

"FRANCES"

Screenplay by

Eric Bergren, Christopher De Vore

and

Nicholas Kazan

PROLOGUE

BLACK. We HEAR the soft voice of Frances Farmer.

FRANCES (V.O.)

No one ever came up to me and said,
'You're a fool. There isn't such a
thing as God. Somebody's been stuffing
you.'

FADE IN:

EXT. PUGET SOUND - DAY

On an expanse of water, calm and undisturbed. After a moment,
it begins to ripple as something rises toward the surface. A
girl's face breaks through.

FRANCES (V.O.)

It wasn't a murder. I think God just
died of old age. And when I realized
He wasn't any more, it didn't shock
me. It seemed natural and right.

The girl, FRANCES, is 16, blond, very pretty: she seems like
the most persuasive proof imaginable of God's existence. She
swims toward the shore with long graceful strokes... then
climbs the steps of the old wood jetty on West Point Beach.

FRANCES (V.O.)

And yet I began to wonder what the
minister meant when he said, 'God,
the Father, sees even the smallest
sparrow fall. He watches over all
his children.' That jumbled it all
up for me.

EXT. PUGET SOUND - LATER

The banks of Puget Sound, dotted with elm trees. Frances sits comfortably in the fork of a tree writing in her diary. Towel around her neck, her hair splayed out and drying golden in the sun.

FRANCES (V.O.)

But still sometimes I found that God was useful to remember, especially when I lost things that were important. 'Please God, let me find my red hat with the blue trimmings.'

INT. FARMER HOME - FAMILY ROOM - EVENING

Frances is now reading aloud from her diary, gently swaying back and forth in a rocking chair. An older woman, LILLIAN FARMER, sits opposite on the couch, listening and nodding from time to time. A small suitcase stands by the front door.

FRANCES

It usually worked. God became a superfather that couldn't spank me. But if I wanted a thing badly enough, He arranged it.

ERNEST FARMER appears in the doorway and hesitates, listening to his daughter read.

FRANCES

But if God loved all of His children equally, why did He bother about my red hat and let other people lose their fathers and mothers for always?

Ernest goes to Frances and kisses her softly on the top of her head. She looks at him briefly, smiling slightly.

ERNEST

Bye, baby.

FRANCES

See you next weekend, Dad.

He goes to the door and picks up his suitcase, glances at Lillian. She doesn't look up. He leaves.

FRANCES

I began to see that He didn't have much to do about hats or people dying or anything. They happened whether He wanted them to or not, and He stayed in Heaven and pretended not to notice.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Frances stands at a podium. Other STUDENTS and TEACHERS sit to either side of her on folding chairs. Above the proscenium is engraved: West Seattle High School. Below that a banner hangs: "NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY COMPETITION, 1931."

FRANCES

I wondered a little why God was such a useless thing. It seemed a waste of time to have Him. After that He became less and less, until He was... nothingness.

The AUDIENCE consists of parents, students, and local dignitaries. We SEE several shocked faces. Lillian is there also, smiling. Seated next to her is a distinguished-looking woman, ALMA STYLES. Ernest sits on the other side of the auditorium, looking a little worried.

FRANCES

I felt rather proud that I had found the truth myself, without help from anyone. It puzzled me that other people hadn't found out, too. God was gone. We had reached past Him. Why couldn't they see it? It still puzzles me.

Frances closes her notebook and looks up, waiting for some response. There is a deep shocked silence, then a smattering of applause. Lillian claps enthusiastically, then rises to her feet. In the back a WOMAN also stands.

WOMAN

You're going straight to hell, Frances Farmer!

A stately man sitting next to her, her husband JUDGE BENJAMIN HILLIER, puts a restraining hand on her arm. The woman continues to glare at Frances.

Frances stares back, dumbfounded.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SEATTLE STREETS - DAY

The screen erupts into violence. A large unruly MOB skirmishes with POLICE in a cobblestoned square. On a truckbed addressing the crowd – which carries placards reading: "Organize Now!", "Workers of the World Unite!", and "Elect Kaminski!" stands MARTONI KAMINSKI. By his side, leading the crowd's responses, stands a younger man with sharp piercing eyes, HARRY YORK.

KAMINSKI

And do you think it's radical for a man to have a job and feed a family?

YORK & CROWD

No!

KAMINSKI

Is it radical for you to have a hand in shaping your future, and the future of your children?

YORK & CROWD

No!

KAMINSKI

Is it radical for the wealth of this country to be turned back to the people who built the country?

YORK & CROWD

No! No!

KAMINSKI

Good! Because, Brothers, that's you!

The crowd cheers. Harry York gives Kaminski the thumbs-up sign as a banner unfurls: "Today Seattle – Tomorrow the World."

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

A TITLE COMES ON SCREEN: GOD'S IN HIS HEAVEN AND ALL'S RIGHT WITH THE WORLD? 'NOT SO!' SAYS YOUNG FRANCES FARMER

We realize we've been watching a newsreel. We SEE the SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT presenting Frances with an award.

ANNOUNCER

Seattle is in the news again as a high school junior wins a national competition and a hundred dollar prize with an essay denying God.

City Hall steps. Judge Hillier and other BIGWIGS speaking heatedly to reporters.

ANNOUNCER

This prompts civic officials to charge that left-wing politicians are encouraging atheism in the city's schools. Miss Frances Farmer was unavailable for comment, but her mother Lillian –

Lillian stands in front of her wood frame house addressing a small CROWD of reporters, photographers, and curious neighbors.

ANNOUNCER

Farmer, a well-known local dietician, stepped to her daughter's defense.

LILLIAN

(emphatically)

Frances has not turned her back on the Lord, they're just having a momentary difference of opinion. What child hasn't questioned the Lord's mysteries in order to better understand them? To paraphrase Mr. Voltaire, I may not agree with what she says, but I'll defend to the death her right to say it. Freedom of speech, unlike in the dark countries to the east, still lives

in America! And in my home.

Among the AUDIENCE in the cinema, we SEE Frances and her father. Frances slinks down in her seat until she's hidden from sight.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET (SEATTLE) - DAY

Frances carries library books and a small grocery bag. Her hair and skin gleam in the sun. People in their yards stare at her as she passes. She walks on, coming to a group of CHILDREN slightly younger than herself who are playing in front of a union hall. A girl, EMMA, 13, glances up.

FRANCES

Hi Emma.

Emma looks away quickly, returns to her play.

FRANCES

Bye Emma.

Frances shakes her head as she walks on.

MAN'S VOICE

Hey!

Frances hesitates, then turns to look:

A man in his twenties whom we recognize as Harry York, Kaminski's compatriot, leaves a group of men in front of the union hall and walks toward her.

HARRY

(friendly)

C'mere. I wanna talk to you.

Frances keeps walking. Harry hurries after her.

HARRY

Momma told ya not to speak to strangers, huh?

(reaches her, grabs her arm)

Hey!

FRANCES

Don't touch me.

HARRY

I'm not gonna hurt you. I just wanna talk.

She stares at him. He's got a newspaper wedged under one arm.

FRANCES

(waiting)

Okay then...

HARRY

Well... you're causin' trouble, you know that?

FRANCES

I'm causing trouble?! You're a pain in the butt! You newshounds've been after me and my folks ever since I won that dumb contest. I'm just sixteen, you know? Who the hell cares what I think?

HARRY

Not me. But other people seem to.

FRANCES

Yeah. Well if you didn't put it in the papers – nobody'd even know about it.

HARRY

Now wait a minute, sweetie. Do I look like a newshound to you?

FRANCES

(examining him)

No... Actually, you look more like a cop.

Harry laughs.

HARRY

That's rich. Hey, if I was a cop, I'd be packing, right?

(holding coat open)

You see a gun? Go on, search me. Pat

me down.

Frances hesitates, leans toward him as though about to frisk him. Their eyes meet, and she pulls away, suddenly embarrassed.

FRANCES

I'll... take your word for it. So
who are you, then?

HARRY

Harry York. I work for Martoni
Kaminski, he's running for Congress
here.

FRANCES

(smiles & points to
him)

Oh yeah! I saw you in the newsreel!

HARRY

(embarrassed)

Yeah, well –

FRANCES

You know, my Dad's done some work
for Kaminski...

HARRY

Now you're catchin' on. Don't wanna
get your Daddy in hot water, do you?

FRANCES

Whattaya mean?

HARRY

Well... see the papers've got us
pegged as pinkos, then you come along,
the friendly neighborhood atheist –

FRANCES

But I'm not. The newspapers're –

HARRY

Right again. You're no more an atheist
than my man's a Red, but what they're
doin', see, they're addin' up their
version of your ideas with their

version of ours. Could look bad for your Daddy.

FRANCES

Yeah. Could look bad for you and Kaminski too, I guess.

Beat.

HARRY

Sure don't talk like you're sixteen.

FRANCES

Well aren't you the smoothie. Now you're going to ask for my number, I suppose.

HARRY

I suppose not. Gotta ask you this, though: for all our sakes, you better keep your trap shut.

FRANCES

Well... I'll give it a try, Mr. York.

HARRY

Harry.

FRANCES

(hesitates, nods)

Harry.

They half-smile, awkwardly, as if neither really wants this encounter to end. Then Harry doffs his hat.

HARRY

Bye.

She nods shyly and starts up the path toward the house.

HARRY

(admiring her)

Sure don't walk like sixteen, neither.

INT. COURTROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON Judge Hillier in his robes, identified by a nameplate on the bench.

HILLIER

These are perilous times. With the economic collapse comes hopelessness and desperation; and people turn to dangerous ideas –

WOMAN'S VOICE

I know.

The CAMERA PULLS SLOWLY BACK. We SEE that the courtroom is empty.

HILLIER

Those of us who represent law and order must be vigilant. Who's behind this, her mother?

Now we SEE who he's talking to: Alma Styles, the woman who sat with Lillian at the school auditorium.

STYLES

Impossible. As her attorney, I've known her for years.

HILLIER

What about the father, he's a little pink. Maybe he wants to show our schools in a bad light, shift some support to Kaminski and those jackals.

STYLES

(shaking her head)

He's no influence; he doesn't even live at home. No, I think Frances wrote that essay with no mischief intended. It was her teacher who entered it in the competition.

HILLIER

Well, the publicity must stop. It's no good for Seattle and no good for the country.

(sternly)

Keep an eye on this, will you, Alma?

STYLES

Of course, your honor.

He nods with satisfaction. Two right-thinking people fighting for what they believe in.

INT. FARMER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Ernest Farmer sits alone, motionless, at the table. Between two candles, facing him, is Frances' check for a hundred dollars.

We HEAR bustle from behind the kitchen door, then Lillian and Frances enter juggling several hot dishes. Ernest rises. They set down the dishes, Frances intentionally placing the bread between the check and her father.

ERNEST

It always amazes me, Lil, how you can whip up a hot, hearty meal out of thin air.

LILLIAN

I can thank you for that. It was a hard-earned talent.

She moves the bread so Ernest again faces the check. As Lillian slices the bread, father and daughter eat grimly.

LILLIAN

(offering to Ernest)
Bread?

ERNEST

(taking a piece)
Thank you.

LILLIAN

When's the last time you saw a hundred dollars, Ernest Farmer?

FRANCES

Mama...

LILLIAN

(pushing back her plate)
I'm not hungry. You two just enjoy yourselves. After all, this is a celebration.

She leaves. A long silence.

They both glance slightly awkwardly at the check.

Frances takes it, folds it, and puts it in her pocket, out of sight.

ERNEST

I'm... I'm really proud of you,
Frances.

FRANCES

Thanks, Dad.

ERNEST

An essay contest... a national
contest. That's pretty impressive.

FRANCES

I didn't have much to do with it.

ERNEST

You wrote it, didn't you?

FRANCES

Yeah, I suppose... Dad, who's Harry
York?

ERNEST

Well, Harry York is a guy who...
well, he does a lot of things. Why
do you ask?

FRANCES

He talked to me today. Told me to
keep my mouth shut or I'd get
everybody in trouble.

ERNEST

Yeah... well... it's possible. Harry
York and I both work for Mr. Kaminski
right now, and... well... There are
lots of folks in this country who
never got a square break. That's the
way of things, but Mr. Kaminski wants
to change it, and when it comes to
new ideas, the people in power get

nervous.

FRANCES
Is Kaminski a Communist?

ERNEST
No, no, no. All he wants to do is
see the common man get a little
representation.

FRANCES
He's a socialist, then?

INT. STUDY - LILLIAN - NIGHT

Sitting at a rolltop desk. She's looking through a large
scrapbook. We SEE articles about nutrition and diet, some
featuring Lillian's picture, others with her name in the
heading. She listens to the conversation in the other room.

ERNEST (V.O.)
The label's not important, Francie.
What's important is: this country's
got nine million unemployed and
something's gotta be done about it.
Besides: left-wing, right-wing, up-
wing, down-wing... they don't mean
much. All a label is usually is a
way to call somebody a dirty name.

Lillian's face becomes set. She looks down at the book. An
article titled "Girl Denies God" is there, freshly pasted.
She lays a hand on the blank page opposite.

FRANCES (V.O.)
It's already started, Dad... with
me.

ERNEST (V.O.)
I know.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

FRANCES
And I can't understand how it can
hurt to be honest, but the more I
tried to explain –
(what I meant)

Lillian appears in the doorway.

LILLIAN

Don't listen to him, little sister.
When you're proud of what you are,
you don't refuse the label,
understand?

FRANCES

Yes, Ma.

LILLIAN

And you... should be proud. You won
that contest and made a name for
yourself.

She stomps out. Frances and Ernest push back their plates.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - NIGHT

Lillian is watering tomatoes in the dark and talking to them quietly. As Ernest approaches, she senses him and grows silent. She speaks without turning around.

LILLIAN

You're poisoning that child's mind.

ERNEST

I have a right to talk to her. She's
my daughter, and she's beginning to
understand why I've sacrificed so
much in order to achieve...

LILLIAN

You've sacrificed?! If you'd practice
law for decent folk instead of
Communists and indigents –

ERNEST

They need help, Lil. They pay me
back in other ways.

LILLIAN

How? What do they do for you, Kaminski
and his friends? They're all
anarchists! Traitors!

ERNEST

(sadly)

No, Lil. It's just you can't understand their brand of patriotism.

LILLIAN

That's right. I can't understand a man who puts strangers over his family, a man who gives up a good career to become a shiftless inkhorn failure.

Beat.

ERNEST

I'm going back to the hotel.

LILLIAN

Good.

ERNEST

See you next weekend?

LILLIAN

As usual. Everything as usual, Mr. Farmer. Just give me my due.

Ernest starts back toward the house. He sees Frances watching them and slows down, turns...

ERNEST

Lillian... I'm more than willing to meet you halfway.

LILLIAN

Don't make me sick. I'd sooner drown myself in Puget Sound.

ERNEST

(under his breath)

That's a thought, Lil. That sure is a thought.

He trudges back toward the house under Frances' eye.

A WOMAN'S VOICE comes from behind the fence.

NEIGHBOR'S VOICE

Are you all right, dear?

LILLIAN

I'm fine, perfectly fine.

OMITTED

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Ernest stands on the porch holding his little bag.

FRANCES

Dad, please, don't leave early. Just because of Mama –

ERNEST

Francie, you'll learn that sometimes it's best to stay low and just walk away.

He trudges out and down the walk.

Frances watches him, shaking her head. That is not a lesson she wants to learn.

FADE TO BLACK:

OMITTED

INT. THEATRE LOBBY - NIGHT

Opening night. Harry is reading a playbill displayed in a theatre lobby: "1934 Spring Production... University of Washington Players Present: 'Uncle Vanya' by Anton Chekhov." Frances is playing Sonia. Harry turns and enters the theatre.

OMITTED

INT. UNIVERSITY THEATRE STAGE - NIGHT

Frances on stage seen from a distance.

FRANCES

What can we do, we must live! We shall live, Uncle Vanya...

Frances is acting with a nervous young man, CHET. As her speech progresses, the camera moves in nearer and nearer,

ending with a close-up. It is as if we are being drawn in by her emotion.

FRANCES

And then we shall rest, we shall rest. We shall hear the angels, we shall see the whole sky all diamonds, we shall see how all earthly evil, all our sufferings, are drowned in the mercy that will fill the whole world. And our life will grow peaceful, tender, sweet as a caress...

(wipes away tears)

Poor, dear Uncle Vanya, you are crying...

(through her tears)

In your life you haven't known what joy was; but wait, Uncle Vanya, wait... We shall rest...

(embraces him)

We shall rest!

Curtains close. AUDIENCE bursts into applause.

As the curtain opens and the players take their bows, we SEE in the audience: Lillian and Ernest, Lillian clapping madly, crying, nudging Ernest to clap harder.

And in the back stands Harry York.

HARRY

(to himself)

Not bad, Farmer. Not half bad.

INT. UNIVERSITY READING ROOM - NIGHT

A celebration in progress. Masks of Comedy and Tragedy hang on the walls. DRAMA STUDENTS lounge about: eating, drinking, talking noisily. Bing Crosby is on the record player, singing "I've Got The World on a String." The Drama Teacher is holding court to a group of attentive students.

DRAMA TEACHER

Art is a constant struggle. Some of you have the will but not the ability. For others, the opposite. I don't wish to be harsh, but only one of you on stage tonight combined the

two...

The front door opens. Frances and Chet enter.

DRAMA TEACHER

On cue.

The young men rush over to congratulate her. Frances takes a mock bow. She laughs as people cheer. TWO GIRLS observe from the back.

GIRL #1

I could really learn to hate her.

GIRL #2

Stand in line.

INT. UNIVERSITY READING ROOM - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

Things have quieted down. The Drama Teacher has cornered Frances and is gesticulating drunkenly, waving a copy of "Voice of Action." Frances is also tipsy, but pays close attention to her mentor.

DRAMA TEACHER

This is the answer: a subscription drive to "Voice of Action!" First prize is a trip to Moscow! You could visit the art theatre, maybe even meet Stanislavski!

FRANCES

But I'll never win that.

DRAMA TEACHER

Yes, yes, it's all arranged. Everyone's collecting subscriptions in your name. And the best part is: the trip returns you to New York.

FRANCES

(intrigued)

Really?

DRAMA TEACHER

New York, Frances! Broadway! This is your chance! You belong on the stage!

FRANCES
(flattered/embarrassed)
Thank you.

A door opens quietly and Harry slips in. He smiles at Frances, who disentangles herself from her teacher and rushes over.

FRANCES
Hi, Harry. Did you see the play?

HARRY
You think I'd miss it?

FRANCES
Well? What'd you think?

HARRY
(shrugs)
I just wanted to see how you looked.

FRANCES
How'd I look?

HARRY
(teasing)
Enh.

FRANCES
(smiling)
Don't be a rat, Harry.

HARRY
You looked okay.
(glances around)
Joint's pretty dead. How 'bout I
take you home?

She hesitates, looks around and sees Chet passed out, snoring in a chair. She takes Harry's arm.

EXT. WEST POINT BEACH - NIGHT

The beach is very dark, but the sweep of the lighthouse picks up an old Chevrolet parked near the shore.

FRANCES (V.O.)
You really think so?

INT. CHEVROLET - NIGHT

Frances and Harry are sitting in the back seat.

HARRY

Honest. When you were up there, you were really... there, know what I mean? Everyone else looked stupid.

FRANCES

I don't know... I did... feel different... Alive.

HARRY

Yeah, it's a gift. You gotta do something with it.

FRANCES

Yeah, but if I win this trip, Mama'll kill me. She hates Russians. I do want to go, though... to New York, especially... but I wanted to do it...

HARRY

What?

FRANCES

Quietly.

HARRY

You're not the quiet type, Frances.

They are silent for a while.

HARRY

You know, my old man was an inventor. Spent his whole life down in the basement trying to design transcontinental underground railroads, stuff like that. Well, I was supposed to be his partner. When I told him the smell of his workshop made me sick, I thought he was going to die right there.

FRANCES

What happened to him?

HARRY

He retired to Florida... made a killing in vending machines.

He grins ironically and Frances laughs.

HARRY

I kick myself sometimes, but the thing is, I would have been miserable living his life.

FRANCES

...So you think I should go.

HARRY

Sure. Try this acting thing. You can make good money at it.

FRANCES

I don't know, Harry. I... I want so many...

HARRY

You don't know what you want.

FRANCES

Yeah.

She looks at him, smiles wistfully.

FRANCES

Not in the long run, anyway.

She starts to unbutton her blouse. Harry is pleasantly surprised, but unnerved.

HARRY

Frances...

FRANCES

What?

HARRY

Well... don't you think it's up to me to...

FRANCES

Come on, Harry. This is America,
land of the free.

(whispers)

I thought we might go skinny dipping.

(pregnant pause...
smile...)

For starters.

Harry can't believe his good fortune.

INT. FARMER HOUSE - DAY

Lillian's face, distorted.

LILLIAN

Communists?! No daughter of mine is
going to Communist Russia!

Lillian is in her apron, canning peaches.

FRANCES

You act like I'm a bomb-thrower,
Mama. It's just a trip.

She leaves. Lillian follows her down the narrow – almost
institutional – hallway.

LILLIAN

But they're using you!

FRANCES

Oh Ma, they're not using me. It's
just a chance to travel, see things.
Besides, it's the only way I can get
to New York.

They've reached Frances' room. She puts on her coat.

LILLIAN

I'll pay your way to New York. I'll
work, I'll slave. I'll sell my
vegetables to the truck farmers, or –

FRANCES

(sighs)

Oh, Mama, don't you understand?

She stares out the window. We see Ernest mowing the lawn.

FRANCES

I have to do this on my own. You see, I've learned your lesson very well. To do what I think is right and everyone else be damned.

Frances turns and heads back down the hall. Lillian follows.

LILLIAN

I never taught you that!

Frances keeps walking.

LILLIAN

Little sister, if you don't wise up soon, it's going to be out of my hands!

They've reached the kitchen. Ernest is there, sweating, drinking water.

FRANCES

It isn't in your hands, Mama. It's my life.

LILLIAN

Yes, but important people are concerned about this. Judge Hillier spoke to Alma Styles –

FRANCES

I don't care.

LILLIAN

(grimacing)
...You will.

She storms outside. Frances sighs, looks at her father.

FRANCES

What do I do, Dad?

ERNEST

You really want to go?

FRANCES

Of course.

ERNEST

And you think it's worth all this?

FRANCES

If I didn't, I wouldn't put you
through it.

ERNEST

...Then go.

EXT. SEATTLE BUS STATION - DAY

Lillian has a few reporters drawn off to one side. Alma Styles
and a MINISTER stand nearby. A CROWD has gathered. Inside
the station, more reporters are milling around Frances.

LILLIAN

(almost conspiratorial)

The authorities tell me there's no
legal way I can stop her, but the
way I see it, it's bigger than me or
my family...

(the following is
heard faintly as
b.g. to the scene
below)

American integrity, that's what's at
stake here. They're sending my
daughter to the heartland of darkness.
. .the dark forces that would
overthrow our country. Your country.
My country.

INT. BUS STATION - FRANCES AND REPORTERS - DAY

Ernest and the Drama Teacher stand at Frances' side.

REPORTER #1

Has your earlier denial of God led
you to Communism?

FRANCES

I'm not a Communist.

REPORTER #2

But Frances, you said –

FRANCES

I said all countries are of cultural interest. Besides, Russia has the greatest theatre company in the world.

REPORTER #2

Better than any American company?

REPORTER #1

What do you think of Stalin?

FRANCES

Not much. Ask me about Stanislavski.

REPORTER #2

Who?

LILLIAN

(suddenly frantic,
loud)

Help me save my daughter! Save the children of America.

A TALL SPECTRAL MAN dressed in black adds:

TALL SPECTRAL MAN

Repent, Frances, Repent!

CROWD

Repent! Repent!

Their cries seem weird, almost deranged, and Lillian is taken aback.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Passengers climb onto the bus. As Frances is hugged by her Drama Teacher, the Tall Spectral Man approaches her. In his arms he carries a potted plant, a Bible, and a flashlight.

TALL SPECTRAL MAN

Bless you, sister, bless you.

(dignified, as though
conducting some
bizarre ceremony)

Here is a Bible for solace... and
this plant to remind you of the
eternal seed in all of us... and

finally, a flashlight to illuminate
your path through darkest Russia.

Frances accepts the gifts, bewildered. The Tall Spectral Man stares at her through hollow eyes. She staggers on toward the bus, looking like a bedraggled Statue of Liberty. The Tall Spectral Man sings an ethereal hymn.

Lillian blocks Frances' path. Frances looks at her tearfully.

FRANCES
I love you, Mama.
(turns to her father)
I love you, Dad.

ERNEST
(hugging her)
Be careful, Francie.

As Frances climbs on board.

LILLIAN
Frances, I'm warning you. I'm gonna
throw myself beneath the wheels.
I'll do it, Frances. Frances!

Inside the bus, Frances stares out the window and shakes her head sadly.

The bus starts. Everyone looks at Lillian. She is motionless... Furious. Frances sighs, and the bus moves off unimpeded.

There is a homicidal rage in Lillian's eyes as she stares after the vehicle. Then the Reporters rush toward her.

FIRST REPORTER
What do you say now, Mrs. Farmer?

She looks down, her lip quivering. Humiliated, crumbling...

As the reporters shout unanswered questions, Ernest puts his arm around his wife and leads her away.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

INT. FARMER STUDY - DAY

Lillian is happily thumbing through her scrapbook. Her hand runs down the page, and we SEE a series of headlines, with photos:

MOTHER UNABLE TO HALT GIRL'S TRIP TO RUSSIA

(Photo Lillian & Frances)

Then:

MOTHER WARNS AGAINST REDS IN SCHOOLS

(Photo Lillian)

Next is a SNAPSHOT of Frances on board on ocean liner.

Then TWO SNAPSHOTS of her in what is clearly Moscow. She wears a Russian hat. The Kremlin stands behind her.

Then SNAPSHOTS of her in New York, with a small clipping from the "New York Times":

Visits Moscow Art Theatre...

YOUNG ACTRESS RETURNS FROM RUSSIA, ASPIRES TO THE BROADWAY STAGE

Below this is a magazine advertisement showing Frances in a glossy Chesterfield ad. Her hair is swept up off her head, and she looks glamorous, artificial, very different from how we've seen her.

Lillian takes up the paste brush and liberally swabs the opposite – blank – page of her scrapbook. A handwritten letter from Frances lies beside her. She removes a clipping from the letter and spreads it out. The clipping says: "STARS OF TOMORROW" and shows a semi-circle of girl's faces inside garish stars.

Lillian circles Frances' photo and sits back to admire it.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD - DAY

We SEE the Hollywood sign in the distance... then CHANGE FOCUS to see the front of the studio...

INT. PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO - HOLLYWOOD - DAY

Frances' hair is tightly curled. She is dressed in a grotesquely ruffled white gown and seated on a small stool. Behind her TWO ASSISTANTS fuss with bunches of white carnations hanging on a grid. A seasoned PUBLICIST kneels nearby and a woman with a coffee cup, CLAIRE, surveys the scene.

PHOTOGRAPHER (O.S.)

One more time.

Frances stares dramatically off into space.

PUBLICIST

Hobbies?

The camera clicks.

FRANCES

Oh, I swim some... play the piano badly... and I read like a fiend: I like history.

PUBLICIST

No, no, people don't want that. Now listen: you spend lots of time at the beach. You're crazy about dancing. And you're the kind of girl who's just a little in love with love. Get it? Now try again? Hobbies?

FRANCES

Look, I...

PUBLICIST

(writing in notepad)

Beach... dancing... in love with love.

FRANCES

(ironically)

That's me.

The camera clicks again. MR. BEBE – a tall, brooding, well-dressed man – ENTERS.

CLAIRE

Good morning, Mr. Bebe!

BEBE
Who's this?

CLAIRE
Frances Farmer, contract player, six-month option.

BEBE
(an assessment)
Okay. Good tits. Can't we show them off a little more?

CLAIRE
I guess so, sir.

BEBE
(nods, stares again
at Frances)
Very fine bone structure.

He leaves. Claire stares after him with profound contempt.

PUBLICIST
(coming up to Claire)
Not much to work with. How's this:
(reading)
'The most interesting thing about Frances Farmer is that her road to Hollywood was 12,000 miles long. After winning a beauty contest, the first prize of which was a trip to Europe...' She made some deal with the Commies and went to Moscow, but I'm not going to say that, am I?

CLAIRE
Heavens no. Go on.

PUBLICIST
Um... 'Miss Farmer returned to New York City and had a brief fling with the Broadway stage before coming west to seek stardom.'

CLAIRE
'Brief fling?'

PUBLICIST

Well, actually she couldn't get hired,
but lucky for her, some guy in our
New York office saw her. She says
soon as she gets a stake, she's going
back.

Claire rolls her eyes. She's heard this before.

The Camera clicks again. Frances is frozen in time.

INT. STUDIO ACTING CLASS - DAY

TWO STUDENTS are doing a scene from "Design For Living."
Others sit around watching, whispering, flirting, sleeping...
but Frances is paying very close attention, making notes.
The MAN next to her rubs her arm and whispers something. She
grimaces and pays no attention. Then she notices, two rows
in front, a young handsome student, DICK, who's also making
notes. She stares at him for a second, then back at the stage.

EXT. LAUREL CANYON COTTAGE - DAY

A tiny rustic cottage, dogs everywhere. Two identical old
Fords are parked out front.

INT. COTTAGE - DAY

Frances sits on the couch talking on the phone.

FRANCES

Did you get the check?... Oh my God,
it opened?!, what'd you think?

Water lands on her face. She grimaces playfully.

FRANCES

Well, I hope I get bigger parts,
they don't come much smaller.

The last line is garbled as water streams in her mouth. She
fumbles for something on the floor.

FRANCES

No, I'm fine. I just have water in
my mouth.

She finds a water pistol on the floor, picks up the phone, and starts searching for her assailant.

FRANCES

No, Mama, I'm not changing my name.
They can't actually make you, you
know? Most people don't realize that.
(playfully, covering
receiver)
Oh Dick...

She flings open the bathroom door and finds him: Dick from drama class. A furious water battle ensues.

FRANCES

No, no, nothing's going on.
(fast)
I love you too, Mama. Give my love
to Dad. Bye!

She hangs up, lowers her gun as Dick squirts her. She's getting wet. Her shirt clinging to her breasts. She likes it.

FRANCES

Okay, handsome. You win.

INT. HOLLYWOOD SCREENING ROOM

On the small screen we SEE Frances in the arms of a MAN IN FIRE CHIEF'S HAT.

FRANCES

Kurt!

FIRE CHIEF

Oh, Angela! Go with these trappers!
They'll lead you safely down the
mountain...

FRANCES

But, Kurt, I...

FIRE CHIEF

No, No arguments. Be my good girl
and go. There's a forest, a burning
forest, and you know what I have to
do!

FRANCES
Oh, Kurt!

FIRE CHIEF
Oh Angela, my own... Angela!

ON SCREEN the corners of Frances' mouth begin to tremble, but her eyes remain wide and innocent. The Fire Chief slowly inclines his head toward hers. The brim of his hat hits her forehead. Frances covers her face with her hands and bursts out laughing. The Fire Chief looks stunned. She tries to control herself.

FRANCES
I'm sorry...
(looking into camera)
I'm sorry, let's go back.

Laughter inside the screening room. A small light flicks on, and from behind we dimly SEE TWO MEN.

MAN #1
(irate)
What the hell is that? What's she doing?

LAUGHING MAN
That's talent, Andy.

MAN #1
(after a beat)
Oh.

EXT. CATWALK - DAY

Frances smiles and eases shut the screening room door. We HEAR the Laughing Man inside shout: "Let's see that again!" Frances puts a cigarette in her mouth and fishes for a match.

A man's hand appears, holding a lighter. She looks up: It's Harry, wearing a garish Hawaiian shirt and a Panama hat.

FRANCES
Harry! Harry-god-damn-York! A real person!

Frances throws her arms around him. They hug warmly.

HARRY
How ya doin', Farmer?

FRANCES
Me? Look at you! What're you doing
in Hollywood?

HARRY
Came to get a tan.

They compare forearms.

FRANCES
Not bad. But come on, Harry; what's
the real reason?

HARRY
(staring out)
Kaminski.

FRANCES
Yeah, I read about that. Terrible
business, suicide.

HARRY
Since when do you believe the papers?
They killed him, kid.

FRANCES
What?

HARRY
They killed him. They threw him out
that window.

FRANCES
Oh no...

HARRY
Eight stories.

She stares down two stories to the ground, imagining:

FRANCES
Jesus.

HARRY

(also staring down)
Yup. Poor bastard lay there on the sidewalk and he couldn't die. Too god damn much heart. He just didn't want to die.

FRANCES

(walking on)
But... but why, Harry...? Why'd they do it?

HARRY

(shrugs)
He wouldn't play ball. What can I tell ya... it's done.
(brightening)
Anyway, I didn't want to be next, so I skipped town; came down here to work for some big-wig. Tail and nail job.
(confidentially)
I'm sort of a non-gentleman's non-gentleman.
(turns around, displaying his shirt)
How d'ya like the camouflage?

FRANCES

You jackass!
(pushing him down the stairs)
C'mon, let's get out of here.

EXT. STUDIO LOT - DAY

Harry and Frances walking arm in arm.

FRANCES

Not bad. It was slow at first, but I'm doing bits now.

HARRY

I always told ya, Frances. You got real ability.

FRANCES

(smiling)
I know what ability you're interested

in.

HARRY

Hey, I'm a man, aren't I? Whattaya say we have dinner, then maybe head out to the beach, rub some of this tan off each other.

(off her sober expression)

For old time's sake.

FRANCES

(serious)

Harry... I met someone.

HARRY

(stiffens slightly)

Yeah? What is he – muscleman? Lifeguard?

Frances shakes her head.

HARRY

Actor?

She nods.

HARRY

Good. Then it's temporary.

(whispers)

All actors are phonies.

He's joking, but she doesn't respond.

HARRY

Serious, huh?

FRANCES

Yeah.

HARRY

Hey that's great, Farmer, just great.

She smiles wistfully, seeing him cover up his disappointment. She squeezes his arm and they continue walking.

INT. SOUND STAGE - SET (RHYTHM ON THE RANGE) - DAY

Lights being adjusted, cameras set, actors walking through their blocking. In the midst of this we SEE Frances, dressed in western attire, making a point to the WARDROBE MISTRESS, who is listening without enthusiasm.

FRANCES

(spreading her arms)

These creases... I look like I just came from the laundry! I'm supposed to be hiding out in boxcars, sleeping on floors.

WARDROBE MISTRESS

(cool)

This is the suit we fitted on you, Miss Farmer.

FRANCES

(friendly)

Oh, I know that. But it could look more realistic, don't you think?

WARDROBE MISTRESS

(looking her over)

It'll do. No one will notice.

FRANCES

I'll notice.

We HEAR a man conspicuously clearing his throat. Both women turn as Mr. Bebe steps forward.

WARDROBE MISTRESS

Oh, Mr. Bebe, good morning.

He nods imperceptibly.

BEBE

Come along with me, Fanny.

She hesitates, then goes.

FRANCES

That's Frances. I'm not the cookbook.

BEBE

(leading her off)

You see: We've got to change that

name.

EXT. STUDIO LOT - DAY

Frances and Bebe come through the sound stage door into the light. He gestures to indicate what direction they're going, but remains silent, watching her. She's uncomfortable, blinking like a bird.

BEBE

I like your looks. You have the classical bone structure of the very great beauties... Garbo, Dietrich –

FRANCES

Thank you –

BEBE

I intend to make a great deal of money off you.

Frances is taken aback. This is all rather blunt.

BEBE

Since we have you on a seven year contract, I'm planning long-range. I'm going to loan you out to Sam Goldwyn to make a picture called "Come and Get It."

FRANCES

Really? That's a very good book. It'd make a terrific –

BEBE

Never mind that. I'm concerned about you. Your attitude.

They hear a ruckus in the distance and turn and look: PICKETERS are fighting with POLICE. It is raucous, brutal. Bebe turns back to her with a stern look:

BEBE

Society is falling apart, Miss Farmer, and people have to buckle down, do their jobs. You see, I view myself as the Henry Ford of motion picture industry, and I can't have the fellow

who puts on the wheels arguing with
the man who installs head-lights,
now can I?

FRANCES

But I'm concerned with everything,
Mr. Bebe.

BEBE

(fierce but very muted)
No, I'm concerned with everything.

FRANCES

But I'm the one up there on the
screen.

BEBE

That's right. You're an actress,
Miss Farmer and your job is to act.

She's about to reply, but he quickly takes her hand and raises
it to his lips. Kisses it very formally, like a suitor. Then
turns and walks into the sumptuous executive office building.

She watches him go.

FADE OUT:

OMITTED

FADE IN:

EXT. THEATRE MARQUEE - NIGHT

Brightly colored bulbs flashing, causing the wisps of fog
around them to glow. The bulbs spell:

"COME AND GET IT" WITH SEATTLE'S OWN FRANCES FARMER

A noisy CROWD is gathered outside the theatre, straining
against velvet cordons. Big black limos disgorge couples in
formal evening wear, to the applause of the crowd. All
slightly small-town, off-key.

Harry, now sporting a mustache, hat pulled down over his
face, stands across the street.

HARRY

(puffing his cigarette)
Not bad, Farmer.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Two limousines streaking through the night.

INT. SECOND LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Frances sits next to a faceless STUDIO EXECUTIVE. She's all dolled up. She looks uncomfortable. Silence. She glances up at the limo ahead of them.

INT. FIRST LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Dick sits between Lillian and Ernest A REPORTER and PHOTOGRAPHER crouch in front of them.

LILLIAN

I guess it's no secret that I'm proud.
Only twenty-one years old, and look
at all she's done.

(confidentially)

As for her looks, I flatter myself
that she gets them from me.

DICK

Obviously.

He winks at the reporters.

LILLIAN

And not only has Frances come home a
star; she's also brought me this big
handsome lug of a son-in-law!

REPORTER

Mr. Farmer, what was your reaction
when Frances told you she had
married...

DICK

Dwayne. Dwayne Steele.

ERNEST

What...? Oh. Well, I was pleased, of
course. Richard... uh, Dwayne, is a
real gentleman.

Dick smiles and hugs them both.

DICK

Well, all I can say is: I feel like
I've known these two for years!

LILLIAN

(girlishly)
Oh, Dwayne!
(overcome)
This is like a fairy tale!

They're stopped at a light. Outside their window we SEE DERELICTS, casualties of the depression, huddled in the night.

INT. FRANCES' LIMO - NIGHT

She's staring at the derelicts. We feel her sympathy for them. Almost like she'd rather be out there. A MAN WITH HOLLOW EYES shouts something at them.

FRANCES

What'd he say?

She rolls down her window. The Studio Executive beside her looks at her like she's crazy.

STUDIO EXECUTIVE

(to Driver)
Let's go. We'll be late.

The limousine lurches forward. Frances settles back in her seat, letting the night air sweep over her face.

EXT. THEATRE - NIGHT

The two limos pull up, the second emptying first. As Frances gets out, the CROWD cheers wildly. She walks past them, eyes glazed. She doesn't see Harry, who is held back by cordons. Lillian is posing and signing autographs. In her tight, formal dress, Frances looks radiant but constricted. As she walks, voices assault her:

LILLIAN

There she is!

REPORTER #1 (O.S.)

How does it feel to be back in
Seattle, Frances?

FRANCES

A little strange.

WOMEN'S VOICES

Isn't she gorgeous?

STUDIO EXECUTIVE (O.S.)

This way.

REPORTER #2 (O.S.)

How's the movie, Frances?

FRANCES

It's okay.

LILLIAN (O.S.)

Smile, little sister, smile.

Frances sees her mother smiling nervously. They have entered
the:

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Again there is a cordoned area in the center where Seattle
luminaries are sipping champagne. Reporter #1 lurches forward:

REPORTER #1

Can you make some statement about
Seattle, how the city helped you, or
the schools –

FRANCES

Well, the truth is the city had
nothing to do with it. I was lucky.
And what wasn't luck was hard work.

REPORTER #1

(disappointed)

Oh.

Judge Hillier's Wife, whom we recognize as the Woman who
shouted at Frances in the auditorium, steps forward in a
garish gown. She's holding a large key.

JUDGE HILLIER'S WIFE

Miss Farmer, I can't tell you how proud I am to meet you.

She embraces and kisses Frances, who's more than a little put off. After the kiss, she takes firm hold of Frances' hand and won't let go. Judge Hillier steps to his wife's side. Lillian also approaches.

JUDGE HILLIER'S WIFE

On behalf of the Seattle Ladies Club,
as a token of our vast admiration –

FRANCES

Excuse me.

JUDGE HILLIER'S WIFE

(startled)

Yes...?

FRANCES

Don't I know you?

JUDGE HILLIER'S WIFE

I don't believe so.

FRANCES

Sure. You shouted at me in the auditorium when I read my essay.

JUDGE HILLIER'S WIFE

No, my dear. You must be mistaken.

FRANCES

(barely audible)

Oh bullshit.

JUDGE HILLIER

I beg your pardon?

FRANCES

(to the dignitaries)

Listen, I'm still the same girl that wrote that essay, the same girl who went to Russia, and you people aren't proud to meet me at all.

A hideous silence. Judge Hillier is fuming. His wife is aghast, the key to the city extended awkwardly in front of

her. She shoves it into Frances' arms.

Frances moves to leave, but her arm is taken by the Studio Executive, who escorts her into the theatre. The crowd follows. Lillian is utterly mortified.

EXT. THEATRE - NIGHT

We TRACK along the side of the theatre. An exit door is thrown open, and Frances storms out. As she does, she trips over an OLD INDIAN BEGGAR. She stops and looks at him. He peers up at her with large forlorn eyes... then holds out his hand. A connection is made. All the anger drains out of her. She gives him money, several bills. He breaks into a wonderful crooked grin. She starts away, hesitates, then hands him the key to the city. He stares at it, bewildered.

She strides away toward her limousine, which is now parked with several others at the end of the alley. The CHAUFFEURS are talking and smoking a cigarette. Her chauffeur sees her and hurries to his limo. As it pulls into the street, we see Harry drift back to the curb and stare after it.

OMITTED

EXT. WEST POINT BEACH - NIGHT

Frances sits on the old wood jetty staring out at the water, the lighthouse... Harry approaches.

HARRY

...It's one thing to marry the guy,
but did you have to sleep with him?

She cracks up. Harry laughs at his mistake.

HARRY

Shit. I meant the other way around.

FRANCES

(still laughing)

Well, the studio told me not to.

HARRY

Is that why you did it?

FRANCES

Who ever thought they'd be right for

once? Jesus, Harry... it's a zoo
back there –

HARRY
You're telling me.

FRANCES
Dick... and my mother! She acts like
she's on Mars or something –

HARRY
Well, she's back to earth now. They're
all pretty huffed up about your
leaving. I think you better go back,
kid.

FRANCES
Forget it.

He looks at her thoughtfully, then sits.

FRANCES
You know, the funny thing is: it's
not a great movie. I mean it could've
been, but they screwed it up, gave
it a happy ending. And all my friends,
I know they're going to smile and
say they loved it.

HARRY
If they say they love it, they'll
probably love it. Not everybody lies,
you know?

FRANCES
(warmly, to him)
No, they don't, do they?

Beat.

HARRY
Frances, you're a movie star now. If
you give them what they want, you
can get anything.

FRANCES
I don't have what they want, Harry.
(stares at the water)

Harry, will you tell me something?
How can I keep making movies when
people in the streets are starving?

HARRY

Some people starve, kid. Until we
can do something about it, they might
as well see a movie. Makes 'em feel
better.

FRANCES

But I don't want to be like that. I
want to do something...
(important)

HARRY

What're you gonna do, waste your
talent? Why not use it to make
something worthwhile. You can do
that, you know?

FRANCES

(laughs)
Yeah, if I don't make too big an ass
of myself.

They start to walk now along the beach. We see Harry's car
and the chauffeured limousine parked above.

HARRY

Tell you what. Let's ditch the limo.
Let me drive you up to that red carpet
in my beat up Chevy.

FRANCES

The hell you will, Harry York.

HARRY

Come on, Cinderella, your pumpkin
awaits.

She shakes her head mischievously... moves backward
unbuttoning her coat.

FRANCES

(like a clock striking)
Bong... bong... bong...

The coat falls.

HARRY
Don't start, Farmer.

FRANCES
(dropping her scarf)
It's midnight, Harry. My glittering
raiments are dissolving.

HARRY
(nervously)
The chauffeur. He's watching.

FRANCES
He deserves a show. He missed the
movie.

HARRY
I'm serious, Frances. This is
important.

FRANCES
(kicking off a shoe)
I know.

She kicks off another shoe, sailing it into the water.

Frances is zipping off her dress.

Harry bends to pick up the first shoe.

FRANCES
A single glass slipper left glittering
on the pearly sands. Who was that
girl, anyway?

Harry watches her, mesmerized. The dress is off.

FRANCES
'Come and get it,' Harry.

She skips off down the beach, her dress strewn on the sands.

After a moment, from the darkness, we SEE her underclothes
fly into view. Harry can restrain himself no longer.

HARRY

(excited)
Hot damn!

He drops the shoe and runs after her, tearing off his clothes. After a moment, from the darkness, we hear her squeals of laughter.

EXT. STUDIO - HOLLYWOOD - DAY

The street outside the Studio Main Gate. Actors, directors, etc. arrive in their shiny expensive autos. Among them is Frances in her old battered Ford. She waves to the Guard and drives through.

EXT. STUDIO LOT - DAY

As Frances pulls into her parking space, Claire, the woman from the photo session, strolls up.

CLAIRE
Hi Frances, got a minute?

FRANCES
Sure, Claire. If you don't mind walking my way.

They walk toward the dressing room.

CLAIRE
(nervous)
Well, I suppose I should just say it. It's your clothes.

FRANCES
(bewildered)
My clothes?

CLAIRE
Yeah, I mean slacks... and work clothes... and that awful car –

FRANCES
It's a perfectly good car. It runs.

CLAIRE
Yes, but... Really, I hate to sound... it's just that the public expects something different from its stars.

People won't take you seriously.

FRANCES

I don't care if my clothes are taken seriously. Or my car.

CLAIRE

You know what I mean.

FRANCES

Uh-huh. You mean what if the public finds out I perspire? And wear slacks. And drive an old jalopy? What if they find out I'm a real person. Oh no! Say it ain't so! Not a real person!

Claire is laughing. They go inside.

INT. FRANCES' DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Posh, fit for a star. Frances smiles at the MAKEUP MAN.

FRANCES

Morning, Eddie.

As Frances sits at the table and Eddie goes to work:

CLAIRE

That's not all, Frances. Mr. Bebe is very concerned about your politics. He hears you've been donating money, speaking at rallies.

FRANCES

Yup. Claire... please, please tell Mr. Bebe that if he worried half as much about his scripts as he does about my private life, we'd make a lot better movies.

CLAIRE

I'm sorry, Frances. It's my job, you know?

FRANCES

I know.
(imitating Bebe)

'This is a factory and we each have our jobs. The writer writes, the director directs, and the actress...'

CLAIRE
(laughing)
...acts. I'll relay your message.

INT. FRANCES AND DICK'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Dick is talking on the phone in the living room.

DICK
Yes, of course she'll make a statement on women's rights. Call back tomorrow, okay?

He hangs up. Immediately the phone rings again. He stares at it wearily, then answers:

DICK
(pointedly)
Dwayne Steele's residence.

Through the half-open door to the bedroom we see Frances dozing, an open script laid out beside her.

DICK
Yes.
(confused)
What...?
(hurt)
Yes. Yes, I'll tell her.

He hangs up. Stares off. Slowly enters the bedroom.

Frances looks up.

DICK
You learn your lines?

FRANCES
(nods drowsily)
Sort of.

DICK
There've been some calls.

FRANCES

Who?

DICK

Well... about half an hour ago that woman from the talent department called, what's her name?

FRANCES

Claire?

DICK

Yeah, Claire. She said she was fired. Too bad, huh?

FRANCES

(apprehensively)

Fired?

DICK

Yeah. She said she delivered your message and that you'd understand.

Frances looks stricken.

Dick presses on.

DICK

There was another call too. From your agent. He says your summer stock deal is all set. So you're going back east, huh?

FRANCES

...Yes.

DICK

Without me.

FRANCES

(sighing)

Showdown.

DICK

You weren't going to tell me, were you? Just pack up and leave, is that it?

FRANCES

Dick, we need some time apart –

DICK

Hey, I'm not a complete fool, you know. I can see you're going sour on me, and when I try to do something about it, you turn your back and say it's nothing.

FRANCES

Dick, I can't even breathe here...

DICK

Dwayne! I'm Dwayne now! And you damn well better get used to it!

FRANCES

(softly, remembering)

Dick...

DICK

I don't suppose it occurred to you that I might want to leave too, that I might want to do theatre? No, 'cause you don't want me along, do you? And the reason has nothing to do with summer stock.

FRANCES

No?

DICK

No. It's all about that night, isn't it?

FRANCES

(bewildered)

What night?

DICK

The premiere. I never pressed you about it but god damn it, you're gonna tell me right here and right now what happened and where the hell you were!

FRANCES

(quietly)
You want his name?

Dick is crumbling inside.

DICK
What...?

We watch it sink in. Confusion... self-pity... building gradually to resentment and rage. He starts to throw a tantrum. Hurling things around the room.

Frances just sits there.

FRANCES
My God... I think you're overplaying this a bit...?

He hurls a pillow against the wall and rushes out.

Frances looks after him, then turns. She's now facing the bureau.

FRANCES
Goodbye, Dick.

A mirror sits on top of the bureau. She looks into it. Doesn't like her expression. Turns the mirror away.

FADE OUT:

OMITTED

FADE IN:

INT. THEATRE LOBBY - NIGHT

A playbill in a theatre lobby reads: "Mt. Kisco Playhouse, 1937 Summer Season: 'THE PETRIFIED FOREST'." Among the names listed is: "Frances Farmer, the 'Come And Get It' Girl. Suddenly we HEAR an eruption of applause.

INT. THEATRE - AUDIENCE - NIGHT

TIGHT SHOT on two men: HAROLD CLURMAN – a thoughtful aristocratic man – and CLIFFORD ODETS, who is taller, slimmer, with black hair and intense dark eyes. Around them we see (mostly HEAR) the AUDIENCE going crazy, leaping to

its feet, yelling "Bravo! Bravo!" Clurman and Odets sit impassively. As the hurrahs die down and the audience files out, the two men sit there. Finally Clurman turns to Odets. Odets nods very slightly.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Frances sits in the cramped room, listening intently to Clurman. Occasionally she sneaks a glance at Odets, who is pacing like some caged beast.

CLURMAN

The Group is more than a theatre company. It's the embodiment of an ideal. Our approach allows the actor to be an artist in the fullest sense, a creative individual and an instrument of change. You see –

FRANCES

(watching Odets)

Really, Mr. Clurman, you don't have to sell me.

CLURMAN

Forgive my indulgence. Seems we always lecture those who are on time for those who are tardy. The point is, Mr. Odets here has written a wonderful play. Most of the roles are cast, but we haven't found our female lead...

FRANCES

Who is she?

ODETS

She's a tramp from Newark.

CLURMAN

Forgive me, but I think you'd be perfect for the part.

Odets is pacing furiously, seizing their attention. He stops, looks at her, then resumes.

ODETS

Miss Farmer, for me this is not a

play: it's an assault... a
seduction... a plea for understanding.
I think we live in a time when new
art works should shoot bullets...
and you make very attractive
ammunition.

He stops. Tentatively, almost boyishly, he smiles.

She returns it. She's charmed.

FRANCES

And what's the title of this seduc...
assault?

ODETS

(mysterious, intimate)
'Golden Boy.'

EXT. BELASCO THEATRE MARQUEE - NIGHT

It reads "Golden Boy". Crowds of people streaming out of the
lobby. A sign over the box office reads: "Tomorrow's
performances sold out."

Odets sits on the curb. Behind him the lights in the theatre
lobby flicker off. PEDESTRIANS stroll by: an odd mix of
affluent theatre crowd and 1930s bums.

Frances emerges from the theatre, sees him sitting there.
Sits beside him.

FRANCES

Hi.

He nods.

FRANCES

You wanted to talk?

Another nod. He's silent. He peers up the street. A GIRL,
16, selling pencils catches his eye.

ODETS

You see that girl?

She looks like a waif: tough, vulnerable, pleading with a
WEALTHY COUPLE, following them down the street. A drama being

played out in the distance, out of earshot.

ODETS

That's who my play is about.

Frances watches the girl.

FRANCES

That's me, Clifford.

ODETS

(strong)

I know, but I'm not seeing it. It's there, Frances, the fire is there, but it's not coming through. You're lazy –

INT. WORKING CLASS BAR - LATER

The same conversation continuing:

FRANCES

I'm not!

ODETS

Yes, you win them, you bring them into your heart, touch them, but you don't set them on fire!

FRANCES

But I want to. I'm trying!

ODETS

I need an incendiary! An arsonist!

FRANCES

Then show me! That's what I'm here for, to learn, to grow!

ODETS

Good. Then it's very simple. You have to stop being afraid, Frances. It's in you.

EXT. PLATFORM - SPANISH EMBASSY - DAY

Clurman is delivering a speech in the background as PHOTOGRAPHERS snap pictures. Behind them on the platform

Frances and Odets continue their conversation in whispers:

ODETS

I can see it. You just have to let it out. Trust it. No one will quash you here, but it's still a fight, a struggle! Being true to your art, being honest, is always a struggle!

We now HEAR Clurman's speech. The initial words below were background to the above. What we HEAR now is underlined:

CLURMAN

...Not only an artist, but an instrument of change. We must look to the world around us, not content to observe, but to take an active hand in redressing its wrongs. We will not stand idly by as Fascist bombs obliterate democracy. We contribute our profits, for if fascism is not stopped in Spain, it will spread across Europe, jeopardizing the struggle of civilized man to survive.

(presenting check to
SPANISH CONSUL)

The artist, to be vital, must be a soldier too.

FRANCES

I'm not afraid of struggle, Clifford.

CLIFFORD

Yes you are. We all are. The first step is to acknowledge our fear.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREETS - NIGHT

They're walking. The conversation continues.

CLIFFORD

Face it! Confess it! You're weak!

FRANCES

I'm not!

CLIFFORD

You're afraid!

FRANCES

I'm not!

CLIFFORD

You don't want to show your whole soul – ugly, mis-shapen, and pitiful – you don't want to show it –

FRANCES

(angry)

God damn it, Clifford, will you shut up! I tell you, I want to give these things! I want to give them to the audience, and I can give them, I will give them, so shut up!

She is seething. Gorgeous. Alive.

He smiles, watching her.

CLIFFORD

Good, good. Give them that.

FRANCES

What?

As she feels the anger coursing through her body she realizes what he's talking about. She looks at him, still breathing heavily. Gradually her face turns toward a smile.

He reaches out and, with exquisite tenderness, kisses her.

INT. ODETS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Later. They enter slightly drunk, laughing. He takes her coat.

CLIFFORD

Madam...?

FRANCES

Thank you.

She's looking at the apartment. He sees her. A dark thought flickers across his face, and he breaks into an exaggerated act:

CLIFFORD

Oh my God! Frances, I'm such a cad.
I can't go through with this. My
wife is in Europe, but this is her
house...

(gesturing off)

her bedroom. I can't ask you to...

FRANCES

(playing along)

Oh well. I guess I better leave then.

She starts to put on her coat. He watches her.

CLIFFORD

Okay, but come here first.

FRANCES

Huh.

CLIFFORD

(Leading her down
hall)

Come here. I want to show you
something.

He opens the bedroom door.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bed is drawn back, and the sheets are sprinkled with
rose petals.

Frances' eyes are large.

The kiss is very hungry now.

INT. BEBE'S PANELLED OFFICE - HOLLYWOOD - DAY

Bebe's huge desk. Variety Headline: "ACTRESS FIGHTS FASCISM!"
Next to the newspaper are a dozen pencils which Bebe is lining
up precisely parallel. His expression is totally obsessive,
crazed.

Behind him a woman (TORA) is cutting his hair. A STUDIO LAWYER
paces nearby.

LAWYER

And on top of her political activities, now she's got a lawyer. She wants out of her contract, Mr. Bebe. She says she's through with motion pictures.

BEBE

(muttering)

I'm sure it wasn't me, it wasn't me...

LAWYER

Excuse me, sir?

BEBE

I don't know who she fucked to get where she is, but I don't think it was me.

Tora is massaging the back of Bebe's neck. He's oblivious.

LAWYER

(startled)

Well... you could always dump her, Mr. Bebe. Teach her a lesson. There are a million beautiful girls out there who don't give a damn about politics.

BEBE

That's not the point. Frances Farmer has the world by the tit because of this studio, and now she thinks she can waltz off without a thank you. No. No, that young lady has a contract, and she's going to honor it.

LAWYER

Oh. I mean, good.

BEBE

I think it's time to take the gloves off.

(scowls, speaks into intercom)

Get me some reporters.

(afterthought)
Particularly Louella Parsons!

During this conversation, Bebe has been drawing on the Variety. We now see his work. Beneath the headline was a photo of Frances, on whom Bebe has drawn a mustache.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

EXT. BELASCO THEATRE - NIGHT

The marquee for "Golden Boy" reads "Held Over". USHERS are opening the glass doors from the empty lobby onto the street. We HEAR thunderous applause from the inside.

EXT. BACKSTAGE DOOR - ALLEY - NIGHT

Frances emerges from the stage door to a throng of AUTOGRAPH SEEKERS. She smiles tiredly, but good-naturedly complies. A little ways back stands a boyish YOUNG MAN holding a single red carnation. When the Autograph-seekers are satisfied and all but a few have trailed away, the Young Man steps forward.

YOUNG MAN

Miss Farmer... I've never done this
before... but... I had to tell ya'
you're great!

He shyly hands her the flower.

FRANCES

Thank you very much. I'm glad you
liked the play.

She smiles and begins to walk away. The Young Man follows her.

YOUNG MAN

I'm really sad it's closing. Now
what am I gonna do on Tuesday nights?

FRANCES

You can always come see it in London.

YOUNG MAN

Only if you were in it. Are you?

FRANCES

I wouldn't miss it.

YOUNG MAN

Boy, I'd love to... but I'm going to Hollywood.

FRANCES

(smiling)

Are you an actor?

YOUNG MAN

Hell yes!... well, okay, I'm still in school. But as soon as I graduate... California, here I come!

FRANCES

(after a pause)

Are you really serious? About acting?

YOUNG MAN

Why... yes.

FRANCES

Then don't go to Hollywood.

YOUNG MAN

Why?

FRANCES

I'm telling you straight, if you have any serious ambitions, stay clear of the place. It'll crush you.

YOUNG MAN

You sound as if you hate it.

FRANCES

No, I don't hate it.

Again she walks on. He follows.

YOUNG MAN

Aren't you ever going back?

FRANCES

...Not if I can help it.

YOUNG MAN
Gosh! You'll break a lot of hearts.

FRANCES
They'll mend.

YOUNG MAN
(after a pause)
What about your husband?

Frances stops walking, her eyes shoot to the Young Man's face.

FRANCES
What?

YOUNG MAN
Will you be getting back together?
When you quit Hollywood, I mean.

FRANCES
What is this?

The Young Man suddenly seems much older, and there is no sign of the awkward boyishness.

YOUNG MAN
Is it true you're getting a divorce?
Comrade?

FRANCES
Why, you... you little bastard!

The Young Man grins.

YOUNG MAN
Thanks for our chat, Miss Farmer. Be
seeing you.

He begins to walk away.

FRANCES
Just one minute...

YOUNG MAN
(turning)
You're wasting your time, lady.

Nothing's off the record with me.

He is gone.

OMITTED

INT. WORKING CLASS BAR - NIGHT

Odets sits at a table in back, drinking and writing in a notebook. Frances comes up to him.

He smiles, draws her to him for a hug.

ODETS

How'd it go?

She hesitates, still affected by the incident outside the theatre.

FRANCES

'But how do I know you love me?'

ODETS

Your big speech?

FRANCES

'How do I know it's true? You'll get to be the champ. They'll all want you, all the girls! But I don't care. I've been undersea a long time. When they'd put their hands on me I used to say, "This isn't it! This isn't what I mean!" It's been a mysterious world for me! But Joe, I think you're it! I don't know why, I think you're it. Take me home with you.'

ODETS

(smiling)

I already have.

She nods, turns her back to him.

FRANCES

How's it sound?

ODETS

The speech? Real good.

FRANCES
You think I got it?

ODETS
You got it.

FRANCES
Yeah. Yeah, tonight I think I got
it.

She is crying.

OMITTED

INT. ODETS' APARTMENT - DAY

Frances comes in the front door with a bag of groceries,
removes her key. Walks into the living room, stops short.
Clurman is sitting on the couch, a bottle and two glasses in
front of him.

FRANCES
Hello, Harold.

CLURMAN
(nodding)
Frances.

FRANCES
(looking around)
Where's Clifford?

CLURMAN
He's not here.

FRANCES
Oh.

She sits.

CLURMAN
Bourbon?

He pours. She drinks hers, watching him.

FRANCES
What's up?

CLURMAN

I hear you're meeting with the studio lawyers to get out of your contract.

FRANCES

That's right. I don't want them breathing down my neck while we're in London.

CLURMAN

Well... well, you see, that's the point. You won't be opening in London.

Frances looks like she's been punched in the stomach.

FRANCES

(insecure)

You don't think I'm good enough?

CLURMAN

What?! Good Lord no, it's just... It's money. We needed backing and... well, we found it.

FRANCES

Who?

CLURMAN

An actress.

FRANCES

A rich actress.

CLURMAN

Yes. That's the deal. She plays Lorna.

FRANCES

(growing angry)

But... but wait a minute. We're supposed to be different, right? Clifford says... This theatre is supposed to be different! And this play... this play is all about what greed and money do to people!

CLURMAN

I know, but –

FRANCES
(over his line)
What does Clifford say?

CLURMAN
Right now we have to be practical.

FRANCES
Does Clifford even know?
(off his silence)
You didn't tell him, did you?
(standing)
I'm gonna tell him. Where is he?

CLURMAN
He knows, Frances.

She collapses back into her seat. Her head is swirling.

CLURMAN
(gently)
He approved it.

She's glaring at him. He hands her a letter.

CLURMAN
I'm very sorry, but... well, Hollywood
wants you back, right?

Her eyes fill with rage. She hurls her drink in his face.

FRANCES
Prick!

He stands and, with as much dignity as he can muster, leaves.
Frances is shaking. She rips open the letter he gave her.
Stares at it in horror...

OMITTED

INT. BOOKIE JOINT - DAY

Plain room. A few tables with phones, men on the phones
writing down numbers. Behind them are blackboards with horses'
names and prices. Off to one side Harry is conferring with
the OWNER.

HARRY

Of course it can be done, "Mr. Jones," but it's how you do it. There's a way to pay off L.A. cops and a way to get yourself arrested. First you gotta know who to approach –

A Man at one of the phones looks up, calls.

MAN AT PHONE

You Harry York?

Harry nods, startled. The Man at the table holds up the phone and goes to his next call.

Harry takes the phone.

OMITTED

INT. ODETS' APARTMENT - NEW YORK - NIGHT

Frances on the phone. A half-packed bag lies on the bed. A bottle and glass sit beside her. She's been crying and drinking.

FRANCES

Harry? Harry, where are you?!

HARRY (V.O.)

Jesus, Frances, how'd you find me?

FRANCES

I called your god-damned office! I want you to kill him, Harry. You'll do that for me, won't you? I loved him, I loved him... that bastard.

OMITTED

INT. BOOKIE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

HARRY

Calm down, Frances.

FRANCES (V.O.)

Don't tell me what to do, just give me his head on a platter!

OMITTED

INT. ODETS' APARTMENT - NEW YORK - NIGHT

Frances unfolds the crumpled letter Clurman gave her.

FRANCES

Two lines! Two fucking lines! 'My wife returns from Europe tomorrow. I can't see you any more.' Just like that!

HARRY (V.O.)

Frances...

FRANCES

(sobbing)

Harry, I hate being in love. I don't ever want to be in love again. I just hate it!

OMITTED

INT. BOOKIE JOINT - DAY

With the patter of the bookie taking bets beside him, Harry listens to Frances' sobs.

HARRY

I know, Frances... I know.

He HEARS a CLICK on the other end. He hangs up and heaves a long slow sigh.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. SOUND STAGE - FLOWING GOLD SET - DAY

Frances, in a pair of overalls, falls face down into mud.

INT. SOUND STAGE - FLOWING GOLD SET - LATER

We SEE the slate: 'Flowing Gold', Scene 31A, Take 11... then the same action is repeated from a slightly different angle. Next to her is an old car, its wheels mired in mud.

INT. SOUND STAGE - FLOWING GOLD SET - LATER

Slate: Take 12. She falls again, this time splattering mud all over her face and hair. She lies still for a moment, gritting her teeth.

Sitting comfortably in a nearby director's chair is a DIRECTOR reading Daily Variety. The headline reads: "STUDIO WINS FARMER WAR ON HOLLYWOOD." Behind the Director, off to one side, stands Bebe. The A.D. tugs on the Director's sleeve:

A.D.
How was that?

DIRECTOR
(looking up)
Good, good. One more time.

FRANCES
(standing)
For God's sake... why?

DIRECTOR
Because we want to get it perfect...
just the right combination of fury
and confusion. You can understand
that, can't you, Miss Farmer? We're
serious artists here, right? Right.

The Director glances toward Bebe, who nods with satisfaction.

Frances watches this interaction. She hesitates, then approaches Bebe. She wipes some mud from her face and drops it at her feet.

FRANCES
Look, Mr. Bebe, you can hold me to
my contract, but you can't break me.
I'm back, and I'm gonna make the
best of it.

BEBE
(somewhat snidely)
I'd like nothing better.

She turns and walks, with an air of pride, to her wardrobe trailer.

EXT. ELEGANT BEACHFRONT HOME - NIGHT

Lights everywhere. Cars line the driveway. We HEAR the SOUND of a large party.

A car pulls up. BOB BARNES gets out, goes around to open the door for Frances. She's exhausted. She doesn't move.

BARNES

Well... come on.

FRANCES

This is a mistake. No. This is a disaster.

BARNES

Come on, it's just what you need!
Let everyone see you. Talk to them,
live it up!

FRANCES

(tiredly)

But we've been at it since six this morning. At least you could've let me go home and change.

BARNES

Look, Frances, I didn't want this job. Think I'm crazy? But you begged me: improve your image. So please... lemme try, huh?

FRANCES

(getting out)

You're right. I'm sorry.

(sighs)

Okay, let's go get 'em.

BARNES

(taking pills from pocket)

Here, take a few of these. Studio makes 'em in the basement. They keep the fat off.

FRANCES

(joking)

So not only am I a troublesome bitch,

but I'm fat too?

BARNES

Come on. They make you feel nice and peppy.

She nods, takes a few. They head for the door.

INT. HOUSE - ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

The DOORBELL CHIMES. The hostess, CONNIE, a pleasant-looking woman, answers the door.

BARNES

Hi! Bob Barnes! Looks like a swell party!

CONNIE

(pleased)
Frances!

As they embrace, Frances looks around with trepidation:

FRANCES

(whisper)
God, who's here?

CONNIE

(also whispering)
The usual vermin, I'm afraid.

Barnes tries to pull Frances inside.

She sees a flurry of waiting faces. Everyone's watching her.

FRANCES

(sotto voice)
Get me a drink.

Barnes nods, concerned, and crosses to the bar.

FRANCES

Hi everybody.

Some people seem amused, some curious, some scornful. The Director from the mud scene nods to her. Connie is at her side for support. A voice from somewhere pierces the chatter:

SNIDE VOICE

So nice to have you back, Frances.

As Barnes returns with her drink, she turns to Connie:

FRANCES

Connie, can I use the upstairs bathroom?

CONNIE

Sure.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Later. Frances lies in a bubblebath, relaxing, sipping her drink. She obviously feels a lot better. Someone knocks.

FRANCES

Come in.

A FAT MAN ENTERS, stares at her.

FRANCES

(relaxed)

Hi.

He is dumbfounded. He slowly retreats into the hall.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Barnes is talking to a Young Man whom we recognize as the reporter who tricked Frances in New York.

BARNES

You wouldn't believe the offers!
Just piling in. I mean piling. Some
of the best scripts I've read in
years!

YOUNG REPORTER

(sarcastic)

Yes? My employer will be glad to
hear that.

BARNES

Louella? Is she here?

YOUNG REPORTER

How could you miss her?

He nods toward a hard-faced OLDER WOMAN surrounded by admirers.

BARNES

Louella's here and I'm talking to you?

INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT

We SEE the open door to the bathroom. Frances, with a towel around her, is going through Connie's closet. Barnes KNOCKS.

BARNES

Frances?
(enters, sees her)
Oh no.

FRANCES

Refill my drink, will you, Bob?

BARNES

(aghast)
What're you doing?

FRANCES

Putting on my armor.

BARNES

Come on, Frances. Louella Parsons is here. She wants to talk to you, help you out.

FRANCES

(musing)
Louella... didn't she call me a spoiled little bitch?

BARNES

Come on, she's an important columnist! What's the matter? I thought you wanted these people to forgive you.

FRANCES

(darkly)
'Forgive'...? For What?

BARNES

I'm sorry... that was an unfortunate choice of words.

Frances pulls down a dress and inspects it.

FRANCES

You're not kidding.

(firmly)

Get me a refill, Bob. I'll be down in a minute.

He nods and retreats out the door.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone chattering away... then hushing slightly. Heads turn: Frances is descending the stairway in one of Connie's dresses. She looks absolutely radiant... like some kind of goddess.

Barnes, looking very pleased at her appearance and the others' reaction, hands her the drink.

FRANCES

Thank you.

Then the Young Reporter steps forward.

YOUNG REPORTER

(his callow youth act)

Gee, awful good to see ya again, Miss Farmer.

Frances bristles. Barnes looks on nervously: It's all becoming unravelled again.

YOUNG REPORTER

My employer would like to know something very important: is it true your friend Clifford sleeps in the nude?

Frances is broiling. She stares at him. Under her steady gaze, the snide smile gradually fades from his face.

FRANCES

You seem like an intelligent young

man.

YOUNG REPORTER

Huh?

FRANCES

Can't you find a more dignified way
to make a living?

He blanches. This hits home. Frances turns on her heel and leaves.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Frances rushes out, followed by Barnes and a few curious partygoers. She is very upset. Tight. Holding it in. Barnes pleads with her, tries to stop her, but she leaps in the car and speeds off, spewing gravel over him. The partygoers salute her with their drinks.

EXT. A CLIFFSIDE COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

In the pale moonlight we SEE the dim outline of a poster tacked to the outside wall. The highway disappears down to the sea glittering dully in the distance. We HEAR the RISING SOUND of an approaching car. Its headlights crest the hill, illuminating the poster, showing a woman driving an open car, seated beside the outline of a familiar mustached figure. The poster reads, "When You're Riding Alone, You're Riding with Hitler." The lights grow brighter, almost blinding. The car, accelerating furiously, flashes by. Then we HEAR a motorcycle start up. It emerges from the blackness and speeds off in pursuit. A road sign reads: "Dimout Zone."

Frances drives fast, tears running her face.

The MOTORCYCLE COP pulls up alongside and shouts, "Pull over!" She hesitates. He waves insistently. Gradually she slows. He gets off his bike and walks over, preparing the usual lecture.

COP

Okay...

He leans over the car and sees Frances, her hair wild and tangled.

COP

(a come-on)

Hey, where's the fire, sister?

FRANCES
(sarcastic)
In my eyes, officer.

COP
Cool off, beautiful. Didn't you see
the sign says "Dimout Zone?"
(switching off her
lights)
There's a war on, you know?

FRANCES
Come on. You're seriously trying to
tell me the Japs can't find Los
Angeles without my headlights?

COP
(testy)
I didn't make the law, lady. I just
enforce it.

She switches her headlights back on.

FRANCES
God, you bore me.

She starts the car. The Cop, angry now, lunges in and grabs
the keys.

FRANCES
Don't touch me!

She leaps out of the car. The Cop turns off the car lights.
As Frances passes his motorcycle, she switches on its lights.

COP
Hey!

He runs after her, turning off the motorcycle lights on the
way. When he catches her, he grabs her arm. She struggles,
grabs the flashlight from his belt. She switches it on and
holds it high, its beam spearing wildly out to sea. He lunges
for it, knocks her down. They struggle. He rolls on top of
her, pinning both her arms with one hand... trying to handcuff
her. She writhes, knees him in the balls. She crawls away,
desperately clawing at loose stones. The Cop, angry now,

hurls her down again and manages to get the cuffs on. As they dig into her wrists, she tries to bite him. The Cop, winded from the battle, yanks her to her feet and drags her, kicking and screaming, to his motorcycle. He pulls out his radio mike.

COP
(panting)
Santa Monica, this is motor six-sixty-six. I got a live one here.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

OMITTED

EXT. BEACH HOUSE BALCONY - DAY

CLOSE ON front page of the Los Angeles Times, October 1942. The headlines read: "24 Jap Ships Sunk", "Errol Flynn Sex Trial Delayed", "Frances Farmer Arrested on Drunk Driving Charge – Actress Gets \$250 Fine and Six Months Probation."

CAMERA PULLS BACK to show several newspapers spread out on the balcony of Frances' beach house. As the papers ruffle in the wind, a little kitten swipes at them.

Frances sits in the sun writing in her diary, the same one we saw at the opening of the film. A man's shoes COME INTO VIEW.

HARRY (O.S.)
Got any ginger beer?

She turns, surprised and pleased to see him.

FRANCES
Take a look.

He walks off into the kitchen. She puts her diary away.

FRANCES
(calling)
How the hell do you find me anyway?

HARRY (O.S.)
Animal magnetism!

(she laughs)
No ginger beer. What's this red stuff?

FRANCES
What's left of my blood.

HARRY (O.S.)
Think I'll have a glass.

FRANCES
Help yourself. Everyone else has.

Harry returns, sipping the drink.

HARRY
Very tasty.

She smiles.

HARRY
(looking around)
Nice joint. Can you afford it?

FRANCES
Nope. The studio pays. Thank you,
Harry.

HARRY
What for?

FRANCES
For not chopping off his head and
serving it to me on a platter.

HARRY
Well, I would have, you know? I just
didn't know how to cook it.

She laughs.

HARRY
Six months' probation...? You gotta
learn when to do battle, Farmer.
You're not going to win many bouts
with 200 pound cops.

FRANCES
I took the early rounds.

HARRY

(laughs)

I'll bet.

FRANCES

I don't know. It hurts, Harry. Some things, no matter what you do with them, they just hurt.

HARRY

So you drink, and you fight with a cop...?

FRANCES

Yeah, and you look at people and you wonder who the hell they are, what's going on inside their heads. Sometimes you can hear it, like a buzzing, the things that happen in their heads. And you wonder: does anybody ever love anybody, really?

HARRY

Beats me.

Beat.

FRANCES

I gotta get outta here. I gotta get out of this town.

We see a thought come to him.

HARRY

Hey look, I got some business down in San Diego. Whattaya say you come with me, stay a few days?

FRANCES

No, Harry, I can't –
(right now)

HARRY

You're coming.

OMITTED

INT. SAN DIEGO BAR - NIGHT

Waterfront bar, full of SAILORS, WHORES, and HEAVY DRINKERS.
Hanging over the bar is San Diego paraphernalia.

Frances and Harry sit at a table. Heavy boozing has led to philosophizing:

FRANCES

You know... when I started acting,
you know what I wanted?

He grunts: what?

FRANCES

I just wanted to be part of
something... one thing, one play or
one movie, something that was really
fine... memorable. And I could say:
I did that, I made something good.

HARRY

And?

FRANCES

Well... to get a crack at something
good, you gotta earn it, you gotta
climb the ladder first. So you do,
you work hard, and all these people
behind you are pushing you up,
shouting you on. And then one day
you realize you are, you're at the
top... and there's nothing there.
And you look behind you and there's
no one below. You're just left there
all alone... swaying in the god-damned
breeze.

In the background, we SEE a DRUNKEN SAILOR lurching toward
their table.

HARRY

Well, like the man said: "You can
make a fresh start with your last
breath."

The Sailor trips and falls across their table, spilling beer
on Frances and knocking things over.

FRANCES
(irritated)
Hey, watch it.

SAILOR
(eyeing her
suggestively)
Watch what?

FRANCES
Get away from me, you foul slime.

SAILOR
That's no way for a lady to talk.

HARRY
Take a walk, pal.

FRANCES
Who said I was a lady?

SAILOR
Sorry I insulted you... bitch.

HARRY
Hey!

FRANCES
Ahhh, go eat a toilet seat.

The Sailor goes berserk, takes a swing at Frances. Harry leaps in to protect her, starts to fight with the Sailor. Frances joins in; she's not going to let anyone fight her battles. The Sailor's BUDDY enters the fracas. Everyone's getting hit. As the melee continues we:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FRANCES' BEACH HOUSE - DAY

A cab pulls up. Frances gets out. She looks weary and has a bruise on her cheek. A car is parked in the driveway. She frowns at it, shrugs, and carries her suitcase toward the house.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

She enters with her bags, then drops them, stunned. The house is stripped bare. A MAN holding a measuring tape comes out of the bedroom.

FRANCES

What happened? Who're you?

MAN

Who're you?

FRANCES

I live here.

MAN

You're Farmer? Oh... Well, look, they took your stuff out. Moved it to some hotel, I think.

FRANCES

What?

MAN

I'm preparin' it for the next tenant, he's coming in tomorrow.

Frances stares at him, dumbfounded.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Frances on the phone. Boxes spread out, their contents strewn over the floor, tables, etc. Frances is going through various piles, again and again, looking for something...

FRANCES

(muttering)

God damn it, god damn it...

(into phone)

Yes, I'll wait, I'm waiting...

(to herself)

I don't believe this. They can't do this to me!

She takes a long drink, sifts through a pile, then throws it on the bed in disgust. We HEAR a voice on the phone.

FRANCES

(into phone)
Barnes? It's my diary! They stole my
fucking diary! Find it, will you?
Find it! God damn it, that's my life!

She slams down the phone.

INT. STAGE - MOVIE SET - DAY

The crew is idle and the Director paces, muttering:

DIRECTOR
Never. Never again. I swear, I swear
I will never work with this broad –

Frances, looking pretty hung-over, enters blithely.

DIRECTOR
You're four hours late! It's insane!
It's unprofessional!

FRANCES
I'd say I'm behaving as professionally
as anyone else in this town.

DIRECTOR
Where were you?!

FRANCES
Terribly, terribly sorry; I overslept.
What's the name of this fine
entertainment we're all so involved
in?

The Director clenches his fists as though about to punch her.

FRANCES
(looking blearily at
the slate)
Oh yes. "No Escape." That's it.
There's no escape.

She walks to her dressing room as the Director explodes anew.

INT. FRANCES' DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Small, cramped; not like the earlier one we saw. The

Hairdresser – whom we recognize as Tora, the woman who cut Bebe's hair – stands waiting, holding her brushes and looking vexed. Frances enters.

TORA

It's about time! You're not the star on this show, y'know!

Frances sits. Tora begins brushing her hair, yanking Frances' head back with each stroke. Building tension...

TORA

Of course, it's not up to me to say anything. I'm just crew... Y'know, you hair's so fine you'll lose it if you're not careful. Wonder you all don't, the things you do to yourselves. In fact, I think you are already... Fact, I think you better –

Frances cries out and twists around suddenly. Tora is thrown back: stumbling... falling... hitting her jaw against a chair.

FRANCES

That's it! I'm not taking this any more! I quit!

She storms out. Tora is left moaning, holding her jaw.

INT. STAGE - MOVIE SET - DAY

Frances marches across it. Everyone stares.

FRANCES

Goodbye!... goodbye!... goodbye!...

When she reaches the exit door, she turns and bows to them all, grandiloquently.

INT. FRANCES' HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

She's snoring in bed. Face down, spread-eagled. The light is on. A whiskey bottle (three-quarters empty), a tumbler (three-quarters full), and a bottle of pills sit on the night table.

The phone RINGS. She winces, groans, tries to open her eyes then squeezes them together: hung over. Her arm flails out, finds the light and turns it off.

FRANCES

Shit.

The phone keeps RINGING. Her arm gropes for it.

A loud POUNDING at the door.

FRANCES

What the hell's going on here?

(calls)

Hold on!

(answering phone)

Hello...

(we HEAR a dial tone)

Hello?

The POUNDING at the door becomes violent. Someone's breaking it down.

FRANCES

Hey!

The door splinters.

FRANCES

What...? Help!

Men stream into the room. Back-lit from the hall they look like monsters, phantoms. They're carrying sticks.

Frances screams and runs naked into the bathroom.

FRANCES

Don't kill me! Don't kill me!

She slams the door on the advancing figures.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Frances leans her weight against the door.

FRANCES

Mama, help me, help me, Mama! Don't let them kill me!

It's too much for her. She's shoved back, falling to the floor. The door flies open revealing THREE LARGE COPS. Leering

at her. Frances clutches at the shower curtain, trying to cover herself.

COP
Get your clothes on.

FRANCES
(crying)
You have no right! You have no fucking right, you bastards! Get the hell out of here –

COP
Get your clothes on, lady –

FRANCES
GET OUT!

COP
You're under arrest.

OMITTED

INT. SANTA MONICA POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Frances is being led to the booking desk. All around her Photographers snap her picture, and Reporters walk alongside subjecting her to a never-ending barrage of questions. Frances just smokes a cigarette and smiles grimly at the dour-faced SERGEANT facing her.

SERGEANT
Name?

FRANCES
I don't believe this! You jerks drag me down here in the middle of the night and you don't even know who the hell I am!

The Photographers laugh.

SERGEANT
Age?

FRANCES
Fifteen.

SERGEANT
(bristling)
Address?

FRANCES
Just put me down as a avg – a vagrant
vagabond. Come on, this is a joke!
Assault and battery? I barely touched
that bitch!

SERGEANT
Occupation?

Frances considers for a moment, then smiles matter-of-factly.

FRANCES
Cocksucker.

The Sergeant reddens. Frances laughs as the Photographers
snap their shots.

INT. WOMEN'S JAIL - CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

TWO MATRONS escort Frances to her cell. She shakes their
hands off her arms and enters. They slide the door shut.
Photographers press up to the bars. Frances calls after the
matrons.

FRANCES
Hey! I'd like to leave a wake-up
call for say, ten? Hey! I'll have my
bread and water in bed!

Frances looks disgustedly at the Photographers and lies down
heavily on the cot.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Hey Frances! Why don't you comb your
hair, okay?

FRANCES
...Take me the way I am.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Frances, looking disheveled, dazed, and over-tired from a
sleepless night in jail, stands alone before the JUDGE. Next
to the PROSECUTOR sits Tora, her jaw heavily bandaged, glaring

at Frances. The spectator's section is packed.

JUDGE

...Is that not true?

FRANCES

(under her breath)

Who's writing this guy's lines?

JUDGE

Answer the question! Have you driven a car since you were placed on probation?

FRANCES

No, I couldn't get my hands on one.

JUDGE

Have you reported to your Probation Officer as directed?

FRANCES

I never saw him. Why didn't he show up?

JUDGE

Did you expect him to look you up?

FRANCES

Why, certainly. I wanted to get a peek at his face...

Suppressed laughter ripples through the courtroom.

JUDGE

You're on your way to a contempt citation, young lady.

FRANCES

That's fine with me...

(turning to spectators)

Get it? Fine. A fine! Hey c'mon, c'mon, what is this, an audience or a jury?

JUDGE

Miss Farmer, is it true you fought with the policeman who arrested you

last night?

FRANCES

Sure it's true. I was fighting for my country as well as myself.

JUDGE

Miss Farmer, you were advised at the last hearing that if you took one drink of liquor or failed to be a law-abiding citizen –

Frances moves closer to the bench.

FRANCES

Are you telling me you didn't have a little rum in your pineapple juice this morning? I can smell it from here, Your Honor.

The courtroom erupts into surprised laughter.

JUDGE

That's enough!

Frances laughs triumphantly and spears the air with her finger, pointing at the Judge.

FRANCES

It's the truth! I can smell it from here – you old hypocrite!

The laughter grows. The Judge bangs his gavel.

JUDGE

Miss Farmer! In light of your flagrant disregard for the conditions of your probation, coupled with the unwarranted assault on the Plaintiff here... I am forced to order you to begin serving a sentence of 180 days in the County Jail.

FRANCES

Fine!

JUDGE

(rising)

You are a deeply troubled young lady... I only hope you change your course before it's too late.

The Judge pounds his gavel. Frances is about to say something when suddenly the realization of what's happening hits her. The Judge is leaving the bench. A REPORTER runs out of the room.

FRANCES
(frightened now)
Wait a minute... I haven't got a lawyer...

The Judge ignores this.

FRANCES
(shouting)
What I want to know is do I have any civil rights?

The Judge closes his chambers door behind him. Frances turns slowly. The Matrons are coming toward her.

FRANCES
I want to make a phone call...

She lunges at the Matrons, trying to get past them.

FRANCES
I have a right to make a phone call!

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE COURTROOM -
A ROW OF PHONE BOOTHS - DAY

The Reporter is phoning in his story. The hallway is pandemonium.

REPORTER
(from his notes)
"The kleig-lighted road to fame and fortune is strewn with heartbreak and despair. Today film star Frances Farmer, tarnished by alcohol and drugs" – 'm I going too fast for ya?

In the next phone booth we SEE Harry listening to the

Reporter's spiel. He regards the confusion around him with calm eyes.

EXT. THE COURTROOM DOORS - DAY

They burst open. The Matrons and Two Cops come out carrying Frances. Reporters and Photographers rush past her.

FRANCES

They're stealing my civil rights!
Help me! I'm being kidnapped! Oh
God, help me! Help me!

She suddenly sees the phone booths. Her eyes fill with tears, her shoulders slump forward and her lower lip begins to tremble. She no longer struggles.

FRANCES

(to a Matron)

Haven't you ever had a broken heart?

The Matron relaxes her grip and gives Frances a handkerchief. Frances dabs at her eyes... wraps the kerchief around her knuckles... and slugs the Matron in the jaw, sending her sprawling. Frances runs to the phones.

REPORTER

Oh my God, she's loose!

Frances throws herself at the door of the booth. The Reporter is delirious with joy: what a story!

REPORTER

She's attacking your correspondent!
Right here in the Court Building!
Good God, this bitch is crazy! Someone
stop her!

Frances pounds at the door a few more times, then moves to the next booth... into the arms of Harry.

FRANCES

(a whisper)

Harry!

Harry shakes his head. Before he can speak, Frances is grabbed from behind and dragged toward the elevator.

FRANCES

I have a right! I have a right!

REPORTER

(into phone)

With what must surely be the final act of madness, the curtain falls on Frances Farmer's once promising career. The crazed blonde who at 27...

Harry opens the door to his booth. The Reporter looks up at him.

REPORTER

Hold it a second, Bub...

Harry says not a word, but punches the Reporter hard in the face. The Reporter sags, out like a light. In the confusion, no one has noticed a thing. Harry pulls the door shut.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Frances is sitting in a wooden chair. The venetian blinds over the tall windows are almost completely closed. The room is dim and terribly quiet. A WOMAN is murmuring something to a kindly-looking JUDGE. Another MAN is standing beside her. Frances can't quite make out the words.

WOMAN

...and we feel that this would be more appropriate.

JUDGE

...a difficult decision, but, I'm sure, the proper one.

He nods to the other Man who, together with the Woman, turn away from the bench. As they pass in front of one of the tall windows, Frances recognizes the Woman. It is Alma Styles.

FRANCES

What?

She feels an arm slip around her shoulders and she stiffens. Her mother's face appears by hers.

LILLIAN

(whispering)
It's alright now, little sister,
everything's going to be just fine.

FRANCES
Mama, what's...

LILLIAN
Shhh, shhh. You're not going to jail,
Frances. The Judge has put you under
my care. I'll see you get the rest
you need.

FRANCES
You're taking me home!

Two other WOMEN appear at either side of Frances and Lillian.
Lillian tenderly takes her daughter's face in her hands.

LILLIAN
(smiling)
First things first, little sister.
Trust me.

She kisses Frances on the forehead. Frances looks at the two
Women. They are smiling understandingly at Lillian. Frances
looks a little alarmed.

OMITTED

EXT. ENTRANCE DRIVE - DAY

A wood-panelled station wagon turns the corner of a tree-
lined road and heads up toward tall wrought-iron gates. On a
white-
washed wall are black letters: "MEADOW WOOD CONVALESCENT
HOME". The Station wagon, a similar sign on its door, pulls
up. The gates swing slowly open, and it travels up a long
tree-lined driveway. As it goes by, we see Frances sitting
in the back seat between Lillian and one of the Women from
the previous scene.

The car heads up toward a large Spanish-style building set
back among some trees.

INT. A SMALL OFFICE - DAY

Frances sits in front of a desk nervously smoking a cigarette.

Lillian stands at a window looking out at a broad expanse of well-manicured lawn ending at a row of oaks in the distance.

LILLIAN

Why it's beautiful here! What a view!

Lillian smiles enthusiastically at Frances, who stares accusingly back: she's not falling for that.

An awkward moment of silence. Lillian fidgets, doesn't know what to say. She is rescued when the door opens and DR. SYMINGTON (early 30s, glasses, white coat and ingratiating smile) enters. He holds his right hand out to Frances.

MAN

Good afternoon, Miss Farmer. I'm Dr. Symington.

Frances stares at the proffered hand. Lillian steps in quickly and takes it.

LILLIAN

Good afternoon, Doctor.

The Doctor winks at Frances and puts a hand on Lillian's arm.

SYMINGTON

I'm very pleased to meet you, Mrs. Farmer. I'm sure we'll have more of a chance to talk later. Right now I think it's important that your daughter have a chance to settle in. Perhaps it would be best if you said your goodbyes here.

He smiles pleasantly. Lillian is obviously very put off by the idea. She looks at Frances who stares unseeingly out the window.

LILLIAN

Oh. Well, I have some background that you should probably know about if you're...

SYMINGTON

I have no doubt, Mrs. Farmer. If you'll speak to the girl at the desk,

she'll arrange an appointment.

He goes to the door and opens it. Lillian is momentarily at a loss, but she acquiesces. She bends down and tightly hugs Frances, who pats her on the back a couple of times.

LILLIAN

I'll be back real soon, little sister.
You be a good girl.

She waits for a reply and then, getting none, starts out the door.

FRANCES

(staring out window)
Mama!

Lillian turns back expectantly.

FRANCES

(warningly)
...I want to go home, Mama.

Lillian looks to the Doctor, who nods sympathetically at her.

LILLIAN

You'll see, little sister. Everything
will be fine. The doctors know best.

She goes out and down the hall. The Doctor closes the door.

SYMINGTON

I find these initial meetings to be
much easier without the concerned
relatives in attendance.

FRANCES

Am I supposed to say 'thank you'?

SYMINGTON

Thanks are hardly necessary.

FRANCES

Aw, shucks, ma'am. T'weren't nothin'.

SYMINGTON

I'm glad to see you haven't lost

your sense of humor.

FRANCES

It ain't for lack of trying.

SYMINGTON

So it seems. May we be serious for a moment?

FRANCES

(seductively)

Why, Doctor! We've only just met!

He reddens ever so slightly and looks away.

SYMINGTON

I feel I've known you for a long time... you see, I've followed your career... you're a fascinating case... I'm looking forward to resolving your predicament.

Frances' face begins to set in hard planes.

FRANCES

Oh! Are you really?

SYMINGTON

Among persons such as yourself, creative people under great stress, erratic behavior is not at all uncommon and certainly nothing to be ashamed of. It's just that the neuroses which fuel your talent can also generate certain character disabilities which...

(can cripple your ability to function...)

He stops as Frances rises and leans over his desk:

FRANCES

Do you expect me, for one moment, to believe you have greater insight into my personality than I do?

SYMINGTON

Please sit down...

FRANCES

You may discuss my predicament,
Doctor. You may discuss it with anyone
you like, but not with me. I'm not
interested. I can solve my problems
without recourse to a veterinarian.

SYMINGTON

I see.

FRANCES

Besides, I don't want to be what you
want to make me.

SYMINGTON

And what's that?

FRANCES

Normal. Average.

SYMINGTON

All right. Will you please sit down
now?

(smiling)

Symington says.

FRANCES

...Did you really say that?

SYMINGTON

Just a little joke, Miss Farmer.

FRANCES

This whole thing is a joke!

SYMINGTON

Stay calm, please.

FRANCES

No, you stay calm, Doctor! But you're
finding that difficult, aren't you?

(soft, seductive)

Why, are you attracted to me? Perhaps
later, in some of our more intimate
sessions... after we know each other
a little better...

(turning harder)

and you've torn my personality to shreds, and I'm weeping and vulnerable...

(very hard)

then you'll really get your kicks, won't you, "Doctor?"

SYMINGTON

I'll have someone show you to your room.

FRANCES

Oh, that's good, very professional. In control. But the tiny beads of sweat on your upper lip give you away.

Symington stares at her. With a careful, almost scientific gesture he moves thumb and forefinger over his lip, then rubs the two fingers together. Yes, there is sweat.

SYMINGTON

You really should get some rest now. Nurse will meet you outside. Good day.

He pushes a button on his desk and reaches for a folder. Frances hasn't moved. She gazes at him evenly.

SYMINGTON

Is there something else?

FRANCES

You didn't say 'Symington says'.

His eyes are very calm now, he smiles at her patronizingly.

SYMINGTON

Symington says.

INT. FRANCES' ROOM - DAY

Small, white, spartan and rather pleasant. Lillian is standing by the window, testing the locks. She turns and goes to the bed, fussing with the pillow, seeming very uncomfortable. She pulls at the corners of the mattress.

The door opens and a tall, sullen-looking MATRON walks in.

Lillian doesn't pay much attention to her.

LILLIAN

Not much on hospital corners, are you?

MATRON

You Farmer?

Something in her tone makes Lillian look up. The Matron closes the door behind her and advances. Lillian assumes her full height.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Frances is walking with a NURSE. They pass a variety of other patients, some of whom look old or beaten but few of whom seem overtly crazy.

FRANCES

So this is the nuthouse...

The Nurse smiles confidentially at her.

NURSE

Honey... take my word for it. This is a resort.

They get to the door and HEAR Lillian's protesting voice:

LILLIAN (O.S.)

You have no right!

They enter and SEE the Matron struggling to get Lillian's coat away from her. Lillian pleads with Frances.

LILLIAN

Tell them who I am! Tell them who I am!

FRANCES

Are you crazy? Unhand that woman! That's Amelia Earhart!

Frances bursts out laughing. The Matron releases Lillian and comes for Frances.

INT. FRANCES' ROOM - DAY CLOSE-UP OF A HYPODERMIC NEEDLE

A little fluid squirts out the tip.

FRANCES (O.S.)

But what is it?

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL Frances strapped down on a white cot. The Nurse is holding the syringe while a THIN NURSE and an ATTENDANT stand by.

FRANCES

You've got to tell me what it is!

THIN NURSE

It's insulin. It throws your body into shock.

Frances looks at her suspiciously, uncertain whether to believe this, and turns toward the Nurse with the hypodermic.

NURSE WITH HYPO

(reassuringly)

It's just vitamins.

This sounds more reasonable. Frances relaxes somewhat.

NURSE WITH HYPO

A, C, B-Complex, certain minerals...

(inserting hypo)

Just stay relaxed... Good, now open your mouth a sec.

Frances does. The Attendant jams a rubber bar between her teeth. Frances squirms, fights. The Attendant holds the bar in place. And the Nurse pushes the plunger on the hypo. Frances goes rigid. Her eyes widen, her back arches. With a loud hoarse cry she starts to convulse. The SCREEN BEGINS TO FADE into bright white light. She is unconscious. The SCREEN IS NOW BLANK.

EXT. COURTYARD - MEADOW WOOD - DAY

Frances sits beside Lillian on a bench. Other patients with ground privileges wander aimlessly about.

There is an open carpet bag at Lillian's feet and, in her lap, a bundle of letters and telegrams that she's showing to Frances. Frances seems restless.

LILLIAN

...and here's the one from Duluth. A war widow with five children. She works in a defense plant and she's very worried about you. I answered her that she shouldn't let worry over you affect her vital work; and that you'd be back on the silver screen in no time.

She hands it to Frances, who lets it drop beside her on the bench.

LILLIAN

And here's one from nice Mr. Zeiss. He says that...

FRANCES

Why are these all opened?

LILLIAN

Well, they needed immediate answers, Frances. It's good manners and good sense. You shouldn't be bothering yourself with these right now.

FRANCES

Then why did you bring them?

LILLIAN

It's your fan mail, little sister.

FRANCES

(looking off, under her breath)
You kill me, Mama.

LILLIAN

What?

FRANCES

Go on...

Frances sighs. She looks for something to divert her attention.

INT. SYMINGTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Frances is alone in the room. The door is ajar. She's standing over Symington's desk, which is empty except for a doodle pad. The doodle she's looking at is extremely bizarre, sadistic... After a moment, Symington ENTERS holding several folders. Frances' manner changes very subtly.

SYMINGTON

...I'm sorry to keep you waiting, the staff review ran over. Did you enjoy your mother's visit?

FRANCES

(sitting)

Yes. It was very good to see her.

SYMINGTON

Really? Any problems?

Symington puts the folders in a drawer. All except Frances'.

FRANCES

Not at all. She brought me my fan mail.

(a performance)

I had no idea there were so many strangers concerned about me. But I guess that's the best thing about working in the movies. You make so many friends. I want to go back and show them that the faith they put in me wasn't a mistake.

SYMINGTON

You're telling me you feel guilty.

FRANCES

(slightly edgy)

No... What I mean is... I'm just very excited by the prospect of getting on with my life, that's all.

SYMINGTON

(after a pause)

Do you really believe your mother's trying to kill you?

FRANCES

(laughing)
What?

SYMINGTON
She told me you said, "Mama, you want to kill me."

FRANCES
I never said... Oh look. That's just a figure of speech. She said something funny, and I said...

SYMINGTON
And you accused her of tampering with your mail.

FRANCES
Oh for Christ's...

Frances is wrapping and unwrapping a handkerchief around her knuckles. Looks a little crazy. Symington's watching it. She stops.

FRANCES
I'm sorry. She misunderstood, that's all.

SYMINGTON
But you tell me you had a pleasant visit and your mother says you were sullen and uncommunicative. Whom do you think I should believe?

FRANCES
Doctor, I hate to break this to you, but my mother is a little batty.

SYMINGTON
Frances, you're still filled with anxiety. You feel guilty and hostile toward your family and friends. Consequently, I didn't recommend your release at the staff review.

FRANCES
You what?

SYMINGTON

Mental illness is an elusive thing,
and though I'm pleased you're feeling
more... capable, it's perhaps
unrealistic to expect you to be
completely cured after so short a
time. Don't you agree?

Frances stares at him. Stunned. Horrified.

SYMINGTON

(smiling)

I'm sure you'll see it my way in the
end.

FRANCES

Dr. Symington, how big is your dick?

SYMINGTON

Huh?

FRANCES

'Cause if it's long enough, which I
doubt, why don't you wrap it around
and fuck yourself in the ass!

Symington smiles patronizingly.

FRANCES

I want outta here, you understand?
I'm ready to get out! So you go back
there... you go back and you tell
them to let me out!

SYMINGTON

(calmly)

Frances, I'm warning you...

FRANCES

No, I'm warning you! Who do you think
you are, God? You bumble around with
your folders...

(she knocks her folder
to the floor)

...and your pencils...

(she grabs some pencils
and throws them at
him)

...and your god-damn buttons...

(she pounds on the
inter-com; a voice
says, 'Yes, Doctor?')
...all your badges of authority! But
you have no authority! You're nothing!
You're a zero!

She tears open the door. Two huge ORDERLIES are waiting.
Frances tries to barrel past, but they easily restrain her.

ORDERLY
Doc?

Symington sits forward, his hands smoothing his hair.

Frances smiles sarcastically at him:

FRANCES
Symington says...

SYMINGTON
(tonelessly)
Sedate her.

They haul her away.

EXT. MEADOW WOOD CONVALESCENT HOME - DAY

A few PATIENTS stroll about, visiting with relatives. Frances lies on a chaise lounge. She's wearing a robe and dark glasses, a big hat, and she seems to be sleeping. THE CAMERA APPROACHES. Her hair is a mess, her skin splotchy. And something is moving: her hand... one finger on one hand is moving in agitated little bursts. We realize she is not sleeping at all...

HARRY (O.S.)
Hi there. How 'bout a walk in the
woods?

She looks to one side and sees him. Frowns. Takes off her glasses and runs her fingers nervously through her hair.

FRANCES
Oh my God, I look awful.

HARRY
(friendly)

You've looked a whole lot better.
C'mon.

EXT. MEADOW WOOD GROUNDS - DAY

Frances and Harry walking in a relatively secluded area. She glances around continuously... suspiciously.

FRANCES

They're doin' stuff to me, Harry.
Can you see it? You feel it? They're putting stuff in my food or something, my water, and they're using it to put thoughts in my head. You understand? They're trying to re-arrange what's in my head, they're trying to drive me crazy! Oh, Harry!

She breaks down and weeps on Harry's shoulder. Harry looks around warily.

FRANCES

I can't stay here anymore, you understand? I can't, I can't. I gotta get home. I gotta get somewhere else, anywhere, okay?

Harry nods, squeezes her arm firmly – a warning – as a white-coated ATTENDANT APPROACHES. Frances straightens up.

ATTENDANT

Oh, Miss Farmer! Time for your bath, Miss Farmer!

HARRY

(urgent whisper)
Listen: to the left. Straight through the trees and over the wall to your left. My car is there.

The Attendant reaches them.

ATTENDANT

(as if to a child)
It's time for your bath!

FRANCES

Oh good. I love my baths.

ATTENDANT

Come along now.

Frances starts to move off with the Attendant. For an instant Harry – and we – wonder if she really is crazy.

HARRY

Frances! Did you hear what I said?

She turns. The Attendant turns. She smiles sweetly, madly.

FRANCES

Of course, Harry.

The Attendant is between her and Harry. We SEE her face turn dark. She shoves the Attendant toward Harry and shouts:

FRANCES

(fiercely)

Over the walls!

She runs. The Attendant staggers toward Harry, who knocks him down with two punches. ANOTHER ATTENDANT runs up. Harry whips out an icepick and brandishes it at them:

HARRY

You want crazy? I'll show you crazy!

The Attendants hold their ground. Harry runs after Frances.

EXT. GROVE OF TREES - DAY

Frances and Harry crash through bushes, come to a high wall.

HARRY

(offering to lift her)

Here.

Frances hugs him tightly, kisses him. He lifts her by the waist, and she grabs the top of the wall and hauls herself up. Harry joins her. We SEE, over the wall, a Lincoln Zephyr waiting on a dirt road. Harry and Frances jump down as we HEAR the Two Attendants burst through the underbrush and haul themselves up. As their heads pop over the top of the wall, they see the Lincoln disappearing down the road in a cloud of dust...

INT. LINCOLN - DUSK - DAY

Harry, eyes bleary and shoulders hunched, tries to concentrate on the road ahead. The RADIO DRONES quietly, a lazy saxophone ballad. After a while, there's movement in the back seat and Frances sits up. She yawns and stretches as Harry watches her in the mirror.

HARRY

Evening, gorgeous.

FRANCES

(yawning)

That sure looks like fun...

(leaning over front
seat)

You know how long it's been since I
was behind the wheel?

HARRY

Forget it, Frances. You're not
driving.

FRANCES

Have I told you how mean you're
turning, York?

Harry smiles. Frances climbs over the seat and starts to fiddle with the radio.

FRANCES

Where are we, mean man?

HARRY

Couple hours from Idaho. We'll cut
across to Montana. I've got friends
there with a ranch.

FRANCES

I should've known...

HARRY

What?

FRANCES

This is another one of your schemes
to get me off alone...

HARRY
That's right.

FRANCES
(smiling)
...Take advantage of me.

Harry laughs.

They pass a poster: "BUY WAR BONDS!" Frances stares at it.

FRANCES
I don't think I'd be much good in a war...

HARRY
Whattaya think you're in now?

FRANCES
(sleepily)
I don't know. Not a war exactly.
It's more a... a misapprehension
maybe...

HARRY
Huh?

FRANCES
A misunderstanding, people taking
the wrong meaning from things. I
wasn't declaring war, Harry. I was
just saying my prayers.

Harry looks at her quizzically.

HARRY
Who to?

Beat.

FRANCES
Harry, I have to go home. I have to
talk to Mama.

HARRY
Frances, you're fulla drugs. You
don't know what you're saying. Who
do you think put you into Meadow

Wood? Your mother thinks you're crazy
and she'll keep on thinking it as
long as it suits her.

FRANCES

(sitting up)

No, she just didn't want me going to
jail, that's all.

HARRY

Yeah? She's a shark, Frances. I'm
not taking you there, and that's
that!

She rubs his neck and his attitude seems to soften.

She looks at him fondly, thoughtfully.

FRANCES

You know something, Harry?

HARRY

I guess.

FRANCES

Aside from meanness, you're almost
perfect. There's only one other thing
wrong with you.

HARRY

What's that?

FRANCES

You can't drink.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ROADHOUSE - NIGHT

The Lincoln is parked beside a few other cars.

INT. ROADHOUSE - NIGHT

Frances and Harry sit at a table cluttered with empty glasses.
The JUKEBOX PLAYS, a few COUPLES dance. Frances is gulping
down a tall Scotch.

FRANCES

(wincing/grinning)
Ohhh, that's lousy Scotch!

HARRY
(calling drunkenly)
Hey! Another shot for the lady and a
double for me!

FRANCES
What a man!

HARRY
Hey, you're a good quarter-horse,
kid, but you can't go a route of
ground.

FRANCES
(hoisting her glass)
To quarter-horses.

HARRY
No. To thoroughbreds.

He knocks back his drink.

THE JUKEBOX

A hand puts a nickel in, and we HEAR Bing Crosby singing
"Love Is So Terrific." We PAN across the dance floor, where
Harry and Frances are dancing.

BING'S VOICE
Love is so terrific Such a funny
feeling Makes you want to cuddle And
coo...

Frances squeals with delight when she hears the song. She
holds Harry forcefully and starts to lead him around the
floor. Harry starts to sing along:

BING & HARRY
Makes you sentimental, Makes you
kinda gentle Ouch!
(Frances pinches Harry)
Terrific thing.

Around them an infection is spreading: all the women are
leading their men. For an instant it is magical, liberating...

She leans her head against his shoulder.

FRANCES

Why are you always leaving me, Harry?

HARRY

Huh?

FRANCES

You should stick around sometimes.
Look out for me.

HARRY

Look, Frances, I'm only gonna ask
this one time. I mean it. I swear
after this, I'll never ask again:
Will you marry me?

FRANCES

(after a long pause)

I know a thing or two about marriage.
You... you understand me more than
anyone, Harry... maybe even more
than Mama. But... you're too important
to me. I'd fail you. I don't know
how or why, but I would. And that's
a chance I just can't take. Do you
understand?

HARRY

(a bitter smile)

Well... I'll act like I do until I
do.

They are silent for a moment.

HARRY

There's just one more thing.

FRANCES

What's that?

HARRY

Will you marry me?

She laughs happily. He joins her, but his seems a little
forced.

She leans her head on his shoulder and holds him tight. They dance...

OMITTED

EXT. FARMER HOUSE - SEATTLE - DAY

The Lincoln, Harry at the wheel, drives up and stops. Harry shakes his head.

HARRY

It's not too late to keep going, up to Vancouver? Be the smartest thing.

FRANCES

Thanks, Harry, really, but... I can't explain it. She's my mother. She's just... I can't give up on her that easy.

HARRY

You give up on her?

FRANCES

Yeah. It's just... something I gotta do, I guess.

HARRY

(smiling warmly)
Frances, You're crazy.

FRANCES

(whispers)
I know. Don't tell anyone.

He laughs. We SEE Lillian come out onto the porch with uncharacteristic trepidation.

HARRY

Anyway... if you need me...

FRANCES

(warmly)
I got your number, Mister Man.

She gets out, waves to him, and walks toward the house. Harry drives off. As Frances reaches the top step, Lillian suddenly opens her arms:

LILLIAN
(nervous, forced)
Welcome home, little sister.

INT. FARMER HOUSE - DAY

Frances and Lillian enter. On the sofa sits Alma Styles.
Alma and Lillian seem slightly furtive. Caught in the act.

FRANCES
Well, who have we here...?

LILLIAN
(anxiously)
Frances, you remember my lawyer,
Alma Styles?

STYLES
Hello, Frances. You seem to be having
quite a time of it.

LILLIAN
I called Alma because I think we'll
need...

STYLES
Frances, the doctors at Meadow Wood
have petitioned the court for your
return. Your mother has asked me to
intervene so you can stay here.

LILLIAN
I swear I didn't know what they were
doing to you. I wouldn't have let
them...

She bursts into tears. Frances takes her in her arms and
rocks her like a child.

FRANCES
It's okay, Mama. It's okay.

STYLES
You realize, of course, your mother
is now your legal guardian. In the
eyes of the law, you no longer have
any rights as an adult. You're going

to have to hold your tongue and be selective about whom you mix with. That man who drove you here, for instance –

FRANCES

You leave him out of this!

LILLIAN

Frances, please don't...

STYLES

Never mind. We won't have to worry about him much longer.

EXT. LINCOLN - END OF FRANCES' STREET - DAY

Harry pulls up at a stop sign. He rubs his forehead wearily as a car crosses the intersection. It stops dead in front of him. Another pulls up alongside. Another behind. Harry thinks about this. His hand slides down slowly under the seat. We SEE the handle of his ice pick. Harry turns to smile at the MAN in the next car. The Man flashes an FBI badge, points revolver:

FBI MAN

(smiling)

How ya doin', Al?

HARRY

You got the wrong guy. Name's Slocum.

FBI MAN

No, it ain't. And it ain't Harry York, neither.

HARRY

Look, I'm tellin' you...

The FBI Man pulls the hammer back on the revolver. ANOTHER MAN opens the passenger door.

FBI MAN

I'd give you till ten, Al, but we ain't got the time.

SMASH CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS

Judge Hillier walking... out of the chamber and down a corridor. His stride is long, his demeanor purposeful. The corridor leads into a courtroom. Harry standing at attention. We hear Hillier climb onto the bench and be introduced by the court official. Harry stares up at the judge.

HILLIER

Alvin Hanson, a.k.a. Ronald Burns,
Thomas Slocum, Harry York... Mr.
Hanson, this warrant has been
outstanding for many years. Normally
that circumstance would prompt me
toward leniency, but the crime you
committed – inciting to riot – and
the cause you sought to promote – a
worker's rebellion – are such
anathemas to this court that I feel
compelled to mete out the full
sentence. I only wish it were longer.
(slamming gavel)
Six months in the state penitentiary.

INT. FARMER HOUSE - DAY

Frances sits at the piano playing "You Are My Sunshine".
Lillian is lounging on the couch, leafing happily through
her scrapbook.

LILLIAN

Frances, play 'Flow Gently Sweet
Afton'.

Frances' brows mesh.

FRANCES

Oh Mama, I'm so... tired of that
song.

LILLIAN

Please. I want you to. It would make
me so happy.

Frances sighs and begins to play it. Lillian scrunches down
and begins to hum along.

LILLIAN

It's just a flow gently sweet Afton
day. Life has been so good to me.
Why, I have just about everything
one could wish... but I still have
so many blank pages in my scrapbook.

She smiles warmly at Frances. Frances abruptly stops playing.

FRANCES

I think I need a little air.

LILLIAN

What's wrong?

FRANCES

Nothing. I think I'll just go out
for awhile.

LILLIAN

Where are you going?

FRANCES

For a walk, Mama. Just a walk.

She gets up and Lillian rouses herself.

LILLIAN

How long will you be?

FRANCES

Not long.

Frances goes down the hall for her coat. Lillian follows
part way.

LILLIAN

(smiling)

I'll have lunch ready by one.

FRANCES

I'll be back.

LILLIAN

At one. Promise?

FRANCES

Sure.

Frances returns wearing the coat. Lillian half-blocking her path.

LILLIAN

Say you promise.

FRANCES

I promise I'll... I promise, Mama.

Lillian nods, moves aside. As Frances heads for the door:

LILLIAN

You know, the surest way to lose an appetite, is to drink, little sister.

FRANCES

(exiting)

Yes, Mama.

LILLIAN

I don't want you drinking, Frances.

FRANCES

Yes, Mama.

Lillian enters and re-establishes herself on the couch with a happy smile. She begins to hum "Flow Gently Sweet Afton"

INT. FLEA-BAG HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

DERELICTS sleep on broken couches and armchairs. In a corner by a pay phone Ernest Farmer sits at a rickety desk piled high with briefs. Frances sits across from him. They've been talking.

FRANCES

...So what do you think?

ERNEST

I don't know, honey. Your mother has such big plans for you.

FRANCES

I know that, Dad, but –

ERNEST

What you have to understand, Francie, is that she... well... she wanted so much for herself too, and for me, and she never really got to... The only time I ever saw her happy was if her name was in the papers... but she could have been... if times were different she could have been a politician or... I don't know.

FRANCES

But Dad, I'm asking about me. What do you think I should do?

ERNEST

(after a pause)

Well, Francie, sometimes after you get your hands on something you want, it just doesn't look the same. Then you have to be real smart to know if you should hold onto it because it's all you've got... or just let it go. This is the way of things, but I guess you already know that.

FRANCES

Dad... whatever I decide, will it be okay with you?

ERNEST

Always. Always.

Frances rises from her chair, looking around the room to hide her tears. Ernest rises too.

ERNEST

I'm sorry, I... I don't have a desk in my room, and...
(it's not a proper office)

FRANCES

I don't care, Dad. I love you.

ERNEST

I love you too, Francie.

They look at each other across the desk for an uncomfortable

moment, then Frances slowly leaves. He looks sadly after her.

EXT. FLEA-BAG HOTEL - DAY

Frances exits and starts across the road. Ernest comes to the window to watch her leave. It is raining and the water on the glass distorts his view.

OMITTED

INT. FARMER HOUSE - FRANCES' ROOM - DAY

Lillian is straightening up Frances' room, rearranging things to suit herself. She hears the door slam downstairs.

FRANCES (O.S.)

I'm back, Mama.

LILLIAN

(coming into hall)

Oh Frances, do I have news for you!
Guess who –

FRANCES

(excited)

Wait, Mama, wait. I have something to tell you. I've decided... well... I'm not going to make movies anymore. I thought that's what I wanted, and I went after it with all my soul, the way you taught me, but I was miserable, Mama, and it nearly killed me. So now... now it's over. I want a different kind of life, something... simple. I want to live someplace quiet and peaceful... in the country maybe, and I'll have dogs and cats – I feel so light suddenly, so clear for the first time in... It's going to be okay, Mama, I know it. And I love you.

She goes to hug her mother, but Lillian has changed. Frances' news has chilled her.

LILLIAN

(coming down stairs)

Don't... talk crazy.

FRANCES
Mama...?

LILLIAN
(entering living room)
They want you back! Your agent called today! Don't you understand? He's sending the scripts. He wants to fly up here in a week with the publicity people! Frances, you can't do this to your fans! Why, they've been praying for you all through this nightmare. You can't turn your back on them now! Look at this fan mail I've been answering!

She points to a stack of letters on the table.

FRANCES
Haven't you heard what I said?

LILLIAN
I told him to come up! I told him you wanted to show them all that there's nothing wrong with you any more, that you're completely cured!

FRANCES
I'm not cured. I was never sick! They had no business putting me in there! My only responsibility is to myself now!

LILLIAN
You... you selfish, selfish child. At least talk to him, hear what he has to say.

FRANCES
No!

LILLIAN
You want to throw it all away, is that it? You had everything, little sister. Beauty... a brilliant career... a wonderful husband. You

were a movie star!

FRANCES
Mama, shut up!

LILLIAN
And now you're throwing everything
away? You're gonna be a nobody!
Nobody! You know what that's like?!

FRANCES
(sudden realization)
You... You'd send me back, wouldn't
you? You would.

Frances grabs her coat.

LILLIAN
Where are you going?

FRANCES
I'm going out!

LILLIAN
You're not going anywhere!

FRANCES
Yes, I am, and you can't stop me!
You can't tell me what to do, mother.
I'm a grown woman, and I can decide
about my own life.

LILLIAN
Frances!

They're wrestling, Lillian trying to prevent her from leaving.

FRANCES
Don't you try and stop me. Don't you
dare!

She grabs Lillian's wrists and twists them, throws her back.

FRANCES
If you follow me, Mama, I swear I'll
fucking kill you!

Frances storms out. Lillian sits back in the chair, suddenly

looking very old. She massages her wrists...

LILLIAN

That's it. You've done it now, little sister.

INT. LARGE OFFICE - DAY

Dark. Blinds drawn. We SEE a single light with a green shade, HEAR the soft coo of Lillian's voice. The CAMERA SHIFTS gradually onto her earnest face.

LILLIAN

All my life, I've tried to live up to my parents' example. To have the independence of mind and fortitude of spirit that have made this country great. I taught that to Frances: Speak out. Aspire. Make something of yourself, something –
(to be proud of)

DR. DOYLE

(bored)
Yes, yes, Mrs. Farmer –

ALMA STYLES

Frances has always been a battleground, Lillian.

DR. DOYLE, a psychiatrist, and the others are seated with Judge Hillier around a table.

DOYLE

The point is: it's your opinion that Frances is getting steadily worse?

LILLIAN

Well... yes.

Doyle fills in a line on the printed form before him.

DOYLE

And you feel you're unable to control her any longer?

LILLIAN

No... I mean, yes, Doctor.

Alma holds up Lillian's bruised wrists as evidence.

DOYLE

And the only course open to you is to commit your daughter for a period of time to a mental institution?

LILLIAN

Well, Alma told me that...

Alma looks coolly at Lillian.

LILLIAN

...Yes.

Hillier nods slightly, approvingly, toward Alma.

DOYLE

(closing his folder)

I believe that's all I need to know about Miss Farmer.

HILLIER

I think in all future documents she should be referred to as Mrs. R. H. Richardson.

LILLIAN

Her married name?

HILLIER

Yes. It's less recognizable. I'm sure you'd prefer to keep unpleasant publicity to a minimum.

LILLIAN

...Oh yes.

HILLIER

Now. Can you tell us where we might find Frances?

INT. DOWNTOWN SEATTLE BAR - NIGHT

It's late. Frances stands at the bar acting out a joke for a small audience of devoted DRINKERS.

FRANCES

...Looking for a drink, and the town is deserted, he can't understand it. Finally he finds a bar, goes in – the place is empty, bartender's closing up. Salesman says, 'Gimme a martini.' Bartender's real nervous, he says, 'No, no, no, I gotta close. Big Otis is coming to town.'

Behind them is a large window covered by a gauzy curtain. In the street a police car cruises slowly past.

FRANCES

Salesman says, 'I don't care. I gotta have a martini.' So the bartender fixes him a martini real fast, grabs his money, and runs out the back. Salesman sits there sipping his martini,... he's got the bar all to himself... Then he hears it. This big roaring in the street.
RRRAAAAAAAAA!!!
(stomping her feet)
Gigantic footsteps... coming closer.
Stopping.

We SEE the police car again... It stops out front.

FRANCES

Enormous hands reach in, grab the swinging doors and rip them off their hinges. This huge man stomps in. Picks up a chair and hurls it over the bar, smashing the mirror – whiskey and glass flying everywhere.

TWO COPS appear at the window, looking in.

FRANCES

He turns to the salesman: 'What the hell're you doing in here!' Salesman says, 'I'm just drinking a martini.' 'Oh yeah?' the guy says. 'Well you better get outa here! Big Otis is coming to town!'

Everyone laughs. A long moment of enjoyment. Then Frances

turns, looks out the window and sees the cops.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Hillier behind the bench. Doyle sits at a table with Alma Styles. A COURT RECORDER taps out his notes in an odd, jerky style. (NOTE: This scene is INTERCUT, where appropriate, with shots of FRANCES in a bare room, wearing a strait jacket.)

DOYLE

...From her history, it's apparent the patient suffers from a paranoid reaction with pronounced egotism. Her violent responses have recently included aggression against her mother. In view of the deep-seated nature of her ailments and her failure to respond satisfactorily to insulin shock, it is my opinion she may ultimately require permanent institutional care.

HILLIER

(to Styles)

Counsellor, as Guardian ad litem for Mrs. Richardson, do you waive jury trial?

STYLES

Yes, your Honor.

She signs a paper which is passed to Hillier.

HILLIER

Having heard the testimony of a legally qualified and reputable physician... and being further satisfied of the truth of all matters set forth in the certificates of said physician, I do hereby order that the said Mrs. R. H. Richardson, an insane person, be confined to the Western State Hospital for the Insane at Steilacoom.

He bangs his gavel.

HILLIER

So ordered! Are the gentlemen from
Steilacoom present?

EXT. STEILACOOM - DAY

Huge, dark-red brick buildings with barred windows, loom out of the fog and trees. A van pulls up to the front entrance. Two MEN get out, open the back doors and assist Frances out. She is strapped into a strait-jacket. She yells and struggles violently but a piercing SCREAM stops her. She looks up at the building.

From a top floor window, a thin, white hand protrudes from the bars and waves "hello".

INT. STEILACOOM HALLWAY - DAY

Frances is dragged kicking and screaming down the shiny linoleum-covered hallway. There are many patients here, talking to imaginary birds, laughing at unheard jokes. A few of them notice Frances, most do not. The two Orderlies arrive at a door and throw it open. A bare 6', 10' room is revealed with a narrow cot and no windows. Frances is pushed inside and the door locks shut with a resounding click.

INT. TREATMENT ROOM - DAY

A MEDICAL STUDENT wheels a small electrical machine up to a table. On the table Frances is securely strapped down. TWO DOCTORS grease Frances' temples and put two metal electrodes on them. The electrodes are connected to the machine.

DOCTOR #1

What's she getting, anyway?

DOCTOR #2

Standard series to start.

DOCTOR #1

Fifteen?

Doctor #2 nods and jams a rubber bar into Frances' mouth. The Medical Student steps forward.

STUDENT

Can I push the button on this one?

Doctor #1 shoots a silent query to Doctor #2.

DOCTOR #2

Sure.

The Medical Student pushes the button with great gravity. Frances' body immediately begins to convulse. It seems as if it will never stop.

INT. STEILACOOM - A WOMAN'S WARD - DAY

Beds three inches apart. Women patients lie on them in varying stages of madness and decay. Some are bound to their beds with coarse cloth strips. One bed is empty, the bonds chewed through. We find Frances sitting on the floor staring at a hissing radiator. Her lips are caked with blood. Her eyes are glazed. She is dreaming. Or remembering...

DISSOLVE TO:

FRANCES ACTING (HER MEMORY)

A scene from one of her movies or plays. Soundless. She looks radiant, vivacious, alive...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STEILACOOM - THE HYDRO-THERAPY ROOM - DAY

A NURSE ushers Frances and two ATTENDANTS into a sparse tiled room with dilapidated plumbing and fungus growing between the tiles. In the center are three steel baths with hammocks suspended above them. The Attendants strap Frances into a bath as Dr. Doyle enters.

FRANCES

(speaking with
difficulty)

Doctor, it may sound odd, but I believe I've profited from my stay here. It's just what I've needed, to get away like this. But I'm recuperated now. I've had lots of time to think and I've made a few decisions about my life. I'm ready to get on with it.

DOYLE

I know you believe that.

FRANCES

...Don't you?

DOYLE

I'm afraid not. You see, we observe things that you're unaware of: signs, indicators. Your problem cuts very deep, Frances, and we have to get at that deeper stuff so that when you do get out, you'll really feel secure. Does that make sense?

The Attendants lower her into the empty tub.

FRANCES

No. Cut this runaround, Doctor. I know better.

DOYLE

(smiling)

Listen to yourself, Frances. The resistance, the anger in your voice.

FRANCES

(tightly)

You... I'm sorry, forgive me. Doctor, tell me honestly, what do I have to do to get out of here?

DOYLE

Be patient, that's all. Take an interest in your treatment and don't dwell on your resentments. You'll be yourself again, I assure you.

FRANCES

...I see.

DOYLE

We'll talk more about this. I'll see you later.

FRANCES

One question. If I'm not myself now, just who do you think I am?

The Doctor smiles sympathetically.

DOYLE

We'll talk.

As he turns to leave, Frances laughs triumphantly. The two Attendants lower her into the bath and begin to fill it with ice-cold water.

FRANCES

What the hell!

They shove a rubber bit between her teeth. She immediately spits it out and defiantly starts to sing in order to keep her teeth from chattering.

INT. STEILACOOM - DINING HALL - DAY

Everyone eating gruel. A parade of lunatics. The edge of incipient violence is palpable. Frances eats listlessly. Others are playing with their food, devouring it ravenously, fondling each other. Suddenly a call starts up at the far end of the hall. Other voices join in. At first we don't understand it, but gradually the words become clear:

CHANT

Come and get it! Come and get it!
Come and get it!

The whole hall joins in. The Nurses make no effort to stop it. Others at Frances' table smile at her, try to push her to her feet. When they succeed, the hall breaks into applause and a new chaotic chant:

CHANT

We want Frances! We want Frances!

The chant is quickly silenced by hushing sounds. Everyone is watching Frances. She climbs up on her bench. Her eyes are glazed, her face expressionless. This feels like some kind of automatic behavior. She takes an exaggerated posture and speaks in almost a whisper:

FRANCES

Come and get it...

The hall breaks into riotous applause, catcalls, stomping.

Frances climbs down from her bench. That was the entire performance.

EXT. STEILACOOM - NIGHT

Two dark FIGURES move stealthily along the shadow of the main building. A little ways ahead, a door opens, sending a shaft of light across the ground. The two Men duck back into the shadows. Five young SOLDIERS EXIT, paying off and waving goodbye to one of the Orderlies. The door closes. They head off down the road laughing and joking together.

The two Men emerge from the shadows and approach the door. They try the handle. It opens. The first one in is Harry, followed by the other Man carrying a rolled-up bundle.

INT. STEILACOOM - NIGHT

We SEE Harry and the other Man, now wearing a white Doctor's coat, walking quickly down a dim hallway. They come to a large door with a barred window. The Man fiddles with a keyring and unlocks the door. They enter. We HEAR the door lock behind them.

INT. WARD - NIGHT

Just inside the door the Doctor flicks on a flashlight and they walk down the center of the room. The beam of light sweeps over women PATIENTS in their cots, crammed side-by-side. Some are asleep, others stare blankly at the ceiling. A few smile invitingly at the two Men, whispering obscenities. The light falls on a bedraggled woman hunched over in a corner between the wall and a cot. It is Frances. Harry goes to her, putting his arms around her. She is very heavily sedated. Tears spring to Harry's eyes.

HARRY
(whispering)
Frances! Frances!

FRANCES
Who?

HARRY
Frances, it's me, Harry?

FRANCES
...Touch me again and I'll kill you,

you pig.

DOCTOR

Watch out, Harry. Let me look her over.

Harry is on the verge of tears.

HARRY

Oh, God! Let's get her out of here tonight, right now! Let's take her with us!

DOCTOR

The hearing's tomorrow. If she gets out legally, they can't come after her.

HARRY

Look at her! She'll never pass that sanity test tomorrow...

DOCTOR

I'm taking care of that, Harry. Just hold her.

(pulling a hypodermic
from his pocket)

Reserpine. I guarantee you this'll clear her head. She'll wake up feeling smart and sailright through the hearing.

Harry holds her around the shoulders and straightens out her arm. Frances starts to struggle and moan loudly.

DOCTOR

Yeah... she knows about these. Shut her up.

Harry glares at the Doctor, but puts a hand over her mouth and the Doctor injects her. Her arm is covered with sores.

HARRY

(tenderly)

You'll be okay, honey. He's just givin' you something to make you think, so that tomorrow you can tell 'em what they want to hear, okay?

Tell 'em you were crazy as a loon
and they cured you and you're
grateful.

The Doctor withdraws the hypo and massages her arm.

DOCTOR
This stuff takes pretty quick. Let's
go.

FRANCES
(grabbing Harry)
Please! Take me!

Other women in the ward cry out: "Take me! Take me!!"

DOCTOR
(pulling Harry)
Let's get out of here! I'll lose my
job!

HARRY
Frances, we gotta do it this way.
Just remember tomorrow, remember
what I told you. What're you gonna
tell 'em?

FRANCES
(groggily)
I'm grateful... grateful.

WOMEN IN WARD
I'm grateful! I'm grateful!

DOCTOR
(very worried)
Harry!

HARRY
I gotta go now.

FRANCES
Harry, please!

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The two Men come out and the Doctor quickly locks the door.

DOCTOR
We're all square now, Harry. Right?

HARRY
All square, Doc.

DOCTOR
Good. 'Cause I don't want to see you
again.

Frances' face appears at the tiny barred window. We can just
hear her:

FRANCES
I love you, Harry. I love you.

HARRY
I love you too, Frances.

Behind Frances we HEAR the Women screaming: "I love you,
Harry!" The Doctor takes Harry's arm and pulls him down the
corridor.

INT. WARD - NIGHT

Frances turns to face the women in their cots. Collects
herself. Looks repentant. She is practicing tomorrow's speech.

FRANCES
I realize now that I was a very sick
woman.

WOMEN IN WARD
Sick! She's sick!

FRANCES
I couldn't relate to others in a
normal way.

ONE PATIENT
(playful warning)
She's... not... normal...!

The others laugh. We realize that if Frances can handle this,
she can sail through it tomorrow. The catcalls gradually
diminish as she concludes her speech.

FRANCES

And I was not taking responsibility for my actions. But now, thanks to your treatment, I feel ready to face myself, ready to resume the career which I so single-handedly shattered. I only hope... I hope I can make you all proud of me. Thank you. Thank you so much.

The room is silent now. A very odd moment. To their astonishment, the other patients seem to believe her...

EXT. FARMER HOUSE - SUNNY DAY

The vegetable garden is overgrown, the paint peeling. The house is in disrepair, but we can tell from the freshly-mowed lawn that some effort has recently been made...

A car pulls up. Frances kisses Ernest on the cheek and gets out. As he drives off, she walks into the yard and looks around, heaves a sigh; she's home. Then Christmas lights spring on over the porch. Lillian comes out grinning broadly, followed by REPORTERS. Frances blanches.

INT. FARMER HOUSE - DAY

Frances sits on the couch next to Lillian. They're sipping tea and answering questions. Frances is uncomfortable.

LILLIAN

Of course, she hasn't anything definite in mind.

FRANCES

No. No, it all depends on what offers I get.

REPORTER

Who did your hair, Frances?

She touches it shyly. It's swept up in a continental style.

FRANCES

Well, I like to try different styles. Sometimes if you're old-fashioned enough, you find you're modern. Right, Mama?

Lillian laughs.

REPORTER

What do you think of all this, Mrs. Farmer?

LILLIAN

It's a miracle. Just a miracle.

EXT. FARMER HOUSE - NIGHT

The porch light goes out. Shadows pass over the curtained windows. Across the street a match flares. Harry is leaning against a tree. He lights a cigarette and settles back to wait.

INT. FARMER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lillian walks from room to room turning off lights. Frances is neatly stacking the dessert dishes on a tray. Very domestic, out of character. She carries the tray into the kitchen.

LILLIAN

Oh, just leave those things for now.

FRANCES

No, Mama, I'll take care of it. I'll wash them in the morning.

Lillian smiles warmly at her.

LILLIAN

You know, little sister, I never resented you for refusing to see me in the... the hospital. I knew you had to manage on your own before you could come back.

FRANCES

Thank you for understanding, Mama.

Lillian links her arm with Frances' and they go upstairs together.

LILLIAN

Little sister, I don't want you to feel any rush to get back to work. I

want you to rest... for a while
anyway.

FRANCES
I will, I promise.

They hug each other.

LILLIAN
Good night, dear.

Lillian waits until Frances has shut her door before closing hers.

EXT. FARMER HOUSE - NIGHT

The front door opens and Frances, suitcase in hand, slips out onto the porch. She eases the door shut behind her, tiptoes down the steps and, without looking back, starts down the road.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Frances rounds the corner, then sees him: Harry, standing by his car, smiling.

HARRY
Where to?

FRANCES
Oh Harry...

She approaches him tentatively.

HARRY
This is it, kid. This is our chance.
When you got a chance, you better
take it.

FRANCES
Yeah. I don't know.

HARRY
You don't need to screw around
anymore. You don't need Dwayne Steele
or Odets or your mother. You need
me.

FRANCES

I know, but... There were so many people in there, Harry. Every time I turned around someone was pressing against me... watching, looking over my shoulder, touching me, grabbing, sticking things into me. When I feel somebody near me now... anybody... my skin starts to crawl.

Long beat. She turns and stares at him sadly.

FRANCES

You can't change the things they did to me, Harry. Only I can do that... by myself.

He nods slowly.

HARRY

Been a lot of years, you know. A long time waiting. For what? End up feeling like a sap.

FRANCES

Oh please, Harry... don't even think it. You're the only person who ever... It's just... Can't you wait for me?

HARRY

I don't know.

FRANCES

(getting frantic)

Yes you do. If you love me you can wait, right? A month, six months, whatever it takes.

HARRY

Right. Except... time has a way of –

FRANCES

No, Harry, it's not time, it's us. You and me. And I'm telling you now that I'll come to you, okay? I'll find you. I will.

HARRY

(smiles wistfully)
I hope so, Frances.

They hug. Together for an instant. Then she shivers as if the contact were too much.

FRANCES
(disentangling)
I'm sorry.

He nods, looks at her.

HARRY
I'll be seeing you, kid.

He turns and walks slowly to his car.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAWN

Barren desert. The middle of nowhere. A lone male HITCHHIKER, poor, stands at a crossroads. A car coming the wrong direction raises dust along the highway. It slows, stops, and lets Frances out. She is now dressed in jeans and a workshirt. She has a heavy tan.

She glances across at the Hitchhiker and nods casually. He responds in kind. A relaxed silence follows. Two strangers passing. His voice, when he speaks, is gentle, calm:

HITCHHIKER
Pretty morning.

FRANCES
(nods)
It's always beautiful at this time.
Peaceful...

HITCHHIKER
And no people.

FRANCES
Yes.

Beat.

HITCHHIKER
Where you goin'?

FRANCES

Wherever they're going, I'm going.

HITCHHIKER

Yeah, I know what that's like...
Where you been?

FRANCES

Well, I was picking fruit with some
migrant workers until...

She stops. She sees now that the car heading toward her is a
cop car. She averts her face... then tries to hide her
gesture.

HITCHHIKER

What's the matter?

Frances sighs as the cop car speeds away.

HITCHHIKER

They're looking for you, huh?

She's uncertain whether to trust him. Takes the plunge:

FRANCES

Yeah.

HITCHHIKER

What'd you do?

FRANCES

You know, I've never been able to
figure that out.

He laughs. She shivers slightly, pulls her clothes around
her. He takes out a small flask and offers, no strings:

HITCHHIKER

I've got a little whiskey here, warm
you up.

She smiles, truly grateful:

FRANCES

Thank you.

Then she sees a ball of dust nearing... a car on his side.

FRANCES

Wait. Maybe they'll pick you up.

The car stops. Its lights flashing. COPS jump out.

FRANCES

Shit!

HITCHHIKER

Run!

She does. She's pursued. The Hitchhiker makes an effort to impede the Cops' progress, but is tossed aside. The Cops are slowly, inevitably, gaining on her.

EXT. SMALL TOWN JAIL - DAY

Frances and Ernest walk out the door followed by a portly SHERIFF. He watches them get in Ernest's car and drive off. His expression says very clearly: I'm glad that's over with.

INT. CAR - DAY

Ernest's at the wheel, Frances at his side. Silence, then:

FRANCES

Dad...? Why don't you stop at a side road and let me out?

Ernest writhes slightly with discomfort.

ERNEST

Francie, you know I can't do that.

FRANCES

Why? It's such a simple thing. You just let me out and I disappear down a road and you never have to see me again.

ERNEST

They'll just catch you again, Francie. Besides, your mother will know.

We SEE them approaching a side road.

FRANCES

Dad, here! You don't have to stop, just slow down. You can tell Mama I jumped out. She knows that's the kind of thing I'd do. She won't blame you.

ERNEST

But I gave her my word. Besides, she's still your legal guardian. My hands are tied.

They are nearer the side road.

FRANCES

You know where you're taking me. You know what she'll do. Just give me a minute, slow down, give me an instant for once in your life, please?

ERNEST

Please, Francie...

FRANCES

(pleading)
Daddy!

They pass the side road. It disappears behind them. All the life seems to drain from Frances.

ERNEST

I'll try to protect you, Francie. I will, I'll talk to her. We'll have a real talk.

Frances buries her face in her hands.

ERNEST

Are you... are you hungry?

FRANCES

I pity us, Dad. I pity us both.

INT. FARMER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lillian is sitting on the couch, waiting. We HEAR A CAR PULL UP outside and stop. Doors slam. Steps come up the walk and onto the porch. The door opens and Frances and Ernest enter. Lillian rises to face her daughter.

FRANCES

(coldly)

Do I go right away or do I have time
to take a bath?

LILLIAN

I was hoping for a kind word, little
sister.

FRANCES

You were hoping for a kind word?!
You're my mother! You're supposed to
nourish me! Support me!

LILLIAN

I have!

Through the window we SEE a white van pull up outside.

FRANCES

No! All you've done is try to break
my spirit, try to turn me into you!
But I'm not you, mother, and I never
will be, and thank god for it!

(to Ernest)

That goes for you too! And frankly,
I don't know how, with the two of
you, I turned out as sane as I am –

(to the MEN IN WHITE
COATS who are at the
door)

Wait right there, gentlemen, I'll be
with you in a minute... and believe
me, I don't want to stay here one
second longer than I have to!

(turning back)

But I've got to tell you, Lillian,
that one day before you die, you
will realize what you've done and
hang your head in shame. In shame!

LILLIAN

But what –
(have I done?)

FRANCES

No! You're not talking now. You

listen. You can send me away, Lillian,
you can pretend I'm crazy and pretend
I'm still your little girl who can't
take care of herself, but one thing
you can't pretend anymore. You can't
pretend I love you because I don't.
I can't. Not after what you've done
to me. Because you see... I'm still
me... I'm trying real hard all this
time to be me... and you, 'little
sister', you haven't been any help
at all.

(walking out the door)

Okay, boys, I'm ready.

The way she goes out that door we know she's never coming back.

INT. STEILACOOM - VIOLENT WARD - NIGHT

The ward is a huge room packed with nearly naked women, their hair cropped very short. The walls are corrugated tin nailed to bare wood framing. The place looks like an enormous tool shed. The SOUND OF GARBLED VOICES and SCREAMING never stops.

These are the forgotten ones... beyond hope. Everyone here has lost any notion of what they might have once been. Their faces are slack, only their eyes glow with an animal ferocity. Some wander aimlessly about, unheeding of others who are pushing, kicking and screaming at them. Many squat in the dirt by the walls, mired in their own urine and excrement, chanting wordlessly to themselves. Some appear lifeless, their prone bodies shoved out of the way. Some women are involved in violent sex with themselves or each other, some in mindless fist-fights. In a far corner we SEE a group of men in various military and medical uniforms, their backs to us, facing the wall, grouped around something. We HEAR their cheering and laughing and joking, slapping each other on the back.

We SLOWLY MOVE CLOSER and can see over their shoulders the object of their hilarity. It's Frances, lying naked and spread-eagled on the floor. Four hospital ATTENDANTS pin her arms and legs. A SOLDIER, his pants down around his ankles, is squirming violently on top of her. Frances' eyes are open but glazed, her face turned away from her attacker. She is passive and unresisting. She is reciting to herself, over and over.

FRANCES

We shall hear the angels, we shall
see the whole sky all diamonds...

Two of the SOLDIERS, waiting their turn, are smoking
cigarettes and chatting idly.

SOLDIER #1

...Best deal I ever made. Twenty
bucks to fuck a fuckin' movie star.

SOLDIER #2

Yeah, it's worth it I guess.

SOLDIER #1

What's she saying, anyway?

SOLDIER #2

Who knows. She's crazy, ain't she?

Frances keeps reciting as one rapist gets off. The Soldiers
cheer as another quickly takes his place.

EXT. STEILACOOM - DAY

A heavy snow is falling. From the corrugated-tin Violent
Ward, a thin white hand protrudes from a narrow window to
catch a snowflake.

As it opens and closes, capturing individual flakes, a VOICE
BEGINS TO SING "You Are My Sunshine...". We recognize Frances'
voice, still surprisingly strong and steady.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STEILACOOM - TREATMENT ROOM - DAY

TWO NURSES discuss Frances' condition as we SEE, background,
that she is getting electroshock treatments from a pair of
doctors.

OLDER NURSE

I don't know why they even bother.
She's had enough of this to knock
sense into a bull elephant.

YOUNG NURSE

Yeah?

OLDER NURSE

(nods)

I checked the files. This one holds the record for shock treatments. Four hundred seventeen and no end in sight.

YOUNG NURSE

(wincing)

You're kidding.

OLDER NURSE

(indicating the doctors)

Yeah, well, you know doctors. They sure hate to use that word.

YOUNG NURSE

What?

OLDER NURSE

'Incurable.'

OMITTED

INT. STEILACOOM - HOLDING WARD - DAY

Frances, barely conscious, lies strapped to a bed. Doyle and an ORDERLY approach her. Doyle nods toward her as if to say: that one. He and the Orderly unstrap her.

FRANCES

(to Doyle)

Harry? Oh Harry, I knew you'd come. I love you, Harry. I love... Take me home, Harry.

DOYLE

We'll get you home, Frances.

FRANCES

Thank you, Harry.

She's untied. The Orderly helps her up onto a gurney.

She lies down. Doyle nods to the Orderly, who starts pushing her.

She is wheeled out and down:

THE HALL

Past other patients, doctors, etc. We see some of this from her point of view.

She goes through two swinging doors, down another hall... at the end of which a man opens a door. She is pushed onto a:

STAGE

She is wheeled into a row... between two other patients. In the background we HEAR a voice:

DR. HARLINGTON (O.S.)

One merely inserts the leucotome beneath the eyelid and presses up into the prefrontal lobe, manipulating it so as to sever the nervous connections between the thalamofrontal radiation and the body of the brain.

The lights are bright, on her and the other patients. We cannot see, but we sense, an audience watching.

DR. HARLINGTON (O.S.)

Because of the speed and simplicity of the operation, I am able, as you are seeing, to perform the procedure on ten patients in less than a half hour.

Frances stares up at a fan in the ceiling. It's moving round and round. The voice drones on.

DR. HARLINGTON (O.S.)

The operation is completely painless and can be performed without any sedative whatsoever.

We now see vaguely that DR. HARLINGTON has moved to the patient on the adjacent gurney.

DR. HARLINGTON

We have always known that this form of radical treatment was effective,

but until now it couldn't be applied on a large scale. The old procedure required a full day's work by a surgical team to perform a single operation. In the same time, working alone, I can treat fifty.

Frances turns and stares mutely, without emotion, at what's happening next to her: the leucotome (an ice-pick-like instrument) is inserted into a woman's eye socket...

DR. HARLINGTON

This procedure works best on patients with extreme over-reactions to emotional stimuli. It can also be used as a last resort on those who seem impervious to other forms of treatment.

The leucotome is then shoved up into the brain and twisted.

DR. HARLINGTON

In plain language, my technique severs the nerves which give emotional energy to ideas. Along with the cure comes a loss of affect... a kind of emotional flattening...

Frances turns away and stares at the fan again. There is something simple and pleasing about its rhythmic whirring...

DR. HARLINGTON

...with diminished creativity and imagination. Patients become like good solid cake with no icing. But, after all, it is their emotions and imaginations that are disturbed.

We glimpse the leucotome being withdrawn.

DR. HARLINGTON

These patients will soon be leaving the hospital.

Harlington's face moves vaguely into Frances' view.

DR. HARLINGTON

Lobotomy gets 'em home.

He moves directly over Frances, his pleasant face obscuring the fan. As the leucotome descends, we:

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMER HOUSE - DAY

Total disrepair: peeling paint, broken steps, fallen shingles... This house is easing slowly back to nature...

INT. FARMER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Neglect is just as evident inside. Dust, faded rugs, torn yellow curtains. Lillian sits on the couch staring out a window. She has aged and looks tiny, frail, with no trace of her old formidability. The scrapbook is open on her lap.

LILLIAN

What was I saying? Oh yes, it was the Communists that did it to Frances.

Ernest is hunched in a chair by the stone fireplace. FOUR REPORTERS crouch on the floor, totally bored. Yesterday's headlines are now old news.

LILLIAN

They capture the mind by first seducing the heart. I suppose I never taught Frances to close her heart...

Two Reporters rise and edge toward the door.

REPORTER

Uh... excuse us, Mrs. Farmer. We're going to have to... uh...

THIRD REPORTER

(rising)

Yeah, I better pack it in too.

LILLIAN

(distractedly)

Pardon? Oh, would you like more lemonade?

The last Reporter gets to his feet.

FOURTH REPORTER

(kindly)

I think we've had enough. Thank you,
Mrs. Farmer. Goodbye.

He follows the others out. Lillian climbs wearily to her feet and goes to the window, looks out. Ernest stares into the fire.

LILLIAN

You know, Ernie, I think we should have Frances' room repainted for when she comes home. That'll brighten her day.

Ernest looks at her wearily, as if she is stark raving mad. He knows damn well Frances isn't coming home...

FADE IN ON: A TELEVISION SCREEN against a dark background. The show is "This Is Your Life". We SEE a smiling RALPH EDWARDS, reading from a large black book. Next to him stands Frances. She has aged dramatically, but is still a very handsome woman. She seems uncomfortable.

EDWARDS

...Dwayne Steele divorced you, and from this point on, your story takes a darker turn. Shunned by the Hollywood you criticized so harshly, alienated from your family and friends, you turn your back on professional commitments in New York, and alcohol and drugs enter your life. These are sad, desperate times for you.

Throughout this, Frances' jaw works slowly back and forth, not from anger, but in embarrassment and doubt.

EDWARDS

...until finally your mother finds it necessary to commit you to a state mental institution. Were you mentally ill, Frances?

FRANCES

...No, Ralph. I don't believe I ever was sick. But when you're treated

like a patient long enough, you're
apt to act like one...

We MOVE AWAY from the screen to see that the TV set is in the living room of a comfortable, tastefully furnished home. On the couch in front of the set sits Harry York. He still looks athletic, young for his age. Tears stream down his cheeks.

EDWARDS (O.S.)
Were you an alcoholic?

FRANCES (O.S.)
No.

EDWARDS (O.S.)
Were you a drug addict?

FRANCES (O.S.)
No. Never.

ON THE SCREEN Edwards has moved Frances over to a seating area where various people from Frances' life are waiting, smiling at her. We've never seen any of them before.

EDWARDS
...and over 200 producers have been invited to watch your appearance here tonight... so who knows, Frances Farmer, anything's possible on your comeback trail!
(indicating seating area)
And since your friends tell me they have to drive you everywhere, look what we've got for you!

The curtains behind them open to reveal a car in a spotlight.

EDWARDS
A brand new 1958 Edsel!

The audience applauds. Frances smiles guardedly.

FRANCES
Thank you, Ralph.

EDWARDS

Thank you, Frances. And after the show we're hosting a reception for you and your friends at Hollywood's own Roosevelt Hotel!

Applause.

EDWARDS

So, Frances Farmer, this is your life. Good night. God bless you.

The audience applauds. Frances smiles wearily and accepts congratulations.

EXT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL - HOLLYWOOD - DAY

A group of PEOPLE are coming down the front steps, Frances among them. They all talk happily, Frances is silent but smiling.

WOMAN

Where shall we drop you, Frances?
Home?

FRANCES

(vaguely)
No... no, someone's picking me up.

The people all excuse themselves, calling goodbye. Frances waits by herself for a few moments, but soon begins to walk away down the sidewalk.

HARRY (O.S.)

Hey.

She turns. Harry is leaning against the side of a building, looking much as he did when they first met. But there is very little light of recognition in Frances' eyes.

HARRY

C'mere. I want to talk to you.

FRANCES

(flatly)
Oh. Why, Harry York. How nice to see you.

Harry is a little puzzled by her reaction.

HARRY

How... how ya doin', Farmer?

FRANCES

Fine, thank you. Did you watch the show?

HARRY

Sure I did, that's why I'm here.

FRANCES

(concerned)

How did I look?

HARRY

Oh, you...

(smiling)

...ennh.

FRANCES

(a glimmer, but she does not pick up on the cue)

Well... you're looking well.

They are both silent a long moment.

FRANCES

I got a new car. Only it's red. Did you know Mama died?

HARRY

Yeah. Yeah, I heard about that.

FRANCES

Dad, too. I sold the house. I'm a faceless sinner, Harry...

HARRY

Why do you say that?

FRANCES

I'd ask you to take me home, but I'm a faceless sinner.

(she smiles)

...You smell good, Harry. Familiar, you know? I'd ask you to take me

home, but...

Harry is alarmed now.

HARRY
(taking her by the
arm)
Frances!

She angrily bares her teeth; then just as suddenly she relaxes and becomes lucid.

FRANCES
Don't get mad at me, Harry. Please.
It's just... Some things happen for
the best.

Beat.

She takes his hand as if to shake it.

Harry clasps hers tenderly.

She holds on like an old woman, stroking his hand. For an instant she gets lost in time, just holding his hand. Then she looks up.

FRANCES
It's going to be slow from now on.
Do you know what I mean, Harry?

HARRY
I'm not sure.

FRANCES
Very slow.
(uncertainly)
But we're not going to stop, are we?

HARRY
No.

FRANCES
(reassured)
No, we're not.

It is as if she is able to express in words the last remnant of her indomitable will... but the words bear no emotional

power.

FRANCES

Goodbye, Harry. It was very good to see you again.

HARRY

Yes. Would you like me to walk a little way with you?

FRANCES

That would be okay.

HARRY

Just a little way.

He offers his arm. She takes it. All rather formal. They stroll on together.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END