratty white socks,
stands up on the bed.

HUSTLER

What the fuck is going on here. Who the fuck
are you?!
PAUL, startled, "sits up in bed and pulls on his clothes.
OUIZA screams.

OUIZA

Flan!!

THE MASTER BEDROOM

OUIZA shakes FLAN violently. FLAN comes to.

FLAN

What is it?!
FLAN AND OUIZA step out into

THE HALL.

SILENCE.

THEY hear their dog bark in

THE LIVING ROOM.

THE HUSTLER, naked but for white socks, wanders around the
living room picking up things. THE DOG is barking at HIM.
THE HUSTLER turns and smiles at FLAN and OUIZA. -

HUSTLER

Hey! How ya doin'? Nice stuff.

FLAN

Oh my God!
THE HUSTLER stretches out on the sofa.

HUSTLER

Hey. I got to get some sleep--
FLAN tips the sofa, hurling the HUSTLER onto the floor.
THE HUSTLER leaps at FLAN threateningly.

OUIZA

Stop it! He might have a gun!

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HUSTLER (laughs)
Yeah. I might have a gun. I might have a knife.
THE HUSTLER raises his hand threateningly.

OUISA

He has a gun! He has a knife!
THE HUSTLER chases OUISA around the room.
FLAN chases the HUSTLER. THE DOG chases FLAN.
PAUL, dressed, runs in to the living room, carrying THE
HUSTLER'S clothes which HE hurls down onto the sofa.

PAUL

I can explain.

OUISA

You went out after we went to sleep and picked
up this thing?

FLAN

You brought this thing into our house! Thing!
Thing! Get out! Get out of my house!
FLAN picks up the HUSTLER'S clothes and opens the front
door.

THE HUSTLER

Hey! Be careful of the pants!

FLAN

Take your clothes. Go back to sleep
in the gutter.
FLAN flings the clothes out into

THE OUTSIDE CORRIDOR.

FLAN pushes the elevator button.
THE HUSTLER suddenly lunges at FLAN and grabs FLAN by the
lapels of his bathrobe.

HUSTLER

Fuck. You!
THE HUSTLER throws FLAN back violently, then picks up his
clothes.
OUISA runs to FLAN.
FLAN gasps, catching his breath.
THE ELEVATOR DOOR opens..
EDDIE, the elevator man, is startled by the sight.

W

57

OUIZA is terrified as PAUL stands at the front door.

PAUL

Please. Don't tell my father. I don't want him to know. I haven't told him. I got. so lonely. I got so afraid. My dad coming. I had the money. I went out after we went to sleep and I brought him back. You had so much. I couldn't be alone. I was so afraid. I am so sorry.

OUIZA

Just go.

EDDIE

Is everything all right?

FLAN

Make sure they go out!

PAUL

I can explain!

FLAN

Give me my fifty dollars.

PAUL

I spent it.

OUIZA

Get out!

PAUL

I'm so sorry.
THE HUSTLER is in the elevator, pulling on his seedy clothes.

FLAN

Make sure they leave. By the back door.
PAUL steps into the elevator. The door shuts.

BACK IN THE LIVING ROOM

FLAN and OUISA survey the room. THEY are at a loss.
THEY straighten out the pillows on the sofa.
THEY are exhausted.

MILLBROOK CLUB BAR

THE CROWD is astonished.

58

OUISA

And that's that.

FLAN

Well, it's not

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

FLAN and OUISA survey the living room.

FLAN

I am shaking.

OUISA

You have to do something.

FLAN

it's awful.

OUISA

Is anything gone?

FLAN

How can I look? I'm shaking.

OUISA

Did he take anything?

FLAN

Would you concentrate on yourself?

OUISA

I want to know if anything's gone?

FLAN

Calm down.

OUIZA

We could have been killed.

FLAN

The silver Victorian inkwell.

OUIZA

How can you think of things? We could have been murdered.

FLAN picks up an ornate Victorian inkwell capped by a silver beaver.

FLAN

There's the inkwell. Silver beaver. Why?

59

OUIZA

Slashed ---our throats slashed.
A framed portrait of a pug.

FLAN

And there's the watercolor. Our dog.
FLAN pets his dog.

OUIZA

Go to bed at night happy and then murdered.
would we have woken up?

FLAN

we're alive.
THEY sit on the sofa, drained, holding onto the phone.
The phone suddenly rings. THEY clutch each other.

OUIZA

Don't pick it up!
FLAN does.

FLAN

Hello?

INT A LIMOUSINE MORNING

GEOFFREY sits in the back seat of a limousine talking on a

cordless portable phone.

GEOFFREY

Flanders. Look, I've been thinking. Those Japs really want the Cezanne. They'll pay. You can depend on me for an additional overcall of two fifty.

THE KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM MORNING

FLAN's mind is boggled.

FLAN

Two hundred and fifty thousand?

60

EXT CURBSIDE KENNEDY AIRPORT

As GEOFFREY'S DRIVER takes care of the baggage, GEOFFREY proceeds into the

THE FIRST CLASS LOUNGE

never dropping one beat on his radio phone.

GEOFFREY

And I was thinking for South Africa. What about a black American film festival? With this Spike Lee you have now and of course get Poitier down to be the president of the jury and I know Cosby and I love this Eddie Murphy and my wife went fishing in Norway with Diana Ross and her new Norwegian husband. And also they must have some

NEW BLACKS-

KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

OUIA is trying to hear the other end of the call.

FLAN

Yes. It sounds a wonderful idea.

INT JFK THE TERMINAL

GEOFFREY walks through the terminal.

GEOFFREY

I'll call Poitier at the Sherry --

KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

FLAN

No! We'll call!

INT AIRPORT IMMIGRATION

GEOFFREY puts the phone down on the security belt.

The phone goes through radar.

All the while we hear FLAN's voice.

The SECURITY PERSON impassively watches the phone on the X-Ray screen.

GEOFFREY picks up the phone as it slides off the band.

GEOFFREY

They're calling my plane- And again last night-

61

KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

FLAN

No need to thank. See you shortly.

INT KENNEDY AIRPORT THE GATE

GEOFFREY

The banks.

KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

FLAN

My lawyer.

KENNEDY AIRPORT THE GATE

GEOFFREY

Exactly.

KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

FLAN

Safe trip.

KENNEDY AIRPORT THE GATE

GEOFFREY snaps the phone shut, sticks it in his pocket and goes into the gate.

KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

FLAN and OUISA look at each other in amazement.

OUISA

We're safe?

As FLAN hangs up the phone we hear a car door shut as FLAN and OUISA get in their car.

EXT THE MILLBROOK GOLF AND TENNIS CLUB DAY

THE GROUP FROM THE WEDDING waves goodbye not at the BRIDE and GROOM but at FLAN and OUISA. THE BRIDE and GROOM as a matter of fact are there.

THE BRIDE

And then?

SANDY

And then?

62

OUISA

That's all we know!

And FLAN and OUISA drive out of the parking lot.

INT/EXT THE CAR TACONIC PARKWAY DAY

THE CAMERA pulls back to show FLAN and OUISA driving back down the Taconic Parkway. THEY are more composed now than when THEY left - and even pleased.

THE RADIO plays a Bach Cantata: Gloria!

THE CAMERA pulls back further to show them entering New York City via the Triborough Bridge. THE CITY looks magnificent for a moment from this vantage.

EXT EAST 67TH STREET DAY

Below us FLAN and, OUISA's car heads for the garage. OUISA's hand suddenly flies out of the car window, waving at a couple in their forties, KITTY AND LARKIN, crossing the street. FLAN honks the horn. THE CAMERA travels down to KITTY and LARKIN as they glare at the car, then smile when THEY see who it is.

T

OUISA

Do we have a story to tell you!

KITTY

Do we have a story to tell you!

INT PRECINCT NIGHT

We cannot tell where we are yet.
But OUISA and FLAN and KITTY and LARKIN lean across a desk and tell a MAN we will learn shortly is a DETECTIVE.

OUISA

Our two and their son are at Harvard together.
KITTY and LARKIN are pleased about this.

INT MORTIMER'S RESTAURANT AFTERNOON

THE TWO COUPLES sit a table in this definitive East Side restaurant.

FLAN

Let me tell you our story.

63

LARKIN

When did your story happen?

FLAN

Last night. We are still zonked.

KITTY

we win. Our story happened Friday night.
So we go first.

LARKIN

We're going to be in the movies.

KITTY

We are going to be in the movie of Cats.
OUIA puts down her white wine.

OUIA

You tell your story first.

LARKIN

Friday night we were home, the doorbell rang---

KITTY

I am not impressed but it was the son of -

INT PRECINCT

THE DETECTIVE makes notes.
OUIA and FLAN
You got it.

BACK AT MORTIMER'S RESTAURANT

KITTY

The kid was mugged. We had to go out. We left him. He was so charming. His father was taking the red eye. He couldn't get into the Hotel till seven AM. He stayed with us.
SHE is very pleased.

LARKIN

In the middle of the night, we heard somebody screaming Burglar! Burglar! We came out in the hall. Paul is chasing this naked blonde thief down the corridor. The blonde thief runs out, the alarm goes off. The kid saved our lives.

64

FLAN

That was no burglar.

OUIA

You had another house guest.
KITTY and LARKIN laugh.

LARKIN

We feel so guilty. Paul could've been killed by that intruder. He was very understanding -

OUIA

Was anything missing from your house?

LARKIN

Nothing.

FLAN

Did you give him money?

KITTY

Twenty-five dollars until his father arrived.

THE PRECINCT

THE DETECTIVE looks at THEM carefully.
FLAN (to the detective)
We told them our story.

MORTIMER'S RESTAURANT NIGHT

KITTY & LARKIN

Oh.

OUIA

Have you talked to your kids?

KITTY

Can't get through.

FLAN

Let's go back to our place.

INT KITTREDGE'S APARTMENT NIGHT

The sound of keys in the door. The door swings open.
FLAN switches on the lights. THE TWO COUPLES run in heading for the phone. OUIA dials.

OUISA

Sherry Netherlands. I'd like--

THE PRECINCT

LARKIN

She gave the name.

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

OUISA

No! I'm not a fan. This is not a fan call.
Sidney Poitier must be registered.
His son is a friend of-
CLICK. The Sherry's hung up.
The doorbell rings. FLAN goes to the door.

LARKIN

He must be there under another name.
Another phone call.

OUISA

Hi. Celebrity Service? I'm not
sure how you work.

KITTY

Greta Garbo used the name Harriet Brown.

OUISA

You track down celebrities? Am I right?

LARKIN

Everybody must have known she was Greta Garbo.

OUISA

I'm trying to find out how one would get in
touch with---No, I'm not a press agent--No, I'm
not with anyone---My husband. Flanders
Kittredge?

(CLICK)

Celebrity Service doesn't give out information
over the phone.

LARKIN

Try the public library.

KITTY

Try Who's Who.

FLAN returns carrying an elaborate arrangement of flowers.
FLAN reads the card.

66

FLAN

"To thank you for a wonderful time.
Paul Poitier.""
FLAN reaches into the bouquet. HE takes out a p.t of jam.

FLAN

A pot of jam?

LARKIN

A pot of jam.
THEY back off as if it might explode.

KITTY

I think we should go to the police.

EXT THE 19TH PRECINCT NIGHT

THE FOUR approach the precinct on East 94th Street.

INT THE PRECINCT

THE DETECTIVE, whom we recognize from earlier, looks up from
his desk.

DETECTIVE

What are the charges?

OUISA

He came into our house.

FLAN

He cooked us dinner.

OUISA

He told us the story of Catcher In The Rye.

FLAN

He said he was the son of Sidney Poitier.

DETECTIVE

Sidney Poitier?
FLAN and OUISA
You got it.

DETECTIVE

Was he?

OUISA

We don't know.

67

FLAN

We gave him fifty dollars.

KITTY

We gave him twenty five.

LARKIN

S HHHH

OUISA

He picked up a hustler.

FLAN

He left.

KITTY

He chased the burglar out of our house.

OUISA

He didn't steal anything.

LARKIN

We looked and looked.

KITTY

Top to bottom. Nothing gone.
THE DETECTIVE closes his notebook.

OUISA

Granted this does not seem major now.

DETECTIVE

Look. We're very busy.

FLAN

You can't chuck us out.

DETECTIVE

Come up with charges. Then I'll do something.

INT THE MORGAN LIBRARY NIGHT

FLAN and OUISA have come to a charity do featuring a string quartet playing Schubert Trio in B flat.

But FLAN and OUISA are not entranced by the music.

THEY stand at the back of the room by the bar telling their story to a GROUP of fascinated FRIENDS (none of whom was at the wedding) as the QUARTET plays. These FRIENDS are all dressed formally but with the look of people who dress this way every night. There-'s always one of these going on and they're always there.

68

FLAN

Yes, there is another chapter.

OUISA

Our kids came down from Harvard. a
Loud groans of protest and disbelief fill the

KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM DAY

Two of FLAN and OUISA'S college aged CHILDREN, WOODY and TESS, and KITTY and LARKIN'S boy, BEN, slump around the room. They are in dismay at OUISA, FLAN, KITTY and LARKIN and their story.

FLAN

--the details he knew--how would he know about the painting?

FLAN has taken the Kandinsky off the wall and flipped it around to the wild side.

FLAN

Although I think it's a very fine Kandinsky.

FLAN leans the painting against a chair and studies it.

OUIZA

And none of you knows this fellow? He has this wild quality--yet, a real elegance and a real concern and a real consideration. TESS looks at the floral arrangement PAUL sent. It's only slightly wilted.

TESS

Well, Mom, you should have let him stay. You should have divorced all your children and just let this dreamboat stay. Plus he sent you flowers.

FLAN

And jam .

THE KIDS

Oooooo.

OUIZA

I wish I knew how to get hold of his father. Just to see if there is any truth in it.

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LARKIN

Who knows Sidney Poitier so we could just call him up and ask him?

KITTY

I have a friend who does theatrical law. I bet he -

LARKIN

What friend?
KITTY (suddenly trapped)
Oh, it's nobody.

LARKIN

I want to know.

KITTY (SCREAMS)

Nobody!

LARKIN (RECONSIDERS)

Whatever's going on anywhere, I do not
want to know. I don't want to know.
I don't want to know.

KITTY (OVERLAPPING)

Nobody. Nobody. Nobody.

BEN (OVERLAPPING)

Dad. Mom. Please. For once. Please?
BEN, KITTY, LARKIN scream at each other in anguish.
TESS, in a fury, leaves the apartment.
FLAN follows HER to

THE OUTSIDE CORRIDOR.

FLAN

Tess, when you see your little sister, don't
tell her that Paul and the hustler used her bed.

TESS

You put him in that bed. I'm not going to get
involved with any conspiracy.

FLAN

It's not a conspiracy. It's a family.
THE ELEVATOR DOOR opens. TESS and FLAN virtually growl at
each other as the door shuts on TESS.

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FLAN sees KITTY, LARKIN and BEN screaming at each other.
FLAN sees OUISA, to avoid involvement in the domestic stir,
hang the Kandinsky back on the wall.
The geometric ordered side.

EXT CENTRAL PARK DAWN

The Alaskan Husky barks at the moon.
THE CAMERA travels out of the park up the face of the Fifth
Avenue apartment once again into the safety of

THE MASTER BEDROOM.

FLAN and OUISA are in bed asleep.

OUISA sits up when SHE hears someone tapping insistently on the window pane. SHE looks around the room.

PAUL appears outside on the window ledge wearing the pink shirt. OUISA gets out of bed and opens the window.

PAUL

The imagination. That's our out. Our imagination teaches us our limits and then how to grow beyond those limits. The imagination says listen to me. I at your darkest voice. .I am your 4am voice. I am the voice that wakes you up and says this is what I'm afraid of. Do not listen to me at your peril. The imagination is the noon voice that sees clearly and says yes this is what I want for my life. It's there to sort out your nightmare, to show you the exit from the maze of-your nightmare, to transform the nightmare into dreams that become your bedrock. If we don't listen to that voice, it dies. It shrivels. It vanishes.

(PAUL takes out a switch blade and opens it.)

The imagination is not our escape. on the contrary, the imagination is the place we are all trying to get to.

PAUL lifts his shirt and stabs himself.

OUISA screams.

PAUL falls over backward into space.

The phone rings, waking OUISA. FLAN picks up the phone.

OUISA sits up, a little stunned. She is relieved to find things so normal.

INT THE PRECINCT EARLY MORNING

DETECTIVE

I got a call that might interest you.

BACK TO THE MORGAN LIBRARY

The string quartet reaches a climax.

FLAN

And a new character entered our story

EXT BETH ISRAEL DOCTORS HOSPITAL DAY

FLAN and OUISA, KITTY and LARKIN come to this hospital across from Gracie Mansion.

INT BETH ISRAEL DOCTORS HOSPITAL DR. FINE'S OFFICE

DR. FINE, an earnest professional man in his 50s, comes down the hall, and opens his office door.

FLAN, OUISA, KITTY and LARKIN sit in his office.

DR. FINE

I was seeing a patient. I'm an obstetrician at New York Hospital. The nurse opened my office door.

INT EXAMINING ROOM DAY

THE NURSE, a sturdy woman in her 50s, opens the door.

NURSE

There's a friend of your son's here.

PAUL appears,- looking much as HE was when HE came to FLAN and OUISA's. PAUL's shirt front is bleeding.

DR. FINE'S OFFICE

OUISA and FLAN, KITTY and LARKIN are filled with dread.

DR. FINE

I treated the kid. He was more scared than hurt. A knife wound, a few bruises.

EXAMINING ROOM

PAUL gets off the examining table, buttoning his pink shirt.

PAUL

I don't know how to thank you, sir. My father is coming here.

DR. FINE'S OFFICE

THE TWO COUPLES sit cramped on the Doctor's leather sofa.

DR. FINE stands by the window looking out at the river.

DR. FINE

And he told me the name of a matinee idol of my youth. Somebody who had really forged ahead and made new paths for Blacks just by the strength of his own talent. Strangely, I had identified with him, before I started Medical School. I mean, I'm a Jew. My grandparents were killed in the war. I had this sense of self-hatred, of fear. And this kid's father - the bravery of his films - had given me a direction, a confidence. Simple as that. We're always paying off debts. Then my beeper went off. A patient in her tenth month of labor. Her water finally broke. I gave him the keys.

EXAMINING ROOM

DR. FINE gives PAUL a set of keys and walks him out into

THE HOSPITAL HALL.

PAUL

Doug's told me all about your brownstone. How you got it at a great price because there had been a murder in it and for a while people thought it had a curse but you were a scientific man and were courageous!

DR. FINE

Well, yes! Courageous!

DR. FINE'S OFFICE

FLAN and OUISA, KITTY and LARKIN agree.

FLAN

Very courageous.

DR. FINE

I ran off to the delivery room. Twins! Two boys. I thought of my son. I dialed my boy at Dartmouth. Amazingly, he was in his room. Doing y hat I hate to ask.

INT COLLEGE DORM ROOM DAY

The call wakens DR. FINE'S son, DOUG, 20.
DOUG grabs for the phone from under the covers. Is there someone else in bed with Doug?

DR.FINE'S EXAMINING ROOM**DR. FINE**

So you accuse me of having no interest in your life, not doing for friends, being a rotten father. Well, you should be very happy.

COLLEGE DORM ROOM**DOUG**

The son of who? Dad, I never heard of him.
Dad, as usual, you are a real cretin. You gave him the keys? You gave , & complete stranger who happens to mention my name the keys to our house? Dad, sometimes it is so obvious to me why Mom left. I am so embarrassed to know you. You gave the keys to a stranger who shows up at your office? Mother told me you beat her! Mom told me you were a rotten lover and drank so much your body smelled of cheap white wine. Mom said sleeping with you was like sleeping with a salad made with bad dressing. Why you had to bring me into the world!
A GIRL sits up in bed, terrified.

EXAMINING ROOM**DR. FINE**

There are two sides to every story -

COLLEGE DORM ROOM**DOUG**

You're an idiot! You're an idiot!
THE GIRL in bed puts pillows over her head.

DR. FINE'S OFFICE

FLAN and OUISA, KITTY and LARKIN lean forward in fascination.

DR. FINE

I went home..-courageously with a policeman.

EXT DR. FINE'S BROWNSTONE DAY

DR. FINE puts the key in the door. The COP with HIM has his gun drawn. DR. FINE and THE COP enter

THE BROWNSTONE.

THEY hear a Debussy quartet playing.
PAUL sits in the living room wearing a silk robe, swirling a snifter of brandy, listening to the music.
PAUL smiles when HE sees DR. FINE, but when the COP appears with the gun, PAUL rolls over on his side out of the chair.

DR. FINE

Arrest him!
DR. FINE snaps off the radio.
PAUL backs up against the wall.

PAUL

Pardon?

DR. FINE

Breaking and entering.

PAUL

Breaking and entering?

DR. FINE

You're an imposter.

PAUL

Officer, your honor, your eminence, Dr. Fine
cave me the keys to his brownstone. Isn't that
so?

DR. FINE

My son doesn't know you.

PAUL

This man gave me the keys to the house.
Isn't that so?
THE COP puts his gun away.

POLICEMAN (SCREAMS)

Did you give him the key to the house?

DR. FINE

Yes, but under false pretenses. This fucking black kid crack addict comes into my office

LYING -

75

PAUL (cool and forgiving)
I have taken this much brandy but can pour the rest back into the bottle. And I've used electricity listening to the music, but I think you'll find that nothing's taken from the house. PAUL takes off the silk robe and neatly places it on the table.

DR. FINE

I want you to arrest this fraud.
PAUL puts on his jacket and leaves the house.

DR. FINE

Stop him!
THE POLICEMAN walks away.

COLLEGE DORM ROOM

DOUG continues his tirade.

DOUG

A cretin! A creep! No wonder mother left you!

DOUG flings the phone against the wall.

DR. FINE'S OFFICE

FLAN and OUISA, KITTY and LARKIN look at DR. FINE sympathetically.

DR. FINE

Two sides. Every story.
But THE TWO COUPLES are also embarrassed.

BACK TO THE MORGAN LIBRARY

PEOPLE from the back row of the concert turn away from the

music and listen to OUISA and FLAN.

OUISA

We went down to the Strand -

FLAN

Five Sherlock Holmeses-

76

0 EXT THE STRAND BOOKSTORE 12th STREET AND BROADWAY DAY
The TWO COUPLES AND DR. FINE, go into

THE STRAND BOOKSTORE.

which advertises itself as possessing Eight miles of books
and that seems an understatement.
THE CAMERA rushes past rows of books.
And then suddenly stops.

OUISA

I found it!
OUISA'S HAND reaches up and brings down.

CU

A COPY OF SIDNEY POITIER'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY: "This Life"
OUISA reads from the Poitier autobiography.
THE OTHERS are enrapt..

OUISA

"Back in New York with Juanita and the children,
I began to become aware that our marriage,
while working on some levels, was falling apart
in other fundamental areas."
FLAN takes the book.

FLAN

There's a picture of him and his four-
daughters. No sons. Four daughters.

BACK TO THE MORGAN LIBRARY

FLAN

The book's called This Life.

A CONCERT-GOER

No sons?

OUIA

No sons!

THE STRAND BOOKSTORE

KITTY

Oh dear.

OUIA

This kid bulldozing his way into our lives.

77

LA. RKIN

is We let him in our lives. I run a foundation.
You're a dealer. You're a doctor. You'd think
we'd be satisfied with our achievements.

TNT THE GOTHAM RESTAURANT DAY

THE FIVE of THEM have gone down the street from the Strand
to this swell restaurant.

FLAN

Agatha Christie would ask what do
we all have in common?

OUIA

It seems the common thread linking us all is an
overwhelming need to be in the movie of Cats.

KITTY

Our kids. Struggling through their lives.

LARKIN

I don't want to know anything about the
spillover of their lives.

OUIA

All we have in common is our children went to
boarding school together.

FLAN (to Dr. Fine)
How come we never met?

DR. FINE

His mother had custody. I lived out West. After he graduated from high school, she moved west. I moved east.

LARKIN

I think we should drop it right here.

KITTY

Are you afraid Ben is mixed up in this fraud?

LARKIN

I don't want to know too much about my kid.

KITTY

You think Ben is hiding things from us? I tell you, I'm getting to the bottom of this. My son has no involvements with any black frauds. Doctor, you said something about crack?

78

LARKIN

I don't want to know.

DR. FINE

It just leaped out of my mouth.
No proof. Oh dear god, no proof.

FLAN

We'll take a vote. Do we pursue this to the end no matter what we find out about our kids?

OUISA

I vote yes.

DR. FINE

I trust Doug. Yes.

LARKIN

No.

KITTY

Yes.

FLAN

Yes.

KITTY looks through the Poitier autobiography.

KITTY

Listen to the last page. "...making it better for our children. Protecting them. From what? The truth is what we were protecting those little people from... there is a lot to worry about and I'd better start telling the little bastards - start worrying!" The end.

KITTY closes the book in dismay.

OUISA, FLAN, LARKIN, and DR. FINE are each lost in thought.

INT LINCOLN CENTER METROPOLITAN OPERA NIGHT

FLAN and OUISA, dressed formally, the way people used to dress for the opera, stand at the small champagne bar outside the boxes. Their similarly dressed FRIENDS are engrossed in the tale.

FLAN

We all went up to Harvard.

OUISA

We had to enlist our children -

79

EXT HARVARD UNIVERSITY DAY

FLAN and OUISA, KITTY and LARKIN, and DR. FINE cut through the Harvard Yard at an urgent pace.

INT ELIOT HOUSE HARVARD

The FIVE PARENTS sit in the empty Dining Commons.

THEY've come for lunch. And now lunch is over.

TESS, WOODY, BEN and DOUG sit on the other side of the refectory table, glaring at their parents, lunch trays between the generations.

STUDENTS walk in and out. THE PARENTS speak in hushed, library size whispers to avoid any echo.

FLAN

It's obvious. It's somebody you went to High School with, since you go to different colleges.

DR. FINE

I just want to tell you how I appreciate your coming today -

DOUG

Dad? Spare me?
DOUG'S voice echoes.

OUISA

He knows the details about our lives.

FLAN

Who in your high school, part of your gang, has become homosexual or is deep into drugs?

TESS

That's like about fifteen people.
TESS enjoys her echo because it makes FLAN and OUISA uncomfortable.

LARKIN

I don't want to know.

TESS

I find it really insulting that you would assume that it has to be a guy. This movie star's son could have had a relationship with a girl in

HIGH SCHOOL---

And BEN is just as loud.

80

HEN

That's your problem in a nut shell.
You're so limited.
FLAN and OUISA try to shush them.

TESS

That's why I'm going to Afghanistan.
To climb mountains.

OUISA

You are not climbing mountains.

FLAN

We have not invested all this money in
you to scale the face of K-2.
TESS leans across the table, matching them whisper for
whisper.

TESS

Is that all I am? An investment?

OUISA

All right. Track down everybody in your high
school class. Male. Female. Whatever. Not
just homosexuals. Drug addicts. The kid might
be a drug dealer.
DOUG throws back his chair.

DOUG

Why do you look at me when you say that? Do you
think I'm an addict? A drug pusher? I really
resent the accusations.

DR. FINE

No one is accusing you of anything. Sit down.
LARKIN gets up and paces around the table.

LARKIN

I don't want to know. I don't want to know.
I don't want to know.

FLAN

Nobody is accusing anyone of anything.
I'm asking you to go on a detective search and
find out from your high school class if anyone
has met a Black kid pretending to be a movie
star's son.

81

BEN

He promised you parts in Cats?

OUIA

It wasn't just that. It was fun.

TESS

You went to Cats. You said it was an all time low in a lifetime of theater going. OUIA considers.

OUIA

Film is a different medium.

TESS

You said Aeschylus did not invent theater to have it end up a bunch of chorus kids wondering which of them will go to Kitty Kat Heaven.

OUIA

I don't remember saying that.

FLAN

No, I think that was Starlight Express -

TESS

Well, maybe he'll make a movie of Starlight Express and you can all be on roller skates! THE KIDS stand up.

DOUG

This is so humiliating.

BEN

This is so pathetic.

TESS

This is so racist.

OUIA

This is not racist!
THE KIDS stride out of the DINING HALL into

THE CORRIDOR.

THEIR PARENTS run ahead trying to circle them.

82

DOUG

How can I get in touch with anybody in high school? I've outgrown them.

KITTY

Now can you outgrow them?
You graduated a year ago!
THE PARENTS stop in front of

THE MAIN ENTRANCE

blocking TESS and DOUG and BEN's escape. OUISA takes a red book out of her bag and brandishes at THEM.

OUISA

Here is a copy of your yearbook. I want you to get the phone numbers of everybody in your class. You all went to the same boarding school.

DR. FINE

You can charge it to my phone.

OUISA

Call everyone in your class and ask them if they know--
THE THREE KIDS try to break through the blockade.

DOUG

Never!

TESS

This is the KGB.

DR. FINE

You're on the phone all the time. Now I ask you to make calls all over the country and you become reticent.

TESS

This is the entire McCarthy period.
WOODY saunters up to his PARENTS.
HE is very cool.

FLAN and OUISA smile at his sweet attitude.

WOODY

I just want to get one thing straight.

83

FLAN

Finally, we hear from the peanut gallery. And WOODY screams at THEM in rage, his voice echoing, mindless of the STUDENTS who freeze in the background as you would at a traffic accident.

WOODY

You gave him my pink shirt? You gave a complete stranger my pink shirt? That pink shirt was a Christmas present from you. I treasured that shirt. I loved that shirt. My collar size has grown a full size from weight lifting. And you saw my arms had grown, you saw my neck had grown. And you bought me that shirt for my new body. I loved that shirt. The first shirt for my new body. And you gave that shirt away. I can't believe it. I hate this life. I hate you.

EXT ELIOT HOUSE

WOODY's wrath grows and grows and drives OUISA and FLAN, indeed all the PARENTS, out of the serene, venerable Harvard building onto the street. PASSERSBY stop and gape.

WOODY doesn't care.

DOUG

You never do anything for me.

TESS

You've never done anything but tried to block me.

BEN

I'm only this pathetic extension of your eighth rate personality.

DOUG

Social Darwinism pushed beyond all limits.

WOODY

You gave away my pink shirt?

TESS

You want me to be everything you weren't.

DOUG

You said drugs and looked at me.

THE PARENTS go down the street, speechless, defeated.

84

CUT TO

PAGES of a Yearbook turning. The pages stop.

TESS (VO)

Trent Conway. -

EXT THE BANKS OF THE CHARLES RIVER DAY

THE FOUR KIDS look through their high school yearbook.
TESS spots a face. THEY all consider.

THE KIDS

Trent Conway.

CU

TRENT CONWAY'S YEARBOOK PICTURE

TRENT is weasel faced. Very hard to read. Not quite
looking into the yearbook photographer's camera.

TESS

Trent Conway.

DOUG

Look at those beady eyes staring out at me.

BEN

Trent Conway.

WOODY

He's at MIT.

INT KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM DAY

TESS has come down to New York with news for her mother.

TESS

So I went to MIT. He was there in his computer room and I just pressed him and pressed him and pressed him. I had this strapped to me. TESS puts a small tape recorder on the desk. TESS turns it on. OUISA listens to the tape.

TRENT'S TAPED VOICE

Yes, I knew Paul.

INT A COMPUTER ROOM AT MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

THE CAMERA focusses in on her thigh. WE can see the slight bump where TESS has strapped the recorder.

85

TRENT looks up from his bank of computers at TESS. TRENT's pinched face looks as if it has never, known one truly happy day.

TESS A

But what happened between you?

TRENT

It was...It was...

EXT A DOORWAY RAIN NIGHT

PAUL dressed in ragged clothes stands huddled in a doorway to get out of the freezing rain. TRENT passes by the doorway. TRENT is gone. Then TRENT reappears and stares at PAUL.

INT TRENT CONWAY'S APARTMENT NIGHT

PAUL stands against the WHITE WALL we've seen earlier. Rain. Distant thunder. Jazz playing somewhere.

PAUL, unlike the elegant PAUL we have seen, is dressed in torn jeans, a ripped tank top, dirty high top sneakers. This is the PAUL we first saw.

PAUL looks at TRENT with a mixture of contempt and I dare you.
PAUL stretches out on the bed.
HE pulls out a thick address -book from under him.

PAUL

What's this?
PAUL speaks.street talk speech. Hardly what we've heard.

TRENT

My address book.
TRENT tries to take the address book away from PAUL.

PAUL

All these names. Addresses.
Tell me about these people.
TRENT lies along side PAUL.

TRENT

This is where I wanted you to be...
Right here...
PAUL, hypnotised by the-'address book, slaps TRENT away from him and gets out of the bed.

86

PAUL (FIERCE)

Tell me about these people, man!

TRENT

I just want to look at you. Sorry.

PAUL

Are these all rich people?
TRENT sits up in bed.

TRENT

No. Hand to mouth on a higher plateau.

KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

OUISA looks at the tape recorder, horrified at this judgement.

OUISA

How long did Trent keep Paul?

TESS shushes OUISA.

TRENT CONWAY'S APARTMENT

PAUL paces around the room, looking into this book.

PAUL

I think it must be very hard to be with rich people. You have to have money. You have to give them presents.

TRENT

Not at all. Rich people do something nice for you, you give them a pot of jam.

PAUL (AMAZED)

That's what pots of jam are for?

TRENT

Orange. Grapefruit. Strawberry. But fancy. They have entire stores filled with fancy pots of jam wrapped in cloth. English. Or French.

PAUL

I'll tell you what I'll do. I pick a name. You tell me about them. Where they live. Secrets. And for each name you get a piece of clothing.

TRENT

All right.

87

PAUL picks a name at random, circling his finger and

0

plunging into the address book.

PAUL

Kittredge. Talbot and Woodrow.

TRENT

Talbot called Tess was anorexic and was in a hospital for a while.

PAUL takes off a shoe and kicks it to TRENT.

KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

Now it's TESS's turn to be hurt. OUISA comforts TESS.

PAUL'S TAPED VOICE

Their parents.

TRENT CONWAY'S APARTMENT

TRENT

Ouisa and Flan for Flanders Kittredge. Rhode Island I believe. Newport but not along the ocean. The street behind the ocean. He's an art dealer. They have a Kandinsky.

PAUL

A Kan--what- ski?

TRENT

Kandinsky. A double-sided Kandinsky.

PAUL kicks off his other shoe.

KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

OUISA and TESS look up at the Kandinsky hanging geometric side front.

TRENT CONWAY'S APARTMENT

TRENT catches PAUL's sneaker joyously.

TRENT

I feel like Scheherazade!

TRENT embraces PAUL with fierce tenderness.

Maybe TRENT had one happy day and this is it.

I don't want you to leave me, Paul. I'll go through my address book and tell you about family after family. You'll never not fit in again. We'll give you a new idea, it's my. I'll make you the most eagerly sought after young man in the East. And then I'll come into one of these homes one day---and you'll be there and I'll be presented to you. And I'll pretend to meet you for the first time and our friendship will be witnessed by my friends, our parents' friends. If it all happens under their noses, they can't judge me. They can't disparage you. I'll make you a guest in their houses. Ask me another name. I'd like to try for the shirt. PAUL kisses TRENT.

PAUL

That's enough for today.
PAUL takes his shoes and the address book and goes.

KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

40 OUISA brushes TESS's hair as THEY listen.

TRENT'S TAPED VOICE

Paul stayed with me for three months.

TRENT CONWAY'S APARTMENT

PAUL leans against the white wall.
PAUL frowns, then smiles.
All ready PAUL has begun to change from a street kid to someone quite preppy - very Ralph Lauren. Only on the surface. HE's still learning.

TRENT

This is the way you must speak. Hear my accent. Hear my voice. Never say you're going horse back riding. You say You're going Riding. And don't say couch. Say sofa. And you say Bodd-ill. It's bottle. Say bottle of beer.

PAUL

Bodd-ill a bee-ya.

TRENT

Bottle of beer.

89

PAUL

(SERIOUS)

Bodd-ill a bee-ya.

(FLIRTATIOUS)

Bodd-ill a bee-ya.

(SUSPICIOUS)

Bodd-ill a bee-ya.

(ELATED)

Bottle of beer.

TRENT claps. PAUL bows to TRENT.

TRENT'S face is transfigured with joy.

COMPUTER ROOM

TRENT smiles at TESS but the smile is one of tight lipped stoicism.

TRENT

We went through the address book letter by letter. Paul vanished by the L's. He took the address book with him. Well, he's already been in all your houses. Maybe I will meet him again. I sure would like to.

TRENT stands up signalling an end to the conversation. HE turns off his computers.

TESS

His past? His real name?

TRENT

I don't know anything about him. It was a rainy night in Boston. He was in a doorway. That's all.

TESS

He took stuff from you?

TRENT

Besides the address book? He took my stereo and sport jacket and my word processor and my laser printer. And my skis. And my TV.

TESS

Will you press charges?

TRENT

No.

TESS

It's a felony.

90

TRENT

Why do they want to find him?

TESS

They say to help him. If there's a crime, the cops will get involved.

TRENT

Look, we must keep in touch. We were friends for a brief bit in school. I mean we were really good friends.

KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

TESS'S TAPED VOICE

won't you press charges?

TRENT'S TAPED VOICE

Please.

TESS leans forward-and snaps off the tape recorder.
OUIA is amazed.

INT LINCOLN CENTER METROPOLITAN OPERA NIGHT

FLAN and OUIA have brought their FRIENDS up to date.

OUIA

Paul learned all that in three months!

OPERAGOER

Three months?

FLAN

Three months!
The chimes ring, signalling the start of the opera.

OUIA

who would have thought it? Trent Conway, the
Henry Higgins of our time.
THE GROUP laughs and finishes their drinks as THE USHER
unlocks the door to

THE OPERA BOX.

THE GROUP proceeds in, deciding who'll sit where in the box
and checking their programs.
OUIA looks into the vastness of the Metropolitan Opera
House.
The chandeliers are rising into the ceiling.

91

OPERAGOER #1

Quick - what the hell is the story of this
opera?

FLAN adjusts his opera glasses. a

OPERAGOER #2

Boy meets girl. Boy loses girl.
OUIA is distracted.

OUIA

Paul must have looked at all those
names and said I am Columbus. I am Magellan.
I will sail into this new world.
The camera comes in on OUIA as she remembers

THE KITTREDGE LIVING ROOM.

TESS laughs. OUIA laughs. It's a nice moment between these
two.

OUIA

I read somewhere that everybody on this planet
is separated by only six other people. Six
degrees of separation. Between us and everybody
else on this planet. The President of the
United States. A. gondolier in Venice. Fill in
the names. I find that A.] tremendously
comforting that we're so close and B.] like
Chinese water torture that we're so close.
Because you have to find the right six people to
make the connection. It's not just big names.

It's anyone. A native in a rain forest. A
Tierra del Fuegan. An Eskimo. I am bound to
everyone on this planet by a trail of six
people. It's a profound thought. How Paul found
us. How to find the man whose son he pretends to
be. Or perhaps j& his son, although I doubt it.
How every person is a new door, opening up into
other worlds. Six degrees of separation between
me and everyone else on this planet. But to
find the right six people.
TESS kisses HER MOTHER.
OUIA puts out the light and THEY leave the room.

92

MUSIC

THE ACT ONE MUSIC OF PUCCINI'S TOSCA suddenly swells up and

CONTINUES UNDER:

THE MASTER BEDROOM NIGHT

OUIA looks out the window down into the park.

EXT CENTRAL PARK

THE HUSKY bays up at the moon.

INT LINCOLN CENTER METROPOLITAN OPERA NIGHT

The curtain comes down on Act One of TOSCA.
Applause.

SANDY and CONNIE (yes! Pram the wedding) have leaned over
from the next box.

FLAN

No. No news.

OUIA

He just vanished.

FLAN

Nothing. All quiet. Thank god.
THEY pass out of the box into

THE CHAMPAGNE BAR.

EVERYONE is very cheery.

OUIZA

Yes! We are going to Rome.
CONNIE gives OUIZA a card with a name on it.
OUIZA reads the card and passes it to FLAN.

OUIZA

No! I don't know them.
FLAN smiles when HE sees the card.

FLAN

Always wanted to meet them! Of course we'll
call. As soon as we get to Rome! What fun!

93

EXT ROME DAY

THE CAMERA floats high across the city heading for ST.
PETER'S BASILICA. It descends, circling ST. PETER'S,

TOWARDS

THE VATICAN.

FLAN (VO)

Rome is always remarkable but to see -
Columns flash past. The blurring clears and we are moving

INTO

INT SISTINE CHAPEL

with FLAN and OUIZA. They are escorted, through a maze of
scaffolding, by an elderly Italian ART DEALER.

FLAN (VO)

the Sistine Chapel like this!

OUIZA (VO)

To stand at the very top on scaffolding!

FLAN and OUIZA ride up through the scaffolding, in a

rickety elevator.

OUIZA

We were at the opera and ran into them and they gave us your address!

FLAN

This is staggering!
THEY step out, in great excitement, right onto

THE SISTINE CHAPEL SCAFFOLDING.

FLAN (VO)

They restored it after all these years -
FOUR ITALIAN WORKERS scrub away at the ceiling a few feet above them. They refer constantly to banks of computers operated by TWO JAPANESE.

OUIZA (VO)

scraped all this paint off it

FLAN (VO)

and years of smoke and tourists and it's brand new!

94

OUIZA looks up. SHE is right beneath the hand of God touching the hand of Man. SHE looks at it in awe. To be this close to it! THE SCREEN is filled with the cleaned ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

INT SOHO LOFT NIGHT

FLAN and OUIZA sit on cushions of a Soho loft done in the most glamorous minimal Japanese mode.

FLAN

The colors are vibrant!

OUIZA

Flan went for business but for me it was -
THE OWNERS of this loft are a MAN, 40s, who is confined to a wheel chair, and his beautiful COMPANION, an elegant Japanese woman. THE TEN DINNER GUESTS are dressed all in black, except OUIZA who has on a bright Chanel suit. SHE

and FLAN have managed to capture stage center.

THE WHEEL CHAIR MAN

(INTERRUPTING OUISA)

But what happened!

FLAN

No. It's not important -

THE JAPANESE HOSTESS

You must!

OUISA

Well, the day we got back from Rome -

FLAN

We stepped out of the taxi from the airport and

EXT THE KITTREDGE'S APARTMENT BUILDING DAY

FLAN steps out of the cab first.

OUISA (VO)

our doorman whom we tip very well at Christmas
and any time he does something nice for us-- our
doorman spits at my husband, J. Flanders
Kittredge. I mean, spit at him!
The DOORMAN - FRANK - good faithful loyal FRANK - holds
the door open and spits at FLAN.

95

SOHO LOFT

THE CROWD gasps.

FLAN frowns at OUISA for telling this part.

FLAN

Darling, they don't have to know every detail.

EXT THE KITTREDGE'S APARTMENT BUILDING

OUISA is afraid to come out of the cab.

DOORMAN

Your son! I know all about your son.

FLAN

What about my son?

DOORMAN

Not the little shit who lives here. The other son. The secret son. The negro son you deny.

FLAN

The negro son?

DOORMAN

The black son you make live in Central Park while you're gallivanting around Rome. The DOORMAN spits at FLAN again.

SOHO LOFT

THE JAPANESE HOSTESS is interested.

THE JAPANESE HOSTESS

You have a black son?

FLAN

No! The cops brought this young girl to us!

OUISA

The cops called us up and we went down to the precinct again!

INT PRECINCT DAY

THE DETECTIVE sits on the edge of his desk. OUISA and FLAN sit in chairs in the small office, looking on uncomfortably. The emotion in the shabby room is too big for the size of it. THEY watch a young woman named ELIZABETH, in her mid-20s, seated behind the DETECTIVE'S desk.

96

ELIZABETH (in a rage)
I want him dead. That's all I want.

SOHO LOFT

OUISA leans forward at the dinner table.

OUISA

The next chapter.
THE PARTY is silenced.

THE PRECINCT

ELIZABETH

My boy friend and I took a picnic
into the park

EXT CENTRAL PARK DAY

RICK, ELIZABETH and PAUL sprawl out on the grass in the
sun, under the statue of the Alaskan husky, the remains of a
picnic around them. Bongo Drums play in the distance.

ELIZABETH (VO)

and we met this guy and started
singing and talking.

RICK, a nice young guy in his mid-twenties, plays his guitar
energetically, the THREE of them having a great time singing
a cheery old rock song.

PAUL is wearing the pink shirt and the khakis but looks
pretty seedy. HE eats hungrily.

PAUL

I was hallucinating from not eating-

ELIZABETH

If I told people back home that
New York had trees and picnics,
they'd swear I was lying. I love New York so
much. Look at it! I can't get over it.

RICK

We're here from Utah.

PAUL

Do they have any black people in Utah?

RICK

Maybe two.

ELIZABETH

I saw them once. Two black people.

RICK

Yes, the Mormons brought in two.
THEY all laugh, enjoying each other, the day, the meeting.

ELIZABETH

We came here to be actors.

RICK

She won the all-state competition
for comedy and drama.

PAUL

My gosh!
ELIZABETH stands up and declaims.

ELIZABETH

"The quality of mercy is not strained.
It droppeth like the gentle rain from heaven.."
SHE's not bad. But then SHE giggles and the Shakespearean
effect crumbles.

RICK

And we study and we wait tables.

ELIZABETH

Because you have to have technique.
ELIZABETH and RICK are very earnest.

PAUL

Like the painters. Cezanne looked for the rules
behind the spontaneity of Impressionism.

RICK

Cez - That's a painter?

ELIZABETH

We don't know anything about painting.

PAUL

My dad loves painting. He has a Kandinsky but
he loves Cezanne the most. He lives up there.

RICK

What?

PAUL points up at 910 FIFTH, the home of the Kittredge's.

PAUL

He lives up there. Count six windows over. John Flanders Kittredge. His chums-call him Flan. I was the child of Flan's hippie days. His radical days. He went down South as a freedom marcher, to register black voters - his friends were killed. Met my mother. Registered her and married her in a fit of sentimental righteousness and knocked her up with me and came back here and abandoned her. Went to Harvard. He's now a fancy art dealer. Lives up there. Count six windows over. Won't see me. The new wife--the white wife-- The Louisa Kittredge Call Me Ouisa wife - the mother of the new children wife--

RICK

Your brothers and sisters?

PAUL (BITTER)

They go to Andover and Exeter and Harvard and Yale. The awful thing is my father started out good. My mother says there is a good man inside s J. Flanders Kittredge.

ELIZABETH

He'll see you if he is that good. He can't forget you entirely.

PAUL

I call him. He hangs up.

RICK

Go to his office -

PAUL

He doesn't have an office. He works out of there. They won't even let me in the elevator.

RICK

Dress up as a messenger.

ELIZABETH

Say you have a masterpiece for him.
"I got the Mona Lisa waitin' out in the truck."

99

PAUL

I don't want to embarrass him. Look, this is so fucking tacky.

(PAUSE)

You love each other? a

ELIZABETH

A lot.

RICK and ELIZABETH touch each other's hands.

PAUL (standing up to go)

I hope we can meet again.

RICK

Where do you live?

PAUL looks around HIM and makes a hopeless grand gesture.

PAUL

Live? I'm, home.

PAUL picks up two plastic shopping bags which are filled with clothing.

ELIZABETH

You're not out on the streets?

PAUL

You're such assholes. Where would I live?

PAUL shrugs his shoulders and leaves.

RICK and ELIZABETH look at each other then follow him down the path leading through the park to the carousel.

THE CAROUSEL calliope plays merrily.

RICK

Stay with us.

ELIZABETH

We just have a railroad flat in a tenement --

PAUL looks at a bank of daffodils planted by the carousel.

HE begins picking a bouquet of daffodils.

RICK and ELIZABETH are being as persuasive as they can.

RICK

It's over a roller disco. The last of the
roller discos but it's quiet by five AM and a
great narrow space -

100

ELIZABETH

A railroad loft and we could give you a corner.
The tub's in the kitchen but there's light in

THE MORNING-

SOHO LOFT

OUISA

And he did!

INT RICK AND ELIZABETH'S TENEMENT DAY

RICK and ELIZABETH'S tenement is disastrously crummy and
probably violates every building code. But, yes, light
does flow in through that one narrow window.
PAUL puts the bouquet of daffodils into a jelly jar and sets
it down on a board that covers the tub.

THE PRECINCT

ELIZABETH composes herself.
OUISA pours ELIZABETH a glass of water.

ELIZABETH

He stayed for a few weeks. He taught
us so much. We even thought he was the
reason for coming to New York. He opened
up a new world for us. That's all anybody
wants, isn't it? A new world?
OUISA looks at FLAN.

RICK AND ELIZABETH'S TENEMENT

RICK and ELIZABETH listen intently to PAUL.

PAUL

This is the way you must speak.
Hear my accent. Hear my voice.

Never say you're going horse back riding.
You say You're going Riding. And don't
say Couch. Say Sofa. And you say bodd-ill.
It's bottle. Say bottle of beer.

RICK

Bodd-ill a bee-ya.

101

ELIZABETH pokes around in the refrigerator.

ELIZABETH

(SERIOUS)

Hello. i;½. _

(FLIRTATIOUS)

Hello.

(SHE discovers two bottles of beer)

Hello hello!

SHE opens the beers. PAUL regards RICK for a moment.

PAUL takes the bottle of beer.

RICK and ELIZABETH share the other.

PAUL

Bottle of beer. And never be afraid of rich
people. You know what they love? A fancy pot
of jam. That's all. Get yourself a patron.
That's what you need. You shouldn't be waiting
tables. You're going to wake up one day and the
temporary job you picked up to stay alive is
going to be your full time life.

ELIZABETH is struck by his advice and embraces PAUL
gratefully.

THE PRECINCT

ELIZABETH is more pulled together, sipping her drink of
water. FLAN takes OUISA's hand.

RICK AND ELIZABETH'S TENEMENT

RICK and ELIZABETH have made love and lay on their backs in
bed and dream.

RICK

I'll tell you all the parts I want to play.
Vanya in Uncle Vanya.

ELIZABETH

Masha in Three Sisters.

RICK

I'd like a -
ELIZABETH is on fire with happiness and unwittingly cuts off

RICK.

ELIZABETH

No, Irina first. The young one
who yearns for love.

102

RICK

I'd like a shot at -

ELIZABETH

Then Masha who loves.

RICK

I'd like a shot -

ELIZABETH

Then the oldest one, Olga, who never knows love!
RICK'waits to see that ELIZABETH is through, then:

RICK

I'd like a shot at Laertes. I think
it's a much better part.
ELIZABETH gazes in a mirror that- SHE holds close to her
face.

ELIZABETH

Do you think it'll hurt me?

RICK

What'll hurt you?

ELIZABETH

My resemblance to Liv Ullmann.
PAUL runs into the loft.

PAUL

He wrote me! I wrote him and he _
wrote me back! He's going to give
me a thousand dollars! And that's
just for starters! He sold a Cezanne
to the Japanese and made millions and
he can give me money without her knowing it.
PAUL lets out a whoop and leaps up onto the bed with RICK
and ELIZABETH in it and begins jumping up and down.

ELIZABETH

I knew it!
PAUL goes to a corner which contains a single mattress on
the floor and begins to pack his few things back in the
plastic bags.

PAUL

I'm moving out of here!

103

ELIZABETH reaches for her robe and pulls it on.
RICK pulls on his jeans.

ELIZABETH

You can't!

RICK

No!
RICK and ELIZABETH surround PAUL to make HIM stay.
PAUL hugs THEM.

PAUL

But I am going to give you the money to put on a
showcase of any play you want and you'll be in
it and agents will come see you and you'll be
seen and you'll be started. And when you win
your Oscars - both of you - you'll look in the

camera and thank me -
ELIZABETH loves the moment and weeps her acceptance speech.

ELIZABETH

I want to thank Paul Kittredge.

RICK

Thanks, Paul!
THEY all hug each other and that's real.

PAUL

One hitch. I'm going to meet him in Maine. He's up there visiting his parents in Dark Harbor. My grandparents whom I've never met. He's finally going to tell my grandparents about me. He's going to make up for lost time. He's going to give me money. I can go back home. Get my momma that beauty parlor she's wanted all her life. One problem. How am I going to get to Maine? The wife checks all the bills. He has to account for the money. She handles the purse strings. Where the hell am I going to get two hundred and fifty dollars to get to Maine?

ELIZABETH

How long would you need it for?

PAUL

I'll be gone a week. But I could wire it back to you.

104

PAUL goes into the john to take his toothbrush and razor.
ELIZABETH pulls on her dress and straightens out her hair.

RICK (QUIET)

We could lend it to him for a week.

ELIZABETH (QUIET)

We can't. If something happens -

RICK (QUIET)

You're like his stepmother. These women holding on to all the purse strings.

ELIZABETH

No. We worked too hard to save that.
PAUL comes out of the john.
RICK - always laid back - is suddenly quite angry.

ELIZABETH

Paul. I'm sorry. We just can't.

PAUL

Look. No problem. I understand.

ELIZABETH

I'll meet you both after work. If your father
loves you, he'll get you the ticket up there.

PAUL

He does. It'll work out. Hey.
Posture. Stand up straight. Don't slump.
Attitudes of defeat.
ELIZABETH kisses PAUL and looks at sullen RICK and leaves.

SOHO LOFT

OUISA

She was one of those armies of
young people who come to New York
filled with dreams and end up on a treadmill
working and working just to stay alive.

INT A WEST SIDE RESTAURANT NIGHT

ELIZABETH is one of the few waitresses in this crowded bar
and works very hard.

EXT CASH MACHINE NIGHT

ELIZABETH gapes at the information on the screen.

105

CU MESSAGE ON SCREEN

"ACCOUNT CLOSED"

ELIZABETH begins hitting the machine to get her card back.
ELIZABETH picks up the phone on the machine and calls the

emergency number.

ELIZABETH (in phone)

There's some mistake. It says my joint account
- can you see the numbers on the screen - that's
right. that's my name. And his name. Joint
account. What do you mean? Closed? Who closed
the account? Who took everything out of the
account? Who did this! Give me my card back!
THE GUY next in line nudges her.

THE NEXT CUSTOMER

Let somebody else in here.

EXT THE KITTREDGE'S APARTMENT BUILDING NIGHT

An hysterical ELIZABETH goes into

THE LOBBY.

FRANK, the DOORMAN, is having a snooze.

ELIZABETH shakes him. HE wakes up terrified at the sight of
this hysterical creature over HIM.

ELIZABETH

- people named Kittredge. This Kittredge guy
has a black son he makes live in the park -

FRANK

Mr. Kittredge has what?

ELIZABETH

His black son took money from me -

FRANK

You have to be quiet

ELIZABETH

I want to get up to see them!

FRANK

You'll have to call or write a letter -

ELIZABETH

They owe me money!

R

106

FRANK takes ELIZABETH by the arm and ushers her out of

THE KITTREDGE'S APARTMENT BUILDING.

FRANK, the DOORMAN, bolts the front door to the-building.
ELIZABETH bangs on the door.

ELIZABETH

I'm here trying to get to meet people.
I am stranded. Who do I know to go to?
I want my money. I work tables. I work hard.
A CAB pulls up. A POSH COUPLE steps out of the cab to go
into 910 Fifth. THEY look at ELIZABETH.

ELIZABETH

"The quality of mercy is not strained?"
Fuck you, quality of mercy.
FRANK opens the door quickly. THE POSH COUPLE scoots in.
ELIZABETH kicks the building.

INT ORSO'S RESTAURANT NIGHT

FLAN and OUISA have come to this Broadway Italian
restaurant

after the theater with a MAN and WOMAN who from their dress
and manner are obviously in the theater: ANDREW and ZEANNIE.
FLAN and OUISA are in mid-story.

FLAN

- all over the building that I had abandoned
some mistake of my past in Central Park!
THE COUPLE gasps!

JEANNIE

But it's too fantastic!

FLAN

Can't you just see me marching
down South for Freedom Now!

OUISA (PROUDLY)

Yes. Yes, I can.

FLAN

It was so embarrassing.

ANDREW

Horrible!

107

OUIA

It wasn't so embarrassing.

JEANNIE

I bet Flan loves being outraged.
FLAN (mock outrage)
I don't!

ANDREW

You do! Flan loves getting into
high dudgeon! His cheeks go all rosy!
Look at his cheeks! Dudgeon becomes him.
THEY all laugh as the WAITRESS puts down the plates of food.

FLAN

To high dudgeon!
THEY all toast.
But OUIA has stopped laughing.

INT RICK AND ELIZABETH'S TENEMENT NIGHT

ELIZABETH sits up in bed in the dark. SHE impassively
watches a rat scramble across the floor. RICK comes in,
drained, dressed in a baby blue tuxedo with a ruffled blue
shirt - the kind of tux worn at high school proms.

RICK (BRIGHT)

Hi!
ELIZABETH puts on the light.

ELIZABETH

Where's the money?

BACK IN ORSO'S RESTAURANT

OUIA continues her tale.

OUIA

- she understandably wanted to know.

RICK AND ELIZABETH'S TENEMENT

RICK laughs brightly and sits beside HER on the bed.

RICK

No! Let me explain. Paul found some extra money of his own and he wanted to thank us for staying here! He would've treated you but you had to work or else we would've . We rented these tuxedos! Isn't it a gas! He's going to give us the money back! And then I'm going to take you to the Rainbow Room. That's where we went! I brought you matches!

INT THE RAINBOW ROOM NIGHT

RICK, in his ruffled blue tux, and, PAUL, in impeccable black tie, look into the Rainbow Room. THE CAPTAIN takes THEM to a table by the window. RICK and PAUL look out over the city. The view is magic!

RICK (WHISPERS)

Now did we get this table!

PAUL

Stick with me, baby. I know the right name to drop.

RICK AND ELIZABETH'S TENEMENT

RICK (laughs brightly)
And it's not that expensive for what you get. Well, it's not a bargain but it's

THE RAINBOW ROOM

THE WAITER opens a bottle of champagne.

RICK

How an I going to explain to Elizabeth about the money?
PAUL tastes the champagne. THE WAITER pours.

PAUL

She'll have it back. With interest. Wonderful bouquet. Bouquet. That's what you call the taste of the wine. And I believe that wine from the even numbered years is generally the superior to the odd numbered years. Although it's just a theory - Cheers! Skol! Prosit!

RICK

You are just about the greatest -
THE DANCE ORCHESTRA plays a salute to 1930's romance.

109

PAUL

Do you want to dance?

RICK

Elizabeth has never seen anything like here. I
wish she was... Who do we dance with?
THE ORCHESTRA segues into a tango. PAUL stands.

RICK

We're guys.

PAUL

Every moment in life is a learning experience or
what good is it? Right? Right?

RICK

Well, yes.

PAUL

Then let this bunch of jerks see class.

ORSO'S RESTAURANT

FLAN nods for their dinner guests, ANDREW and JEANNIE.

A little bit of titillation.

FLAN

They danced. That's right! High
over New York City.

THE RAINBOW ROOM

RICK and PAUL go to the dance floor and begin to dance,
PAUL leading. RICK loving it.

RICK AND ELIZABETH'S TENEMENT

RICK tries to laugh it up into a wild experience.
ELIZABETH sits impassively.

RICK

I swear nothing like this ever happened in Utah.

THE RAINBOW ROOM

At first PEOPLE don't notice RICK and PAUL dancing. Then PEOPLE do notice.

110

RICK (VO)

And, I'll tell you, nothing like that must have ever happened at the Rainbow Room because they asked us to leave. It was so funny. PAUL spins RICK round and round and the CAMERA spins with

THEM.

RICK AND ELIZABETH'S TENEMENT

RICK

You'll love the place. It's up so high.

THE RAINBOW ROOM

THE CAMERA spins around the panoramic view sixty-five floors and then spins out of the windows down onto

EXT THE ICE RINK ROCKEFELLER CENTER NIGHT

THE CAMERA focusses in on a COUPLE spinning in the middle of the ice. RICK and PAUL, hysterical with laughter, cut through Rockefeller Center and then come to Fifth Avenue where A HANSOM CARRIAGE waits. THE DRIVER tips his hat to these customers. PAUL jumps into

THE HANSOM CARRIAGE.

RICK

We don't have any money -

PAUL

Amigo! When will you learn! Money is one commodity you can always get. THE HANSOM CARRIAGE proceeds up to Central Park.

RICK leans forward looking out the isinglass windows.

RICK

I'm going to have to explain to Elizabeth about the money and calm her. She gets so nervous

ABOUT-

(PAUL draws a circle on RICK's back.)
Hey, stop that. Paul. Come on.

PAUL

I was wondering if I could fuck you.
RICK laughs. Then sees PAUL is serious.

RICK

I don't do things like that.

111

PAUL

That's what makes it so nice. You don't.

RICK AND ELIZABETH'S TENEMENT

RICK reaches over and turns off the light by the bedside.
Downstairs we hear the throb beginning of the roller disco.
ELIZABETH looks at him coldly.

RICK

- and he did and it was fantastic.

THE HANSOM CARRIAGE

Time has passed.
PAUL kisses an amazed, mused RICK on the mouth and jumps out of the CARRIAGE and goes off into the dark.

EXT CENTRAL PARK

THE DRIVER stands up seeing PAUL run out. RICK runs out of the CARRIAGE after PAUL. THE DRIVER chases them.

CU

RICK lost in the nighttime park.
RICK looks up and sees the STATUE OF THE HUSKY.

RICK AND ELIZABETH'S TENEMENT

RICK paces back and forth.

RICK

Didn't we come here for experience? Right? We can use this. Right?

ELIZABETH lies on her stomach on the bed away from him.

THE PRECINCT

ELIZABETH rolls a pencil back and forth on the desk.

FLAN and OUISA watch sympathetically.

ELIZABETH

He rambled on for hours. His own father warned me Rick was a fool and I looked at Rick and knew his father was right.

112

RICK AND ELIZABETH'S TENEMENT

RICK paces back and forth in a rage, pulling at his tux.

RICK - -

My father is not right! I can't have him be right. I wanted experience. We came here for experience. What's so wrong with that? Right? ELIZABETH is repelled by him.

ELIZABETH

Don't touch me!

THE PRECINCT

ELIZABETH rubs her hands over her face as if trying to get the memory away.

OUISA looks at FLAN and THE DETECTIVE.

ELIZABETH

He went on for a long time trying to get me just to look at him. I couldn't even do that.

RICK AND ELIZABETH'S TENEMENT

RICK

But I didn't come here to do this or lose that
or be this or do this to you. Not to you. Look
at me? Elizabeth! What did I let him do to me?

ELIZABETH

Nobody did this but you.

BACK IN ORSO'S RESTAURANT

FLAN

Now the amazing part is

OUISA

talk about six degrees

FLAN

We were in the roller disco that night!
ANDREW and JEANNIE's jaws drop.

113

OUISA

Yes! There we were roller skating for heart
disease or cancer -

FLAN

It was illiteracy.

INT ROLLER DISCO NIGHT

MIDDLE AGED PEOPLE all dolled up roll skate around and
around trying to keep their balance to 40s swing music.
Among the SKATERS we spot FLAN and OUISA at this ROLLER
DISCO BENEFIT skating round and round breathlessly going
faster and faster, laughing and laughing.
Lights flash and whirl.

ORSO'S RESTAURANT

OUISA

I hadn't skated in I hate to tell you how many

YEARS -

FLAN

We came outside giddy and reeling

0

EXT ROLLER DISCO NIGHT

Lights reflect in a puddle on the wet street. THE CAMERA pulls back to reveal it is a puddle of blood, seeping out of a crumpled body.

OUISA (VO)

The body must have just landed there in a clump

FLAN (VO)

Because the blood seeping out had not yet reached the gutter...

OUISA (VO)

The blood just oozing out slowly towards the curb.

FLAN and OUISA and another COUPLE, SANDY and CONNIE from the wedding, stop at the sight. They stare at the body that has slammed into the pavement. The body of RICK.

FLAN (VC)

The boy had jumped from above.

OUISA (VO)

We just missed it by minutes.

114

ORSO'S RESTAURANT

OUISA

Perhaps we could have saved him - called an ambulance - but it was too late -

FLAN

He could've landed on us!
ANDREW and JEANNIE are appalled. No!

OUISA frowns.

JEANNIE

It's so funny you say that. Yesterday we walked through the park by Gracie Mansion

ANDREW

and it was cold and we saw police putting a jacket on a man sitting on a bench.

JEANNIE

Only we got closer and it wasn't a jacket.

ANDREW

It was a body bag. A homeless person had frozen during the night.

OUISA

Was it that cold?

ANDREW

Sometimes there are periods where you see death everywhere.

FLAN waves to someone over there.

THE WAITRESS brings coffees.

OUISA looks straight ahead.

THE PRECINCT DAY

OUISA and FLAN sit with the DETECTIVE and ELIZABETH.

DETECTIVE

When this young lady told me the black kid was your son, it all seemed to come into place.

What I'm saying is she'll press charges.

ELIZABETH

I want Paul dead. He took all our money. He took my life. Rick's dead! You bet your life I'll press charges.

OUIA

We haven't seen him since that night.

DETECTIVE

Find him. We might have a case. a

OUIA

How do we find him?

FLAN

We'll trap him. I'll release it to the papers. I can call the New York Times. I have friends. They'll publish the story. Someone will see it. And turn him in. We'll find Paul.

OUIA

Six degrees. Six degrees.
OUIA looks at FLAN. FLAN is so secure.

INT THE FRONT DOOR OF THE KITTREDGE'S APARTMENT DAY

FLAN, in his bathrobe, opens the door and picks up the morning paper.

t HE scans through the paper, then lets out a whoop and runs through the apartment to

INSERT

NEW YORK TIMES article entitled:
"Who Says New Yorkers Don't Have a Heart"

THE KITCHEN

OUIA is making a breakfast drink at the blender.

FLAN (reading from the Times)

"Smart sophisticated tough New Yorkers such as J. Flanders Kittredge who opened their homes and pocket books to a young man learned yesterday they had been boondoggled by a confidence man now wanted by police -

FLAN pounds the kitchen counter in glee.

OUIA looks at him, askance.

EXT LINCOLN CENTER THE STATE THEATRE NIGHT

The fountain shoots up. The camera drifts up the face of the State Theatre. It's intermission. FLAN and OUIA are out on the terrace in, mid story talking to A COUPLE (ALEX and LILY) who are there with a YOUNG GIRL who is obviously an aspiring ballerina.

116

LILY

I didn't see that piece.

ALEX

We were in Aspen.
THE CHIME signals the intermission's end.

FLAN

I'll send you the clipping.

OUISA

You could wall paper the Empire State Building
with all the copies he made.

ALEX

We'll meet right here at the next intermission-
THEY return inside.

THE YOUNG BALLERINA

Did you ever hear from Sidney Poitier?

FLAN

No.

ALEX

Did you hear from the boy?

FLAN

No.

EXT CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE DAY

OUISA and FLAN get out of a taxi in front of this gothic
cathedral. THEY see KITTY and FLAN running down the street
to the same destination.

INT CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

OUISA and FLAN walk down the aisle with KITTY and LARKIN.

KITTY

Come for dinner with us after

OUISA

We'd love to but can't!

FLAN

So sorry! Have to work.

117

OUIA

Black-tie auction - Sotheby's -
FLAN leans in close to KITTY. Top secret.

A

FLAN

We are bidding tonight on an Henri Matisse.

LARKIN

The nudes? The bathers? The dancers?
THEY cut down a side aisle.

FLAN

It's a second level Matisse -

OUIA

but a Matisse -

KITTY

Who are you buying it for? The Japanese?
Germans?
AN ORGAN suddenly begins playing a triumphant Bach cantata.

OUIA

Not allowed to tell.
OUIA turns to look up at the choir loft.

LARKIN

Then it's the Germans.

FLAN

They'll go as high as -

OUIA

Don't tell all the family secrets -

FLAN

Well over 25 million.

LARKIN

Out of which you will keep -

OUISA

Not that much in this new market.

118

FLAN

Ugh. Bring back the 80s.

I'll have to give most of it away, but the good part is it gives me a credibility in this new market. It's all out of whack. Everything's up. Everything's down. I mean, a David Fucking Hockney print sold for a hundred bucks fifteen years ago went for Thirty four thousand dollars! A print! A flower. You know Geoffrey. our South African -
OUISA shushes FLAN.
THEY have arrived at

INT THE BAPTISTRY OF THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

OUISA and FLAN are part of the GROUP in this stone Gothic chamber witnessing the baptism of the infant child of two FRIENDS of theirs. KITTY and LARKIN are the godparents. EVERYBODY applauds as THE PRIEST shakes the water on the baby's head.

CU A SHOWER HEAD

spewing a jet of water

INT KITTRIDGE'S MASTER BEDROOM/BATHROOM EARLY EVENING

FLAN is in the shower singing merrily.

FLAN

The Matisse will be mine

- for a few hours

Then off to Tokyo

Off to Saudi

OUISA is on the speaker phone with TESS while she is dressing for the auction.

TESS (VO)

What do you have on?

OUIA

I'm totally dolled up. The black. Have you seen it? I have to tell you the sign I saw today. Cruelty-free cosmetics. A store was selling cruelty-free cosmetics.

INT HARVARD DORM ROOM

TESS is curled up on her bed enjoying this chat.

119

TESS

Mother, that is such a beautiful thing. Do you realize the agony cosmetic companies put rabbits through to test eye shadow?

A

MASTER BEDROOM

OUIA

Dearest, I know that. I'm only talking about the phrase. Cruelty-free cosmetics should take away all evidence of time and cellulite and--

HARVARD DORM ROOM

TESS

Mother, I'm getting married.

MASTER BEDROOM

OUIA picks up the receiver on the cordless phone. This is too important for 'a speaker phone.

OUIA

I thought you were going to Afghanistan.

TESS (VO)

I am going to get married and then go to Afghanistan.

OUIA

One country at a time. You are not getting married.

HARVARD DORM ROOM

TESS

Immediately so deeply negative--

OUIA (VO)

I know everyone you know and you are not marrying any of them.

TESS

The arrogance that you would assume you know everyone I know. The way you say it: I know everyone you know -

MASTER BEDROOM

In the Background, FLAN shaves at the bathroom mirror.

120

OUIA

Unless you met them in the last two days - you can't hold a secret.
(The other line rings)
Wait- I'm putting you on hold

TESS (VO)

No one ever calls on that number.

OUIA

Wait. Hold on.

TESS (VO)

Mother!

OUIA

Hello?

EXT UNIDENTIFIED PHONE BOOTH DUSK

Lights flash on the glass of this UNSPECIFIED LOCATION.
PAUL, frightened, is on a street phone AND dressed as HE was

when TRENT first met him, ragged, scared.

PAUL

Hello?

BACK IN THE MASTER BEDROOM

OUISA

Paul?

We will cut back and forth between these two locations for the remainder of this scene. At times, the two will share the screen.

During this scene OUISA walks throughout THE APARTMENT speaking on the cordless phone.

PAUL

I saw the story in the paper. I didn't know the boy killed himself. He gave me the money. I didn't steal any -

OUISA

Let me put you on hold. I'm talking to my child.

PAUL

If you put me on hold, I'll be gone and you'll never hear from me again.
OUISA pauses.

121

HARVARD DORM ROOM

TESS

Mother! I -

A

TESS is cut off.

BACK IN THE KITTREDGE'S HALL

OUISA

You have to turn yourself in. The boy committed suicide. You stole the money. The girl is pressing charges. They're going to get you. Why not turn yourself in and you can get off easier. You can strike a bargain. Learn when you're trapped. You're so brilliant. You have such promise. You need help.

PAUL

Would you help me?

OUIA

What would you want me to do?

PAUL

Stay with you.

OUIA

That's impossible-.

PAUL

Why?

OUIA

My husband feels you betrayed him.

PAUL

Do you?

OUIA

You were lunatic! And picking that dreck off the street. Are you suicidal? Do you have AIDS? Are you infected?

PAUL

I do not have it. It's a miracle. But I don't. Do you feel I betrayed you? If you do, I'll hang up and never bother you again -

OUIA

Where have you been?

PAUL

Travelling.

OUIA

You're not in trouble? I mean, more trouble?

PAUL

No, I only visited you. I didn't like the first people so much. They went out and just left me alone. I didn't like the doctor. He was too eager to please. And he left me alone. But you. You and your husband. We all stayed together.

OUIA

What did you want from us?

PAUL

Everlasting friendship.

OUIA

Nobody has that.

PAUL

You do.

OUIA

What do you think we are?

PAUL

You're going to tell me secrets? You're not what you appear to be? You have no secrets. Trent Conway told me what your kids have told him over the years.

OUIA

What have the kids told him about us?

PAUL

I don't tell that. I save that for blackmail.

OUIA

Then perhaps I'd better hang up.

PAUL (PANIC)

No! I went to a museum! I liked Toulouse-Lautrec!

OUIA

As well you should.

PAUL

I read the Andy Warhol Diaries.

123

DUISA

Ahh, you've become an aesthete.

PAUL

Are you laughing at me?

OUIA

No. I read them too.

PAUL

I read The Agony and the Ecstasy by Irving Stone about Michelangelo painting the Sistine Chapel.

DUISA

You're ahead of me there.

PAUL

Have you seen the Sistine Chapel?

OUIA

Oh yes. Even gone to the top of it in a rickety elevator to watch the men clean it.

PAUL

You've been to the top of the Sistine Chapel? PAUL leans into the phone, amazed, as the screen floods with the brightly colored ceiling of the

INT SISTINE CHAPEL

OUIA and FLAN stand on the top of a rickety platform. THE WORIOCKN slaps it.

OUIA (VO)

Absolutely. Stood right under the hand of God touching the hand of man.

THE WORKMAN

Hit it. Hit it. It's only a fresco. OUIA looks up at the hand of God. SHE laughs and slaps

the hand of God.
PAUL smiles in wonderment as the SCREEN fills with color.
But then WE're out of his imagination and see the squalid
surroundings of his phone booth.

PAUL

You slapped God's hand!

124

KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

OUISA

I slapped God's clean hand.
And you know what they clean it with? All this
technology? Q-tips and water.
PAUL is thrilled by this bit of knowledge.

PAUL

No!

OUISA

Clean away the years of grime and soot and paint
ovens. Q-tips and water changing the history of
Western art. Vivid colors.

PAUL

Take me to see it?

OUISA

Take you to see it? Paul, they think you might
have murdered someone! You stole money!
O FLAN appears, needing help with his studs.

FLAN

Honey, could you give me a hand with--
OUISA (mouths to Flan)
It's Paul.
FLAN goes to the other phone.

FLAN

I'll call that detective.

The other phone line rings. FLAN picks it up.

INT HARVARD DORM ROOM

TESS

Dad! We were cut off. I'm getting marr -

FLAN (VO)

Darling, could you call back -

TESS

I'm getting married and going to Afghanistan -

125

BACK IN THE KITTRIDGE'S LIVING ROOM

FLAN

We cannot talk about this now -

HARVARD DORM ROOM

TESS

I'm going to ruin my life and get married and throw away everything you want me to be because it's the only way to hurt you!

TESS hangs up.

ANOTHER PHONE is picked up. It is at

THE PRECINCT.

THE DETECTIVE doesn't even get to say "Hello".

FLAN (on the phone)

I've got that kid on the line.

DETECTIVE

Find out where he is.

KITTREDGE'S LIVING ROOM

FLAN (mouths to Ouisa)

Find out where he is

PAUL

Who's there?

OUIA

Look, why don't you come here. Where are you?
PAUL, pressed in the battered phone booth, doesn't want to be in this cold street with its brightly lit squalor. HE wants to be at OUIA's, but his fear wins out.

PAUL

I come there and you'll have the cops waiting.

OUIA

You have to trust us.

PAUL

Why?

OUIA

Because - we like you.

126

FLAN (mouths)

Where is he?

PAUL, straining to hear, gets very paranoid.

PAUL

Who's there?

IT'S -

I'm not here.

It's Flan.

FLAN groans impatiently.

PAUL brightens.

THE OPERATOR makes noises.

PAUL drops a coin in the box.

PAUL

Are you in tonight? I could come and make a feast for you.

OUIA

We're going out now. But you could be here when

we come back.

FLAN

Are you nuts! Tell a crook we're going out. The house is empty.

PAUL

Where are you going?

OUIA

To Sotheby's.
FLAN grabs the phone.

FLAN (SARCASTIC)

The key's under the mat!
PAUL is as cheery as HE can be.

PAUL

Hi! Can I come to Sotheby's?
FLAN thrusts the phone back to OUIA.

127

OUIA

Hi.

PAUL

I said hi to Flan.

OUIA

FLAN

OUIA

PAUL

That's wonderful! I'll come!

OUIA

You can't.

PAUL

Why? I was helpful last time -

FLAN

Thank him - he was very help -
OUIA hands FLAN the phone.

FLAN

Paul? You were helpful getting me that money
for the Cezanne. You impressed Geoffrey -

PAUL

Really! I was thinking maybe that's what I
should do is what you do - in art but making
money out of art and meeting people and not
working in an office -

FLAN

You only see the glam side of it. There's a
whole grotty side that -

PAUL

I could learn the grotty -

FLAN

You have to have art history. You have to have
language. You have to have economics -

-- **PAUL**

I'm fast. I could do it. Do your kids want to

128

FLAN

No, it's not really a profession you hand down
from generation to gen - what the hell at I
talking career counselling to you! You
embarrassed me in my building! You stole money.
There is a warrant out for your arrest.'
OUIA (wrests the phone away)
Don't hang up! Paul? Are you there? Paul!
(TO FLAN) You made him hang up -

PAUL

I'm here.

OUI SA

You are! Who are you? What's your real name?

PAUL

If you let me stay with you, I'll tell you.
That night was the happiest night I ever had.
OUI SA (to Flan)
It was the happiest night he ever had.

FLAN

Oh please. I am not a bullshitter but never
bullshit a bullshitter.
FLAN goes.
SHE paces into the KITCHEN, looking at the implements PAUL
had used that night, the funny candelabra.

OUI SA

Why?

PAUL

You let me use all the parts of
myself that night -
OUI SA opens the door into the DINING ROOM.

OUI SA

It was magical. That Salinger stuff -
SHE turns on the chandelier in the DINING ROOM.

PAUL

Graduation speech at Groton two years ago.

OUI SA

Your cooking -

129

PAUL

Other people's recipes. Did you see Donald
Harthleme's obituary? He said Collage was the
art form of the 20th century.

OUIA

Everything is somebody else's-

PAUL

Not your children. Not your life.
SHE walks around the empty dining room table.

OUIA

Yes. You got me there. That is mine.
It is no one else's.

PAUL

You don't sound happy.
SHE walks back into the LIVING ROOM.

OUIA

There's so much you don't know. You are so.
smart and so stupid -

PAUL slams the side of the phone booth.

PAUL (FURIOUS)

Never say I'm stupid -

OUIA

Have some flexibility! You're stupid not to
recognize what you could be.

PAUL

What could I be?

OUIA

So much.

PAUL

With you behind me?

OUIA

Perhaps. You liked that night?
I've thought since that you spent
all your time laughing at us.

PAUL

No.

130

SHE walks down the HALL.

DUISA

That you had brought that awful hustling thing
back to show us your contempt -

PAUL

I was so happy. I wanted to add sex to it.
Don't you do that?
OUIA looks into the MASTER BEDROOM and goes in.

DUISA (PAUSE)

No.

PAUL

I'll tell you my name.

OUIA

Please?

PAUL

It's Paul Poitier-Kittredge.
It's a hyphenated name.
SHE sits on her bed.

OUIA

Paul? You need help. Go to the police. Turn
yourself in. You'll be over it all the sooner.
You can start.

PAUL

Start what?

OUIA

Your life.

PAUL

Will you help me?
OUIA stands up.

OUIA

I will help you. But you have to go to the
police and go to jail and -

PAUL

Will you send me books and polaroids of you and
cassettes? And letters?

131

OUIA

Yes.
OUIA walks rapidly down the HALL.

PAUL

Will you visit me?

OUIA

I will visit you.

PAUL

And when you do, you'll wear your
best clothes and knock em dead?
SHE's in the LIVING ROOM.

OUIA

I'll knock em dead. But you've got to be careful
in prison. You have to use condoms.

PAUL

I won't have sex in prison. I only
have sex when I'm happy.

OUIA

Go to the police.

PAUL

Will you take me?

OUIA

I'll give you the name of-the detective to see-

PAUL

I'll be treated with care if you
take me to the police. If they don't
know you're special, they kill you.

OUIA

I don't think they kill you.
PAUL puts the phone receiver over his head in a sudden
gesture of fear. Then HE returns the receiver to his ear.

PAUL

Mrs. Louisa Kittredge, I am black.

PAUSE.

132

OUIA

I will deliver you to them with kindness and affection.

PAUL

And I'll plead guilty and go to prison and serve a few months.

OUIA

A few months tops.

PAUL

Then I'll come out and work for you and learn -

OUIA

We'll work that out.

PAUL

I want to know now.

OUIA

Yes. You'll work for us.

PAUL

Learn all the trade. Not just the grotty part.

OUIA

Top to bottom.

PAUL

And live with you.

OUIA

No.

PAUL

Your kids are away.

OUIA

You should have your own place.

PAUL

You'll help me find a place?

OUIA

We'll help you find a place.

PAUL

I have no furniture.

133

OUIA

We'll help you out.

PAUL beams as HE becomes the PAUL from that night. His imagination is off and running. The lights, from wherever HE is, shine on his face and reflect on the broken glass of the booth.

PAUL

I made a list of things I liked in the museum.
Philadelphia Chippendale.

OUIA

Believe it or not, we have two Philadelphia
Chippendale chairs -

PAUL

I'd rather have one nice piece than
a room full of junk.

OUIA

Quality. Always. You'll have all that.
Philadelphia Chippendale.

PAUL

All I have to do is go to the police.

OUIA

Make it all history. Put it behind you.

PAUL

Tonight.

OUI SA

It can't be tonight. I will take you tomorrow.
We have an auction tonight at Sotheby's -

PAUL

Bring me?

OUI SA

I can't. It's black tie.

PAUL

I have black tie from a time I
went to the Rainbow Room. Have
you ever been to the Rainbow Room?

OUI SA

Yes.

134

PAUL

What time do you have to be there?

OUI SA

Eight o'clock.

PAUL

It's five thirty now. You could come
get me now and take me to the police
tonight and then go to Sotheby's--

OUI SA

We're going to drinks before at the Pierre.

PAUL

Japanese?

OUI SA

Germans.

PAUL

You're just like my father.

OUIA

Which father?

PAUL

Sidney!

PAUSE.

OUIA

Paul. He's not your father. And
Flanders. is not your father.
FLAN comes in to the living room, dressed.

FLAN

Oh fuck. We have drinks with the Japanese at
six- fifteen - Get off that fucking phone. Is
it that kid? Get him out of our life! Get off
that phone or I'll rip it out of the wall!
OUIA (looks at FLAN)
Paul, I made a mistake. It is not the Germans.
We will come right now and get you. Where are
you? Tell me? I'll take you to the police. They
will treat you with dignity.

135

EXT PHONEBOOTH BY THE MARQUEE OF THE WAVERLY THEATER,

GREENWICH VILLAGE

PAUL

I'm in the lobby of the Waverly movie theater on
Sixth Avenue and Third Street.

KITTRIDGE'S LIVING ROOM

OUIA

We'll be there in half an hour.

PAUL

I'll give you fifteen minutes grace time.

OUISA

We'll be there. Paul. We love you.

PAUL

Ouisa., I love you. Ouisa Kittredge. Hey?
Bring a pink shirt.

OUISA

We'll have a wonderful life.
SHE hangs up and looks at FLAN.

OUISA

We can skip the shmoozing. Pick
the boy up, take him to the police
and be at Sotheby's before eight.

INT A FORMAL DINING ROOM

Of all the PARTIES we've been to, this is the most luxurious
of all, given by one of New York's legendary hostess's, a
glamorous woman who must be in her late 80s, MRS. BANNISTER.
OUISA and FLAN are here.

This dinner is really a state occasion in honor of that
United Nations type at MRS. BANNISTER'S right.
But FLAN and OUISA have captured the table.

OUISA

t The story ended there...

FLAN

It did not!
Clearly OUISA is as disturbed by the telling of the events
as FLAN is energized.

136

OUISA

There are so many other people here tonight. We
didn't mean to take up so much
MRS. BANNISTER slams her napkin down.

MRS. BANNISTER

No! It's my supper and I command you to sing!

FLAN

We called our new best friend, the detective.

OUISA

We told them Paul was at the Waverly theater.
FLAN (to his dinner partner)
Sixth Avenue and Third Street. The lobby.

OUISA

But we had promised Paul that we would
bring him to the police. We told the police he
was special.

FLAN

Well, Ouisa did.

OUISA

The detective said he'd honor our promise.

FLAN

We skipped the cocktails

OUISA

But we didn't count on

EXT TRAFFIC ON FIFTH AVENUE

OUISA and FLAN in dinner clothes are stuck in a traffic jam.

OUISA (VO)

Traffic traffic traffic
FLAN gets out of the car and looks ahead in this din of
honking horns.

EXT WAVERLY MOVIE THEATER, GREENWICH VILLAGE NIGHT

FLAN and OUISA speed up Sixth Avenue and double park in
front of the Waverly Movie Theater.
Two Cop cars are there. Red lights spinning.
PEOPLE gape on the street.

137

THEY see PAUL being dragged into one of the two Cop cars,
t kicking and screaming.
THE COPS throw PAUL into the back seat.

FLAN tries to talk to one of the POLICE while OUISA runs up to the Cop car window.
PAUL, being handcuffed, looks at OUISA. HE smiles as if HE's bumped into DUISA at a cocktail party.

PAUL

The Kandinsky is painted on both sides.
DUISA is startled. THE COP slams the car door on PAUL.

OUISA

Paul? Officer? Let me go with you -
I promised I'd take him!

OFFICER

Lady. Out of the way --
FLAN takes OUISA's-arm.

OUISA

We have to do soaething!

FLAN

Let's just get the hell out of here.
THE COP CAR pulls away, sirens blaring.
PAUL turns and looks at OUISA. Betrayal.

BACK IN THE FORMAL DINING ROOM

MRS. BANNISTER

There's nothing more you can do -

FLAN

What could we do? We tried.

OUISA

went to the precinct.

INT THE PRECINCT DAY

DUISA hands the detective's card to the DESK CLERK.

CLERK

He's transferred.

OUISA

Since yesterday? He's been handling this

138

CLERK

He's transferred -

OUISA

This is about an arrest made yesterday at the Waverly Movie theater -
THE CLERK checks the records.

CLERK

This precinct didn't do any business at the Waverly Theater.

OUISA

I didn't imagine it -

CLERK

I'm not saying you did.

OUISA

Could you find out which precinct -
THE CLERK looks through the book.

CLERK

The name?

OUISA

Poitier. He's a young black man. Or maybe Kittredge. I don't know the exact name -

CLERK

Are you family?

OUISA

Not exactly. But the detective promised me yesterday that I could go with the young man when he was arraigned to let them know he was special.

CLERK

We have no record of it. Some other precinct must have made the arrest. It sounds like your special friend was wanted for something else.

OUISA

Like what?

CLERK

Lady, how can I help you? You don't even know your friend's name.

139

OUIA

We can find anybody - Six degrees
THE CLERK closes the book.

BACK IN THE FORMAL DINING ROOM

OUIA

We weren't family. We didn't know Paul's name.

EXT HOGAN PLACE THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE DAY

OUIA (VO)

I went to the District Attorney's office.
we weren't family. We didn't know Paul's name.

EXT THE CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING

OUIA (VO)

I called the Criminal Courts.
I wasn't family. I didn't know Paul's name.

THE FORMAL DINING ROOM

OUIA

You see, I read today that a young man
committed suicide in Riker's Island.
Tied a shirt around his neck and hanged
himself. Was it the pink shirt? This
burst of color? The pink shirt. Was it Paul?
We never found out who he was.

FLAN

I'm sure it's not him.

MRS. BANNISTER

Yes. I agree. Isn't it amazing.

FLAN

He'll be back. We haven't heard the last of him. The imagination. He'll find a way. Could we talk about something else? Our guest of honor tonight- it's such a pleasure to meet you- But.THE GUEST OF HONOR FROM THE UN leans forward.

THE GUEST OF HONOR

Why does it mean so much to you?

140

OUISA

He wanted to be us. Everything we are in the world, this paltry thing--our life--he wanted it. He stabbed himself to get into our lives. He envied us. We're not enough to be envied.

FLAN

Like the papers said. We have hearts.

OUISA

Having a heart is not the point. We were hardly taken in. We believed him -- for a few hours. He did more for us in a few hours than our children ever did. He wanted to be your child. Don't let that go. He sat out in that park and said that man is my father. He's in trouble and we don't know how to help him.

FLAN

Help him? He could've killed me. And you. THE GUESTS agree.

OUISA

You were attracted to him -

FLAN throws down his napkin in mock outrage. Almogj mock outrage.

FLAN

Cut me out of that pathology! You are on your own -

OUISA

Attracted by youth and his talent and the embarrassing prospect of being in the movie version of Cats. Did you put that in your Times piece? And we turn him into anecdote to dine out on. Like this. As we are right now. But it was an experience. I will not turn him into an anecdote. How do we fit what happened to us into life without turning it into an anecdote with no teeth and a punch line we'll mouth over and over for years to come. "Tell the story about the imposter who came into our lives---" "That reminds me of the time this boy--". And we become these human juke boxes spilling out these anecdotes. But it was an experience. How do we keep the experience?
OUISA looks around the dinner table.
THE GUESTS have decided to start on their dinners.

141

FLAN (to his Dinner Partner)

That's why I love paintings. Cezanne. The problems he brought up are the problems painters are still dealing with. Color. Structure. Those are problems.
OUISA (to herself)
There is color in my life, but I'm not aware of any structure.

FLAN

What are you saying, darling?
OUISA looks at FLAN clinically. FLAN frowns and turns back to his dinner partner brightly.

FLAN

Cezanne would leave blank spaces in his canvasses if he couldn't account for the brush stroke, give a reason for the color.

OUISA

Then I am a collage of unaccounted-for brush

strokes. I an all random.

OUISA stands up from the dinner table.
Her chair scrapes. There is an embarrassed rush.
MRS. BANNISTER (an order)
Sit down.
OUISA leaves the dinner table.

THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE FORMAL DINNER PARTY

OUISA pushes the elevator button.
FLAN comes into the hall.

FLAN

What kind of behavior is -

OUISA

God, Flan, how much of your life
can you account for?
THE ELEVATOR DOOR opens.

FLAN

Do you realize how important this woman is!
SHE steps in the elevator. FLAN follows.

142

THEY descend in silence, not wanting a scene in front of the
THE OPERATOR. THE ELEVATOR DOOR opens into the lobby.

INT PARK AVENUE LOBBY NIGHT

FLAN follows OUISA through the lobby.

FLAN

Are you drunk? What are you unhappy about? The
Cezanne sale went through. The Matisse went
through. We are rich. Geoffrey's rich. Next
month there's a Bonnard and after that -

OUISA

These are the times I would take a knife and dig
out your heart. Answer me? How much of your -

FLAN

- life can I account for! All! I am a gambler!
OUISA smiles at the simplicity of her realization.

OUISA

We're a terrible match.
OUISA steps out onto

EXT PARK AVENUE NIGHT

FLAN (following OUISA)

She is a very important woman. I am hoping to do business! Did you see the paintings on her walls! She might want to sell! She

FLAN glares at HER and turns back into the lobby and returns to the party.

OUISA moves to follow FLAN, then walks up PARK AVENUE, lost, agitated, unsure.

OUISA walks on, remembering

THE SISTINE CHAPEL.

OUISA's hand completes the action.

OUISA slaps the frescoed ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

OUISA slaps the Hand of God!

PARK AVENUE

OUISA gasps when SHE looks in a SHOP WINDOW