

**"THE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS"**

An Original Screenplay  
by  
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**WARNER BROS. INC.**

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**"THE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS"**

**FADE IN:**

**JACK BAKER**

is standing before a dirty window, looking  
out at a dirty city street. He is wearing a tuxedo.

**VOICE (O.S.)**

Hey.

**WIDEN ANGLE**

It's the GIRL from this afternoon.

**JACK**

Hey.

Jack looks at the Girl, sleepy and warm under the  
bedcovers, then at the rest of the apartment.  
Not good.

**GIRL**

Whatcha doin' over there?

**JACK**

Gotta go.

**GIRL**

How come?

**JACK**

Job.

The Girl glances at the bedside clock.

**GIRL**

Funny hours.

**JACK**

Funny job.

**GIRL**

Will I see you again?

Jack looks out at the dirty street again.

**JACK**

No.

The Girl doesn't appear terribly unnerved by this.

**GIRL**

(at the tux)

You weren't wearing that, were you? Earlier.

Jack shakes his head, taps a brown paper bag on the sill.

**JACK**

Brought it.

**GIRL**

Shit, thank God. You look like a creep.

**JACK**

Thanks.

**GIRL**

I mean, I'd hate to think I'd pick up someone who wore that shit.

Jack smiles, grabs the paper bag, and moves to the door.

**GIRL**

(continuing)

Hey.

(as he stops)

You got great hands.

**EXT. STREET - JACK**

Jack ain't exactly Cary Grant, but any guy wearing a tux on these streets doesn't exactly mesh with the milieu. Pausing for a flask of whiskey at an all-night liquor store, he breaks the seal before he hits the sidewalk and moves on, drinking as he goes. Finally, he comes to a nice downtown hotel. Slipping the bottle in his coat, he squints up at the glittering building as if sizing up an opponent.

**DOORMAN**

Hey, Jackie!

**JACK**

How goes it, Tommy?

**TOMMY (DOORMAN)**

(shrugging)

Ah, you know. Howsa pooch?

**JACK**

Losing his teeth.

**TOMMY**

No shit. It's the goddamn water. Kill an ox. I buy bottled for my Danny. You can't trust the taps.

**JACK**

Yeah.

(standing back)

Jesus, you look like fucking royalty, Tommy.

Tommy brushes at his new velvet coat.

**TOMMY**

Yeah. The big boys sent it down yesterday.

**JACK**

Another five years, huh?

**TOMMY**

Like clockwork. You got a good memory, Jackie.

**JACK**

It ain't always a blessing. My brother here?

**TOMMY**

(nodding)

He's got blood in his eye.

Jack glances at his watch, waves to Tommy, and moves into the hotel.

**INT. HOTEL - ANGLE ON FRANK**

Jack's older brother, FRANK, is pacing outside the lounge when he sees Jack approaching.

**FRANK**

Great. Terrific. Glad you could make it.

**JACK**

How we doing?

**FRANK**

How we ... ? What, are you kidding me?

**JACK**

Am I late?

**FRANK**

That's not the point.

**JACK**

(taking out a cigarette)  
What's the point?

**FRANK**

You cannot continue to walk in at the last moment, Jack.

**JACK**

You want me to show up late a few nights?

**FRANK**

Jack.

**JACK**

Frank.

**FRANK**

Jack.

**JACK**

Frank. I'm here. I always get here. Don't sweat it.

**FRANK**

Christ, will you look at your hair?

**ANOTHER ANGLE**

Jack turns to the wall, which is paneled in tiny tinted mirrors shot through with veins of gold.

**JACK**

What's wrong with it?

**FRANK**

You look like you just crawled out of bed.

**JACK**

No one's gonna be looking at my hair. Come on, we're on.

Frank just stands there, bottled up with exasperation.

**JACK**

(continuing)

Careful, Frank. When you get angry your tie starts to spin.

Jack steps into the lounge and Frank, shaking his head, follows. As they move away, a cardboard stand-up is revealed. On it are two 8 X 10 glossies of Frank and Jack, and below printed in bold letters, this: "Tonight! The Doubly Delightful Tones of the Fabulous Baker Boys!"

**BAKER BROTHERS**

as they make their way through the dimly-lit lounge and settle behind matching pianos, it becomes apparent that what the "Fabulous Baker Boys" are, in fact, is a poor man's version of Ferrante and Teicher.

**WIDER ANGLE INCLUDING LOUNGE**

As they begin to plink out their "theme song" tables of middle-aged couples sipping enormous banana daiquiries begin to tap their feet and bob their heads. After a few bars, the boys finish with a flourish and the couples applaud.

**FRANK**

(Mr. Smile)

Thank you. Thank you. Good evening and welcome to the Starfire lounge. My name is Frank Baker and eighty-eight keys across from me is my little brother, Jack.

Applause. Little brother Jack smiles, winks, and takes a draw on his cigarette.

**FRANK**

(continuing; could do this in his sleep)  
You know, my brother and I have been playing together, gosh, I don't know. How long has it been, Jack?

**JACK**

Twenty-eight years, Frank.

Applause.

**FRANK**

That's a lot of water under the bridge, eh, Jack?

**JACK**

Lotta water.

**FRANK**

Of course, back then, things were a little different. I was eight, Jack was seven, just about the only song we knew was 'My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean', and the only one who would listen to us was the family cat, Cecil.

(to Jack)

We must have shaved three lives off that cat, eh, Jack?

Laughter. Jack smiles like he's got a mouth full of razor blades.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

But seriously. It's been fifteen years since Jack and I first stepped on the stage as professionals. Three states, sixty-eight cities, and more-grayhairs-then-we'd-like-to-admit later... well, believe me, we've seen our share of this crazy country of ours. But even though we've played some of the finest venues in the world ...

At this point, Jack begins to mimic his brother's words.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

... There's one place that's always been, for us,  
a very special place, and that place is... this  
place, the Starfire lounge.

Jack lays in a few soft bass chords.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Why? Well, I guess you could just say it's  
the ...

(pregnant moment)

... people.

At which point Frank's hands descend onto the keyboard  
and give birth to the melody of -- what else? "People."

**JACK AND FRANK - LATER**

They exit the stage to applause.

**FRANK**

Thank you. Remember, room service is available  
till one A.M. for you late-nighters.

**INT. HOTEL KITCHEN**

Jack and Frank pass through the steamy hotel kitchen.

**FRANK**

Don't make trouble, all right?

**JACK**

Who's gonna make trouble?

(spotting someone)

Hey, amigo!

**JACK'S POV - MAN**

in an apron, cutting meat off a huge soup bone,  
looks up.

**BACK TO SCENE**

**MAN**

Jack!

(lower)

Frank.

**FRANK**

(the feeling's mutual)  
Yeah, hi, Hector.

**HECTOR (MAN)**

(re: the soup bone)  
For Eddie. I wrap.

**JACK**

Gracias.

**FRANK**

(as they exit)  
I mean it, Jack. Behave.

**JACK**

Like an angel.

**INT. OFFICE**

Frank stands across the desk from a YOUNG MAN who, despite his youth, has an irritatingly paternal attitude toward the two men in his office. Jack stays in the doorway, smoking a cigarette, as if to venture any further is to risk contracting some hideous disease.

**LLOYD (YOUNG MAN)**

(preparing a cash envelope)  
Terrific, boys. Really. Terrific.

**FRANK**

Thanks, Lloyd.

**LLOYD**

Yes, sir. You're just what we needed on a night like this.

**FRANK**

Uh ... thanks.

Frank glances at Jack and realizes he should have left him in the kitchen with Hector and the soup bone.

**LLOYD**

Only, Jack, do me a favor, will ya, pal? If you wanna smoke, put on a pair of sunglasses and go play with the niggers on State Street. These blisters from the midwest don't wanna watch some guy dripping ash all over himself while he's



playing 'The Sound of Music.'

**ANGLE - JACK**

Smoke curls out of Jack's nose. He is utterly still, like a pit bull eyeing a steak.

**BACK TO SCENE**

**LLOYD**

Okay, boys, that ought to buy you a few more lessons. By the way, Frankie, I'm declaring this.

Lloyd slaps a slender envelope onto the desk and, business closed, busies himself with other matters.

**FRANK**

Uh ... You don't know when you'll be wanting us back, do you, Lloyd?

**LLOYD**

I'll call you.

**FRANK**

Uh, well, you know, the way our schedule is, I thought maybe...

**LLOYD**

I'll call you.

Frank bites down and takes the envelope from the desk.

**JACK**

Count it.

**FRANK**

Huh?

**JACK**

Count it.

**FRANK**

Jack...

**JACK**

Count the fucking money, Frank.

Lloyd looks up. Jack is staring right into him. Reluctantly, Frank opens the envelope.

**FRANK**

It's all here.

(pulling Jack out)  
I'll be talking to you, Lloyd.

Lloyd doesn't answer. He just looks at Jack, smiling with amusement.

**EXT. STREET - JACK AND FRANK**

Jack comes out onto the street holding the wrapped soup bone, dogged by Frank, who's got the cardboard stand-up under his arm.

**FRANK**

You mind telling me what that was about in there?  
Was that planned?  
Or were you just bored and decided  
to get creative?

**JACK**

Fuck him.

**FRANK**

This isn't the Pine Tree Inn on  
Route 81, Jack.

**JACK**

Fuck him.

**FRANK**

(to himself)  
Fuck him. Great. Terrific. Fuck him.

The fabulous Bakers walk in silence until they come to Frank's car. Frank opens the trunk and starts to put the stand-up away.

**JACK**

So we on tomorrow night?

**FRANK**

(shaking his head)  
Maybe Thursday. I hear the harpist at the  
Sheraton's got appendicitis.

Jack nods and starts to walk away.

**FRANK**

(continuing)  
Hey.

Jack stops.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Listen ... why don't you come out to the house  
this weekend. Say hello to the kids.  
They've grown.

**JACK**

I hate your kids, Frank.

**FRANK**

You're their uncle.

**JACK**

Only by relation. Besides, they hate me, too.

**FRANK**

They don't. They're always asking about you.

**JACK**

They tried to electrocute me, Frank.

**FRANK**

It was an accident.

**JACK**

It was no fucking accident, Frank. The little  
one ...

**FRANK**

Cindy.

**JACK**

She threw a goddamn radio into the bathtub.  
How do you explain that?

**FRANK**

She didn't know what she was doing.  
You're too sensitive.

**JACK**

You got weird kids, Frank.

**FRANK**

Look, I just thought if you came out you might  
see what you're missing.

Jack just stares at Frank.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Just think about it, all right?

Consider it a standing offer.

Frank closes the trunk and moves to the driver's side.

**FRANK**

(continuing;like a litany)  
You want a ride, Jack? No, Frank,  
I'll walk. Okay, Jack, good night.  
Good night, Frank.

Frank turns the ENGINE OVER and pulls away from the curb. Jack watches the taillights burn into the distance, then takes the whiskey bottle from his coat and heads for home.

**ANGLE - APARTMENT BUILDING**

Jack crosses the street and waves up to his apartment building, where a black labrador is studying him from a second story window.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT**

Jack's apartment is small, old, and comfortably cluttered. The most striking item is a vintage phone booth placed against the wall. As Jack lets himself in, EDDIE, the dog from the window, walks over. He is not an overly enthusiastic dog, but you can see from his face that he has a great deal of affection for Jack.

**JACK**

Hi, pal. Thought you were gonna clean the apartment.

Eddie nuzzles the soup bone. Jack unwraps the paper and hands it over.

**JACK**

(continuing)  
Take it easy, will ya? You're becoming a regular Johnny Appleseed the way you're dropping teeth around here.

Jack hangs his tie on the phone booth and walks over to an old phonograph stacked six deep with discs. He lifts the records back up the post and clicks ON the MACHINE. As Bill Evans' smoky "PEACE PIECE" fills the tiny apartment, Jack breaks the collar of his shirt and walks over to the old piano near the window. Settling back with the bottle of whiskey, Jack rests his elbows gently on the keys and stares out the open window,

listening to the music.

**INT. PIANO STORE**

Jack and Frank work opposite sides of a large piano showroom, inspecting rentals of every style and color. WILLIE, the owner of the place, leans against a cheap upright, contemplating his shoes.

**FRANK**

What happened to the two Clays, Willie?

**WILLIE**

Out.

**FRANK**

When they coming in?

**WILLIE**

Wednesday next.  
Frank looks across the room at Jack.

**FRANK**

What d'ya got?,

**JACK**

Bosen black.  
(taps a key)  
Flat.

**FRANK**

What d'you say, Willie? Tighten her up?

**WILLIE**

What's the gig?

**FRANK**

Two nights.

Willie just looks at his shoes and shakes his head.  
Frank frowns and glances around.  
Across the room, Jack pauses before another piano.

**FRANK**

(continuing)  
What d'ya got?

**JACK**

(tapping)  
Yamaha white. Nice.

Frank moves to another grand and alternates taps with his brother to see if the two pianos are in harmony.

**FRANK**

What do you think?

**JACK**

Try the black Knable.

Frank moves to another piano and repeats the process, watching Jack for a verdict. After a moment, Jack nods.

**FRANK**

Tag 'em, Willie. The Regency downtown, Thursday-Friday. Thanks.

**WILLIE**

My pleasure.

**INT. DINER**

The brothers sit at a window of a corner diner, Jack nursing an ice coffee, Frank playing with a plate of scrambled eggs. The glass next to them is cluttered with photographs of neighborhood luminaries, including two of Jack and Frank in their tuxedos.

**FRANK**

You know, I think it's been five years since I saw you eat anything. That's the God's truth.

**JACK**

Trust me, you're not missing anything.

**FRANK**

You look awful.

**JACK**

Thanks.

**FRANK**

Really. You sleeping?

**JACK**

Only on odd days.

**FRANK**

(a look)

Seeing anyone in particular?

**JACK**

Why the interest?

**FRANK**

Because I'm your brother. Because I care about you. Because sometimes it seems like the most significant relationship in your life is with that goddamn dog of yours.

Jack studies his brother's face.

**JACK**

I'm not seeing anyone. In particular.

**FRANK**

What about that waitress at the Ambassador?

**JACK**

Uh-uh. How about you? You seeing anyone?

**FRANK**

Funny.

(points at his wedding band)

Strike a bell?

**JACK**

It's only a ring. Not a collar.

**FRANK**

It's more than that.

Jack smiles and sips his coffee.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

By the way, we gotta go see Ma tomorrow.

**JACK**

No thanks.

**FRANK**

No, I mean it.

**JACK**

So do I.

**FRANK**

We gotta go, Jack.

**JACK**

No, you gotta go 'cause if you don't get up there every couple weeks you feel guilty. I won't feel guilty, so I don't gotta go.

**FRANK**

This time you gotta go.

**JACK**

I don't gotta go.

**FRANK**

You gotta go.

**JACK**

Says who?

**FRANK**

Your older brother.

**JACK**

You're thirteen months older than me, Frank. That might've meant something in the Apache clubhouse, but it don't cut too deep anymore.

**FRANK**

Christ, Jack, it's her birthday.

Jack glances up. Frank nods.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

So what do you say?

Think the city can spare you for an afternoon?

Jack squints out the window.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Okay. And don't worry about a present.

I got her something from both of us.

**EXT. STREET**

Jack, cradling a pink bakery box in one hand, gets out of Frank's car and surveys the street on which he grew up.

**FRANK**

Make sure you lock.

**ANOTHER ANGLE**



Unless you count the elderly gentleman picking roses three houses down, there would not appear to be a wealth of potential car thieves in the immediate vicinity. But it's not Jack's car, so he doesn't press the point.

**BACK TO SCENE**

**FRANK**

Place looks good, huh? I got a neighbor boy to mow the lawn, pick up. Five bucks. Times've changed, huh?  
(pointing)  
See the tree?  
Remember the job Cecil did on it the day Dad planted it?  
You can still see the scars on the trunk. Really. I was looking at it just the other day.  
Jesus, I thought he was gonna kill that cat.

Frank smiles, recalling Cecil's near-demise, then raps on the front door. Jack studies the tree a moment, then gestures to the tiny ribboned box in Frank's hand.

**JACK**

So what'd we get her?

**FRANK**

You'll see.

**ANGLE - FRONT DOOR**

At that moment, the door swings open and ELLIE BAKER is there, a vibrant woman in her sixties.

**MRS. BAKER**

Well, if it isn't the fabulous Baker Boys!

**FRANK**

How's the birthday girl?

**MRS. BAKER**

A little stiffer, but just as sturdy.

Mrs. Baker hugs Frank, then, a bit awkwardly, embraces Jack.

**MRS. BAKER**

(continuing)  
John. It's good to see you.

**JACK**

(uncomfortable; balancing cake box)  
Good to see you, Ma.

Jack looks over his mother's shoulder at Frank and mimics "John" with a knowing nod.

**FRANK**

Uh, Ma, you know, no one calls him that anymore. Jack. He goes by Jack.

**MRS. BAKER**

I thought maybe held gotten over that.

**FRANK**

Twenty years, Ma ...

**MRS. BAKER**

Yes, yes. It's just that John is so much nicer. Jack sounds so ... crude. When I was a little girl, we had a pig on the farm named Jack. I guess I just can't help making the association.

Jack's eyes slide over to Frank as if to suggest he holds his brother personally responsible for this.

**FRANK**

Uh ... yeah, well, you know, Ma, John Kennedy went by Jack.

**MRS. BAKER**

Catholics. What do you expect?  
Oh, well, what's in a name, right?  
Let's go inside and have a look at that cake.

As Mrs. Baker exits, Frank leans over to Jack.

**FRANK**

Keep her busy, will ya?  
I have to set a few things up.

Frank disappears, leaving Jack alone on the porch with the bakery box. Jack shakes his head, wondering how he's going to make it through the afternoon, then enters the house.

**INT. HOUSE**

The front room is cluttered with his childhood. Most noticeable are the pianos: two tiny uprights, perfectly matched, their simulated ivory keys yellowed with age. Above them, pressed between glass and framed,

are the music ribbons, faded by twenty years of sunlight. Finally, there is the sheet music, dusty and dog-eared, piled everywhere in drunken stacks. This and all else in the room Jack confronts slowly, warily, but with a noticeable dispassion, until his eyes fall upon a photograph. In it, he and Frank are standing alongside a tall man in baggy slacks, safe within the arc of his long arms.

Frank is staring straight into the camera, neat, clean, perfectly posed, but Jack, a year younger, his shirt too big, is caught in profile, looking up at the tall man with an almost worshipful gaze.

**MRS. BAKER**

(entering)

Well, now, where's everyone run off to?  
Frank?

**JACK**

Downstairs.

**MRS. BAKER**

Oh.

All at once, Jack and his mother realize they are alone.

**MRS. BAKER**

Well, shall we cut that cake?

Jack nods and follows her into the kitchen. He places the box on the table and stands off to the side while Mrs. Baker sets about preparing things.

**MRS. BAKER**

So. How are you?

**JACK**

Fine. You?

**MRS. BAKER**

Oh, fine.

Silence.

Jack watches his mother poise the knife over the cake. Her fingers are trembling.

**MRS. BAKER**

(continuing)

Big piece or little?

**JACK**

Huh? Oh, no.

**MRS. BAKER**

None?

**JACK**

I'm not much for sweets.

Mrs. Baker nods.

**MRS. BAKER**

How's that dog of yours? What was his name?

**JACK**

Eddie.

**MRS. BAKER**

Yes. Right. Eddie. How is he?

**JACK**

He's losing his teeth.

Mrs. Baker stops and looks up into Jack's eyes. Suddenly, a NOISE is heard in the other room.

**MRS. BAKER**

Sounds like your brothers back with us.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Frank comes stumbling up the basement stairs with an old movie projector and a roll-up screen.

**MRS. BAKER**

(entering)

What's all this?

Frank sets the projector down and hands his mother the tiny ribboned box.

**FRANK**

Go on.

Jack watches from the kitchen doorway as Mrs. Baker pulls the ribbon off the box. Inside is a tiny spool of film.

**MRS. BAKER**

Why, what's this?

**INT. KITCHEN (LATER)**

Blank screen, curtains drawn, the room dark.  
Frank clicks on the projector and picks up his cake.  
Mrs. Baker close on his elbow,  
sets her plate on her knees and watches the screen.  
Jack sits off to the side.  
A title card appears:  
"For Mrs. Ellie Baker, who made it all possible."  
Mrs. Baker gives Frank a puzzled look.  
He just smiles.

Suddenly, images spring to the screen,  
obviously footage several years old,  
showing Jack and Frank as children,  
sitting at the tiny pianos, wearing matching suits,  
smiling matching smiles as they play for the camera.

**MRS. BAKER**

Oh my God ...

**FRANK**

Recognize these two characters?

**MRS. BAKER**

I thought these were lost.  
Where did you find ...

**FRANK**

In the attic. Behind some of Dad's stuff.  
(pointing with his fork)  
Look, Jack can hardly reach the pedals.

As Frank's laughter fills the dark room,  
Jack stares with cold fascination at the screen.  
Suddenly, a jagged cut springs the boys a year later,  
in the same positions, smiling the same smiles.

**MRS. BAKER**

(laughing)  
Oh no!

**FRANK**

I had a boy down at the camera shop cut them  
all together. Boy, old man Henderson didn't  
fool around when he gave a haircut, did he, Jack?

Jack says nothing.

**MRS. BAKER**

Oh, look at you two. So skinny.

And those tiny suits ...

**FRANK**

Wait. Watch. Here comes Dad.

Jack's eyes narrow as the film jumps another year and a man enters the frame, obviously by accident. He is so tall his face cannot be seen. As he dances quickly out of sight, he ruffles Jack's hair.

**MRS. BAKER**

That man.

As the film jumps again, Jack glances at the photograph to his right. The images on the screen flicker softly off the glass of the picture frame.

**MRS. BAKER (O.S.)**

(continuing)

Oh, look how you're growing.  
My little boys ...

Jack's eyes drift from the photograph to his mother and brother, sitting close together in the love seat, laughing. After a moment, their voices fade and Jack looks back to the children on the screen, like two tiny men, mirror images of one another. At first the changes are subtle. Little Jack's tie is askew, his shirt missing a button. But as the years flick by, the brothers resemble one another less and less, until finally, the little boy that was Jack is completely gone and in his place is a slouching, tousle-haired adolescent in rumpled coat and open collar, a cigarette hanging disdainfully from his lip. A woman's hand darts into the frame and plucks the offending cigarette away in a flash.

**INT. CAR**

Frank and Jack are parked in front of Jack's building. Whispers of steam snake from the mancovers in the street.

**JACK**

I made her nervous.

**FRANK**

What do you mean?

**JACK**

Her hands. Like that.

Jack holds out a trembling hand.

**FRANK**

Nah. Medication.

Jack looks over at Frank. He nods.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Couple years, now.

(taps his heart)

Keeps the beat steady. Nothing serious.

Jack considers this a moment, then gets out of the car.

**FRANK**

She was glad to see you.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT**

Jack lets himself into his apartment and stops. Across the room, curled up on the couch, is a little girl. Jack takes the girl gently in his arms and carries her to the bedroom. As he folds a blanket under her chin, he pauses. The girl's face is calm, peaceful.

**EXT. STREET - DAWN**

The next morning. Early. The sun is peeking sleepily between the buildings and beginning to drip out onto the street. Suddenly, RINGING OUT over the rooftops, is "JINGLE BELLS" -- not the entire song, just the first two bars, over and over.

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

Jack, on the couch, his arm draped over a slumbering Eddie, opens his eyes. Across the room, seated at the piano, is NINA, the little girl. She stops playing and turns.

**NINA**

Morning. You want coffee? I made coffee.

Jack looks into the sleepy face of Eddie and sits up.  
He nods to the coffee. Nina goes to the kitchen.

**NINA**

(continuing)

I did the dishes last night. You're missing a cup.

Jack rubs his head, then gets up and walks to the window.

**NINA**

(continuing)

Did you break a cup, Jack?

**JACK**

Eddie did.

Nina looks at Eddie, sleeping on the couch,  
then brings Jack his coffee with both hands.

**NINA**

I practiced the piano last night. Two hours.  
I think I'm ready for 'Jingle all the way.'

Jack nods. Suddenly, the sound of HEAVY FOOTSTEPS is heard.  
Jack and Nina glance up at the ceiling.

**NINA**

(continuing)

Guess they're up.

**JACK**

Sounds big. What's he do?

**NINA**

Process server.  
Ma said it's like a lawyer only the hours  
are more regular. All I know's he came to take  
the TV one afternoon and ended up staying for  
dinner. And breakfast.

**JACK**

What happened to the donut king?

**NINA**

Married.

Upstairs, a DOOR SLAMS and HEAVY FEET ECHO in the  
stairwell. Nina peers out the window.

**NINA**

No breakfast. Maybe they had a fight.



TWO DEEP THUMPS sound on the ceiling.

**NINA**

(continuing)

Well, gotta go. Teach me later?

Jack nods.

Nina kisses him on the cheek and exits.

Jack walks over to the couch and gives Eddie a nudge.

**JACK**

Hey.

**INT. LUAU LOUNGE**

Though the plastic palms and grass-skirted waitresses of the Luau Lounge make the Fabulous Baker Boys' presence seem a bit incongruous, Jack and Frank hold nothing back, giving "McCarthur Park" the full treatment. Unfortunately, the audience in the Luau Lounge wouldn't fill a Hawaiian haystack and their applause is less than volcanic.

**FRANK**

Uh, thank you. That concludes our show for this evening. Jack and I only hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as we did.

As the guests wander out, clutching their roomkeys, a freckle-faced BELLHOP comes up.

**BELLHOP**

Mr. Baker.

**FRANK**

(tired)

Yeah, Jimmy.

**JIMMY (BELLHOP)**

Mr. Simpson asked to see you.

**FRANK**

All right, tell him I'll be right there.

As Jimmy exits, Frank stands and points at Jack.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Tomorrow we close with the 'Aquarius Suite.'

**INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR**

Frank pauses before a door marked "HOTEL MANAGER."  
It's half-open. Inside, CHARLIE SIMPSON,  
a heavy man in a shiny suit,  
is throwing darts in the general direction of a  
dartboard. He's not very good. Frank knocks.

**CHARLIE**

Frankie.

**FRANK**

You wanted to see me, Charlie?

**ANOTHER ANGLE**

**CHARLIE**

Yeah, come on in.

**FRANK**

Little slow tonight.

**CHARLIE**

(waving it off)

Mondays.

Charlie takes an envelope from his desk and hands it  
to Frank.

**FRANK**

What's this?

**CHARLIE**

Your pay.

**FRANK**

Now? Why not tomorrow? After the show.

**CHARLIE**

Take it now.

**FRANK**

(confused)

What about tomorrow?

**CHARLIE**

We don't need you, Frankie.

For a moment, Frank just stands there.

**FRANK**

I've got the grands for two nights,  
Charlie. You can't just --

**CHARLIE**

It's all there. Both nights.

Frank looks at the envelope in his hands.

**FRANK**

What're you saying, Charlie?

**CHARLIE**

Look, Frankie. You and Jack been  
playing here, a long time.

**FRANK**

Twelve years.

**CHARLIE**

Right, twelve years. Couple times  
a month.

**FRANK**

So?

**CHARLIE**

So maybe it's time we took a vacation from  
each other.

**FRANK**

Vacation? Christ, Charlie, it's a Monday night.  
You said so yourself.

**CHARLIE**

It wasn't half full out there tonight, Frankie.  
I got six waiters standing in back listening  
to baseball. I gotta move the liquor.  
To move the liquor, I gotta fill the tables.  
It's a matter of economics. Me, I love you.  
I love both you guys, you know that.  
You're class. But people today.  
They don't know class if it walks up and  
grabs 'em by the balls.

**INT. HOTEL LOBBY**

Jack rises as Frank passes through the lobby with  
the cardboard stand-up.

**JACK**

What's with Charlie?

**FRANK**

Nothing. Everything's great.  
Terrific.

**INT. FRANK'S HOUSE**

With the stand-up under his arm,  
Frank enters and closes the door quietly.  
A light is glowing in the kitchen.  
The rest of the house is dark, quiet. In the kitchen,  
he checks the message pad by the phone. Nothing.  
On the table, a plate of cold chicken is waiting for him.  
Next to it is a stack of bills with a note attached:  
"Frank. Please."  
Frank sighs and leans the stand-up against the wall.  
The photo of Jack is peeling off the cardboard.  
Finding a stack of glossies in a drawer,  
Frank removes the old Jack from the stand-up and  
replaces it with a new one.  
As he presses the photograph in place,  
his eyes drift to the one of himself.  
It was taken a long time ago.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT**

Jack places a record on the turntable and sits at the  
piano by the window. As the needle hits the spinning  
disc, a sharp, snappy BASS LINE REVERBERATES throughout  
the apartment. Jack takes a drink, then joins in with  
the record, playing along. His concentration is intense,  
so much so that, a moment later, when the PHONE RINGS,  
he seems not to hear it. Finally, he picks it up.

**JACK**

Yeah?

**FRANK (V.O.)**

It's me.

**JACK**

Frank?

**FRANK (V.O.)**

Yeah. Listen ... come out to the  
house tomorrow, will ya?

**JACK**

I've had enough family for one

month, Frank.

**FRANK (V.0.)**

It's not family. It's business.

**JACK**

So talk to me tomorrow. After  
the gig.

**FRANK (V.0.)**

We don't get a gig.

**JACK**

What're you talking about?

**FRANK (V.0.)**

Something came up. Don't worry,  
Charlie stayed true. Both nights.  
I'll give you your share tomorrow.  
At the house.

Silence.

**FRANK (V.0)**

(continuing)

So you'll come out, right?

**JACK**

Yeah, okay.

Jack listens to the PHONE HISSING in the dark,  
then the CONNECTION goes DEAD.

**EXT. STREET**

A taxi lets Jack off on a street of shabby tract houses.  
In his rumpled city suit, Jack looks like a cheap  
gangster amid the weedy lawns and overgrown junipers.  
He walks up to the door of a small white house and  
presses the doorbell.  
When there is no response, he goes around to the back.

**EXT. BACKYARD**

The backyard is small, with a short chainlink fence  
surrounding it. Two kids, a girl and a boy,  
are splashing around in a build-it-yourself  
above-ground pool.  
When they see Jack, they stop splashing.  
Only their heads are visible above the water.

**JACK**

Hey, kids. Dad home?

The two heads say nothing.

**JACK**

(continuing)

What d'ya say? Wanna run and get  
him for me?

Still nothing. Jack frowns, takes out a cigarette,  
and pats his pocket for a match.

**JACK**

(continuing)

Shit.

The kids' eyes widen at his profanity.  
Jack, the unlit cigarette dangling from his lip,  
ponders things for a moment,  
then flicks the 'cigarette away and steps over the fence.  
At which point,  
the tinier of the two heads in the pool begins to scream.

**JACK**

(continuing)

Hey, kid. Take it easy.

No use. The kid's a world-class screamer.  
Frank, wearing baggy shorts and looking alarmed,  
comes racing out of the house.

**FRANK**

Cindy! What is it?

Cindy points. At Jack.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Jack.

**JACK**

Your doorbell doesn't work.

**FRANK**

Honey, it's only Uncle Jack. You  
remember Uncle Jack.

DONNA, Frank's wife, appears.

**DONNA**

What's the matter? Jack?

Jack waves.

**FRANK**

(lifting Cindy out of the pool)  
Nothing's the matter. Is it, sweetheart?

**DONNA**

I'll take her inside. You too,  
little Frank. Out of the pool.

Donna shepherds the kids toward the house.

**FRANK**

Feet!

The kids wipe their dripping feet on the outside mat  
and disappear into the house. Frank turns to Jack.

**FRANK**

(continuing)  
It's probably the excitement of  
seeing you again.

**EXT. BACKYARD (LATER)**

Donna comes out of the house with a tray of lemonade.  
The men are sitting by the pool in a pair of webbed  
aluminum chairs.

**FRANK**

Well, look at this.

**DONNA**

You bring trunks, Jack?

**JACK**

Trunks?

**DONNA**

Swimming trunks.

**JACK**

Oh. No. Strictly dryland.

**DONNA**

Too bad. You could use some sun.  
Really.

**JACK**

Maybe next time.

**DONNA**

We have some lotion.

**JACK**

Just the same.

**DONNA**

Suit yourself.

Donna returns to the house.  
Frank takes a sip of his lemonade and scans his surroundings complacently.

**FRANK**

Nice, huh?

**JACK**

What?

**FRANK**

The trees. The flowers. Nice.

**JACK**

Terrific.

**FRANK**

(expansively)

Yeah ... we're gonna paint in the spring.  
After the rains. Look good as new.

**JACK**

You ask me out here to sell me  
your house, Frank?

Frank shakes the ice in his glass.

**JACK**

(continuing)

Charlie paid you off last night,  
didn't he?

**FRANK**

I don't know what you mean.

**JACK**

The hell you don't.

**FRANK**

I told you. Something came up.  
Some political dinner or something.



**JACK**

Bullshit. Fifteen years, Frank.  
No one paid us off.

**FRANK**

It wasn't like that.

**JACK**

No?

**FRANK**

No.

**JACK**

What was it like?

**FRANK**

Hey pal, I got a mortgage, all right?  
I got two kids. I got a wife.  
Besides, he made the deal.  
There's no shame in it.

**JACK**

That how you see it?

**FRANK**

Yeah, that's how I see it.

Jack shakes his head in disgust.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

And don't go shaking your head, little brother.  
I'm not the one who walks in every night smelling  
like he's got a day job in a piss factory.

(pause)

It killed him, you know.

Jack glances up. Dangerous territory.

**JACK**

A gust of wind killed him.

**FRANK**

Yeah, and what put him up there?

**JACK**

Hey, you weren't there. Right?

Jack's look ends this. Frank sighs.

**FRANK**

Look, can we forget last night?  
We gotta talk.

**JACK**

Talk.

**FRANK**

I been thinking maybe we should  
make some changes.

(pause)

I been thinking maybe we should  
take on a singer.

Silence.

**JACK**

Sure, why not.

**FRANK**

It's just an idea. I want your opinion.  
I mean, we go halfway on everything, right?

**JACK**

It's more like 40-60, wouldn't  
you say?

**FRANK**

We agreed that if I took care of the business;  
I'd be entitled to the extra.  
Isn't that what we agreed?

**JACK**

That's what we agreed.

**FRANK**

If you're unhappy with the  
arrangement --

**JACK**

I'm not unhappy.

**FRANK**

If you'd like to assume more of the financial  
responsibilities, I'd be glad --

**JACK**

Frank. Fuck it. Okay?

**FRANK**

I've tried to do well by you, Jack.  
By both of us.

**JACK**

I'm grateful, Frank. How much?  
For the singer.

**FRANK**

I thought maybe twenty percent.  
Look, with the additional bookings we'll  
come out ahead. The big hotels,  
they want a pretty girl with a big voice.  
We have to stay competitive, Jack.

Jack laughs coldly.

**FRANK**

What's that?

**JACK**

You, Frank. All these years you been telling me  
we're different. We got novelty, Jack.  
No one can touch us.

**FRANK**

Two pianos isn't enough anymore,  
Jack.

**JACK**

It never was.

**YOUNG WOMAN**

in pink sweater and a short black skirt stands in the  
center of a tiny room in the back of Willie's piano  
showroom, holding some sheet music. Sammy Davis Jr.'s  
face is on the sheet music. Frank is sitting against  
the opposite wall, a notepad in his hand.  
Jack is at the piano.

**FRANK**

Good morning, Miss...?

**YOUNG WOMAN**

Moran. Monica Moran.

**FRANK**

All right, Miss Moran

**MONICA (YOUNG WOMAN)**

Actually, that's my stage name.

**FRANK**

I'm sorry?

**MONICA**

Moran. Monica. The whole thing.  
It's my stage name. My real name's Blanche.

**FRANK**

Blanche.

**MONICA**

No romance, right? That's why I came up with  
Monica. It's what I prefer.

**FRANK**

Well, that's fine --

**MONICA**

But if you call my house and my mother answers,  
ask for Blanche. If you ask for Monica, she'll  
think you have the wrong number and hang up.

**FRANK**

Right.

**MONICA**

And if she asks what it's about, don't tell her.  
She's opposed to my career.

**FRANK**

Uh-huh. Well, Miss Moran, what  
is it you'd like to do for us?

**MONICA**

Candy Man.'  
(worried)  
Is that all right?

**FRANK**

It's one of Jack's favorites.

Monica turns and, seeing Jack at the piano,  
gives a little start.

**MONICA**

Oops. I almost forgot you were  
there. Here's the music.

Monica begins to hand Jack the sheet music.

**FRANK**

Uh... he knows it.

**MONICA**

Really? Isn't that a coincidence.

**JACK**

Small world.

Monica smiles. She likes Jack.

**FRANK**

Well, shall we?

Probably not, but Jack begins to play anyway, laconically picking out the cheery tune while Monica swings her arms and taps her foot. Despite all this, Monica still manages to come in between beats and Jack has to scramble over a chord to catch her, sort of like a fireman with a net.

**MONICA**

Who can take a sunrise  
Sprinkle it with dew  
Toss it in the air and  
Make a groovy lemon pie  
The Candy Man can  
The Candy Man can...,

There would appear to be ample evidence as to why the mother of Monica nee Blanche opposes her daughter's career.

**FRANK**

Thank you, Miss Moran, that's enough.

Monica's eyes are closed now and she is fully caught up. Frank looks over at Jack. Jack shrugs and continues to play.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Miss Moran ... Miss Moran ...  
Blanche!

Monica's eyes pop open.

**MONICA**

Oh, sorry. I get so caught up in it sometimes. It's scary.

**FRANK**

Yes, it is.

**MONICA**

Well ... thanks.  
                  (to Jack)  
Bye.

**JACK**

Drive carefully.

As Monica exits, Jack and Frank glance at one another and thus begins a seemingly endless parade of aspiring singers who can't sing. As Frank sinks lower in his chair and Jack's ashtray spills over with wounded cigarettes, singer after singer, in all shapes, sizes, and colors, come forth to offer their own unique interpretations of "Feelings," "I Gotta Be Me," "This Is My Song," and perhaps most appropriately, "What Kind of Fool Am I."  
Finally, when it is all over,  
Jack and Frank are left alone in the tiny room,  
looking dazed, exhausted, and mildly homicidal.

**TALL YOUNG WOMAN**

As the sequence ends, a TALL YOUNG WOMAN in high heels walks into Willie's. She glances around, then spots Willie across the room, eating a corn beef on rye.

**WOMAN**

Hey. You one of the fabulous  
Baker Boys?

**JACK AND FRANK**

are putting on their coats, preparing to leave.  
Frank is staring at his notepad.

**FRANK**

Thirty-seven. Thirty-seven.

**JACK**

What?

**FRANK**

Thirty-seven girls.  
And not one who can carry a tune.  
That must be statistically impossible.

**JACK**

It was a somewhat extraordinary  
day.

**FRANK**

I just don't understand. You  
would think someone ... anyone ...

**WOMAN (O.S.)**

Damn!

The Woman in high heels stumbles into the doorway,  
holding a shoe in her hand. It's broken.

**WOMAN**

(continuing)

Brand new Thursday. You believe  
it?

After today, Jack and Frank are prepared  
to believe anything.

**WOMAN**

(continuing)

This where the auditions are?

**FRANK**

This is where the auditions were.

**WOMAN**

What do you mean?

**FRANK**

We're finished.

**WOMAN**

What about me?

Frank looks at his watch.

**FRANK**

You're an hour and a half late.

**WOMAN**

My watch is broken, too.

**FRANK**

Punctuality. First rule of show  
business.

The Woman looks around her.

**WOMAN**

This is show business?

**FRANK**

(in no mood)

Look, miss. We're tired,  
you have gum on your lip, and we're going home.

**WOMAN**

(touching her lip)

Just like that, huh? You're not  
even gonna give me a chance?

**FRANK**

Don't take it personally.

**WOMAN**

How should I take it?

**FRANK**

Impersonally.

Frank begins to leave.

**WOMAN**

I don't believe it. I come all the way down down  
here, break a heel, and you're not gonna give me  
a chance because I have gum on my lip and I'm a  
few minutes late.

**FRANK**

You're an hour and a half late.

**WOMAN**

So if I'm so 'late how come you're still here?

**FRANK**

We ran long.

**WOMAN**

So run a little longer.

**FRANK**

Miss --

**WOMAN**

You find a girl?

Jack and Frank glance at each other.

**JACK**

No.

**WOMAN**

So. I'm here, you're here, the



piano's here. What d'ya say?

Before Frank can answer, Jack walks over to the piano.

**FRANK**

Terrific. Thirty-eight.

**WOMAN**

What's that mean? Thirty-eight.

**JACK**

Don't worry about it.

**WOMAN**

(to Frank)

You know, I'm feeling a lot of hostility from you.

**FRANK**

(appealing)

Jack.

**JACK**

Let's get it over with.

**FRANK**

All right. What's your name?

**WOMAN**

Susie. Susie Diamond.

**FRANK**

Catchy. You have any previous entertainment experience, Miss Diamond?

**SUSIE (WOMAN)**

Well ... for the last four years I've been on call to Triple A Escort service.

Jack and Frank exchange a glance.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Hey, it's legit. Strictly dinner and dance.

**FRANK**

Okay. I think that's all we need to know.

**SUSIE**

I sing now?

**FRANK**

That's the premise.

Susie gives Frank a dark look, then turns to Jack.

**SUSIE**

I Get Along Without You.' Slowly,  
okay?

Jack nods and begins to play.  
Frank slouches down in his chair,  
preparing to be tortured again.

**SUSIE**

(continuing; singing)  
I get along without you very well  
Of course I do  
Except when soft rains fall  
And drip from leaves, then I recall  
The thrill of being  
Sheltered in your arms  
Of course I do  
But I get along without you very well.'

Susie stops. Frank just sits there.  
Jack just sits there. She can sing.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)  
So?

**FRANK**

(blinking)  
Uh ... we'll let you know.

Jack looks over at Frank like he's insane.

**SUSIE**

When?

**FRANK**

When we know.

**SUSIE**

(smiling)  
Don't leave a girl hanging.  
Second rule of show business.

Frank's not amused.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Yeah, well, okay. 'Bye, Bakers.

Susie walks out barefoot.

**JACK**

What are you, crazy?

**FRANK**

I just thought we should talk  
about it. Between ourselves.

**JACK**

What's there to talk about? She can sing.  
That puts her at the head of the class.  
That makes her the only one in the class.

**FRANK**

I don't know ... She had gum on her lip,  
for Christ sake.  
I don't think she's right for the act.

**JACK**

(studying him)

You're getting cold feet about  
this.

**FRANK**

I was just thinking what Ma would  
think.

**JACK**

Ma? Ma? Was Ma there the last time we played the  
Ambassador? Oh, that's right, she was on bass.  
How could I forget.

Frank frowns and looks down at his hands.

**JACK**

(continuing)

How many other silent partners are there, Frank?  
Donna? Little Cindy?  
Hell, let's give Eddie a vote.

**FRANK**

Okay, okay. I'll call the girl.

Frank gets up wearily, then glances down at the notepad.

**JACK**

What's the matter?

**FRANK**

I didn't get her number.

**EXT. STREET**

Jack and Frank dash out of Willie's and glance up and down the street. Nothing.

**FRANK**

We can always look her up in the book.

**JACK.**

Right. Susie Diamond. She's probably listed right next to Monica Moran.

Jack shakes his head in disgust.

**WOMAN (O.S.)**

Does this mean I get the job?

**ANOTHER ANGLE**

Jack and Frank whirl around.

There, standing in the doorway, is Susie.

**SUSIE**

Intuition.

**CITY SKYLINE**

Gleaming beautifully at the start of a new day. Once again, "JINGLE BELLS" is heard, only this time carried a little further: "Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way..."

**JACK, FRANK AND SUSIE**

Ensconsed in the back room of Willie's, preparing for their first rehearsal ...

**FRANK**

Ready?

Jack nods.

**FRANK**

(continuing)  
Ready?

Susie nods. Frank poises his hands over the piano, hesitates, then looks at Jack again.

**FRANK**  
(continuing)  
Ready?

Jack squints at Frank, then nods.  
Frank turns to Susie.

**FRANK**  
(continuing)  
Ready?

**SUSIE**  
(looking around)  
What are we, an orchestra all of a sudden?

Frank glares at her.

**SUSIE**  
(continuing)  
Sorry.

Frank poises his hands over the piano again and begins to play the opening passage of "Just the Way You Are." A moment later, Jack joins in, and a moment after that, Susie. Unfortunately, Jack and Frank, accustomed to playing alone, are a tad overwhelming and the result sounds like a fifth grade recital. After a few bars, Susie holds up her hand.

**SUSIE**  
Fellas, fellas ...

Jack and Frank stop.

**FRANK**  
What's the problem?

**SUSIE**  
The problem is I can't hear myself sing with all this...  
(searching)  
... music. You know what I'm saying?

Jack and Frank look at one another.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

I mean, back there it may be hard to notice,  
but up here I'm having a little trouble  
getting a word in.

Jack and Frank just stare.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

I mean, you're supposed to be  
backing me up, right?

**FRANK**

(icily)

No. We are not supposed to be  
backing you up.

**SUSIE**

What I mean is --

**FRANK**

We're a team. We work together.

**SUSIE**

So work with me, not against me.  
Okay?

Frank stares at Susie for a long moment.

**FRANK**

I suppose we can bring it down a  
little.

**JACK**

I'll drop the eighths.

**FRANK**

Okay?

Susie looks at the two brothers.

**SUSIE**

Okay.

**WILLIE'S SHOWROOM - LATER**

Frank is on Willie's telephone.  
In the front of the store, just out of earshot,

Jack sits at a beat-up grand,  
while Susie moves aimlessly from one piano to another.

**FRANK**

I'm telling you, Ray. She's got  
a voice like an angel ... What?

Frank glances furtively across the room to where Susie,  
making a very sexy silhouette against the front window,  
is running her hand over a pearl-white piano.

**FRANK**

(continuing)  
No, I wouldn't say she's got a  
body like an angel.

As Frank continues to talk in the background,  
Susie looks over at Jack.

**SUSIE**

Hey, he's not sore, is he?

**JACK**

He'll come around.

Susie nods, goes back to stroking the piano.

**JACK**

(continuing)  
You never sang before?

**SUSIE**

Not for money. With my mother.

Jack nods slowly, but Susie sees he doesn't understand.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)  
She used to waitress downtown, nights,  
when I was a kid. On the way home, we'd sing.  
You know how people whistle when they're nervous?  
My mother sang. She always said you're never alone  
with a song 'cause thousands of people know the  
same song and even though you can't hear 'em,  
they're singing with you. I don't know.  
If they were, they were all singing safe inside  
their apartments.

(shrugging)  
But it worked. We always got home. Ever since,  
I always wanted to sing.  
I never took lessons or anything, though.  
I guess you guys took a lot of lessons.

Jack looks down at the piano in front of him.

**JACK**

Yeah. We took a lot of lessons.

**JACK AND NINA**

Jack's tuxedo is hanging in the shower as he gets ready for the night's gig. Nina, standing next to him at the sink, watches as he works up a lather on a bar of shaving soap, then paints his face with the suds.

**NINA**

You shave like an old movie, Jack.

As Jack picks up a razor, Nina takes the brush and begins to soap her face in the mirror.

**JACK**

In the old days, every man had a shaving mug that he kept at the barber shop. Then, whenever he wanted a shave, he'd go down to the barber shop and there would be his mug, waiting for him.

**NINA**

Is that what you used to do?

**JACK**

My days are not the old days, genius.

**NINA**

What are they?

**JACK**

The recent past.

**NINA**

Oh.

(nodding to the ceiling)  
Bigfoot gets his out of a can.

**JACK**

How do you know?

**NINA**

I saw his stuff in the bathroom.

**JACK**

Oh?



**NINA**

I guess it's getting serious.

**JACK**

Maybe he'll ask your ma to marry him.

**NINA**

I hope not. He's already busted the springs in two chairs. Hey, what's this?

Nina holds up the handle of the shaving brush.

**JACK**

Ivory.

**NINA**

Looks old.

**JACK**

Older than me.

**NINA**

Wow.

Jack gives Nina a look, then begins to splash his face. Nina picks up the razor.

**JACK**

Hey, what do you want to do? Grow a beard?

**NINA**

Why not?

**JACK**

Well, let's get your first prom under the belt, okay?

**NINA**

What's a prom?

**JACK**

Ever go to church?

Nina nods.

**JACK**

It's like that. Only you gotta dance.

**INT. HOTEL**

As Jack enters the hotel, he passes by the cardboard stand-up, prominently displayed in the lobby. It is virtually unchanged, except for a small notation at the bottom: "With Guest Vocalist." On the other side of the lobby, Frank is pacing nervously.

**FRANK**

Where the hell is she?

**JACK**

It's early.

**FRANK**

I told everyone seven-fifteen.  
Didn't I? Seven-fifteen.

**JACK**

She'll get here.

**FRANK**

Just like the day of the auditions,  
right? Jesus. How's my hair?

**JACK**

Awe inspiring.

**FRANK**

Yeah, well, Your's isn't.  
(taking out a comb)  
Let me run a comb through it.

**JACK**

Get out of here.

**FRANK**

Come on, stand still.

**JACK**

Get out of here!

**FRANK**

It's not gonna hurt you.

**JACK**

I'll hit you, Frank. I swear.

Frank hesitates, like a basketball player trying to

feint an opponent, then takes a flick at Jack's hair.  
Jack hits him.

**FRANK**

(holding his shoulder)  
You hit me.

**JACK**

I told you I was gonna hit you.

He looks capable of hitting him again, too.

**FRANK**

All right, all right. I'm a little  
tense.

**JACK**

You're a fucking alarm clock.

**FRANK**

I just wish she'd get here, that's  
all.

**JACK**

She's here.

Susie, wearing a flamboyant orange dress,  
is standing across the lobby, staring at the stand-up.

**FRANK**

Christ, look at her. You'd think if she was gonna  
wear her street clothes she'd have enough sense  
to come in the back.

(walking over)

Good evening, Miss Diamond. You're late.

**SUSIE**

Where's my name?

**FRANK**

What-?

**SUSIE**

And how come you guys are the only ones with  
your pictures on the poster?

**FRANK**

We'll talk about it later. Right  
now, you gotta get changed.

**SUSIE**

Changed?

**FRANK**

Where's your dress?

**SUSIE**

(to Jack)

What's he talking about?

**FRANK**

Is there a language problem here? Your dress.  
For tonight. Where is it?

**SUSIE**

Do I look like I'm naked?

**FRANK**

That! You can't wear that!

**SUSIE**

What's wrong with it?

**FRANK**

It's orange!

**SUSIE**

(to Jack)

Am I missing something?

Before Jack can reply, Frank grabs Susie's hand and pulls her toward the door.

**FRANK**

Come on.

**SUSIE**

Hey!

**FRANK**

Come on. We don't have much time.

**SUSIE**

Time for what?

**INT. DEPARTMENT STORE**

Frank, Jack and Susie dash through a cavernous downtown department store, the brothers turning a few heads with their tuxedos. As they reach the ladies' department, Frank begins to flip through the dress racks.

**SUSIE**

If you ask me, this is pretty stupid.

**FRANK**

Just look. What do you wear?  
A nine?

**SUSIE**

(offended)  
A seven.

**FRANK**

My wife wears a seven. You don't look like a seven to me.

**SUSIE**

I wear a seven.

**FRANK**

Okay, okay. Here, how about this?

**SUSIE**

(looking)  
Save it for your wife.

**FRANK**

We're not exactly silly with time, you know. Jack, you find anything?

Jack, somewhat out of his element, is looking at belts.

**JACK**

No.

**FRANK**

Here, how's this?

Frank holds out an inky black dress. Susie gives it a long look.

**FRANK**

(continuing)  
Close enough. Let's go.

Frank begins to drag Susie into the dressing room.

**SUSIE**

Hey, pal. I don't know about you, but where I come from there's a little girl's room and a little boy's room and the little boys don't go where the little girls go.

**FRANK**

All right, but make it quick.  
(remembering)  
Shoes! What size do you wear?

**SUSIE**

(from the dressing room)  
Nine.

**FRANK**

Nine?

**SUSIE**

Nine!

**FRANK**

(to himself)  
Big feet.

**INT. SHOE DEPARTMENT**

Frank and Jack work the shoe department,  
scouting the endless rows.

**FRANK**

See anything?

**JACK**

(holding one up)  
How about these?

**FRANK**

Jack, for crying out loud. Your  
bachelorhood's showing.  
(seeing something)  
Ah, here we go.

Frank grabs a pretty blue pump and gestures to the  
SALESMAN, who's waiting on a woman.

**FRANK**

Hey! Do these come in black?

**SALESMAN**

I'll be with you in a minute, sir.

**FRANK**

I don't have a minute, pal. Yes  
or no?

**SALESMAN**

(glowering)

Yes. They come in black.

**FRANK**

Okay. Give me a pair of nines.

Pronto.

The Salesman looks casually at Jack.

**SALESMAN**

Does he want a pair, too?

**INT. DRESS DEPARTMENT**

As Jack and Frank return to the dress department, Frank jettisons the shoebox and tissue paper.

**FRANK**

All right, we got your shoes.

Just then, Susie steps out of the dressing room. Even Frank stops at the sight of her.

**SUSIE**

What do you think?

**FRANK**

Uh... good.

**SUSIE**

(turning to Jack)

Zip me up?

The dress is open down to the small of her back. It's a nice back. Jack takes the zipper and closes the panels carefully.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Shoes?

**FRANK**

Right.

Frank puts the shoes down and Susie steps into them.

**SUSIE**

They're tight.

**FRANK**

They're nines.

**SUSIE**

Well, they're aspiring to be sevens.

**FRANK**

You can buy new ones tomorrow.

**SUSIE**

Oh, thanks.

**FRANK**

Don't worry. We'll take it out of your share.

**SUSIE**

You're a prince.

**INT. HOTEL**

As the trio rushes into the hotel service entrance, RAY, the assistant manager, appears.

**RAY**

You better buy yourself a watch, Frankie.

**FRANK**

We had a little emergency.

**RAY**

Yeah, well, I've got a little emergency. You know what I'm saying?  
(seeing Susie)  
Who's this, Minnie Pearl?

All eyes turn to Susie's dress, which still has the tags attached.

**FRANK**

(moving off)  
Jesus.

**RAY**

I want seventy-five minutes, Frankie. You hear me?

**JACK**

This is going well, isn't it?



**INT. KITCHEN**

The three rush into the kitchen.

**FRANK**

We need scissors over here!  
Who's got scissors?  
(turning to Susie)  
Okay, remember. Jack and I go on first,  
I do the set-up, then introduce you.  
And you say ...

**SUSIE**

(deadpan)  
Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.  
I can't tell you how thrilled I am to be here.  
It's like a dream come true.  
And speaking of dreams ...

**FRANK**

Right.

**SUSIE**

Piece of cake.

A tiny MAN in an apron walks up with a meat cleaver.

**FRANK**

Carlos, that's, a cleaver. I need  
scissors.

**CARLOS (MAN)**

No scissors.

**FRANK**

Jesus Christ. All right. Let's  
go, Jack. Fix your tie.

Jack and Frank exit.

Susie stares a little warily at Carlos and his cleaver.

**INT. LOUNGE**

Jack and Frank slide quickly behind their pianos.  
About half the tables in the room are filled.

**FRANK**

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.  
Welcome to the Ambassador Lounge.  
My name's Frank Baker and no, you're not  
seeing double, it's just my

little brother, Jack.

Some laughter.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

I'm glad you're all in such a good mood tonight,  
because we've got a very special  
evening planned ...

**INT. KITCHEN**

Susie sits on a stool while Carlos positions the dress tags  
on a cutting board. As a WAITRESS from the bar passes by,  
Susie snares a drink from her tray.

**WAITRESS**

Hey!

**SUSIE**

Just a sip. To kill the  
butterflies, okay?

**WAITRESS**

Okay. But no lipstick.

Susie takes a quick sip.

**SUSIE**

There. No one's the wiser.

**WAITRESS**

Nice dress.

As the Waitress exits, Carlos brings the cleaver down  
with a sharp chop, severing the tags.

**SUSIE**

Appreciate it, Ace.

**LOUNGE**

The audience is laughing.

**FRANK**

But seriously, folks, as I sit here tonight,  
looking out on all your kind faces, I can't help  
but feel some of us have met before. We may not  
know each other's names, we might not recognize  
one another on the street, but we know each other

just the same. And over the years we've shared something. A little music, a little drink, a little laughter, maybe even... a few tears. But I guess that's what friends are for, huh?

Applause. Jack puts out his cigarette.

**JACK**

Oh, brother.

**FRANK**

And it's especially nice to be among friends tonight, because, well, tonight's a very special night for my brother and I. This evening we've asked a young lady to join us, a lady Jack and I are sure will soon seem like just another old friend to you all. She's making her debut here this evening and, as far as I'm concerned, she couldn't be doing it in a better place. Because there's one place that's always been for us a very special place, and that place is this place, the Ambassador Lounge. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome a very special lady with a very special way of singing a song, Miss Susie Diamond.

Applause. Susie strides out of the kitchen, past the busing station, and up to the microphone stand, which, unfortunately, is not on.

**FRANK**

(continuing; whispering)

The switch. Hit the switch.

**SUSIE**

Switch?

(as she hits it)

What fucking switch?

Silence.

**SUSIE**

(continuing; very demure)

Pardon me.

Jack and Frank look at one another, then, before outrage can set in, plunge into the opening number. Susie takes the mike from the stand and smiles sweetly.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

I can't tell you how thrilled I am to be here.

For the moment, the audience doesn't seem quite sure how thrilled they are to be here.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

I'm all smiles, darling  
Through and through...'

**INT. LOBBY**

A BELLBOY exits the elevator and, hearing Susie's voice coming from the lounge, stops.  
He looks to the CLERK behind the front desk.

**BELLBOY**

I thought the Bakers were on  
tonight.

**CLERK**

They are.

**BELLBOY**

Well, who's that?

The Clerk looks up from the register and listens.

**CLERK**

I don't know. Frank?

**INT. LOUNGE**

Judging from the faces, Susie's as big a hit in the lounge as she is in the lobby. Head thrown back, eyes closed, she sings with abandon, finishing on a long extended note, then swooping down in a dramatic, exhausted bow. There is a split second of silence, then thunderous applause. Magic.

**EXT. HOTEL**

The new trio, fresh off their first gig, come out of the service entrance into the night.

**FRANK**

Fucking. She says fucking in  
front of an entire room of people.

**SUSIE**

I said I was sorry.

**FRANK**

(to Jack)  
Did you hear it?

**JACK**

Fucking.

**SUSIE**

Look, they were all on their third Mai Tais  
by the time I got out there anyway.

**FRANK**

(directly to her)  
Fucking.

**SUSIE**

For Christ sake, I said it, I  
didn't do it.  
(pulling out some bills)  
Besides, I don't think they were  
too offended, do you?

**FRANK**

(grabbing the bills)  
Give me that.

**SUSIE**

Hey!

**FRANK**

We are not a saloon act. We do  
not take tips from dirty old men.

**SUSIE**

(innocent)  
I was gonna split it with you guys.

**FRANK**

We do not take tips. I'll apply  
this to the cost of the dress.

Frank puts the money in his pocket. Susie stares at  
him, steaming.

**SUSIE**

Then I want my name on the poster.  
And my picture!  
(taking off her shoes)  
And these shoes are too goddamn tight!

Susie hurls the shoes at Frank and stalks off barefoot. Jack is leaning against the wall, watching it all with amusement.

**JACK**

Nice girl.

ON Frank's expression we hear the OPENING NOTES of "New York, New York" and we see:

**SERIES OF SHOTS**

Susie and the boys performing it in one lounge after another, playing to increasingly enthusiastic audiences, no empty tables now.

As the SONG ends, we CLOSE ON the cardboard stand-up, newly done over with a picture of Susie and an accompanying exclamation: "See the Sensational Susie Diamond!" As the FINAL CHORD sounds we --

**CUT TO:**

**INT. LLOYD'S OFFICE**

Jack and Frank, once again in the office of the supercilious Lloyd, waiting as he prepares their cash envelope.

**LLOYD**

Yes, sir. That's quite a girl you boys latched onto. She a local?

**FRANK**

Born and bred.

**LLOYD**

Lucky for you. Well, there you go, guys. Don't spend it all in one place. Oh ... you want to count it, Jack?

**FRANK**

We trust you, Lloyd. You know that.

Frank takes the envelope and begins to leave.

**LLOYD**

Say, Frankie. Since I've got you here... How's next week look for you guys?

Frank glances at Jack, giving it to him.  
Jack's eyes go cold.

**JACK**

We'll call you.

As Lloyd's face drops, Jack and Frank step into the hallway and begin to walk slowly away, playing it cool, then glance at one another and begin to walk faster because they're about to burst out laughing.

**FOLLOWING SHOT**

By the time they reach the lobby, they are laughing, tripping across the carpet, out the front entrance and onto the sidewalk, where their voices explode in the night air and they begin to do a weird boyish waltz together, laughing giddily, until they see - standing under an awning, lighting a cigarette - Susie, watching them with raised eyebrows. Jack and Frank, frozen in a clumsy embrace, quickly disengage and begin clearing their throats and squaring their cuffs. Susie exhales a plume of smoke, studies them a moment, then smiles slightly.

**SUSIE**

Night, Bakers.

As she turns away, Jack glances up, watching her trim shadow disappear down the street.

**EXT. CITY**

Gray and cold. The streets swept with rain.  
And once again the tentative piano:  
"JINGLE BELLS, jingle bells, jingle all the way.  
Oh what fun it is to ride ...  
Oh what fun it is to ride ... Oh what fun..."

**INT. VETERINARY CLINIC**

Jack and Eddie are sitting in the waiting room:  
small and dirty and packed with pet owners and  
their animals.  
After a moment, a WOMAN with a clipboard appears.

**WOMAN**

Barker.  
          (no takers)  
Jock Barker?

**JACK**

          (realizing it's him)  
Baker. Jack Baker.

**WOMAN**

Right. Bring him back.

**JACK**

Come on, Ed.

Jack and Eddie follow the Woman down a corridor.

**WOMAN**

You should've brought a leash, Mr. Barker.  
The doctor doesn't like to be bitten.

**JACK**

He doesn't bite.

**WOMAN**

They never do, Mr. Barker.

**JACK**

Baker.

**WOMAN**

Right. In there.

The Woman points Jack and Eddie into a small room. There is an examining table, a sink, and on the wall, a chart detailing the various breeds of dogs and cats. Jack glances around the room, then comes back to Eddie, who's staring up at him.

**JACK**

You shoulda brushed, pal.

Just then, a MAN in a white coat breezes in.

**DR. BEASLEY (MAN)**

Ah, labradorus retrieverus. Good fellows.  
Quiet, but able to appreciate a good joke.

Dr. Beasley pats Eddie on the side, then turns to Jack.

**DR. BEASLEY**

Beasley.



**JACK**

Baker.

**DR. BEASLEY**

What's our friend's problem?

**JACK**

Teeth.

**DR. BEASLEY**

What's wrong with them?

**JACK**

They're falling out.

**DR. BEASLEY**

Uh-oh. That's not good. Let's  
get him up here.

Jack lifts Eddie up onto the table and Dr. Beasley opens  
Eddie's mouth for a look. It doesn't take long.

**DR. BEASLEY**

They gotta go.

**JACK**

(a take)

How many?

**DR. BEASLEY**

Five's my guess. Maybe more.  
Won't know till I get in there.  
(consulting his clipboard)  
Leave him now and you can pick  
him up in the morning.

**JACK**

Isn't there something you can  
give him? A pill or something?

**DR. BEASLEY**

Decay unfortunately doesn't limit itself to  
the denture, Mr. Baker. It spreads into his chest.  
Then the heart goes. We wouldn't want that,  
would we?

**JACK**

How will he eat?

**DR. BEASLEY**

Start him out on cottage cheese.  
If you've got him on kibble, just soak it a

few minutes. Go down like pudding  
through a hot pipe.

**JACK**

No bones?

**DR. BEASLEY**

No bones.

Jack looks at Eddie.

**JACK**

What do you do to him?

**DR. BEASLEY**

Don't worry, Mr. Baker. We'll knock him out.  
He won't feel a thing.

**JACK**

I think maybe I'll bring him back  
next week ...

**DR. BEASLEY**

The sooner we do this the better,  
Mr. Baker.

**EXT. STREET**

Jack steps out onto the rainy street alone.  
He glances back at the vet's with second thought,  
then moves slowly off.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT**

Jack enters with a small grocery bag and opens the  
refrigerator. A carton of cream, a few eggs --  
there's not much there. He takes a small container of  
cottage cheese from the grocery bag and places it on an  
empty shelf. As he closes the refrigerator door, he  
glances around the apartment. It is very still, very  
quiet. He looks up at the ceiling absently, then walks  
over to the window and looks out. There is a mug of  
coffee there on the sill. He takes it and holds it in  
both hands for a moment, then places it back on the sill.  
He sits at the piano and runs his fingers lightly over  
the ivory, not making a sound, then places his hands on  
the keys and begins to play. "Jingle Bells."

**INT. CORNER DINER**

In the front window, room has been made among the photographs for one of Susie. Inside, Jack, Frank and Susie sit at a table, surrounded by empty coffee cups and cigarettes. Frank has several slips of paper before him with names and dates.

**FRANK**

The twenty-third ... Yeah, here it is. We got the Carlton or the Plaza. Four day turns. What do you think, Jack?

Jack is staring out the window.

**FRANK**

(continuing)  
Jack, you with us?

**SUSIE**

The Carlton's a dump. No cover. No minimum. And they water their drinks. It's strictly for the Fuller brush crowd.

Susie, as she says this, is pouring sugar into her Coke.

**FRANK**

(watching)  
I guess it's, the Plaza then. That brings us to the twenty-seventh. We got the Avedon for three or the Park downtown for two.

**SUSIE**

We take the Avedon, right? Simple.

Frank rubs his chin and looks at Jack. Jack shakes his head.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)  
The Park? It's only two nights. Why throw away a night?

**JACK**

Because Blackie Carson books the Park and whenever we've needed a gig he's come through.

**SUSIE**

Oh.  
(lifting her glass)  
Well, for Blackie then.

**FRANK**

By the way, I got a message  
yesterday from some guy looking for  
New Year's action. Resort, upstate.

**SUSIE**

(likes "resort")

Hey.

**JACK**

Sounds like a booking agent  
looking to book an easy fee.

**FRANK**

That's what I figure. Probably have us in  
a bed-and-breakfast playing to the owls.

**SUSIE**

Maybe it's legit.

**FRANK**

Maybe. I'll call him.

**JACK**

Make it collect.

**FRANK**

(shuffling his slips)

That's it except for the first.  
We got the Sheraton, the Ambassador, or the  
Holiday Inn on Sixtieth. All three-day turns.

Frank looks at Jack.

**JACK**

Draw.

Susie shrugs.

**SUSIE**

How'd you guys used to decide what  
gig to take?

Jack and Frank exchange a glance.

**FRANK**

Uh, well ... we flipped a coin.

**SUSIE**

So find a dime. Let's get out  
of here.

**EXT. DINER**

Jack and Frank step out-of the diner and turn their collars up against the chill.  
Frank pulls on a pair of gloves.

**FRANK**

Jesus, it's gonna be mean this year.  
Where're your gloves?

Jack shrugs.

**FRANK**

(continuing)  
Better take care of your fingers, little brother.  
Buy yourself a case of arthritis and you won't be able to play 'Chopsticks.'

**JACK**

I'll take my chances.

Frank pats his hands together and glances into the street.

**FRANK**

Something, huh? All those bids.

**JACK**

Yeah. Something.

**FRANK**

Yeah ... Well, I gotta go.

**JACK**

You wanna get a drink?

Frank stops, surprised.

**FRANK**

No, I... Little Frank's got strep. Donna's been up two nights making sure the rest of us don't get it.

Jack nods.

**FRANK**

(continuing)  
You all right?

**JACK**

Yeah, fine.

**FRANK**

Okay I'll see you tomorrow night then.

**JACK**

Right.

As Frank leaves, he takes a glance at his brother, then disappears around the corner. A second later, Susie comes out of the diner.

**SUSIE**

Where's egghead?

**JACK**

His kid's sick.

**SUSIE**

(searching her purse)

I don't know. It's hard figuring you two as brothers. Seems like the hospital might've scrambled the babies somewhere.

**JACK**

He takes after our mother.

**SUSIE**

Yeah, well, all I know is mother nature must be one crazy dame. Shit.

Jack offers his pack of cigarettes.

**SUSIE**

Uh-uh. I never touch American cigarettes.

(still searching)

What's tomorrow again?

**JACK**

The Stratford.

**SUSIE**

Nice place. Fulla velvet. Even the bedspreads.

(shaking the purse)

Damn! Two-fifty a pack and I go through 'em like toothpicks. Twelve-and-a-half cents a piece, you believe that?

**JACK**

Huh?

**SUSIE**

Paris Opals. Twelve-and-a-half cents. I sat down with a pencil and added it one day. But I figure, if you're gonna be sticking something in your mouth, you might as well make it the best.

(finding one)

Ah, here's a lost soul.

Jack lights it. She takes a draw.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Mmm. Like kissing a rose. Well, au revoir.

**JACK**

Hey.

(as she stops)

You feel like a cup of coffee?

**SUSIE**

You kidding? We must've killed three pots in there. Anyway, I gotta get home. Rest the pipes.

**JACK**

You want me to walk you?

Susie looks at Jack a little funny.

**SUSIE**

No. Thanks.

She starts to move away, then stops and looks back.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Hey, listen. You're not going soft on me, are you? I mean, you're not gonna start dreaming about me and waking up all sweaty and looking at me like I'm some kinda princess when I burp.

**JACK**

Forget it.

**SUSIE**

I mean, that'd be too creepy. With us working together and all.

**JACK**

Forget it.

**SUSIE**

Nothing personal --

Jack holds up his hand. Susie just stands there.

**JACK**

Better hurry. You're a nickel  
down on your cigarette.

**EXT. VETERINARY CLINIC**

Jack paces outside the veterinary clinic, rubbing his arms against the night's chill. He glances up at the flickering sign over the building: "Twenty-Four Hour Emergency Care." Inside, a KID with deep-set eyes is bent over a magazine. Jack hesitates then enters.

**INT. VETERINARY CLINIC**

**KID**

Yeah?

Jack glances around, ill at ease.

**KID**

(continuing)

You want something, pal? If you're looking for a bathroom, try the Super Chief around the corner.

The Kid goes back to his magazine.

**JACK**

No, I, uh, left a dog here this morning.  
He needed some work on his mouth.

**KID**

Regular hours are eight to five.

**JACK**

Yeah, yeah, I know. I was just passing by.  
Thought I'd check in on him.

**KID**

You can check in on him tomorrow.  
Between eight and five.

**JACK**

Yeah, well, couldn't I take a  
look now?

The Kid looks up at Jack with mild contempt.



**KID**

You want to know if he's okay.  
Right?

**JACK**

(uncomfortable)  
Yeah.

**KID**

All right. Hold on.

**JACK**

The name's Baker --

**KID**

Save it. What's he look like?

**JACK**

(puzzled)  
Black. Labrador.

**KID**

All right. they lay the dead ones out in the  
cold room. I'll take a look.

The Kid disappears into the back. Jack stands frozen, watching the swinging door come to rest. He looks like a man who, unexpectedly, finds a razor pressed to his neck. He fumbles for a cigarette, but doesn't light it. He waits. A moment later, the door swings open.

**KID**

Nope. Just a couple poodles.

Jack nods, then, moving stiffly, leaves.

**EXT. VETERINARY CLINIC**

Outside, he reaches into his coat and takes the bottle.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT**

On the floor, a long line of bowls, each containing a different concoction, all intended for the ailing Eddie. Eddie, lying a few feet away, shows no interest. In the kitchen, Jack is heating something up in a pan.

**NINA**

I tried Cheerios this morning.  
He didn't even get up.  
Maybe they took out the wrong teeth.

**JACK**

He's just feeling sorry for himself. This is it,  
pal. Hear me? Two bucks a can.

Jack dumps some brown slop into a bowl and places it next  
to the others. Nina and he wait. At first, nothing, then  
... Eddie's eyes move. His nose twitches.  
His head lifts. Finally, he gets up and walks to the  
bowl. He eats.

**JACK**

(continuing)

Chili.

**CITY**

draped in winter. Dark skies, people lost in heavy  
coats, the city's battered Christmas decorations hung  
tenuously across traffic-clogged streets. Over it all  
we hear "JINGLE BELLS," PLAYED for the first time  
completely through, hesitantly but without error.  
As the SONG ENDS, we are:

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT**

watching Nina strike the final chord triumphantly.  
She turns to Jack, who's been listening from the couch.

**JACK**

(nodding to the ceiling)

You're gonna knock her dead, kid.

**INT. LUAU LOUNGE**

All done up in reds and greens for Christmas Eve.  
Jack, Frank and Susie -- each decked out in their own  
little Santa hats -- perform "Silver Bells" for the  
happy crowd. Jack, smoking a cigarette, will not be  
mistaken for Santa Claus, but Susie looks adorable.  
Frank just looks happy. As they finish,  
the crowd applauds.

**INT. BATHROOM**

Jack, now sans Santa hat, enters the bathroom off the lobby and finds Santa Claus standing in front of the mirror, fussing with his beard.

**JACK**

Hey, Frank.

**FRANK**

You recognized me.

**JACK**

Just a lucky guess.

**FRANK**

So what do you think?

**JACK**

Very realistic.

**FRANK**

(not buying it)

Yeah, well, what can I say? Dad must've had forty pounds on me.

Jesus, you remember him being this big?

Jack looks in the mirror.

**JACK**

Yeah.

**FRANK**

Well, the line's growing weaker, little brother. Lucky for us there aren't any dragons left to slay.

**INT. LOBBY**

Jack and Frank step out into the lobby, thus giving a few people, Susie among them, the curious privilege of seeing Santa Claus exit a men's room.

**FRANK**

You want to come out to the house tomorrow? The way the bookings been piling up, Donna's decided to really lay it on. Turkey, stuffing, the whole bit. Kitchen's so full of food you can hardly move. We could use another appetite.

**JACK**

Thanks, but I've got plans.

**FRANK**

All right, but if you change your mind,  
let me know. I gotta go get Ma in the  
morning anyway.

**SUSIE**

(coming up)  
Well, well. Ho, ho, ho. You  
moonlighting at Macy's, Frank?

**FRANK**

For the kids.  
(moving off)  
Merry Christmas, you two. Don't  
forget. We leave the twenty-sixth.

Frank pushes through the revolving door and steps  
out into the street in his Santa suit.

**SUSIE**

He do that every year?

**JACK**

Every year.

**SUSIE**

Aren't the kids asleep?

**JACK**

Every year.

**SUSIE**

So why's he do it?

**JACK**

I guess in case one year they're not.

Jack looks into Susie's eyes, then crosses to the  
door and exits. Susie watches him go, then turns to  
the desk clerk.

**SUSIE**

Call me a cab, will ya?

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT**

As Jack enters his apartment, he senses a presence in  
the room and looks over to the old phone booth.  
Nina is sitting inside on the little stool, her head  
tilted against the glass. Jack studies her a moment,  
then takes the carton of eggnog he's carrying into the

kitchen and grabs a pair of glasses. He pulls a chair over to the phone booth and sits down.

**NINA**

How'd the show go?

**JACK**

Okay. How'd yours go?

**NINA**

Not so good.

Jack looks at Nina's face, tender and young in the soft shadows of the booth. After a moment, her eyes shift to the carton in his hand.

**NINA**

Eggnog?

Jack nods.

**NINA**

(continuing)

From Hurley's?

**JACK**

Eighty proof. What d'ya say?  
Think you can handle it?

Nina nods. Jack begins to fill the two glasses.

**NINA**

Jack.

**JACK**

Yeah?

**NINA**

Can I stay here tonight? Even if  
she comes here?

Jack pauses a moment, then closes the carton and sets it aside.

**JACK**

Sure.

He hands Nina her glass, then takes his own.

**NINA**

Merry Christmas, Jack.

**JACK**

Merry Christmas.

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

Jack and Nina are standing in the middle of the room, looking down at something.

**NINA**

What do you think?

Eddie, outfitted in a brand new, spanking red dog sweater, stares up at Jack and Nina, wondering why he's the object of so much attention.

**JACK**

Very cool.

**EXT. CEMETERY - JACK, NINA AND EDDIE**

(sporting his new sweater)

make their way across an empty cemetery.  
Nina is swinging a bottle of whiskey.

**NINA**

(looking around)

There were more flowers last year. Mr. Rinaldi down at the drugstore says it's going to snow by New Year's. Says he can feel it in his elbows. I hope it snows. I want to make a snowman. You ever make a snowman, Jack?

**JACK**

Sure.

**NINA**

That's what I want to do.  
I want to make a snowman.

As they come to a plot of ground, they stop. There are two matching headstones, one for Jack's father, fully engraved, and another for Jack's mother, bearing only her name. Jack studies the plot a moment, then crouches before his father's marker: "ANDREW S. BAKER. Adoring Husband of Eleanor, Loving Father of Franklin and John." Jack brushes some dirt from the face of the stone, then stands.

**NINA**

(continuing)

Now?

Jack nods. Nina uncaps the whiskey bottle and pours it onto the dead man's grave.

**NINA**

(continuing)

Merry Christmas, Mr. Baker.

They stand another moment, just looking, then turn away. As they begin to walk, Jack sees Eddie in his new sweater sniffing at a gravestone.

**JACK**

Hey, Eddie. Have some respect,  
will ya?

**EXT. BUILDING**

Jack is sitting on a suitcase in front of his building. A moment later, Frank pulls the car up to the curb and Jack gets in. Susie is sitting up front.

**INT. CAR**

Frank, burning with the afterglow of a holiday spent with family, cheerfully maneuvers the car through the city.

**FRANK**

So. How was everyone's Christmas?

Jack and Susie stare disconsolately out the window.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Too early, huh? Well, there's coffee and donuts  
for whoever wants them.  
How about a maple bar, Jack?

Jack shakes his head and takes out a cigarette.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Uh, Jack ... if you don't mind.

Jack stares at the back of Frank's head, then puts the cigarette away. Susie takes a peek in the donut bag and looks a little sick.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

By the way, if anyone gets bored,  
Donna packed some travel games.  
They work wonders with the kids.

Frank reaches under the seat and hands Susie a sack  
full of magnetic games, puzzles, and plastic cubes.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

You two could play checkers.

**SUSIE**

Maybe we should just listen to the radio.

**FRANK**

Sorry. It only plays static.

Susie looks at the radio,  
then at the games in her hands.

**SUSIE**

How long did you say it takes to  
get to this place?

**INT. CAR - FEW HOURS LATER**

Jack is staring out the window at the winter landscape,  
an unlit cigarette dangling from his lip.  
Susie is gnawing on a donut, deeply obsessed with an  
elaborate plastic puzzle.

**FRANK**

Any more coffee?

Susie snaps out of her trance and shakes the Thermos.

**SUSIE**

Uh-uh. Hey, what's this?

Susie notices an old, leather-bound ledger. Inside,  
there are hundreds of tiny entries.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

You play all these places?

**FRANK**

Baker's unabridged.



**SUSIE**

Jesus, you fellas've made a lot of noise. What's with the stars?

**FRANK**

Virgins.

**SUSIE**

Virgins?

**FRANK**

First times. Hey, look at this.

A crepe-covered car surrounded by several other HONKING VEHICLES passes by. Jack stares at the beaming newlyweds as they glide past his window, two kids starting life in a beat-up Eldorado covered with toilet paper.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

When's the last time we played a wedding, Jack?

**JACK**

Two years ago. March.

**SUSIE**

(consulting the ledger)

He's right.

**FRANK**

He's always right. Go ahead. Pick a virgin.

Susie looks at Frank curiously.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Go ahead.

**SUSIE**

(scanning the book)

Okay. The Fantasy Inn.

**FRANK**

Jack?

**JACK**

(staring out the window)

November. '71.

**FRANK**

First night?

**JACK**

Day. Wednesday.

**FRANK**

Last?

**JACK**

Sunday.

**SUSIE**

I don't believe it.

**FRANK**

I told you, he's got the gift. Same with music.  
Hears it once and he's got it.

Frank smiles into the rear view mirror.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

My brilliant little brother.

**EXT. HOTEL**

The hotel, done in a sort of King Arthur motif, is built right on the ocean. Frank guides the car down a simulated cobblestone drive and the three get out.

**FRANK**

Will you listen to that ocean?

It's LOUD. Frank takes a deep breath.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

And how about this air? I'm telling you,  
a few days in this place'll put five years  
on your life.

**SUSIE**

Smells like fish.

**FRANK**

Of course it smells like fish.  
We're on the ocean.  
What'd you expect, Chanel number five?

**SUSIE**

(to herself)

Smells like tuna number two to me.

**FRANK**

It's paradise. That's what it is.  
Paradise.

As Susie and Jack follow Frank up the drive, Jack notices the beat-up Eldorado in the parking lot, its toilet paper streamers blowing gently in the ocean breeze.

**INT. HOTEL LOBBY**

The lobby is done in royal reds and blues and there are a lot of swords on the walls.  
Franks steps up to the front desk.

**FRANK**

Hi, we're the Fabulous Baker Boys.

**CLERK**

Glad to meet you. I'm Terrific  
Tom.

**FRANK**

No. We're the entertainment.

**TOM (CLERK)**

Oh, right, gotcha. You got bags?

**FRANK**

Outside. Blue Chevy.

**TOM**

(ringing a bell)  
Cyril. Chevy. Blue. Take 'em up  
to the Guinevere Suite.

A lanky boy in velvet jodhpurs and high stockings ambles out for the bags. Tom hands Frank the room keys.

**TOM**

(continuing)  
Right on the ocean, Mr. Baker.  
You can practically dangle your toes  
in the water.

**INT. SUITE**

Tom wasn't kidding. The immediacy of the ocean beyond

the window is almost scary.

**FRANK**

You believe this? I'm telling you, we're getting away with murder. Two shows a night and the rest of the time we live like kings. It's a crime.

Jack stares at the ocean, then at the two beds placed side by side. Suddenly Susie comes through the bathroom.

**SUSIE**

Hey, we're connected.

**FRANK**

Great.

**SUSIE**

Great?

**FRANK**

Yeah.

Susie shrugs and returns to her room through the bathroom.

**JACK**

I thought we had separate rooms.

**FRANK**

(opening drawers)

We do. She's got hers, we've got ours. Hey. Wash and Dries.

**JACK**

I thought we all had separate rooms.

**FRANK**

Come on, Jack. It's not like it's the first time we've bunked together. It'll be like when we were kids. Relax. Enjoy the view.

**INT. DINING ROOM**

Jack, Frank and Susie are in the dining room, which, like their rooms, looks out over the ocean. Dinner is over and they're well through a second bottle of wine.

**SUSIE**

You're kidding me.

**FRANK**

As Charlie Steinway is my witness.

**SUSIE**

Peggy Lee?

**FRANK**

Tell her.

**JACK**

She was staying at the Grand  
downtown ...

**FRANK**

It was April. April seventeenth.  
That one I remember.

**JACK**

We were playing the lounge one  
night and she came in.

**FRANK**

Pearls. White gown. Beautiful.

**JACK**

Frank asked if she'd sit in for a song, she said  
yes, and we did a few bars.

**FRANK**

A few bars!

**SUSIE**

What'd she sing?

**FRANK**

People.' You think Streisand, right?  
Hot that night. Chills.  
Through the whole audience. I could hardly play.

**SUSIE**

Wow. You ever see her again?

**FRANK**

No. We got a picture, though.  
One of the waitresses had a camera.  
(to Jack)  
God, we were just kids. That was  
something, wasn't it?

Jack nods. Frank shakes his head, still lost in the  
spring evening years before, then notices the newlyweds  
sitting across the room.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Hey, will you look at that?

**SUSIE**

They must've bought the same map we did.

**FRANK**

What do you say we send a bottle over?

**SUSIE**

I don't believe it. You're a romantic, Frank.

**JACK**

He's drunk.

**FRANK**

Not true. Besides, Jack's the romantic.

**SUSIE**

Oh yeah?

**FRANK**

He's just afraid to show it. Aren't you, little brother?

**JACK**

Have some more wine, Frank.

**FRANK**

Good idea.

(lifting his glass)

To Peggy Lee.

**INT. BATHROOM**

Frank, standing, dressed in pajamas.  
Jack is staring out the window at the darkness.

**FRANK**

I'm putting my stuff on the right, okay?

**JACK**

Okay.

**FRANK**

I figure that way we won't get confused.

**JACK**

Right.

**FRANK**

Unless you want the right.

**JACK**

No, you take the right.

**FRANK**

We might as well do the towels the same way.

**JACK**

Okay.

**FRANK**

I just figure things'll go smoother, you know, if we have it all worked out from the beginning.

**JACK**

Good idea.

**FRANK**

But if it doesn't work out, let me know. I'm flexible.

**JACK**

Right.

Frank nods and moves to the bed.

**JACK**

(continuing; re: the bathroom light)  
You leaving that on?

**FRANK**

Yeah.

**JACK**

All night?

**FRANK**

Yeah.

**JACK**

We're gonna be here a week?

**FRANK**

(puzzled)  
Yeah.

**JACK**

So you're gonna leave it on.  
Every night. For a week.

**FRANK**

Yeah. You mind?

**JACK**

Why would I mind?

**FRANK**

I don't know. I mean, I always did it as a kid.  
I figured it was no big deal. Is it? A big deal?

Jack just stares at Frank.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Oh. I didn't know. I mean, I always did it as a kid.  
It was never a big deal then. Was it?

Jack just stares at Frank.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Oh. Well. You want me to turn  
it off?

Jack just stares at Frank.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

I'll turn it off.

Jack turns back to the window.

**JACK**

Forget it. It's no big deal.

**INT. DINING ROOM - DAY**

The next morning. Jack and Frank are standing  
in a huge dining room, appraising two elegant grands.

**FRANK**

They're beauties, huh?

Jack steps up to one and runs his hand over the keys.

**FRANK**



(continuing)

Reminds me of those Steinways Willie used to have.

Frank taps a few notes on his piano, humming happily.  
Jack begins to echo his brother's notes, listening.  
After a moment, Frank notices.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

What?

**INT. DINING ROOM**

A short, stubby LITTLE MAN in a charcoal suit strides into the dining room, followed by Terrific Tom.

**MR. DANIELS (LITTLE MAN)**

Good morning, gentlemen. I'm Mr. Daniels, the manager. I believe I've spoken to one of you on the phone.

**FRANK**

(offering his hand)

That'd be me, sir. Frank Baker.

This is my brother Jack.

Jack, slouched against the piano, smoking, nods.

**MR. DANIELS**

Tom here tells me there's a problem with the pianos. We were assured they were in tune.

**FRANK**

Yes, well, they are.

**MR. DANIELS**

Then I'm afraid I don't understand.

**FRANK**

They are in tune. But not with each other.

**MR. DANIELS**

Is that important?

**FRANK**

Uh, well ...

**JACK**

Yes. It's important.

Frank glances nervously at Jack.

**MR. DANIELS**

Tom, who're we dealing with on these?

**TOM**

A Mr. Reynolds, sir. But he's gone on vacation. I called this morning.

**MR. DANIELS**

Well, gentlemen, I don't know what to say. Not being a musician myself I find it difficult to grasp the magnitude of this. I don't suppose there's any way you could just ... accommodate.

**JACK**

Accommodate? I don't think I know what you mean.

**FRANK**

I think what Mr. Daniels is trying to say, Jack, is --

**JACK**

Why don't we let Mr. Daniels tell us what he's trying to say.

**MR. DANIELS**

I assure you, Mr. Baker, no offense is intended. I simply mean, well, we're not a symphony, are we?

**INT. HALLWAY**

Frank dogs Jack down a hallway.

**FRANK**

Jack ... Jack ... You're acting like a kid.

**JACK**

No, that's your problem, Frank. You get around one of these assholes and you turn into a fucking three-year-old.

**FRANK**

What's the matter with you? So the piano's a little out of tune. So what?

**JACK**

(stopping)

Christ, can't you hear it?

**FRANK**

No! I never hear it!

(shaking his head)

Maybe. Sometimes. I don't know.

But I won't let it bother me.

**JACK**

Doesn't it matter to you?

**FRANK**

What matters to me is we've got the six easiest nights we've had in ten years.

So 'Tie a Yellow Ribbon' sounds a little flat.

So what? Nobody's gonna hear it, Jack. Nobody.

So why should you care?

**JACK**

Because I can hear it.

**FRANK**

Well, then stuff cotton in your ears, because come six o'clock we're gonna walk into that dining room with smiles on.

Understand, little brother?

**INT. HOTEL ROOM**

Frank is adjusting his tie in the bathroom mirror. Jack, sitting at the window, his foot up against the glass, drinks from a flask as the sky above the ocean goes dark. After a moment, Susie enters wearing a little tuxedo of her own and begins to brush her hair.

**SUSIE**

Hey, fellas. What's the word?

Nothing.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

What's with you two?

**FRANK**

Jack woke up on the wrong side of the bottle.

Susie looks at Jack. Then Frank.

**SUSIE**

O-kay.

**INT. LOUNGE**

As Jack, Frank and Susie perform "Strangers in the Night," dozens of couples move slowly on the dance floor, while others sit at candle-lit tables, sipping cocktails. As the song ends, the couples applaud.

**FRANK**

Thank you, thank you.

(as applause dies)

You know, Susie and Jack and I only just arrived here yesterday, but already the people here at the King Corporation's Moorish Manor have made us feel, well, a part of the family. And it's their hope that, before you leave, everyone of you will feel a part of that family also. So, if during-the next few days, we should happen to pass one another in the hallway or in the lobby or wherever ... don't be a stranger. Stop. Say hello. Introduce yourself. Because here, there are no strangers, only friends. And family. Right, Jack?

**JACK**

Right. I love you, Frank.

**FRANK**

(stunned)

What?

**JACK**

I love you. I just wanted to say it.

Frank stares incredulously at Jack.

**FRANK**

Uh, well, I love you, too, Jack.

(moving quickly along)

So. Susie. How 'bout it.

**SUSIE**

Huh?

**FRANK**

Got another song for us?

**SUSIE**

Oh. Yeah. I gotta bunch of them.

**FRANK**

Well then ... shall we?

**BACKSTAGE**

Frank corners Jack as they exit the stage.  
Susie looks around nervously to see if anyone's watching.

**FRANK**

(whispering)

What's the matter with you?

**JACK**

I'm sorry, Frank. All that talk about family.  
I just got emotional.

**FRANK**

How dare you say you love me.

**JACK**

It won't happen again. Scout's  
honor.

**SUSIE**

What's with you guys?

**FRANK**

Someone needs to grow up. I won't  
take it, Jack.

**JACK**

Sure you will.

Jack pushes past Frank and leaves.  
Frank watches him go, then turns to leave himself.

**INT. BATHROOM**

Middle of the night. Jack, fully clothed,  
is sitting on the rim of the tub, smoking.  
Susie enters.

**SUSIE**

Oh, sorry. With the light always  
on, it's hard to tell.

**JACK**

It's okay.  
(the cigarette)  
Last one.

**SUSIE**

Can't sleep?

**JACK**

In and out.

**SUSIE**

It's the waves. God's music, my mother used to say.  
She was crazy for the ocean.

**JACK**

Yeah, well, I wish God would go  
a little easy on the trumpets.

**SUSIE**

How's egghead?

**JACK**

Like a baby. You?

**SUSIE**

In and out.

Jack nods. Susie looks at him carefully.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

If you want, I got a pack in the  
room.

**JACK**

No thanks. I never touch French  
cigarettes.

**INT. LOBBY - DAY**

The next morning. As Jack passes through the lobby,  
he hears the plaintive PLINKING of a PIANO. Curious,  
he goes to the dining room and peers in.  
The tables have yet to be set for the evening and,  
except for Frank, the room is empty.

**JACK**

What the hell are you doing?

**FRANK**

(not looking up)

What's it look like I'm doing?  
I'm tuning a goddamn piano.

**JACK**

Really.

**FRANK**

Yes, really. I don't want you to be unhappy, Jack. If you say it's out of tune, it's out of tune.

Jack smiles to himself and crosses the room.

**JACK**

How's it coming?

**FRANK**

Fine.

**JACK**

How long you been at it?

**FRANK**

(shrugging)

Half-hour. Once I finish this octave I'm gonna get breakfast. You see what's on the buffet?

**JACK**

They stopped serving two hours ago.

**FRANK**

Two hours ago!

**JACK**

Time flies, huh?

Frank looks despairingly at the pianos.

**JACK**

(continuing)

I could give you a hand. If you want.

**INT. DINING ROOM - DAY**

Jack and Frank are eating lunch. Frank has a tiny stack of blue cards he's perusing. He holds one out to Jack.

**FRANK**

What do you make that? Paruchi?

Jack nods. Frank continues to go through the cards as he speaks.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

You haven't seen Susie, have you?

**JACK**

No. Why?

**FRANK**

Just wonder what she's up to.  
I never see her. Makes me nervous.

**JACK**

She's a big girl.

**FRANK**

Yeah, well, she's our girl now. I think we better  
keep an eye on her. There's trouble there.

(another card)

Hey, listen to this. Ethel and Bert Lane.  
Married seventy-five years. You believe that?

**JACK**

What the hell are these?

**FRANK**

Dedications. I came up with the idea on the road.  
See, every morning the maids drop one of these  
cards in each room. The guest fills out the card,  
leaves it at the front desk, and that night we play  
it. Daniels went crazy for the idea.

(whispering)

And that's not all. Last night, after the nine  
o'clock, he corners me, right, and starts asking  
about our availability. Like he wants to line  
something up.

I think he's got a hard-on for Susie.

**WOMAN**

Excuse me.

Frank jumps. A WOMAN in a bright flowered gift shop  
dress pokes her head in.

**WOMAN**

I'm sorry to interrupt, but when I saw you sitting  
here, I just had to come over. Florence Simmons.

**FRANK**

Uh ... Frank Baker. This is my  
brother.

**FLORENCE SIMMONS (WOMAN)**



Oh, I know, I know. My husband and I saw you play last night and it's the most remarkable thing.

**FRANK**

Oh. Well, thank you.

**FLORENCE SIMMONS**

No, I mean you.

(to Jack)

I have a brother-in-law who looks exactly like you. Exactly. You don't happen to have a Huckleberry in your family tree, do you?

**JACK**

Afraid not.

**FLORENCE SIMMONS**

Well, it's frightening. You could be his twin. Of course, he doesn't have your talent. Musically, I mean. He sharpens things for a living. Lawn mower blades, kitchen knives, anything with an edge. Can imagine?

Jack is having a hard time imagining Florence Simmons.

**FLORENCE SIMMONS**

(continuing)

Well, anyway, I just had to make sure there was no relation. You play wonderfully. Both of you.

Florence Simmons gives a little flutter of a wave and exits.

**FRANK**

Funny, huh?

**JACK**

What?

**FRANK**

Thinking there's someone who looks like you, walking around the street somewhere.

(smiling)

Wonder if I saw him I'd think it was you?

**EXT. HOTEL - DAY**

Jack is standing on the walkway that encircles the hotel, watching the waves tumble into one another. As he starts to take out a cigarette, he notices

Florence Simmons standing a few yards away with a camera.

**FLORENCE SIMMONS**

I just know my sister won't believe me. Do you mind?

Jack shakes his head and Florence starts to aim the camera.

**FLORENCE SIMMONS**

I really hate to impose. It's just that the resemblance is so extraordinary.

(focusing)

I wonder if you could turn this way so your face isn't in the shadows.

As Jack turns, he glances over Florence's swaying shoulder and sees Susie and a man standing at the other end of the walkway. They are leaning into the wind, her hair blowing free, brushing the man's face.

**FLORENCE SIMMONS**

Say cheese.

The camera clicks.

**FLORENCE SIMMONS**

(continuing)

Gotcha. Would you like a copy for yourself? The hotel develops.

Jack glances away from Susie and the man.

**JACK**

No.

ON Jack's expression APPLAUSE is heard and a moment later we --

**CUT TO:**

**INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

That evening. The trio has just finished a song and those on the dance floor are clapping.

**FRANK**

Thank you. You know, before we came out here this evening, Susie and Jack and I were looking over your dedications and something struck us.

Susie and Jack look at Frank as if they have no idea what he's talking about.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

We realized that, well, we're really not so different from one another after all. Oh sure, we may be at different points in our journey, but we all travel pretty much the same road. And so, with that in mind, we'd like to introduce you to two very special couples. First, married for all of two days, please say hello to Helen and Bud Wilson. Helen. Bud.

Those standing on the dance floor applaud as the young couple from the beat-up Eldorado make their way to the front of the room.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

And now, our second couple. I'm talking about Ethel and Bert Lane, ladies and gentlemen. Now, Ethel and Bert would be upset with me if I told you they'd been married for fifty years. Why? Because, ladies and gentlemen, Ethel and Bert Lane have been married for seventy-five years!

The audience lets go with an audible "ooh" and applauds enthusiastically.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Ethel, Bert. Get up here and show these kids how it's done.

A path is cleared and a tiny couple begins to make their way to the dance floor.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Aren't they a sight?

They are indeed, and a sight slower getting to the dance floor than Frank anticipated.

He nods to Jack and they launch into "The Anniversary Waltz," but have to keep repeating the opening passage while they wait for Ethel and Bert. Finally, everyone on the dance floor steps back and, with some help from a few waiters, who slide a section of tables out of the way, Ethel and Bert Lane begin to dance in the center

of the room, slowly but wonderfully, while the younger couple whirls around them like a youthful satellite.

**INT. BATHROOM**

Jack is sitting in the bathroom again, smoking. He hears Susie's door open, then VOICES -- hers and a man's. He puts out his cigarette in the sink and leaves.

**INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAY**

The next morning. Frank, the early bird, is returning to the room with a newspaper under his arm. Whistling happily, he rounds the corner just in time to see a man exit Susie's room. Astonished, then outraged, he goes to Susie's door and knocks sharply.

**SUSIE**

(opening door)

Forget your tie, handsome ...  
Frank!

**FRANK**

You want to tell me what the hell's going on?

**SUSIE**

Huh?

**FRANK**

I just saw a man walk out of your room.

**SUSIE**

Uh ...

**FRANK**

In case you've forgotten, we're being paid to be here. So it might be nice if you conducted yourself with a certain amount of decency.

**SUSIE**

Decency? Hey listen, pal ...

**FRANK**

No. You listen. I had my doubts about you from the beginning

**JACK**

Hey!

Frank and Susie turn. Jack is standing in the hallway.

**JACK**

(continuing)

What're you trying to do? Wake up the whole goddamn hotel?

**FRANK**

We were just having a little discussion about morality.

**SUSIE**

Some discussion.

**FRANK**

I just saw a man walk out of your room!

**JACK**

You saw wrong.

**FRANK**

Huh?

**JACK**

He's with the hotel. I called him.

**FRANK**

What are you talking about?

**JACK**

We had a leak in the bathroom. He fixed it.

**FRANK**

He was wearing a suit.

**JACK**

He had to come quickly. It was a big leak.

**FRANK**

How come I didn't hear anything?

**JACK**

You're a heavy sleeper, Frank. You've always-been a heavy sleeper.  
(looking at Susie)  
Unlike me.

Frank looks at Jack, then Susie.

**FRANK**

I guess I ... If I jumped to...

**SUSIE**

Forget it.

The three stand there awkwardly for a moment.

**FRANK**

Well...

Frank shrugs lamely and exits.

**SUSIE**

Boy, he comes on like a hurricane  
in the morning, doesn't he?

Jack just stares at her.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Yeah, well, thanks for sticking  
your head in.

**JACK**

Hey, business is business.

He turns to leave. Susie's eyes narrow.

**SUSIE**

It wasn't business. It was pleasure.

**JACK**

Just dinner and dance, right?

**INT. DINING ROOM**

Jack, Frank and Susie are sitting at a table in the smaller dining room. It is conspicuously quiet. The main course seems to be a conscious attempt to ignore each other. Finally, Susie looks at Frank. Then Jack. Then out the window.

**SUSIE**

Paradise.

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Jack and Frank's room. It is New Year's Eve, just before show time, and Jack and Frank are in their tuxes. Frank is on the phone.

**FRANK**

(into phone)

Yes, Daddy promises. I'll bring you one of the little glasses, how's that? Just like Grandma has. It has a picture of the hotel on it and everything ... No, honey, they don't sell puppies here ... Who? ... Well, we'll see. Let me talk to Mommy, okay?... Okay, sweetheart. Happy New Year.

(waits)

Hi, honey. She says Angela Secoli got a puppy for Christmas. Explain to her why we can't ... I don't know, tell her you're allergic ... It's not lying. Well, okay, it is lying, but ... All right, then tell her I'll explain it ... He what? ... No kidding? Without the training wheels?

(affected by this)

Well, that's great. Tell him, tell him. I can't wait to see ... No, no new bike. Maybe for his birthday ... Okay. Listen, honey, I have to go. We're on in ten minutes ... Yeah, Happy New Year ... I love you ...

Frank sets the phone down and stares at it. Jack studies him a moment, then Frank suddenly claps his hands.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Well, let's go. The public waits.

**INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

A mass of swarming, jubilant people. The voices are high and loud and there's not a hand without a champagne glass. Couples lean into one another intimately, dancing gaily between the tables, toasting strangers without hesitation.

**FRANK**

(yelling to be heard)

All right, everyone. This is it.  
Let's hear it. Ten. Nine ...

Gradually, the entire room joins the chant.

**FRANK/EVERYONE**

Eight. Seven. Six. Five.

Four. Three. Two! ONE!  
**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

There is a blizzard of confetti as people scramble to find that certain someone to kiss in the new year. In this moment, Jack, Frank and Susie find themselves oddly removed from the frantic cheer below them, their presence suddenly unnecessary, forgotten. Finally, Susie walks over to Frank and gives him a kiss, then goes to Jack. They hesitate, then kiss lightly, pulling away and glancing awkwardly into each other's eyes. Frank sounds the first chord of "Auld Lang Syne" and Susie looks away from Jack and returns to her place on the stage. As she begins to sing, the others in the room, all intimate friends for one brief moment, begin to sing with her.

**SUSIE/EVERYONE**

Lest old acquaintances be forgot ...

As the voices slowly fade, they are joined by the sound of the OCEAN until the ocean is all we hear and we see:

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Jack, lying on his bed in the dark. He opens his eyes, squinting against the light from the bathroom, then glances over to Frank's bed and detects the outline of a body in the darkness. Swinging his legs over the side, he sits up on the edge of the bed and rubs his eyes. Suddenly there is a rustle of blankets and the shadow in the next bed shifts, falling into the shaft of light cast from the bathroom. It is a little boy. Startled, Jack stares at the sleeping boy, then hears movement in the bathroom. Rising slowly, he walks to the bathroom and gently eases the door open a few inches. Inside, swimming murkily in the steamy mirror, is the reflection of a man. His back is to Jack, but Jack can see that the man is shaving. As Jack lets his gaze drop to the floor, he sees that water is dripping off the man's pant cuffs and gathering in pools on the bathroom floor ... Jack wakes up. He stares at the ceiling, listening to the waves, then lifts his head and looks to the bathroom. It is dark. Turning, he glances at Frank's bed. It's empty.

**INT. DINING ROOM**

Dark and soundless. Balloons, streamers and the other debris of revelry cover the tables and floor like snow. Frank is sitting at the window, drinking as he stares at



the ocean. As Jack crosses the room, he looks up.

**FRANK**

Ah, well, if it isn't the lad with the golden ear.  
Happy New Year, little brother.

**JACK**

What're you doing down here?

**FRANK**

Celebrating. Join me?

**JACK**

The party's over.

**FRANK**

No, you're wrong. It's just beginning.  
Come on, have a drink.  
Show your big brother how it's done.

Frank pours him a glass. Jack notices the bottle.

**JACK**

Expensive hangover.

**FRANK**

A gift. Courtesy of our courteous  
hotel manager, Mr. Daniels.

(toasting Jack)

We, dear brother, are a fucking  
smash.

(nodding)

Yup. They want us back. Easter. It seems they  
have this egg hunt every year. Only not for kids.  
Adults. They stuff these plastic eggs with  
Timexes and little certificates for free Mai Tais  
and everyone has a grand time crawling around on  
the front lawn. Then afterwards, they have a  
dance. An egg dance. Everyone comes dressed in  
a different colored shell and at the end of the  
evening they crack themselves open. It's our job  
to separate the yolks from the whites.  
Slippery business.

Frank smiles as he takes a swallow of his drink, then  
leans his head back, staring at the ceiling.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

You know, I've never kissed my wife on New Year's.  
Not once in twelve years.

Jack studies Frank as he stares at the ceiling.

**FRANK**

The Holmby has a chandelier like that doesn't it?  
With the blue glass.

Jack looks up at the chandelier.

**JACK**

The Royal.

**FRANK**

Right. The Royal. When's the  
last time we were there?

**JACK**

Couple years.

**FRANK**

February?

**JACK**

April.

**FRANK**

Right. It's incredible how you  
do that. Remember things.

**JACK**

A useless talent.

**FRANK**

Drove me crazy when we were kids.  
The way you never looked at the music.  
Miss Simpson would just play it and ...

Frank snaps his fingers.

**JACK**

They were simple songs.

**FRANK**

Not for me. I still have to look at the music  
sometimes, you know that? Otherwise, I forget.  
I just forget. But you. You never forget.  
Ever.

(turning)

So how come you couldn't remember Ma's birthday?

**JACK**

I told you. It's a useless talent.

Frank studies Jack a moment, then stares out at the ocean.

**FRANK**

God, the old man would've loved this view, wouldn't he?

**JACK**

Yeah.

**FRANK**

I always think of him on New Year's. How he used to pour us each half a can of beer. Remember?

**JACK**

You always threw up.

**FRANK**

Yeah, and you drank yours like it was orange juice. He loved that about you.

**JACK**

He was just having fun.

**FRANK**

It was like you'd passed some test, you know?

**JACK**

It was just a can of beer, Frank.

**FRANK**

Yeah, but he told you things. He never told me anything. Even though I was the oldest. It was always you two, running off, doing things together.

**JACK**

You could've come.

**FRANK**

I could've. But he didn't want me to.

**JACK**

You're making things up, Frank.

**FRANK**

Maybe so.

(pause)

You ever go back there? Where it

happened.

Jack stares at the angry SEA, LOUD even through the thick glass.

**JACK**

No.

**EXT. HOTEL - DAY**

The next morning. Jack is sitting outside the hotel, watching HELEN and BUD WILSON pack up the Eldorado. The streamers, by now turned to mush, cling like oatmeal to the car's exterior. After a moment, Frank exits with a little bag from the gift shop and pulls out a tiny souvenir shot glass.

**FRANK**

Want one?

Jack shakes his head.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Ah well, the kids'll break a couple anyway.

Suddenly, across the parking lot, the voices of the newlyweds are heard.

**BUD**

Give me the keys.

**HELEN**

You're not going to drive.

**BUD**

Give me the keys!

**HELEN**

You're not going to drive!

**BUD**

It's my goddamn car!

**HELEN**

It's our goddamn car!

**BUD**

Give me the keys.

**HELEN**

No.

Bud hesitates, then makes a rush for his wife, but she's too quick and runs to the other side of the car. Frustrated, he begins to run around the car like a madman, trying to catch her. Finally, when he gets close, she darts off, sprinting across the parking lot.

**FRANK**

I think I'll warm up the car.

**OVERVIEW - CITY**

Cold, dark, dangerous, but somehow looking quite appealing after a week in paradise.

**INT. CAR - NIGHT**

The trio, looking road-weary, is parked in front of Jack's building. It is very late.

**FRANK**

That takes care of this week. The tenth we got the Sheraton, the sixteenth we're at the Capri.

**JACK**

The tenth's out.

**FRANK**

What?

**JACK**

I can't make the tenth.

**FRANK**

What do you mean?

**JACK**

I mean maybe you should check with us before you go off and book us a month in advance.

**FRANK**

Be reasonable, Jack.

**JACK**

I play two hundred nights a year with you, Frank. How much more reasonable you expect me to be?

Jack gets out of the car. Frank shakes his head in exasperation, then looks to Susie.

**FRANK**

How about you? Got a Bar Mitzvah this weekend?

**SUSIE**

(distracted)  
Huh?

**FRANK**

Forget it.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT**

Jack lets himself in and closes the door quietly. In the darkness he can make out Nina and Eddie, curled up on the couch, asleep. Above them, hung carefully on a string, are some paper letters: **"WELCOME HOME."**

**INT. LOUNGE**

In a lounge whols basic decor makes abundant use of several historical eras but which might best be described as Modern Pilgrim, Jack, Susie and Frank perform "Feelings," while waiters in huge Paul Revere hats pass in and out of view.

**SUSIE**

Feelings ... Wo wo wo ... Feelings  
... Wo wo wo ... Feelings ...

**KITCHEN**

Jack, Frank and Susie exit the lounge to applause.

**SUSIE**

I can't sing it anymore.

**FRANK**

What?

**SUSIE**

That song. I can't sing it anymore.  
I'm gonna get sick.

**FRANK**

What're you talking about? They  
love it.

**SUSIE**

I'm gonna throw up, Frank. I mean it.  
Let's drop it for the ten o'clock, okay?

**FRANK**

(as to a child)  
Susie. It's one more show. One  
more time. That's all.

**SUSIE**

And two more times tomorrow night, and two more  
times the next night, and the next night and the  
next night and the next night. Frank, I can't  
sing that fucking song anymore!

She's yelling. The kitchen workers are glancing over.  
Jack studies her as she tries to calm herself.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)  
I need some air.

**EXT. HOTEL**

A few minutes later. Jack comes out of the hotel and  
sees Susie pacing.  
He sits down and watches her for a moment.

**JACK**

You're gonna wear down those  
heels if you don't give it a rest.

She stops.

**JACK**

(continuing)  
Relax. We'll drop the song.

**SUSIE**

Guess I got a little scattered.

**JACK**

It's a shitty song.

Susie nods and looks up at the glittering hotel.

**SUSIE**

How do you do it? Every night?

**JACK**

Practice.

(pause)

There are worse songs, you know.  
Not many, but a few.

Susie nods. Jack studies her. Something's on her mind.

**SUSIE**

Listen...

(looks into his eyes)

Nothing.

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

A record is spinning on Jack's phonograph as the sun goes down outside his window. As we MOVE AWAY FROM the phonograph and PAST the window, we FIND Jack at the piano, playing along with the record, lost in concentration.

**EXT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS ACTION**

Susie is working on a Paris Opal, pacing, occasionally glancing up at Jack's apartment, where the MUSIC can be heard FAINTLY. After a moment, she drops her cigarette on the sidewalk. There are half a dozen others already there.

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT**

The record finishes, but the needle doesn't pick up, bumping into the label. Jack glances at the clock next to him and gets up. He puts on a jacket, then takes a pair of gloves and pulls them on carefully.

**EXT. BUILDING**

As Jack comes out of his building, Susie stops pacing, surprised. Jack, wearing the same look of concentration he had at the piano, doesn't see her and turns down the other end of the street. Susie starts to call after him, but stops.

**EXT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT**



The sun is gone now and the moon is in the sky.  
We see the hot neon exterior of a tiny jazz club.

**INT. CLUB - NIGHT**

Jack is sitting in the shadows near the stage, where a trio is playing. He has a drink in front of him, but it is untouched. After a moment, the trio finishes and the pianist, a huge black man named HENRY, nods to the applause.

**HENRY**

Thank you. As most of you know, we like to shake things up here every so often just to keep you people on your toes. So I'm gonna take a little rest, grab myself a drink, and let an old friend sit in. He drops by about once a year just to keep his hands clean. Ladies and gentlemen.  
Jack Baker.

Jack rises to polite applause and shakes Henry's hand. As he settles behind the piano, he sits for a moment, not moving, then nods to the two men behind him. As they begin to play, we recognize the music from the record. Jack waits, then brings his hands to the keys. As he plays, his face is suddenly calm. Peaceful.

**EXT. CLUB - NIGHT**

Later. Jack comes out of the club and into the night, lighting a cigarette as he moves up the street.

**SUSIE (O.S.)**

You were good.

Jack stops. Susie.

**JACK**

I can keep the beat.

**SUSIE**

Better than that.

Jack's face goes a little cold, but he says nothing, beginning to walk again.

**SUSIE**

What's the matter?

**JACK**

Nothing.

**SUSIE**

What'd I say?

**JACK**

Nothing.

**SUSIE**

You're upset.

**JACK**

I'm not upset.

**SUSIE**

All I said was you were good.

**JACK**

(stops)

Look. You don't know good. All right?

**SUSIE**

What's that supposed to mean?

**JACK**

It means you wouldn't know good  
if it came up and fucked you.

**SUSIE**

You were good.

**JACK**

Let's make a deal. You shut up.

**SUSIE**

You were good.

**JACK**

(exasperated)

How do you know?

**SUSIE**

(yelling)

Because I saw the other people!  
And they knew you were good!  
You were good, goddamnit!

Jack studies Susie, then glances off. For a moment,  
they just stand on the corner, not talking.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

So you wanna get a drink?

**INT. JACK'S APARTMENT**

**JACK**

Nina?

**SUSIE**

Who's Nina?

**JACK**

Friend.

**SUSIE**

Friend? What's she look like?  
Maybe I can help you find her.

**JACK**

She's four feet tall. Ed?

**SUSIE**

Ed? How many people live here?

Eddie walks around the couch and looks curiously at Susie. Jack moves to the kitchen.

**JACK**

I have to make him some chili.  
Okay?

**SUSIE**

(a look)

Sure.

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

Light from a weak lamp, lots of shadows, as romantic as Jack's apartment will ever get. Outside the window, the city looks like a thousand jewels, gleaming.

Susie cradles a drink in her hand as she moves slowly about the room, slipping, in and out of the shadows as if they were veils.

**SUSIE**

(at window)

Like diamonds, huh? I never get over it.  
When I was a little girl, my mama'd stand me before

the window and tell me to close my eyes and make a wish. Like I could reach out and grab all the lights of the city and string them into a necklace for myself. She'd take my hand and when she closed her eyes, I don't know, it was like she really believed it.

**JACK**

How come you didn't close your eyes?

She looks surprised by the question.

**SUSIE**

I don't know. I guess I didn't trust the night like she did.

Susie finishes her drink and sets it down.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Let me have a cigarette, will you?  
All of mine are down there on the sidewalk.

Jack looks at her curiously.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Long story.

Jack gives her an American cigarette and lights it.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

You know, I saw you guys once.  
You and Frank. At the Roosevelt.

**JACK**

Must've been a cheap date.

**SUSIE**

Soap convention.

**JACK**

Soap?

**SUSIE**

Yeah, they got a convention for everything. At least he was clean. Boy, the guys I met when I was with the service, you wouldn't believe. The older ones, they were okay. Nice. Polite. Pulled the chair out for you. But the younger ones ...  
(shaking her head)

Mama used to say, dance with a man once, but if you can feel calluses on his fingers, don't dance with him again. She thought she had it all figured out. But she wasn't so smart. There are killers with palms like a baby.

Susie takes a long draw and blows the smoke out slowly.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

It wasn't so bad, though. I'd get a nice piece of steak, flowers, sometimes even a gift. Usually whatever the guy was into. Got a socket set once. Believe it? The guy looked like he'd just given me four dozen roses.

(almost wistful)

But I stayed at the Hartford once. You should see the rooms. All satin and velvet. And the bed. Royal blue, trimmed in lace clean as snow. Hard to believe sleeping in a room like that don't change your life. But it don't. The bed may be magic, but the mirror isn't. You wake up the same old Susie.

(pause)

I didn't always, you know. If I liked the guy ...

Susie looks at Jack, but he just takes a drink. She looks out the window again.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Sometimes I wish the sun would never come up.

She stares at the lights another moment, then turns and nods to the phone booth.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

So what's this?

Jack frowns, takes another drink.

**JACK**

History.

**SUSIE**

Huh?

**JACK**

My father proposed to my mother in there.

**SUSIE**

No kidding?

It's a small phone booth.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

The both of them? In there?

**JACK**

He called her.

**SUSIE**

Oh. So what's it doing here?

**JACK**

Long story.

**SUSIE**

You sending me home?

Jack locks eyes with Susie, then glances away.

**JACK**

They'd been out dancing all night and he took her to the train station -- she lived over in Brookhaven. Usually held ride with her, but this time he didn't. Anyway, he starts walking home, only as he's walking he starts getting nervous.

**SUSIE**

Nervous?

**JACK**

By the time he gets to the corner newstand, he's got her meeting some rich guy on the train, the rich guy's asked her to marry him, and he's reading about it in the morning edition.

**SUSIE**

You're kidding.

**JACK**

He had a mind that escalated things.

**SUSIE**

So, what happened?

**JACK**

He calls her, asks her to marry him, she thinks he's crazy, he asks her again, she still thinks he's crazy but says yes anyway, and the next thing you know he's got his brothers down there and

they're tearing the thing right off the curb.

Susie blinks.

**JACK**

(continuing)

I don't know. Maybe he thought some rich guy was gonna try and call her.

**SUSIE**

Wow. But I still don't see how ...

**JACK**

Ma didn't want it around. After.

**SUSIE**

Oh.

Jack glances out the window.

**SUSIE**

(continuing, carefully)

Frank said you saw him die.

Jack glances up quickly, surprised. He nods.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Frank said ---

**JACK**

Frank wasn't 'there.

Susie stops, looks down. Jack studies her for a moment, then decides.

**JACK**

He took me out to the docks one day. We did that a lot. There were other places, but he loved the ocean. He'd worked boats as a kid. Never got rid of it. It was always in him. He'd drink a little when we'd go. If he drank enough, he'd do this funny Irish jig. To make me laugh.

(pause)

He drank a lot that day.

Susie studies Jack as he stares into his glass.

**JACK**

(continuing)

There was a lot of wind. He was up on this cargo shelf, right over the ocean. And he started to

do the jig. One minute he was there ...  
(shrugs)  
I thought it was a joke at first.  
He did things like that. Games.  
(pause)  
I was laughing when it happened.

Jack stares at the glass in his hands, then glances up and catches Susie looking at him.

**JACK**

You got pretty eyes, you know that.

**INT. JACK'S BEDROOM**

Jack's bed. In the darkness, we see Susie's profile, her eyes looking up toward the ceiling. Jack's body falls slowly across her and he kisses her neck.

**EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING**

We see Eddie, wearing his Christmas sweater, sleeping on the fire escape.

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

Susie is dressed, sitting at the piano, staring out the window as she absently hits a key. She is smoking one of Jack's cigarettes. Distracted. Jack comes to the doorway and watches her. Plink. Plink. Plink.

**JACK**

You gotta move 'em around if you want to play a song.

Susie starts, looks at her hand on the piano, pulls it away.

**SUSIE**

Oh. Hi. Sorry.

**JACK**

Coffee?

**SUSIE**

Yeah... No.

**JACK**

Look, if you want to leave...



**SUSIE**

Yeah, maybe ... No. God, I hate these cigarettes!

Susie throws the cigarette out the window,  
then looks down.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Shit. I think I started a fire.

**JACK**

If our feet get hot, you grab  
the piano.

Susie smiles weakly.

**JACK**

(continuing)

Why don't you go. I'll see you  
tomorrow night at the Ambassador.

Susie doesn't move.

**SUSIE**

I followed you last night. I  
mean, I was here. Outside. I was  
about to come up when you came out.

Jack waits.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

The reason I came by ... I couldn't tell Frank...  
I'm leaving. The act.

Susie stares up at Jack, but he says nothing.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

It's a ... I met this guy at the resort. He liked  
my voice. And, it's ... He thinks I can sell cat  
food just by singing about it. Can you believe it?

Susie tries a laugh. Jack nods.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

You can always get another girl.

**JACK**

(looks out window)

There's always another girl.

**INT. LOUNGE**

Jack and Frank stand in a lounge, talking to NICK, the manager. Busboys move in and out, preparing the room for the evening.

**NICK**

Sick? How sick?

**FRANK**

The flu.

**NICK**

So she's got a few sniffles.

**FRANK**

Doctor's orders.

Nick frowns, looking at the two pianos across the room.

**NICK**

You got no right springing this on me, Frankie.  
It's unethical.

**FRANK**

Look, Nick. You want us to pack up, we'll pack up.

**NICK**

What am I gonna do? Put a record  
player out there?  
(exiting)  
Bad, Frankie. Bad.

**JACK**

(to Frank)  
What're you doing?

**FRANK**

Just until we find another girl.

**JACK**

Cancel, Frank.

**FRANK**

You want to know how much I got tied up in  
deposits with Willie? We're in for three  
weeks solid, Jack.

**JACK**

Better give her pneumonia.

**INT. BACK ROOM**

Jack and Frank find themselves in the back room of Willie's again. They do not look happy.

**GIRL (O.S.)**

Remember me?

Jack and Frank look up. A girl in a yellow and black dress is in the doorway. She looks like a bumblebee.

**GIRL**

Monica. Monica Moran. I came in the last time you guys were looking for a singer.

(smiling)

Perseverance. First rule of show business.

Jack and Frank just stare at her.

**MONICA (GIRL)**

I bought a book. That's what it says.

**EXT. WILLIE'S - LATER**

Frank is looking at a list.

**FRANK**

We got the Roosevelt on Thursday, the Park in a couple of weeks. Larry Shelton said he'd let me know by Friday on the Ambassador. That's it.

Frank folds the paper carefully.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

I got some calls out. Things that might be good for us.

Frank looks over at Jack for the first time. He's leaning against the building, staring at his shoes.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

We'll try for a girl again next week.

Jack nods.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Okay. Well, the Roosevelt then.

**INT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL - LOUNGE**

Once grand, now dark and dusty looking. A small crowd.

**FRANK**

You know, my brother and I have been playing together, gosh, I don't know. Jack?

**JACK**

Twenty-eight years.

No response. Bored, brutally indifferent faces.

**FRANK**

Of course, uh, back then it was, uh, a little different. We were just kids. Just about the only one who would listen to us was the family cat, Cecil. We must've shaved three lives off old Cecil, huh, Jack?

Frank laughs and his voice, eerily magnified by the microphone, is the only sound in the room.

**FRANK**

(continuing; hanging tough)

Yeah, well, anyway. It's nice to be back here in the Roosevelt Room, because this has always been ...

Frank falters as he sees Mrs. Baker enter the lounge and seat herself at a table in the back of the room. Jack follows Frank's eyes and spots her.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

a very special place for Jack and I.

(recovering)

And tonight we'd like to open with a very special song. It's the song my mother and father danced to the night they were married. This is for them.

**INT. LOBBY**

Jack watches as Frank gives Mrs. Baker a hug.

**FRANK**

You should've told us you were coming, Ma.  
We would've come and got you.

**MRS. BAKER**

Spur of the moment.

**FRANK**

So what'd you think?

**MRS. BAKER**

Thrilling.

(glancing at Jack)

Both of you.

**FRANK**

The audience was a little off  
tonight.

**MRS. BAKER**

A few empty tables. It's cozier.  
Besides, Mel Torme couldn't fill this place  
on a Wednesday night.

**FRANK**

I guess you're, right. Well, what do you say we  
get a little midnight snack?  
Theo's should still be open.

**MRS. BAKER**

No, no. You boys are tired.

**FRANK**

No, we're not. Jack?

**JACK**

No.

**MRS. BAKER**

I'm tired. Really. I should get  
home.

**FRANK**

You sure?

**MRS. BAKER**

(nodding)

Just call me a cab.

**FRANK**

A cab? Ma, come on. My car's just a half  
block down. You wait here.

**MRS. BAKER**

(smiling)

All right.

Frank dashes out of the lobby. Jack and Mrs. Baker watch him go, then turn to each other. Mrs. Baker smiles awkwardly, then surveys the lobby.

**MRS. BAKER**

(continuing)

It's beautiful, isn't it?

The brocade on the walls has faded and the chairs - once covered with velvet, now with a cheap imitation - look old and dowdy, but the room still maintains an elegant dignity.

**JACK**

Yeah.

**MRS. BAKER**

This was quite a place once. After the war. On Friday nights they had dances in the ballroom upstairs. It was beautiful. Crystal chandeliers. White tablecloths. Orchids floating in the punch bowls... It was a wonderful place to be young.

Jack watches his mother as her eyes pass over the room. After a moment, she nods toward the lounge.

**MRS. BAKER**

(continuing)

It went well tonight.

**JACK**

Frank works hard.

**MRS. BAKER**

And you don't?

**JACK**

He leads, I follow.

**MRS. BAKER**

Is that the way it is?

**JACK**

Pretty much.

**MRS. BAKER**

He mentioned you had a girl for

a while. A singer.

**JACK**

For a while. She left.

**MRS. BAKER**

Yes, well, it's probably best.  
No sense bringing someone else in.

**JACK**

I suppose.

Mrs. Baker glances into the lounge, at the two pianos.

**MRS. BAKER**

Funny. Watching tonight, I was  
remembering when you were young.  
How I used to stand in the kitchen, listening to  
the two of you practice while I did the dishes.  
(smiling)  
My two little radios. Sometimes I'd stop and go to  
the door and just watch. Sometimes your father  
would too.

(pause)

He liked to listen to you play.  
Did you know that?

Jack shakes his head.

**MRS. BAKER**

(continuing)

You miss him, don't you?

**JACK**

It's been a long time, Ma.

**MRS. BAKER**

Yes.

(pause)

I supposed you still have that old phone booth.

Jack nods. Mrs. Baker smiles, then it fades.

**MRS. BAKER**

(continuing)

His love scared me, you know. The day he died he  
left a flower on my pillow.

Jack looks puzzled. Suddenly his mother reaches out  
and very gently touches her fingers to his face.

**MRS. BAKER**

(continuing)  
You look so like him.

They stand like this for a moment, connected, then Frank steps in from the street.

**FRANK**  
Your limo's ready, Ma.

**MRS. BAKER**  
All right.

Mrs. Baker takes her hand from Jack's face and turns away. Just before she exits, she looks back.

**MRS. BAKER**  
(continuing)  
Good night, Jack.

**EXT. STREET**

Jack, walking home, turns a corner and suddenly stops. Across the street, talking to a man, is Susie. She says a few words to the man, then touches him lightly on the arm and begins to walk away. Jack watches her retreat, then follows, moving quicker as he draws close. As he reaches her, he gently touches her elbow and she turns. Not Susie. The woman stares at Jack, startled. For a moment, he doesn't move. Finally, he lets go of her elbow.

**JACK**  
Sorry.

**INT. CAR - NIGHT**

A few nights later. Frank guides the car through wet city streets. It's two AM and raining hard.

**JACK**  
We're not getting paid then.

**FRANK**  
No.

**JACK**  
Nothing. We get nothing.

**FRANK**  
I told you, Jack. It's a telethon.



No one gets a cent.

**JACK**

(a pause)

What's it for?

**FRANK**

I don't know. Some disease.

**JACK**

What disease?

**FRANK**

I don't know.

**JACK**

You don't know?

**FRANK**

It's a disease, Jack. We're against it.  
It's not a moral decision.

**JACK**

(another pause)

What channels it on?

**FRANK**

Seventy-one

**JACK**

Seventy-one? What's seventy-one?

**FRANK**

(defensive)

A channel.

It's just a little further down the dial, that's all.  
Look, it's publicity. Publicity's publicity. Right?

Jack stares at Frank.

**JACK**

Right.

**INT. HALLWAY**

Jack and Frank make their way down a hallway.

**FRANK**

The guy said to find Studio E and  
turn right. What's that say?

Suddenly, a rapid-fire THUMPING SOUND resounds through the corridor. As Jack and Frank turn, they see a huge YOUTH in a wheelchair dribbling a basketball toward them.

**YOUTH**

Fast break!

Jack and Frank step back and watch the kid one-wheel it around the corner.

**FRANK**

I guess it's that way.

**INT. STUDIO**

Jerry Lewis need not fear. This is strictly a tin foil and crepe paper operation. Along one wall is the "phone bank," monitored by a few sleepy volunteers, and opposite, in makeshift bleachers, is the audience. A huge tote board, set on rolling astors, is next to the phones. The total, at 2:15 AM, is \$1125.38. As Jack and Frank enter, the kid in the wheelchair is doing basketball tricks before the camera.

**FRANK**

This must be it. I'll see when we're on.

Frank leaves. Jack glances around the studio like he's walked into a nightmare. At the phone bank, a heavysset MAN in a sweatshirt and a cap, looks over. Both the sweatshirt and the cap have "Earl" printed on them.

**EARL (MAN)**

You the magician?

**JACK**

No.

**EARL**

(disappointed)

Oh. What do you do?

Jack points to the pianos across the room.

**JACK**

Piano.

**EARL**

(hopeful)

Two at a time?

**JACK**

My brother and I. One each.

**EARL**

(disappointed again)

Oh.

**JACK**

(indicating the kid in the wheelchair)

What's wrong with the kid?

**EARL**

Knee. Tore it up against St. Anthony's. Right before the accident.

**JACK**

Accident?

**EARL**

The fire. The way we're going we'll be lucky to buy a carton of jockstraps, let alone a new gym.

As Jack registers this, Earl's PHONE RINGS. Frank returns and gestures to the kid in the wheelchair.

**FRANK**

We're on after Meadowlark.  
(seeing Jack's face)  
What's wrong?

**JACK**

Are you kidding me? Are you  
fucking kidding me?

**FRANK**

What?

**JACK**

We're playing for a goddamn  
gymnasium!

**FRANK**

(worried)

What?

Before Jack can further enlighten Frank, the kid in the wheelchair rolls off and a guy in a cheap rented tux strides in front of the camera. He's VINCE NANCY, the host.

**VINCE**

Let's hear it for our own Jimmy  
Marshall, shall we?

The audience applauds.

**VINCE**

(continuing)

As most of you know, young Jimmy put a nasty twist  
on that knee trying to win-one for good ol' Grant  
High this year. Luckily, the doctors tell us  
Jimmy'll be able to play next season. That is ...  
if there is a next season.

(Uncle Sam)

That's where you come in. Pick up that phone.  
Make a donation. Let's keep our kids off the  
streets and in the gym where they belong.

Applause.

**VINCE**

(continuing)

All right. Well, friends, what can I say about  
our next guest?

(consulting a card)

He, uh, they, uh, we are very pleased to have with  
us two of the most respected men in the musical  
entertainment field. I think you'll agree with me  
when I tell you we're in for a real treat when I  
say that we have with us ... the Fabulous Bunker  
Boys! Come on out here guys.

Vince gestures grandly to the left and Jack and  
Frank enter from the right.

**VINCE**

(continuing)

Whoops, there they are. Hey, nice  
suits, fellas.

(to camera)

Now I know a lot of you amateur musicians out  
there are going to want to rap with these guys and  
don't worry. Right after they finish up here,  
they're going to be manning the phones. Maybe we  
can even convince them to raffle off a few piano  
lessons if we're lucky. What do you think?

The audience applauds. Jack glares at Frank. He shrugs.

**VINCE**

(continuing)

Well, all right then. What are we

waiting for? Take it away, guys.

Jack and Frank poise their hands over their pianos and begin to play. As the music rises, the studio becomes very quiet, almost still. Unfortunately, Jack and Frank are barely through the opening passage when a thunderously LOUD BELL begins to RING. Suddenly, Vince steps out again.

**VINCE**

(continuing)

Uh oh. We know what that means, don't we? It's time to turn the board over.

(to Jack, Frank)

I'm afraid you fellas'll just have to wait a minute. Let's bring out the board.

Two post-pubescent giants roll out the tote board right in front of Jack and Frank. Jack looks positively homicidal.

**FRANK**

Jack ...

Jack kicks out the piano bench and starts to leave. Then, seeing the kid in the wheelchair, he grabs the basketball and fires it at Vince.

**VINCE**

What the --

**JACK**

(pointing)

You're a fucking creep, you know that. I oughta kick your ass.

**FRANK**

(whispering)

Jack, you're on television.

**JACK**

Shut up, Frank.

Earl of the sweatshirt and cap puts his hand on Jack's shoulder.

**EARL**

What do you say we go for a walk, pal.

**JACK**

Get your hand off me.

**EARL**

Come on, friend. I can smell it on you.  
Get yourself a cup of coffee. You'll forget  
what you're angry about.

**JACK**

Go fuck yourself.

**EARL**

(eyes go hard)  
You're a real tough guy when the  
ladies are around, aren't you, Ace?

**JACK**

I don't see any ladies here.  
Except maybe you.

That does it. Earl takes hold of Jack's collar and  
starts to-wrestle him roughly toward the door.

**FRANK**

Hey, leave him alone.

**EARL**

Do your brother a favor and have his mouth sewn up.

**JACK**

You're a lousy dancer, Earl. Don't  
you know the man's supposed to lead?

Earl shoves Jack into the hallway, hard.  
Jack stumbles back against the wall.

**EARL**

Who do you think you are, asshole?  
Liberace?

**EXT. STREET**

Jack walks down the street, mindless of the rain.  
Frank follows a few yards behind.

**FRANK**

Jack. We just,passed the car. Jack. This is a  
tuxedo. Three hundred dollars.

(pause)

You gonna talk to me? Or is this Jack's famous  
silent act? Look, it was for publicity.  
Do you understand? Publicity.

Jack stops and stares at Frank incredulously.

**JACK**

What-are you? A fucking moron?  
It's three o'clock in the morning,  
Frank. Who's watching? Your wife?  
Maybe you can get us a gig playing  
Little Frank's birthday party.  
What do you think?

**FRANK**

Look. I didn't know when we were going to be on  
until yesterday. What was I supposed to do?  
I had the pianos anyway.

**JACK**

Basketballs, Frank. You had us  
playing for basketballs.

**FRANK**

I'm sorry. I should've checked it out. I screwed  
up. But that doesn't mean you walk out in the middle  
of a gig.

**JACK**

(incredulous)  
What?

**FRANK**

It wasn't professional, Jack. It was a stunt.  
A stupid-ass stunt.

Jack just stares at Frank, as if looking at a stranger.

**JACK**

What's happening to you, Frank? You been kissing  
ass so long you're starting to like it? You let  
that guy turn us into clowns tonight. We were  
always small time, but we were never clowns, Frank.  
What's happened to your dignity?

**FRANK**

Dignity? Who the hell are you to  
talk about dignity?

Frank suddenly steps forward and reaches into Jack's  
jacket, coming away with a bottle.

**FRANK**

(continuing)  
This where you get your dignity, Jack?  
This is where you get your courage?

Jack tries to grab the bottle but Frank holds it away.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

No, let's do it straight for  
once, shall we?

Frank tosses the BOTTLE into the street, where it  
**SHATTERS.**

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Let me explain something to you, little brother.  
See, I've got people who depend on me. I've got  
a wife and two children who expect to wake up every  
morning with food on the table and heat in the house.  
I got a mortgage. I got car payments. I got Ma's  
medical bills. Oh yeah, and I got you. Yeah, you.  
Jack the shadow who's so cool and so hip and so  
fucking sure he's better than everyone else. Don't  
you think I'd like to walk up to one of these assholes  
and blow smoke in his face? Goddamn right I would.  
But I can't. Because I have to be responsible, little  
brother. I have to make sure the numbers balance out  
in my favor at the end of each month so everyone can go  
on living their lives. You don't win medals for it,  
but you can be damn sure you'd all take notice if I  
folded up shop. So don't talk to me about dignity,  
little brother. You're drawing on a weak hand.

Jack stares at Frank through the rain,  
then turns and begins to walk away.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Great. Terrific. Walk away. You're good at that,  
Jack. Just don't forget to stop off for another  
bottle of courage on your way home.

(pause)

That's what he'd do.

Jack stops, his back to Frank.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

You've found the perfect solution to all the  
pain in the world, haven't you, little brother?  
Eight-fifty a bottle, available any time day or  
night at your friendly neighborhood liquor store.  
You're weak, Jack. Just like he was.



Jack turns, tough and dangerous in the darkness.

**JACK**

Stay off it.

**FRANK**

No, let's stay on it. I'm sick and tired of watching you make him up into some kinda god. For Christ sake, Jack, he died doing a stupid bullshit jig. He left a wife and two sons. He wasn't a hero. He was a fool.

**JACK**

(eerily cold)  
You weren't there.

**FRANK**

That's right. I wasn't there. I don't have the luxury of being a witness to tragedy.

**JACK**

(coiled)  
Fuck you.

**FRANK**

No, fuck you. And fuck him too.  
Fuck the both-of you.

Jack suddenly bolts forward and grabs Frank by the lapels.

**FRANK**

(continuing)  
Hey, what're you doing? Hey!

Jack flings Frank against the wall, pounding, pulling and slamming him in a fitful rage.

**FRANK**

(continuing; scared)  
Jack! ... Jack! ...

Frank slides to the ground, afraid, trying to protect himself. Jack hovers over him.

**JACK**

How's it feel to have your little brother beat the shit out of you? Huh? Huh!

Jack comes down with a vicious fist at Frank's face. Frank holds up his hands, trying to shield himself, and catches a blow on his fingers.

**FRANK**

My hands! My hands!

Jack grabs one of Frank's hands.

**JACK**

(mocking)

Your hands. Your hands couldn't take the blue ribbon on amateur night.

Jack bends back Frank's fingers.

**FRANK**

(terrified)

Jack!

**JACK**

Who's weak now, big brother?

Jack pushes Frank's fingers until the knuckles crack.

**FRANK**

Jack! JACK!

Frank's voice echoes high above the sound of the rain. Suddenly Jack stops. Looking at Frank's hand, still clasped in his, he seems as shocked by his own behavior as Frank. Letting go, he steps back awkwardly and looks at his brother, beaten, to the ground, his tuxedo ripped and dirty. He stares at his own hands, the knuckles split and bleeding. He no longer looks dangerous. He looks hollow, frightened.

**JACK**

I'm through with it. I can't do it anymore.

Frank, rubbing his fingers, glances up at Jack, but Jack just turns away, leaving Frank on the sidewalk, and disappears into the rain. MUSIC begins. A sad, plaintive solo piano. And we see:

#### **SERIES OF SHOTS**

Jack, crossing the street to his apartment, the rain over now.

Frank, driving home, his face swollen and bruised in the dim glow of the streetlights.

Jack, letting himself into his apartment and standing there. Alone.

Frank, easing the car into the driveway, turning off the engine.

Jack, taking a bottle from the kitchen, moving numbly.

Frank, much later, still sitting in the driveway as the sun begins to come up.

Jack, sitting in the phone booth, the bottle in his hand.

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

The next morning. Jack is sitting on the windowsill, watching the RAIN DRUM the GLASS. He glances at the phone across the room, takes another look at the rain, then goes to the phone. He picks it up hesitantly, then dials. It rings. Again. Again.

**CINDY (V.O.)**

Hello?

Jack blinks. It's Cindy.

**CINDY**

Hello ... Hellooooo ...

(fainter)

Daddy. Daddy! Someone's on the phone and they won't talk.

Jack sets the phone back down on the cradle.

**INT. BAR**

Jack stands in a dark bar. It is early morning and the light from the street gives the room a ghostly atmosphere. A big, beefy MAN with a bar towel hooked in his belt is talking to Jack.

**MAN**

If they wanna talk about their wife, you listen.  
If they wanna talk about their job, you listen.  
If they wanna talk about their parakeet, you listen.  
That's it, six nights a week, nine to one or until I send you home. Okay?

Jack nods and points to the piano in the corner.

**JACK**

That it?

**MAN**

How many you need?

Jack walks over to the piano and strikes a note.

**JACK**

It's out of tune.

**MAN**

Trust me, the way I fix a martini,  
it'll be in tune.

The MUSIC RETURNS, sad and plaintive, and we see:

**INT. FRANK'S HOUSE**

Frank, attempting to give piano lessons to a brother and sister tandem who would be better served by an obedience school. While the little girl pounds incessantly on the piano, her brother runs circles around the room, destroying everything in sight.

MUSIC CONTINUES and we see:

**EXT. STREET**

Jack and Eddie, going for a walk, passing the diner where Jack and Frank's pictures are still displayed.

MUSIC CONTINUES and we see:

**INT. BAR**

Jack, in the bar, playing the music we've been hearing throughout the previous scenes. It is after midnight and the tables are empty. Only a few somber men remain at the bar. They do not appear to be music lovers. As Jack finishes, he takes a cloth and wipes the keys. There is a glass on the piano with money in it.

**SUSIE (O.S.)**

I thought the Bakers didn't take  
tips.

Jack glances up, but he knows the voice.

**JACK**

I give it all to charity.

Susie nods.

**SUSIE**

Saw the sign outside. Got your own sign, huh?

**JACK**

Yeah. Got my own sign.

**SUSIE**

So ... ?

**JACK**

We outgrew each other.

**SUSIE**

Yeah, well, like I said, it didn't figure. You two.

**JACK**

You don't pick your brother.

**SUSIE**

Yeah.

**JACK**

So how's the cat food business?

**SUSIE**

Terrific. I'm doing vegetables next week.

Jack nods.

**JACK**

What kind?

**SUSIE**

Huh?

**JACK**

Vegetables.

**SUSIE**

Oh. Carrots. And peas. None of the important ones.

Susie tries a smile. Takes a breath.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Listen... you want to get a drink? I got a new place. Or we could go to a bar ...

(looking around)

Well, maybe not a bar. But I know a place uptown, if you want --

**JACK**

I've given it up.

Susie stops.

**SUSIE**

No kidding? Well ... I guess you can't do a reunion over tomato juice, can you?

(pause)

Anyway, if you're ever in the neighborhood ... I wrote it down.

Susie takes a slip of paper from her purse and hands it to Jack. They lock eyes for a moment.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Tell egghead I said hi. If you see him.

**JACK**

If I see him.

Susie nods and walks toward the door.

**JACK**

(continuing)

Hey.

(as she stops)

You got pretty eyes.

Susie smiles. As she leaves, Jack studies the slip of paper in his hand, then drops it in the tip glass. He glances at the door, swinging slowly shut in Susie's wake, then reaches into his coat and takes out a bottle.

**INT. FRANK'S DEN**

Frank sits alone in the darkness of the den. The cardboard stand-up is there, along with several old photographs, including one showing two skinny kids in tuxes standing with a glamorous Peggy Lee. After a moment, Donna enters.

**DONNA**

Frank? It's late, honey.

Frank stays staring at the photograph of Peggy Lee.

**DONNA**

(continuing)

Mrs. Lerner called after dinner. Robbie can't make his lesson tomorrow.

Donna waits for her husband to say something, then sees the photograph in his hand.

**FRANK**

You know how good he is? It's like breathing with him. I've always envied it. But tonight, looking at all this -- at his face -- I don't know. Maybe it's worse. For him.

(gesturing to the piano)

It's funny. When I sit here and play ... nothing. But when I was up there with him... It was like I had the gift, too.

**INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NEXT DAY**

Frank is standing in the hallway of his house, leaning against the bathroom door. It's locked.

**FRANK**

Come on, Jeremy. Open the door.

Somewhere in the house, the PHONE RINGS. Frank ignores it.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Jeremy. You want me to call your father? He's not going to be very happy when he hears he's spending fifteen dollars an hour for you to sit on the toilet.

Donna, looking shaken, steps into the hallway.

**DONNA**

Honey ...

**FRANK**

You believe this? The kid won't come out. I'm playing 'Camptown Races' for him and the next thing I know he's locked himself in the bathroom. There's nothing sharp in there, is there?

**DONNA**

Honey ...

**FRANK**

Where are our kids?  
Has he got one of them in there?

**DONNA**

Frank.

Frank finally looks at his wife. She's crying.

**INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT**

Jack rushes down a hospital corridor and heads for the nurses station. As he moves to the counter, Donna appears.

**JACK**

Donna. Where is she?

Donna just shakes her head.

**DONNA**

We tried the apartment, but after  
that we didn't know where to call.

Jack looks frozen.

**DONNA**

(continuing)  
Frank'll be back in a moment.  
He took Little Frank to the bathroom.

Jack begins to back away slowly.

**DONNA**

(continuing)  
Jack ...

**EXT. STREET**

Jack moves aimlessly down the street, slipping in and out of shadows. Finally he stops inside a closed storefront, his back up against the window, and looks down at his hands. They're shaking.

**INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY**

Jack stands in an apartment hallway, waiting.



After a moment, the door opens. It's Susie.

**SUSIE**

Jack.

**JACK**

Hi.

**SUSIE**

Well, this is some surprise.

(seeing his face)

Hey ... You don't look so good, pal.

Susie studies Jack as he glances around the hallway.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Jack?

Jack looks up.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

You want to come in?

He nods. Susie steps back and Jack enters.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Let me get the light.

**JACK**

No.

He stares directly into her eyes.

**JACK**

(continuing)

Leave it dark.

**INT. SUSIE'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING**

Jack is standing at the foot of the bed, looking down at Susie's naked back as she sleeps. He studies her face as if looking for something, then takes his coat and begins to leave.

**SUSIE**

I used to do that.

Jack turns. Susie is looking at him.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Sneak out in the morning. Before the guy could wake up and ruin it. Never figured I'd be on the other end of it, though.

**JACK**

I didn't want to wake you.

**SUSIE**

(smiling slightly)

Yeah.

**JACK**

Thanks. For letting me in last night.

**SUSIE**

Funny how life repeats itself, huh? Over and over. Like a song.

Jack looks at Susie for a long moment, then nods and turns for the door.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Hey.

Jack stops, his hand on the doorknob.

**SUSIE**

(continuing)

Am I gonna see you again?

Jack looks at her face, beautiful in the morning light.

**JACK**

Yeah. You're gonna see me again.

Susie smiles slightly.

**SUSIE**

Okay.

**EXT. STREET**

Jack is standing across the street from his mother's house, just looking. After a moment, he crosses the street. As he moves up the drive, he takes notice of the tree growing in the front yard and crosses to it, kneeling by the trunk and studying the scars there --

cat's claws -- running vertically up the tree, the damage smoothed and widened by time. He runs his fingers over the imperfection, then stands and walks toward the house.

**EXT. HOUSE**

Through the screen door, Jack can hear a CLICKING sound and see partially into the front door. Half the room is cast in shadow, the other in blinding light. He opens the door and enters.

**INT. HOUSE**

Inside, the movie PROJECTOR is RUNNING, the tail of a completed FLIP SLAPPING like a whip against the carriage. Jack TURNS OFF the PROJECTOR and the room falls entirely into shadow. For a moment, the house is silent, full of ghosts, then, gradually, a NOISE is heard coming from the kitchen.

**INT. KITCHEN**

As Jack comes into the kitchen, he finds Frank searching through a cabinet. He watches for a moment.

**JACK**

What're you looking for?

Frank turns quickly, surprised.

**FRANK**

I didn't hear you come in.

**JACK**

What're you doing?

**FRANK**

Oh ... I was just hoping for something to drink. But it seems the old lady was dry. Not even a bottle of cooking sherry.

Jack nods. Frank looks nervous.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Uh, we already boxed some things. I figured you'd want to go through Dad's stuff. It's in there. If you want to get started.

**JACK**

Later.

Frank nods. Silence.

**JACK**

(continuing)

Is everything done? The arrangements, I mean.

**FRANK**

Oh. Yeah. It was all worked out before, you know. She and Dad had taken care of it.

**JACK**

Right.

**FRANK**

I set it for Wednesday. The ceremony. They're doing the stone today.

(pause)

It's okay? Wednesday?

**JACK**

Yeah, fine.

**FRANK**

There's not going to be a viewing. I figured with the kids and all ...

**JACK**

Sure.

Jack glances around the room. Pictures on the walls. Handmade curtains, lightly faded.

**FRANK**

It's funny. Before, whenever I came here, the house seemed small. But today ... I can't keep up with it. I keep losing my mind.

Frank smiles slightly and he and Jack lock eyes for a moment.

**FRANK**

(continuing; glancing away)

God, I could use a drink.

Jack hesitates, then pulls a bottle out of his coat.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Oh. Well, great. I'll get a couple glasses.

Frank moves to a cabinet, but there's nothing there.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Damn. Donna must've packed them up this morning.

Jack holds out the bottle.

**JACK**

Go ahead.

**FRANK**

No.

**JACK**

(showing the seal is unbroken)

Bought it on the way over. Clean as a nun.

**FRANK**

No, it's not that. I ... can't drink from the bottle. I ... gag.

**JACK**

Oh, yeah, right. I forgot.

Frank looks embarrassed.

**FRANK**

(remembering)

Oh, hey, I want to show you something. Come on.

Jack follows Frank back into the front room. Frank stands before one of the tiny matching pianos and gestures Jack to the other.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Hit the C. Go ahead.

Jack steps over to the other piano and taps, then Frank does the same. Jack glances up in surprise.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

I'm right, aren't I? They're in tune.

Jack hits the note again and nods in amazement.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

All these years. She kept them in tune.  
Can you imagine?  
Now why would she do something like that?

Frank looks down at the keys and his smile fades. Suddenly he notices the collection of tiny souvenir shot glasses on top of the piano, each bearing the name of a different hotel.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Hey, what do you know. Looks like we can have that drink after all.  
(picking up a few glasses)  
What's your pleasure? We got the downtown Ramada. We got the Travelodge on Route 41. And ... the Mallory.

**JACK**

I'll take the Mallory.

**FRANK**

Good choice.

Frank blows some dust off the glasses.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Looks like these got a few years on them.

**JACK**

This'll kill 'em.

Jack pours and he and Frank settle on the tiny piano benches. As Frank swallows, he winces.

**FRANK**

Jesus.

It suddenly grows silent, each sitting in his old familiar place, staring into his glass.

**JACK**

How're your hands?

**FRANK**

(surprised)

Oh. Fine. It was nothing. Couple

sore knuckles. Nothing.

**JACK**

You know, that night, I ... It just all came up.

**FRANK**

Yeah, I know. Me, too.

**JACK**

I mean, you can play. You're okay.

**FRANK**

(smiling)

I can keep the beat.

Jack smiles slightly, then both go back to their glasses.

**FRANK**

(continuing)

Charlie called.

**JACK**

Yeah?

**FRANK**

Yeah. Larry Shelton. Blackie. Couple others. Donna said even Lloyd called the other day. Nothing like a little absence to make the heart grow fonder, huh?

**JACK**

Yeah.

Jack and Frank lock eyes again.  
Frank's glance drops to Jack's glass.

**FRANK**

Jesus, when was the last time we played the Mallory?

**JACK**

Five years ago.  
(thinking)  
November.

**FRANK**

Right. It was someone's birthday.  
Halloran?

**JACK**

Daughter's. Sweet sixteen.

**FRANK**

Christ, that's right. How could I forget. What a nightmare.

**JACK**

She asked for it.

**FRANK**

I told Halloran we didn't do vocals, but he said:

**JACK AND FRANK**

(in unison)

What my Sissy-wants, my Sissy gets.

**JACK**

She got it all right.

Jack and Frank glance at one another, little boy mischief glowing in their faces. Suddenly they swivel on the pianos and begin to play "You're Sixteen."

**JACK AND FRANK**

(singing)

She comes on like a dream  
Peaches and cream  
Lips like strawberry wine  
She's sixteen, she's beautiful and she's mine.  
Ribbons and curls  
Ooh, what a girl  
Eyes that sparkle and shine  
You're sixteen, you're beautiful, and you're mine.

As Jack and Frank finish, they're laughing. After a moment, their voices die and the house is quiet again. Full of ghosts. Each stares at the tiny keyboard before him, awkward with the intimacy of the moment. It is quiet for a very long time. Finally, Frank looks over.

**FRANK**

Well ... One more time?

Jack glances up and sees Frank has his empty glass held out. He hesitates, then picks up the bottle.

**JACK**

One more time.