

"MARTY"

Screenplay by

Paddy Chayefsky

SHOOTING DRAFT

1955

NEW YORK CITY, 187TH STREET. A SUMMER DAY

FADE IN:

Just east of Webster Avenue in the North Bronx, 187th Street is a predominantly Italian community and the commercial avenue of the neighborhood. Fruit and vegetable stands, pizzerias, butcher shops, bakeries, cleaners and dyers and bars flourish. It is Saturday morning around eleven o'clock – a market day.

WOMEN, dark, gesticulative, with bulging cloth shopping bags, baby carriages. MERCHANTS at their improvised street stands, hawking their wares, disputing with their CUSTOMERS, roaring salutations to PASSERSBY.

In the midst of all this, CAMERA HOMES IN on a typical neighborhood...

BUTCHER SHOP.

Delicatessens hang on the walls, wreathed with garlands of garlic. PATSY, the boss, a swarthy man of sixty, is flopping a chunk of beef onto the scale for the benefit of a forty-year-old MATRON. There are three or four other WOMEN in the shop, all talking to one another. A four-year-old BOY lazily chases a cat.

The white refrigerator room door opens, and a second butcher, MARTY PILLETTI, comes out carrying a large leg of lamb. Marty is a mildmannered, short, stout, balding man of thirty-four. His charm lies in an almost indestructible good humor. He drops the leg of lamb onto the chopping block, reaches up

for the cleaver hanging with the other utensils over the block and makes quick incisive cuts into the leg of lamb. He sets the cleaver aside, picks up the saw to finish the cuts as he chats with his customer, MRS. FUSARI.

MRS. FUSARI

Your kid brother got married last Sunday, eh, Marty?

MARTY

(sawing away)

That's right, Missus Fusari. It was a very nice affair.

MRS. FUSARI

That's the big tall one, the fellow with the moustache.

MARTY

(still sawing)

No, that's my other brother, Freddie. My other brother Freddie, he's been married four years already. He lives down on Webb Avenue. The one who got married Sunday, that was my little brother, Nickie.

MRS. FUSARI

I thought he was a big tall fat fellow. Didn't I meet him here one time? Big tall, fat fellow, he tried to sell me life insurance?

Marty sets the five chops on the scale, watches its weight register.

MARTY

No, that's my sister Margaret's husband, Frank. My sister Margaret, she's married to the insurance salesman, and my sister Rose, she married a contractor. They moved to Detroit last year. And my other sister Frances, she got married about two and a half years ago in Saint John's

Church on Kingsbridge Avenue. Oh, that was a big affair. Well, let's see now, that'll be about a dollar-seventy-nine. How's that with you?

MRS. FUSARI

Well...

Mrs. Fusari produces an old leather change purse from her pocketbook and painfully extracts one single dollar bill and seventy-nine cents to the penny and lays the money piece by piece on the counter. From the rear of the shop a woman's VOICE rings out.

WOMAN'S VOICE

(off-screen)

Hey, Marty, I'm inna hurry.

MARTY

You're next right now, Missus Canduso.

MRS. FUSARI

When you gonna get married, Marty? You should be ashamed of yourself. All your brothers and sisters, they all younger than you, they married and they got children. I just saw your mother inna fruit shop, and she says to me, "Hey, you know a nice girl for my boy Marty?" Watsa matter with you? That's no way. Now you get married.

MARTY

(amiably)

Missus Fusari, Missus Canduso over there, she's inna big hurry, and...

Mrs. Fusari takes her parcel of meat, but apparently she feels she still hasn't quite made her point.

MRS. FUSARI

My son Frank, he was married when he was nineteen years old. Watsa matter with you?

MARTY

That's swell, Missus Fusari.

MRS. FUSARI

You should be ashamed of yourself.

She takes her package of meat. Marty gathers up the money on the counter, turns to the cash register behind him to ring up the sale. Mrs. Canduso sidles up to the counter.

MRS. CANDUSO

Marty, I want a nice, big fat pullet, about four pounds. I hear your kid brother got married last Sunday.

MARTY

Yeah, it was a very nice affair.

MRS. CANDUSO

Marty, you oughta be ashamed. All your kid brothers and sisters married and have children. When you gonna get married?

NEIGHBORHOOD BAR. LATE AFTERNOON

A TV set on the wall. Mel Allen, smoking a White Owl cigar, is recapping the baseball game that has just finished as Marty comes in.

MARTY

(to two YOUNG MEN
leaving)

What happened?

YOUNG MAN

The Yanks took two.

MARTY

Any homers?

The Young Men exit without answering. Marty moves further into the bar, which is crowded with locals, smoky, noisy. ACROSS GROUP at bar with Marty in the background approaching,

we see a group consisting of RALPH, who wears a suit and tie, the only man in the room who isn't in shirtsleeves or a Basque shirt; JOE, thirty-two, hunched over a girlie magazine; a KID, twenty-two, studying the magazine over Joe's shoulder.

MARTY
(to the Kid)
Angie come in yet?

The Kid indicates a booth where a small wasp of a man, mid-thirties, is sitting, bent over the sports pages of the Daily News.

RALPH
So these two girls come over to the bar...

MARTY
Hey, Ang'...

RALPH
...and they sit down right next to me...

MARTY
You want a beer, Ang'?

RALPH
I look over at this one nexta me,
not bad, about thirty-five – Hiya,
Marty...

MARTY
Hiya, Ralph...

RALPH
...I been talking about two nurses
Leo and me picked up in a bar on
Seventy-First Street.

MARTY
(to Bartender)
Hey, Lou, gimme two bottles-a beer...

RALPH

So, Marty, lemme tell you about these nurses, Marty...

MARTY

(to Joe studying his magazine)

Waddaya read there, Joe?

AD LIB VOICE

(off-screen)

Hey, Lou, turn the television off!

RALPH

Turns out these two girls are nurses in some hospital on a Hundred and Fourth Street...

JOE

They shouldn't sell magazines like this on a public newsstand...

MARTY

That's the truth.

JOE

(turning a page)

Can you imagine the effect this has on adolescents?

RALPH

So, Marty, let me tell you about these nurses...

MARTY

(reaching for two bottles of beer proffered by the Bartender)

What nurses?

RALPH

The nurses Leo and me picked up last night. We got a date with them tonight.

MARTY

(moving off to Angie's booth)

You still owe me ten bucks from last week, if that's what you're working up to.

Joe turns another page in the girlie magazine.

JOE

Now that's something, eh?

RALPH

I used to go out with a girl like that...

THE KID

You should live so long.

THE BOOTH.

Marty joins his friend Angie and pushes a bottle of beer at him, pulling one of the pages loose from the paper Angie is reading. For a moment, the two men sit quietly, each poring over his separate piece of newspaper.

ANGIE

(without looking up)

So waddaya feel like doing tonight?

MARTY

I don't know, Ang'. Wadda you feel like doing?

ANGIE

Well, we oughta do something. It's Saturday night. I don't wanna go bowling like last Saturday. How about calling up that big girl we picked up inna movies about a month ago in the RKO Chester?

MARTY

(not very interested)

Which one was that?

ANGIE

That big girl that was sitting in front of us with the skinny friend.

MARTY

Oh, yeah.

ANGIE

We took them home all the way out in Brooklyn. Her name was Mary Feeney. What do you say? You think I oughta give her a ring? I'll take the skinny one.

MARTY

She probably got a date by now, Angie.

ANGIE

Well, let's call her up. What can we lose?

MARTY

I didn't like her, Angie. I don't feel like calling her up.

ANGIE

Well, what do you feel like doing tonight?

MARTY

I don't know. What do you feel like doing?

ANGIE

Well, we're back to that, huh? I say to you, "What do you feel like doing tonight?" And you say to me, "I don't know, what do you feel like doing?" And then we wind up sitting around your house with a coupla cansa beer, watching Sid Caesar on television. Well, I tell you what I feel like doing. I feel like calling up this Mary Feeney. She likes you.

MARTY

What makes you say that?

ANGIE

I could see she likes you.

MARTY

Yeah, sure.

ANGIE

(half-rising in his
seat)

I'll call her up.

MARTY

You call her up for yourself, Angie.
I don't feel like calling her up.

Angie sits down again. They both return to their papers for a moment. Then Angie looks up again.

ANGIE

How about going downa Seventy-Second Street, see what we can find? Ralph says you have to beat them off with clubs.

Marty makes a wry face at the suggestion.

ANGIE

Boy, you're getting to be a real drag, you know that?

MARTY

Angie, I'm thirty-four years old. I been looking for a girl every Saturday night of my life. I'm tired of looking. Everybody's always telling me to get married. Get married. Get married. Don't you think I wanna get married? I wanna get married. They drive me crazy. Now, I don't wanna wreck your Saturday night for you, Angie. You wanna go somewhere, you

go ahead. I don't wanna go.

ANGIE

My old lady, every word outta her mouth, when you gonna get married?

MARTY

My mother, boy, she drives me crazy.

Angie leans back in his seat, scowls at the paper napkin container on the booth table. Marty returns to the sports page. For a moment, a silence hangs between them.

ANGIE

So what do you feel like doing tonight?

MARTY

(without looking up)

I don't know. What do you feel like doing?

BARTENDER

(from phone booth in background)

Marty, your mother wants you onna phone.

MARTY

(rising in response; to Angie)

Come on over about half past seven, we'll think of something.

(settles into the phone booth, picks up the receiver)

Hello, Ma, what's the matter?

PILLETTI HOME, LIVING ROOM.

It's a typical lower-middle-class Italian home, and MRS. PILLETTI is on the phone, a round, dark woman. Beyond her, in the dining room, we can see a young couple – THOMAS, Marty's cousin, and his wife VIRGINIA, seated at the dining room table.

MRS. PILLETTI

(voice lowered)

Hello, Marty, when you coming home?
Where you now? Because your cousin
Thomas and his wife Virginia, they're
here. They had another fight with
your Aunt Catherine... I don't know...

THE BAR.

MARTY

(in the phone booth)

I'm coming home right now, Ma. I'll
be home in about two minutes. Tell
Thomas stick around, I wanna see him
about something.

PILLETTI HOME, LIVING ROOM.

Mrs. Pilletti is on the phone.

MRS. PILLETTI

Okay, you come on home, okay.

She hangs up, braces herself, turns and starts back to Thomas
and Virginia in the dining room.

MRS. PILLETTI

He coming home right now.

VIRGINIA

So what happened, Aunt Theresa, about
the milk bottle was my mother-in-
law, she comes inna kitchen, Aunt
Theresa, and she begins poking her
head over my shoulder here and poking
her head over my shoulder there, so
then she begins telling me how I
waste money and how I can't cook,
and how I'm raising my baby all wrong,
so she got me so nervous, I spilled
some milk I was making for the baby...

MRS. PILLETTI

She was here, you know, Wednesday,
and I said, "Catherine, my sister..."

VIRGINIA

So she say, "You're spilling the
milk." So she kept talking about
these coupla drops of milk I spilled,
so she got me so mad, so I said,
"Mama, you wanna see me really spill
some milk?" So I took the bottle,
and I threw it against the door. I
didn't throw it at her. That's just
something she made up. She goes around
telling everybody I threw the bottla
milk at her. I didn't throw it
anywheres near her. Well, I was sorry
right away, you know, but she ran
outta the house.

MRS. PILLETTI

Well, I don't know what you want me
to do, Virginia. If you want me,
I'll go talk to her tonight.

Thomas and Virginia suddenly frown and look down at their
hands as if of one mind.

THOMAS

Well, I'll tell you, Aunt Theresa...

VIRGINIA

Lemme tell it, Tommy.

THOMAS

Okay.

VIRGINIA

We want you to do a very big favor
for us, Aunt Theresa.

MRS. PILLETTI

Sure.

VIRGINIA

Aunt Theresa, you got this big house

here. I mean, you got this big house just for you and Marty. And I thought maybe Tommy's mother could come here and live with you and Marty.

MRS. PILLETTI

Well...

VIRGINIA

Because I called up Tommy's brother Joe, and I said, "Joe, she's driving me crazy. Why don't you take her for a couple of years?" And he said, "Oh no!" I know I sound like a terrible woman...

MRS. PILLETTI

No, Virginia, I know how you feel.

VIRGINIA

(on the verge of tears)

I just can't stand it any more! Every minute of the day! Do this! Do that! I don't have ten minutes privacy with my husband! We can't even have a fight! We don't have no privacy! Everybody's miserable in our house!

THOMAS

All right, Ginnie, don't get so excited.

MRS. PILLETTI

She's right. She's right. Young husband and wife, they should have their own home. And my sister Catherine, she's my sister, but I gotta admit, she's an old goat. And plenty-a times in my life, I feel like throwing the milk bottle at her myself. And I tell you now, as far as I'm concerned, if Catherine wantsa come live here with me and Marty, it's all right with me.

Virginia promptly bursts into tears.

THOMAS

(not far from tears
himself, lowers his
face)

That's very nice-a you, Aunt Theresa.

MRS. PILLETTI

We gotta ask Marty, of course.

THOMAS

Sure.

MRS. PILLETTI

(rises)

You just sit here, I gotta turn the
fire on under the cooking.

(exits into the kitchen)

VIRGINIA

(having mastered her
tears)

That's very nice-a you, Aunt Theresa.

THOMAS

(calling to his aunt
in the kitchen)

How's Marty been lately, Aunt Theresa?

MRS. PILLETTI

(off-screen)

Oh, he's fine. You know a nice girl
he can marry?

She comes back into the dining room, wiping her hands on a
kitchen towel.

THOMAS

Oh, he'll get married, don't worry,
Aunt Theresa.

MRS. PILLETTI

(sitting down again)

Well, I don't know. He sits arounna

house alla time. You know a place he can go where he can find a bride?

THOMAS

Well, there's the Stardust Ballroom. That's a kind of a big dance hall. Every Saturday night, it's just loaded with girls. It's a nice place to go. You pay seventy-seven cents. It used to be seventy-seven cents. It must be about a buck and half now. And you go in and you ask some girl to dance. That's how I met Virginia. Nice, respectable place to meet girls. You tell Marty, Aunt Theresa, you tell him, "Go to the Stardust Ballroom. It's loaded with tomatoes."

MRS. PILLETTI

(committing the line to memory)

The Stardust Ballroom. It's loaded with tomatoes.

THOMAS

Right.

VIRGINIA

This is very nice-a you, Aunt Theresa, what you're doing for us, and don't think we don't appreciate...

The SOUND of the DOOR BEING UNLATCHED in the kitchen can be heard. Mrs. Pilletti promptly rises.

MRS. PILLETTI

He's here.

She hurries into...

THE KITCHEN.

Marty comes into the kitchen from the rear porch.

MARTY

Hello, Ma.

MRS. PILLETTI

(whispers)

Marty, Thomas and Virginia are here. They had another fight with your Aunt Catherine. So they ask me, would it be all right if Catherine come to live with us. So I said, all right with me, but we have to ask you. Marty, she's a lonely old lady. Nobody wants her. Everybody's throwing her outta their house...

MARTY

Sure, Ma, it's okay with me.

MRS. PILLETTI

You gotta good heart.

She turns and leads the way back into the dining room. Marty follows.

DINING ROOM.

Thomas has risen. Mrs. Pilletti and Marty come in.

MRS. PILLETTI

He says okay, it's all right Catherine comes here.

THOMAS

Oh, Marty, thanks a lot. That really takes a load offa my mind.

MARTY

Oh, we got plenny-a room here.

MRS. PILLETTI

Sure! Sure! It's gonna be nice! It's gonna be nice! I'll come over tonight to your house, and I talk with Catherine, and you see, everything is gonna work out all right.

THOMAS

I just wanna thank you people again,
because the situation was just
becoming impossible.

MRS. PILLETTI

Siddown, Thomas, siddown.

She exits into the kitchen. Virginia follows her to the kitchen door, where the two women ad-lib the following lines over the ensuing scene between Marty and Thomas.

VIRGINIA

I'm sorry we gotta rush like this...

MRS. PILLETTI

That's all right, that's all right...

VIRGINIA

On accounta...

MRS. PILLETTI

I'm gonna see you tonight...

Over this, Thomas talks to Marty.

THOMAS

Marty, I don't know how to tell you
how much I appreciate what you and
your mother are doing, because the
kinda thing was happening in our
house was Virginia was in the kitchen
making some milk for the baby. So my
mother comes in...

VIRGINIA

Tommy, I promised the babysitter six
o'clock.

MARTY

Tommy, before you go, I wonder if
you gimme a little advice.

THOMAS

Sure, what?

MARTY

You're the accountant inna family,
and I figure you might know about
these things. My boss wantsa sell
his shop to me. His kids are all
married, you know, and he and his
wife live alone, and they wanna move
out to California where his daughter
lives, so he wantsa sell his shop.
He wants five thousand dollars down,
although I think I can knock him
downa four...

VIRGINIA

(off-screen, from
deep in the kitchen)

Tommy!

THOMAS

(rises)

I'll see you at mass tomorrow. We'll
sit down and we'll discuss the whole
thing.

MARTY

All right, I'll see you, Thomas,
because he wants an answer by Monday.

THOMAS

Sure. Thanks a lot about my mother.
We'll work out some arrangement,
because naturally I want to pay...

MARTY

Don't worry about it.

THOMAS

No, listen, that's my mother, I'm
gonna pay for her...

VIRGINIA

(off-screen)

Goodby, Marty!

MARTY
Goodby, Virginia! See you soon!

Thomas has moved off to join his wife in the kitchen where we can hear them exchanging final protestations and goodbys with Mrs. Pilletti. Marty sits at the table, hands folded in front of him, stolid, pensive.

THE KITCHEN. DUSK.

Mrs. Pilletti bends over her steaming kettles. Through the window we see evening is gathering.

MARTY'S BEDROOM.

It's a small room with bed, chest of drawers, religious pictures, etc. Marty sits squatly on the edge of the bed, absorbed in thought. He stands, moves out into...

THE GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR.

...and down that into...

THE DINING ROOM.

...now lit by the overhead neo-Tiffany lampshade and the beaded old-fashioned lamps. He crosses to the kitchen door, looks in on his mother, cooking away, turns, crosses back to...

THE LIVING ROOM.

He closes the sliding doors that separate the living and dining rooms. He extracts a small black address book from his hip pocket, flips through it, finds the page he wants, studies it intently.

He sits on the chair by the phone, dials.

MARTY
(with a vague pretense
at good diction)
Hello, is this Mary Feeney?... Could
I speak to Miss Mary Feeney?... Just
tell her an old friend...

He waits again. With his free hand he wipes the gathering sweat on his brow.

MARTY

...Oh, hello there, is this Mary Feeney? Hello there, this is Marty Pilletti. I wonder if you recall me... Well, I'm kind of a stocky guy. The last time we met was in a movie, the RKO Chester. You was with another girl, and I was with a friend of mine named Angie. This was about a month ago...

The girl apparently doesn't remember him. A sort of panic begins to seize Marty. His voice rises a little.

MARTY

The RKO Chester in Westchester Square. You was sitting in front of us, and we was annoying you, and you got mad, and... I'm the fellow who works in a butcher shop... Come on, you know who I am!... That's right, we went to Howard Johnson's and we had hamburgers. You hadda milkshake... Yeah, that's right. I'm the stocky one, the heavy-set feller... Well, I'm glad you recall me, because I hadda swell time that night, and I was just wondering how everything was with you. How's everything?... That's swell... Yeah, well, I'll tell you why I called...I was figuring on taking in a movie tonight, and I was wondering if you and your friend would care to see a movie tonight with me and my friend...

(his eyes are closed now)

Yeah, tonight. I know it's pretty late to call for a date, but I didn't know myself, till... Yeah, I know, well how about... Yeah, I know, well

maybe next Saturday night. You free next Saturday night?... Well, how about the Saturday after that?... Yeah, I know... Yeah... Yeah... Oh, I understand, I mean...

He hangs up, sits for a moment, then rises, opens the sliding doors, enters...

THE DINING ROOM.

He sits at the heavy, wooden table with its white-on-white table cloth.

THE KITCHEN.

Mrs. Pilletti ladles portions of food from the steaming kettles onto a plate that she brings into...

THE DINING ROOM.

...and sets it down before her son. Without a word, he picks up his fork and spoon and plunges into the mountain of spaghetti, adds cheese, eats away. Mrs. Pilletti takes her seat, folds her hands on the table, and sits watching Marty eat.

MRS. PILLETTI

So what are you gonna do tonight, Marty?

MARTY

I don't know, Ma. I'm all knocked out. I may just hang arounna house.

Mrs. Pilletti nods a couple of times. A moment of silence.

MRS. PILLETTI

Why don't you go to the Stardust Ballroom?

This gives Marty pause. He looks up.

MARTY

What?

MRS. PILLETTI

I say, why don't you go to the Stardust Ballroom? It's loaded with tomatoes.

Marty regards his mother for a moment.

MARTY

It's loaded with what?

MRS. PILLETTI

Tomatoes.

MARTY

Ha! Who told you about the Stardust Ballroom?

MRS. PILLETTI

Thomas. He told me it was a very nice place.

MARTY

Oh, Thomas. Ma, it's just a big dance hall, and that's all it is. I been there a hundred times. Loaded with tomatoes. Boy, you're funny, Ma.

MRS. PILLETTI

Marty, I don't want you hang arounna house tonight. I want you to go take a shave and go out and dance.

MARTY

Ma, when are you gonna give up? You gotta bachelor on your hands. I ain't never gonna get married.

MRS. PILLETTI

You gonna get married.

MARTY

Sooner or later, there comes a point in a man's life when he gotta face some facts, and one fact I gotta

face is that whatever it is that women like, I ain't got it. I chased enough girls in my life. I went to enough dances. I got hurt enough. I don't wanna get hurt no more. I just called a girl just now, and I got a real brush-off, boy. I figured I was past the point of being hurt, but that hurt. Some stupid woman who I didn't even wanna call up. She gave me the brush. I don't wanna go to the Stardust Ballroom because all that ever happened to me there was girls made me feel like I was a bug. I got feelings, you know. I had enough pain. No, thank you.

MRS. PILLETTI

Marty...

MARTY

Ma, I'm gonna stay home and watch Jackie Gleason.

MRS. PILLETTI

You gonna die without a son.

MARTY

So I'll die without a son.

MRS. PILLETTI

Put on your blue suit...

MARTY

Blue suit, gray suit, I'm still a fat man. A fat ugly man.

MRS. PILLETTI

You not ugly.

MARTY

(his voice rising)

I'm ugly... I'm ugly! I'm UGLY!

MRS. PILLETTI

Marty...

MARTY

Ma! Leave me alone!

He stands abruptly, his face pained and drawn. He makes half-formed gestures to his mother, but he can't find words at the moment. He turns and marches a few paces away, turns to his mother again.

MARTY

Ma, waddaya want from me?! Waddaya want from me?! I'm miserable enough as it is! Leave me alone! I'll go to the Stardust Ballroom! I'll put onna blue suit and I'll go! And you know what I'm gonna get for my trouble? Heartache! A big night of heartache!

Sullenly, he marches back to his seat, sits down, picks up his fork, plunges it into the spaghetti, stuffs a mouthful into his mouth, and chews vigorously for a moment. It is impossible for him to remain angry long. After a while, he is shaking his head.

MARTY

Loaded with tomatoes...boy, that's rich.

He plunges his fork in again, starts to eat. Mrs. Pilletti watches Marty anxiously as we...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN

NEW YORK CITY, WEST FARMS SQUARE. NIGHT

West Farms Square is a big street in the Bronx, filled with stores, bowling alleys and bars. Cars push along between the pillars of the elevated subway structure. The NOISE of the subway trains ROARS by overhead every few moments.

CAMERA FINDS and ESTABLISHES the Stardust Ballroom. It occupies the second floor of a large, dirty gray three-story

building. It is a hot June night, and the windows are open for ventilation purposes. MUSIC manufactured by Dave Greenglass and His Band blends with the NOISES of the street.

STARDUST BALLROOM. ENTRANCE VESTIBULE/STAIRS.

MUSIC plays in the background. CAMERA views CLARA, a plain girl in her late twenties; her younger sister, MILLIE, prettier; Millie's fiance ANDY, 30; and a second young man DR. KEEGAN, also 30, who is a resident at Fordham Hospital. They are all huddled over a cigarette machine near the street door.

ANDY

(in a low voice)

I told you she wasn't especially attractive, but that she had a good deal of charm, and she's really a real nice girl...

DR. KEEGAN

(extracting cigarettes from the machine)

She's all right, Andy. It's just that I get one Saturday night off every three weeks, and I was expecting something better, that's all.

ANDY

I told you she wasn't attractive...

DR. KEEGAN

You told me that she was a little tall, but that she wasn't bad looking at all.

ANDY

Millie's been after me to fix her up with a date, so I...

DR. KEEGAN

All right, I'm having a fair time. It's just that I get one Saturday night off in three weeks, and I wanted to wind up with something tonight.

They join the two girls waiting for them and start up the broad stairway to the second floor. They are halfway up, when two GIRLS come in at the top of the stairs and start down. Dr. Keegan, who is holding Clara's arm, looks up, nods.

STARDUST BALLROOM, ANTEROOM.

This is a small, carpeted lobby with TICKET TAKER in booth, a cloak room and rest rooms. Painted posters on the walls announce coming events and caution against smoking. There are also large blow-ups of musicians who had played this ballroom at one time and went on to bigger things. About six or seven PEOPLE congregate in the lobby, engaged in various indifferent activities.

CAMERA ANGLES include the swinging doors, as Clara, Andy, Millie and Dr. Keegan come in. As they enter, the doors to the ballroom proper are pushed out, and a GIRL in a black dress, quite pretty, comes in. She starts across the anteroom toward the cloak room, when Dr. Keegan calls out suddenly to her.

DR. KEEGAN

Hey!

The girl turns. Recognition floods her face.

GIRL

Herbie! Wadda you doing here?!

DR. KEEGAN

I came up to dance, wadda you think?
You here with somebody?

GIRL

I'm just here with another girl.

DR. KEEGAN

Where you going now?

GIRL

I'm just gonna get my cigarettes. I
left them in my coat.

DR. KEEGAN

I'll see you around.

GIRL

I'll see you.

She turns and continues on to the cloak room. Dr. Keegan turns to Clara.

DR. KEEGAN

That's a girl used to know.

BALLROOM, LOUNGE.

A fairly long room, lined on one side by a bar and on the other by cheap leatherette booths. It is brightly lit and crowded. There is a constant movement in and out of the lounge. At the far end of the lounge, there are two large iron fire doors open to allow the heat to flow out. Dance MUSIC from dance floor.

Clara, Dr. Keegan, Millie and Andy come into the lounge and form a little group in the midst of moving PASSERSBY around them. A kind of strange excitement has begun to enter Dr. Keegan. He stands with the others, but his attention is devoted to ogling the passing GIRLS, occasionally looking back to the doors leading to the anteroom.

ANDY

Boy, it's packed in here.

MILLIE

(to Clara)

Some of these kids are awful young.
Aren't you afraid you'll bump into
one of your students?

CLARA

(nervously looking at
Dr. Keegan)

I wouldn't think so. I teach out in
Brooklyn.

ANDY

You been up here before, Clara?

CLARA

Yeah, twice.

MILLIE

Shall we try to get a table and get something to drink or shall we just go in and start dancing?

ANDY

Hey, Herbie...

Dr. Keegan doesn't seem to hear.

ANDY

(continues)

Hey, Herbie...

DR. KEEGAN

What?

ANDY

You wanna have a drink before we start dancing?

DR. KEEGAN

Listen. You people go grab a table. I'll be back inna minute. I'll be right back.

He turns and moves quickly through the crowded lounge, back to the swinging doors leading into the anteroom. CAMERA STAYS with Clara, Millie and Andy staring after him.

ANDY

So what do you say, Clara? Wanna see if we can get a table?

CLARA

All right.

They turn and move toward the booths.

BALLROOM.

The dance floor is fairly dark. A romantic effect is achieved by papier-mâché over the chandeliers. Around the walls are the stag lines – the MEN and waiting GIRLS. They stand singly or in small uneasy groups. There is constant flux and movement.

CAMERA DOLLIES slowly past the stag line, moving past faces, short, fat, tall, thin stags. Some pretend indifference. Some exhibit patent hunger.

CAMERA HOLDS ANGLING to include Marty, Angie near the end of the stag line. They are freshly shaved and groomed.

MARTY AND ANGIE.

They are leaning against the wall smoking, watching their more fortunate brethren on the floor in the background.

ANGIE

Not a bad crowd tonight, you know?

MARTY

There was one nice-looking one there inna black dress and beads, but she's dancing now.

ANGIE

(looking off-screen)

There's a nice-looking little short one for you right now.

MARTY

(following his gaze)

Where?

ANGIE

Down there. That little one there.

REVERSE ANGLE PAST Marty and Angie across the dance floor toward the wall opposite, where three GIRLS are standing. Two are leaning against the wall. The third is facing them with her back to the dance floor. This last girl is the one Angie has in mind. She is a cute little kid about twenty and wears a bright smile.

MARTY AND ANGIE.

They stare off toward the three girls across the room.

MARTY

Yeah, she looks all right from here.

ANGIE

Well, waddaya say, you wanna ask them? I'll take the one inna green dress.

MARTY

I think this number is a little fast.
Wait a minute.

He tries a few tentative steps, testing for tempo.

MARTY

It's all right, I think. They still there?

The two cavaliers turn their heads and look off-screen in the direction of the three girls. Apparently, the girls are still there. Marty and Angie relinquish their lounging positions against the wall and slouch along past the line of stags with a show of determined unconcern. They edge through the crush of people on the non-dancing margin of the dance floor and slowly push their way toward the...

THREE GIRLS.

Marty and Angie come in and start to approach the three girls. The girls, aware of the boys' presence, stiffen and their chatter comes to a halt. Angie advances to one of the girls.

ANGIE

Waddaya say, you wanna dance?

The girl looks surprised, as if this were an extraordinary invitation to receive in a dance hall, looks confounded at her two friends, shrugs, detaches herself from the wall, moves to the outer fringe of the pack of dancers, raises her hand languidly to dancing position and awaits Angie with ineffable boredom. Marty, smiling tentatively, addresses the

SHORT GIRL.

MARTY

Excuse me, would you care for this
dance?

The Short Girl gives Marty a quick glance of appraisal, then looks quickly at her remaining friend.

SHORT GIRL

(but not unpleasantly)
I don't feel like dancing just yet.

MARTY

Sure.

He turns and heads sluggishly in the direction of the stag line.

THE STAG LINE.

A TRAVEL SHOT follows Marty, as he moves past the line of stags, all of whom are watching him. CAMERA HOLDS as he finds his old niche by the wall, leans there. A moment later, he glances guardedly down to where the short girl and her friend are.

MARTY'S P.O.V.: The Short Girl is approached by a dapper young BOY who asks her to dance. She smiles, excuses herself to her friend and follows the boy out onto the dance floor.

Marty stares at the Short Girl. He shrugs, he's used to this kind of thing, then turns his attention bleakly back to watching...

THE DANCE FLOOR.

The band starts up again and the MUSIC blares. It's a Lindy Hop number. Couples swirl past; the MUSIC comes up BIG.

THE BALLROOM.

Marty leans against the wall, smoking and watching the dancers swirl past. Dr. Keegan's VOICE is heard.

DR. KEEGAN

(off-screen)

You here stag or with a girl?

Marty's attention is on the passing couples, so he doesn't seem to hear. ANGLE WIDENS to include the Doctor standing on Marty's right. Suddenly aware of the Doctor, Marty turns his head.

MARTY

You say something?

DR. KEEGAN

Yeah. I was just asking you if you was here stag or with a girl.

MARTY

I'm stag.

DR. KEEGAN

Well, I'll tell you. I got stuck on a blind date with a dog, and I just met an old girl I used to know, and I was wondering how I'm gonna get rid of the girl I'm with. Somebody to take her home, you know what I mean? I'd be glad to pay you five bucks if you take her home for me.

MARTY

(confused)

What?

DR. KEEGAN

I'll take you over, and I'll introduce you as an old army buddy of mine, and then I'll cut out. Because I got this other girl waiting for me out by the hatchcheck, and I'll pay you five bucks.

MARTY

(stares at the man)

Are you kidding?

DR. KEEGAN

No, I'm not kidding.

MARTY

You can't just walk off onna girl like that.

Dr. Keegan shrugs, moves down the line of stag guys. Marty turns to watch him, still a little shocked at the proposition. The Doctor approaches THREE STAGS and obviously broaches the subject with one of them. This STAG seems more receptive to the idea. Dr. Keegan takes out a wallet and gives the Stag a five dollar bill. The Stag detaches himself from the wall and, a little ill-at-ease, follows the Doctor.

Marty stands against the wall, watching the Doctor and the Stag, who come in and move past him. Concerned and curious, Marty stares after them, then moves out of his leaning position, following in their general direction.

Marty moves through the crush of young men and women in the area around the dance floor.

ALCOVE NEAR ARCHWAY.

As Marty reaches the alcove that separates the dance floor proper from the lounge, he pauses and looks off toward the booths.

LOUNGE.

Clara sits about halfway down the length of the booths. Dr. Keegan and the Stag stand over her, talking to her. She is looking up at them, her hands nervously gripping a Coca Cola glass. Dr. Keegan is obviously introducing the Stag to Clara and is going through some story about being called away on an emergency. The Stag is presented as her escort-to-be, who will see to it that she gets home safely.

Clara is not taken in by any of this, although she is trying hard not to seem affected. She politely rejects the Stag's company and will go home by herself, thanks for asking anyway. Dr. Keegan makes a few mild protestations, and then he and the Stag leave the booth and start back toward the archway.

ARCHWAY.

From where Marty stands, he can watch Clara, as well as Dr. Keegan and the Stag. The Doctor and the Stag start past Marty, and he catches their conversation.

DR. KEEGAN

...in that case, as long as she's going home alone, give me the five bucks back...

STAG

Look, Mac, you paid me the five bucks. I was willing. It's my five bucks...

They move past and away and Marty stares after them before he turns his attention toward Clara off-screen.

Clara is sitting as she was, gripping and ungripping the glass of Coca Cola in front of her. Her eyes are closed. Then, with a little nervous shake of her head she gets out of the booth and stands momentarily at a loss for what next to do. As she glances around, CAMERA ANGLES to include a sign over an exit that reads "Fire Escape." Clara starts moving toward that door.

Marty is staring off-screen toward Clara. He slowly works his way down the length of the lounge in the general direction of the fire escape.

LOUNGE.

Near the entrance to the fire escape, Clara comes into view. Background sounds continue steadily.

Marty is walking the length of the lounge and suddenly stops and stares off-screen.

Clara disappears through the exit onto the fire escape outside.

Marty watches. Then he continues on, crossing the threshold of the...

FIRE ESCAPE.

It is sizeable, almost a small balcony. It looks out onto the backs of innumerable five-story apartment houses. Clara is standing by the railing, her back toward the camera, her head sunk down. She is crying. Marty watches her for a moment before moving a step or two forward.

Clara doesn't turn. Marty tries to think of something to say.

MARTY
(finally)
Excuse me, Miss, would you care to
dance?

Clara slowly turns to Marty, her face streaked with tears, her lips trembling. Then, in one of those moments of simultaneous impulse, she lurches to Marty with a sob, and Marty takes her to him.

They stand in an awkward embrace, Marty a little embarrassed, looking back through the fire escape doors to the lounge, wondering if anybody is seeing them. He reaches back with one hand, and contrives, with some effort, to push one of the heavy iron doors shut. He returns his hand around the girl's shoulders. He stands stiffly, allowing her to cry on his chest, as we...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

BRONX APARTMENT HOUSE, STAIRWAY. NIGHT

Mrs. Pilletti, in her hat and coat and carrying a purse, is making her heavy way up the last few steps toward the landing. She pauses to catch her breath on the landing. Then she moves down the hallway to...

ENTRANCE TO APARTMENT 4-B.

Mrs. Pilletti rings the bell. The SOUND can be heard as she waits. The door is opened by Virginia.

VIRGINIA

Hello, Aunt Theresa. Come in.

Mrs. Pilletti enters the apartment.

APARTMENT.

Virginia closes the door after Mrs. Pilletti enters, and they stand in a small narrow hallway, brightly lit. At the far end to the right is the living room in the background.

MRS. PILLETTI

(in a low voice as
she pulls off her
coat)

Is Catherine here?

Virginia helps her with her coat.

VIRGINIA

(nods, keeping her
voice low)

We didn't tell her anything yet. We thought that we'd leave it to you. We thought you'd put it like how you were lonely, and why don't she come to live with you. Because that way it looks like she's doing you a favor, instead we're throwing her out, and it won't be so cruel on her. Do you want Tommy and me to stay here with you?

MRS. PILLETTI

I think it be a better idea if you and Thomas go out, because otherwise she's gonna start a fight with you, and everybody's gonna be yelling.

Thomas appears at the living room end of the foyer with an anxious smile on his face.

THOMAS

Hello, Aunt Theresa.

MRS. PILLETTI

Hello, Thomas.

THOMAS

I just this minute got the baby to sleep.

He comes down to Mrs. Pilletti and Virginia, lowers his voice to a conspiratorial whisper.

THOMAS

Aunt Theresa, we figure the best way to ask her is you say that you're very lonely, see? And wouldn't she come and keep you company, because that way, you see...

MRS. PILLETTI

Don't worry. I'm gonna take care-a the whole thing.

A shrill, imperious woman's voice breaks into the whispered conference in the hallway.

CATHERINE'S VOICE

(off-screen)

Who's there?! Who's there?!

Mrs. Pilletti heads up the foyer to the living room, followed by Virginia and Thomas.

MRS. PILLETTI

(calling back)

It's me, Catherine! How you feel?

CATHERINE comes in at the end of the foyer. She is a gaunt woman with a face carved out of granite. She is tough, embittered, with a history of pain and mirthless hard work ingrained into her features.

CATHERINE

Hey! What are you doing here?

MRS. PILLETTI

I came to see you. How you feel?

The two sisters quickly embrace and release each other.

CATHERINE

I gotta pain in my left side, and my leg throbs like a drum.

MRS. PILLETTI

I been getting a pain in my shoulder.

CATHERINE

I gotta pains in my shoulder too. I have a pain in my hip, and my right arm aches so much I can't sleep. It's a curse to be old. How you feel?

MRS. PILLETTI

I feel fine.

CATHERINE

That's nice.

Now that the standard greetings are over, Aunt Catherine abruptly turns and goes back into the living room. Mrs. Pilletti follows. Virginia and Thomas remain in the doorway.

LIVING ROOM.

Catherine and Mrs. Pilletti enter and Catherine heads straight to a chair – obviously her chair. It is an old heavy oaken chair with thick armrests. The rest of the apartment is furnished in what is known as "modern." A piece from House Beautiful here, a piece from American Homes and Gardens there. Aunt Catherine sits erect and forbidding in her chair. Mrs. Pilletti seats herself with a sigh in a neighboring chair. Thomas and Virginia remain off-screen in the hallway for a moment to hang up Mrs. Pilletti's coat. The two old sisters sit for a moment.

MRS. PILLETTI

Well, how's everything with you?

Aunt Catherine grimaces to describe how everything is with her.

MRS. PILLETTI

My son Marty's fine. Everybody's fine...

Thomas comes in from the hallway, stands in the back of the room, somewhat apprehensively.

MRS. PILLETTI

We gotta postcard from my son Nickie and his bride. They're inna big hotel in Florida on their honeymoon. Everything is very nice.

CATHERINE

That's nice. I gotta letter from my husband's cousin in Abruzzi. His mother died.

MRS. PILLETTI

Oh.

CATHERINE

Do you remember Emilio DiGiorgio, owned the tavern in Abruzzi?

MRS. PILLETTI

I don't think I remember him.

CATHERINE

Well, he died. You know who else died?

MRS. PILLETTI

Who?

CATHERINE

You know the old man upstairs in this house. Old Irishman, always drunk. He got pleurisy. He was inna hospital two weeks. He died yesterday.

MRS. PILLETTI

Well, I always like to visit you, Catherine, because you always got such cheerful news.

Virginia comes into the living room with Thomas. They remain in the background.

THOMAS

(suddenly)

Ma, you want something to eat, some tuna fish?

MRS. PILLETTI

Hey, why don't you go to the movie? Your mother and me, we're gonna be baby-sitter.

Thomas looks indecisively at his wife.

VIRGINIA

Listen, let's go downa Kaplans' apartment. They told us to come down.

MRS. PILLETTI

Sure, sure.

Thomas ponders a moment.

THOMAS

All right, Ma, we're going downstairs to the Kaplans, if you want us for anything.

They exit. The two old sisters sit rigidly until they hear the SOUND of the door closing. Catherine cocks an eyebrow and promptly launches into her statement.

CATHERINE

I wake up this morning, I hear the baby crying. So I wake up. I come in their room. That girl is shaking her hand atta baby. I said, "You brute! Don't you strike that baby! That's my son's baby!"

MRS. PILLETTI

It's her baby too, you know.

CATHERINE

That's my son Thomas's baby.

MRS. PILLETTI

Well, it ain't your baby.

CATHERINE

Did I tell you she threw the bottle-
a milk at me?

MRS. PILLETTI

You told me.

CATHERINE

She's a witch, that one. I tell you
what happen yesterday?

MRS. PILLETTI

What happen?

CATHERINE

She gave me the evil eye.

She demonstrates this by pulling the lower lid of one eye
down and staring grotesquely at the ceiling.

MRS. PILLETTI

(scoffing)

Ufa!

CATHERINE

I keep one eye open when I sleep,
because she's gonna come in, stab me
in my bed.

MRS. PILLETTI

Catherine, I want you come live in
my house with Marty and me.

Her sister turns, genuinely surprised at this request.

CATHERINE

Ah?

MRS. PILLETTI

You son Thomas and Virginia, they

come to my house this afternoon...

CATHERINE

(sharply)

Who?

MRS. PILLETTI

Your son Thomas and his wife
Virginia...

CATHERINE

When was this?

MRS. PILLETTI

This afternoon, about four, five
o'clock.

CATHERINE

What they say?

MRS. PILLETTI

You know what they say. They say
things are no good in this house.
Catherine, your son is married. Leave
him in peace. He wantsa be alone
with his wife. They don't want no
old lady sitting inna balcony. Now I
tell you what I think. I want you
come live with me in my house with
Marty and me. In my house, you have
your own room. You don't have to
sleep onna couch inna living room
like here. We will cook inna kitchen
and talk like when we were girls.
You are dear to me, and you are dear
to Marty. We are pleased for you to
come.

Catherine surveys her sister coldly.

CATHERINE

My son Thomas came to see you this
afternoon, and he said to you he
wants to cast his mother from his
house?

MRS. PILLETTI

Catherine, don't make an opera outta this. The three-a you anna baby live in three skinny rooms. You are an old goat, and she has an Italian temper. She is a good girl, but you drive her crazy. Catherine, you are no fool. You know this is no good, an old woman living with a husband and wife. Two women inna same kitchen, anna house burns down.

Catherine stands abruptly. She is deeply hurt.

CATHERINE

So I am an old garbage bag, put inna street.

MRS. PILLETTI

Oh, Catherine, please! Don't make a tragedy. You come to my house where you know you be happier yourself.

CATHERINE

It pains that they should do this.

MRS. PILLETTI

I know it pains.

Catherine turns and meanders a few steps. The stiff edge of mordant humor that has been her one defense against life has deserted her, and she is just a hurt old lady now.

CATHERINE

These are the worst years, I tell you.

She seats herself on an Eames chair. On her right, a Modern-Age lamp towers slimly. On her left is a Modern-Age endtable with a Modern-Age ashtray on it. The hardened muscles in her face suddenly slacken.

MRS. PILLETTI

(with deep compassion)

Catherine, you are very dear to me.
We have cried many times together.
When my husband died, I would have
gone insane if it were not for you.
I ask you to come to my house, because
I can make you happy. Please come to
my house.

CATHERINE

These are the worst years. I tell
you. It's gonna happen to you. I'm
afraid to look inna mirror. I'm afraid
I'm gonna see an old lady with white
hair, like the old ladies inna park,
little bundles inna black shawl,
waiting for the coffin. I'm fifty-
six years old. What am I to do with
myself? I have strength in my hands.
I wanna cook. I wanna clean. I wanna
make dinner for my children. Am I an
old dog to lie in fronta the fire
til my eyes close? These are the
terrible years, Theresa! Terrible
years!

MRS. PILLETTI

Catherine, my sister...

Catherine stares distraught at Mrs. Pilletti.

CATHERINE

It's gonna happen to you! It's gonna
happen to you! What will you do if
Marty gets married?! What will you
cook? What happen to alla children
playing in alla rooms? Where is the
noise?! It is a curse to be a widow!
A curse. What will you do if Marty
gets married?! What will you do?

She stares at Mrs. Pilletti, her deep eyes haggard and pained.
Mrs. Pilletti stares back for a moment, then her own eyes
close. Catherine has hit home. Catherine sinks back onto her
chair, sitting stiffly, her arms on the thick armrests. Mrs.
Pilletti sits hunched a little forward, her hands folded

nervously in her lap.

CATHERINE

(continuing quietly)

I will put my clothes inna bag, and
I will come to you tomorrow.

The two sisters, somber and silent, continue to just stare at one another.

THE STARDUST BALLROOM. NIGHT

CAMERA PANS the crowd, picking up Marty and Clara dancing cheek-to-cheek on the crowded, darkened dance floor. The MUSIC rides over the top of the scene.

MARTY

You come up here often?

CLARA

I was up here twice before. Once with a friend of mine and once I came up alone. The last time... do you see that girl in the gray dress sitting over there?

MARTY

Yeah.

CLARA

Well, the last time I was up here, that's where I sat. I sat there for an hour and a half, without moving a muscle. Now and then, some fellow would sort of walk up to me and then change his mind. I'll never forget just sitting there for an hour and a half with my hands in my lap. Then I began to cry, and I had to get up and go home.

MARTY

I cry a lot too. I'm a big cryer.

CLARA

This is something recent with me,
this bursting into tears at the least
thing.

MARTY

Oh, I cry all the time, any little
thing. My brothers, my brother-in-
laws, they're always telling me what
a goodhearted guy I am. Well, you
don't get goodhearted by accident.
You get kicked around long enough,
you get to be a real professor of
pain. I know exactly how you feel.
And I also want you to know I'm having
a very good time with you now and
really enjoying myself. So you see,
you're not such a dog as you think
you are.

CLARA

I'm having a very good time, too.

MARTY

So there you are. So I guess I'm not
such a dog as I think I am.

CLARA

You're a very nice guy, and I don't
know why some girl hasn't grabbed
you off long ago.

MARTY

I don't know either. I think I'm a
very nice guy. I also think I'm a
pretty smart guy in my own way.

Clara smiles briefly at this.

MARTY

Now I figure, two people get married,
and they gonna live together forty,
fifty years. So it's just gotta be
more than whether they're good looking
or not. You tell me you think you're
not very good-looking. My father was

a really ugly man, but my mother adored him. She told me that she used to get so miserable sometimes, like everybody, you know? And she says my father always tried to understand. I used to see them sometimes when I was a kid, sitting in the living room, talking and talking, and I used to adore my old man, because he was so kind. That's one of the most beautiful things I have in my life, the way my father and mother were. And my father was a real ugly man. So it doesn't matter if you look like a gorilla. So you see, dogs like us, we ain't such dogs as we think we are.

They dance silently for a moment, cheeks pressed against each other.

CLARA

I'm twenty-nine years old. How old are you?

MARTY

I'm thirty-four.

BALLROOM, STAIRWAY.

Marty and Clara are about halfway down the steps leading to the street entrance to the ballroom. Clara has on a light summer coat. Marty is about two steps ahead of her and has to keep turning his head to talk to her. He is in an elevated mood, intoxicated – on a talking jag.

MARTY

...you teach chemistry? That's funny. Where? What school?

CLARA

Benjamin Franklin High School.

MARTY

Benjamin Franklin, where's that?

Brooklyn? I went to Theodore Roosevelt right up here on Fordham Road. It's right aroundna corner from my house. I have a cousin who's a teacher. He teaches Latin. He lives in Chicago. He was studying to be a Jesuit, but he gave it up after his first vows.

He has reached the street landing and waits for Clara to catch up with him. They stand in front of the glass doors leading to the street.

BALLROOM VESTIBULE. GLASS DOORS.

MARTY

(prattling on)

I was pretty good in high school. I sound like a jerk now, but I was pretty good. I graduated with an eighty-two average. That ain't bad. I was accepted at City College. I filled out the application and everything, but my old man died, so I hadda go to work. My best class was German. That was my first language. Der, die, das – des, der, des. There you are, I still remember...

He pushes the glass door open to...

THE STREET OUTSIDE THE STARDUST BALLROOM.

As Marty and Clara emerge onto the sidewalk of West Farms Square, they pause again.

It is about nine o'clock, and the busy street is brightly lit from the stores.

PASSERSBY hurry on their way. The elevated subway RUMBLES over-head intermittently.

MARTY

(chattering on)

You know what I was good at in high

school? I was good in Math. You know how long ago I graduated high school? June, nineteen-thirty-seven. Holy cow! June, nineteen-thirty-seven! What is that? Fifteen, seventeen years ago! Holy cow! Seventeen years ago! Is that right? Seventeen, that's right. Where did it all go? I'm getting old. I'm gonna be thirty-five November eighth. Thirty-five. Wow. Time goes on, boy.

He takes her arm, and they start walking.

MARTY

Nineteen-thirty-seven... that's right. My old man died December, nineteen-thirty-seven.

SIDEWALK.

MOVING SHOT as they stroll toward the corner of Jerome and Burnside Avenues.

MARTY

Two o'clock in the morning he died. The doorbell rings, and I knew something was wrong right away. Because my room is onna ground floor inna front, you see, and I got outta bed, and I answered the door...

CAMERA HOLDS as Marty, caught in his story, stops and continues intently.

MARTY

There was Mr. Stern. He had a house down about a block from us. He moved out though. My old man, he used to play cards with him and some other old guys. He's a Jewish feller. So he said, "Is your mother home?" So I knew right away there was something wrong. I was only eighteen, exactly eighteen years old, just the month

before. So I said, "Is something wrong, Mr. Stern?" I was in my pajamas, you know? So he said, "Marty, your father died." My father died right inna middle of playing cards, right at the table. He had a heart attack. He had low blood pressure, my old man. He used to faint a lot.

Suddenly he looks at Clara, rather startled.

MARTY

Boy, am I talking, I never talked so much in my life. Usually, everybody comes to me and tells me all their troubles. Well, I'm gonna shut up now, and I'm gonna let you get a word in...

He takes her arm again, and they continue strolling toward the corner intersection in silence.

MARTY

Seventeen years ago. What I been doing with myself all that time?... Well, I'm talking again. I must be driving you crazy. Mosta the time I'm with a girl, I can't find a word to say. Well, I'm gonna shut up now. Because I'm not like this usually. Usually, I... well, here I go again.

They reach the corner intersection. CAMERA HOLDS on Marty as he pauses again. He stares at Clara, confused at his strange loquacity.

MARTY

I can't shut my mouth... I'm on a jag, for Pete's sake. You'd think I was loaded...

Marty stares at Clara, absolutely aghast at his inability to stop talking.

MARTY

I can't stop talking! Isn't this stupid?!

He stands there in the middle of the sidewalk with PEOPLE moving past, back and forth. Marty continues to stare at Clara, his broad face widened by a foolish, confused smile. Clara regards him affectionately.

MARTY

(with sudden sincerity)

You gotta real nice face, you know?
It's really a nice face.

CLARA

Thank you.

They stroll along farther up the noisy, jangled, trafficked Saturday night avenue.

GRAND CONCOURSE LUNCHEONETTE. NIGHT.

Once a candy store, now a soda fountain where booths have been installed in the rear. One wall of the luncheonette in front is covered with magazines from floor to ceiling. It is a nice clean joint, brightly lit. Several CUSTOMERS are occupying three of the four booths.

BOOTH.

They sit opposite each other in the booth. Each has a cup of coffee. Marty is still talking, but now he is apparently telling a story so funny that he can hardly get the words out. The hilarity has communicated itself to Clara. Her eyes are burning with suppressed laughter. Every now and then she has to gasp to control the bubbly giggling inside of her.

MARTY

...so I'm inna kneeling position,
and if you ever try shooting a BAR
inna kneeling position, you know
what I mean. I can't holda steady
position. I'm wavering back and
forth...

He has to interrupt the narrative to control a seizure of

giggles. Clara wipes her eyes and catches her breath.

MARTY

...so the guy next to me, he's shooting from the prone position, and he's cross-eyed like I told you...

He can't go on. He has to stop and cover his face with one hand.

MARTY

So just then...
(stops to control himself again)
...so just then I hear five shots go off from the guy next to me...

It's too much for him. He lets out a sudden guffaw and instantly smothers it under shaking shoulders. Clara hides her face in her hands and giggles desperately. Some of the other people turn to look at them.

MARTY

So my target goes down, and a minute later, the flag comes up. I got five bulls-eyes. This cross-eyed guy next to me, he shot five bulls-eyes into my target...

He stares at the girl, spent from laughter.

MARTY

...so I said to the sergeant who was checking my score, "Pretty good, eh, Sarge? Five bulls-eyes? So this sergeant, he don't know what happened, he says, "Say, that's all right, Pilletti" ...

He closes his eyes, shakes his head.

MARTY

Oh, man. So that's what happened. That's how I got the reputation-a being the best shot inna whole

battalion... oh, man...

For a moment they seem to have controlled their laughter. They sit, shaking their heads, studying their fingers on the table in front of them. Then slowly, Marty begins to giggle again. It communicates itself to Clara. In a moment they are hiding their faces in their hands, their shoulders shivering with laughter.

STARDUST BALLROOM.

CLOSE ON Angie. His eyes look slowly in every direction. CAMERA PULLS BACK disclosing Angie standing on the fringe of the dance floor, head arched high, looking at the crowded dance floor. He starts back to the archway toward the lounge, looking over his shoulder.

ARCHWAY.

Angie comes into the archway, throws one more glance over his shoulder at the dance floor, then turns and enters the...

LOUNGE.

Angie walks down the length of the lounge, looking into the booths and simultaneously at the PEOPLE moving back and forth in the lounge. At the far end of the lounge, he turns and comes back along the bar side, checking each face at the bar.

ANTEROOM.

There are three young BUCKOES laying out their money for admission. One of them calls to Angie.

BUCKO

Anything good in there, Mac?

ANGIE

A buncha dogs.

He crosses to the Men's Room.

MEN'S ROOM.

Angie comes into a momentarily empty room. Angie goes the full length of the white tiled room, past the wash bowls, the long mirror, bending to look under the doors of the stalls. Suddenly he calls out.

ANGIE

Hey, Marty! Hey, Marty, you in here?!

He waits for an answer...

GRAND CONCOURSE LUNCHEONETTE.

CLOSE ON Marty and Clara still in the booth, but two more cups of coffee have been set down in front of each of them. There are also two pie-plates. Clara has left half of her pie. Also an empty pack of cigarettes, and another pack half-gone. They are both smoking. Marty is still talking, but the mood is no longer laughter. A pensive, speculative hush has fallen over them. They have been talking for hours, and they have reached the stage where you start tearing designs in the paper napkins.

MARTY

...When I got outta the army, Clara, I was lost. I didn't know what I wanted to do. I was twenny-five years old, what was I gonna do, go back to my old job, forty cents an hour. I thought maybe I go to college under the G.I. Biller Rights, you know? But I wouldn't graduate till I was twenny-eight, twenny-nine years old, even if I made it in three years. And my brother Freddie wanted to get married, and I had three unmarried sisters – in an Italian home, that's a terrible thing. And my kid brother Nickie, he's a one got married last week. So I just went to pieces. I used to walk inna streets till three, four o'clock inna mornings. My mother used to be so worried about me. My uncle Mario come over one time. He offered me a job driving his hack onna night shift. He got his own

cab, you know. And God forgive me for what I'm gonna say now, but I used to thinka doing away with myself. I used to stand sometimes in the subway, and God forgive me what I'm going to say, I used to feel the tracks sucking me down under the wheels.

CLARA

(deeply sympathetic)

Yes, I know.

MARTY

I'm a Catholic, you know, and even to think about suicide is a terrible sin.

CLARA

Yes, I know.

MARTY

So then Mr. Gazzara – he was a frienda my father – he offered me this job in his butcher shop, and everybody pleaded with me to take it. So that's what happened. I didn't wanna be a butcher.

CLARA

There's nothing wrong with being a butcher.

MARTY

Well, I wouldn't call it an elegant profession. It's in a lower social scale. People look down on butchers.

CLARA

I don't.

Marty looks quickly up at her, then back down.

MARTY

Well, the point is Mr. Gazzara wantsa

sell his shop now, because he and his wife are lonely, and they wanna move out to California in Los Angeles and live near their married daughter. Because she's always writing them to come out there. So it's a nice little shop. I handle his books for him, so I know he has a thirty-five percent markup which is not unreasonable, and he takes home net maybe a hundred, hundred and fifty bucks a week. The point is, of course, you gotta worry about the supermarkets. There's two inna neighborhood now, and there's an A&P coming in, at least that's the rumor. Of course, mosta his trade is strictly Italian, but the younger Italian girls, they get married, and they don't stick to the old Italian dishes so much. I mean, you gotta take that into account too.

CLARA

It's my feeling that you really want to buy this shop, Marty.

MARTY

That's true. I do. But I'm gonna have to take outta loan inna bank eight thousand dollars. That's a big note to carry, because I have to give Mr. Gazzara a mortgage, and what I have to weigh is: will it pay off in the end more than I can make onna salary?

Clara looks down at her fingers, her face alive and sensitive. She carefully assembles her words in her mind. Then she looks at the squat butcher across the table from her.

CLARA

Marty, I know you for three hours, but I know you're a good butcher. You're an intelligent, sensitive, decent man. I have a feeling about

you like sometimes a kid comes in to see me for one reason or another. And some of these kids, Marty, in my classes, they have so much warmth in them, so much capacity. And that's the feeling I get about you.

Marty shuts his eyes, then opens them quickly, bows his head.

CLARA

If you were one of my students, I would say, "Go ahead and buy the butcher shop. You're a good butcher."

Clara pauses.

MARTY

(not quite trusting
the timbre of his
voice)

Well, there's a lotta things I could do with this shop. I could organize my own supermarket. Get a buncha neighborhood merchants together. That's what a lotta them are doing.

He looks up at her now.

MARTY

Wadda you think?

CLARA

I think anything you want to do, you'll do well.

Tears begin to flood his eyes again. He quickly looks away. He licks his lips.

MARTY

(still looking down)
I'm Catholic. Are you Catholic?

Clara looks down at her hands.

CLARA

(also in a low voice)
Yes, I am.

Marty looks up at her.

MARTY

I only got about three bucks on me now, but I just live about eight blocks from here on the other side of Webster Avenue. Why don't we walk back to my house? I'll run in, pick up some dough, and let's step out somewhere.

CLARA

I really should get home...

She twists in her seat and looks toward the back of the luncheonette.

MARTY

It's only a quarter of twelve. The clock's right over there.

CLARA

I really should get home, I told my father... Well, I suppose a little while longer. I wonder if there's any place around here I could put some makeup on...

Marty considers this problem for a second, then leans out of the booth and calls out.

MARTY

Hey, Mac!

CAMERA ANGLES to include the PROPRIETOR of the luncheonette. He is sitting in one of the booths ahead reading the Sunday Mirror. He looks up toward Marty.

MARTY

You gotta Ladies' Room around here?

PROPRIETOR

Inna back.

MARTY
(to Clara)
Inna back.

Clara smiles at this innocent gaucherie, then edges out of the booth, taking her purse with her.

187TH STREET. NIGHT.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT of Angie meandering down the street on which the neighborhood bar is located. It is near midnight, and the street is empty except for Angie and the CLACKING of his leather heels on the pavement. He comes to the bar, opens the door, enters...

THE BAR. NIGHT.

The SOUNDS of Saturday night revelry are loud, coming mostly from the Irish contingent of the neighborhood. They are grouped along practically the whole bar. Three or four WOMEN and a number of shirtsleeved MEN, mostly in their late forties, early fifties. We know they're Irish, because one of the younger men is chanting an auld country ballad.

CAMERA ANGLES disclose the entrance to the bar in the background, showing Angie coming in, looking here and there. He starts toward the bar.

NEAR BAR.

TWO IRISH WOMEN, middle-aged, squat heavily on bar stools over their schooners of beer, gassing away at each other.

FIRST IRISH WOMAN
...so she told me that the doctor
told her that if she had any more
babies, she would do so at the risk
of her life...

Angie shuffles in, pausing near the bar and standing behind the two Irish women.

SECOND IRISH WOMAN

She was always a bit thin in the hips...

FIRST IRISH WOMAN

Well, at the time she told me this, she already had six. Every time I saw the woman, she was either...

ANGIE

Hey, Lou!

FIRST IRISH WOMAN

...going to the hospital or coming from it. She was hatching them out like eggs.

SECOND IRISH WOMAN

And that husband of hers is a skinny bit of a fellow, isn't he?

FIRST IRISH WOMAN

Well, I bumped into her on the street, and she was as big as a barrel.

ANGIE

(loudly)

Hey, Lou!

CAMERA ANGLES to include Lou, the Bartender.

BARTENDER

(looking up from opening a batch of beer bottles)

What?

FIRST IRISH WOMAN

...so I said to her, "Mary..."

ANGIE

(calling to the Bartender)

Marty been in here the last couple hours or so?

FIRST IRISH WOMAN

"...Mary, for heaven's sakes, didn't you tell me that another one'll kill you?"

BARTENDER

I ain't seen Marty all night...

SECOND IRISH WOMAN

And her husband is a little bit of a man, isn't he?

ANGIE

(calling to the
Bartender, but even
more to himself)

Where is everybody? I been walking around, I can't find anybody...

FIRST IRISH WOMAN

Well, last week Tuesday, she gave birth to the baby in Saint Elizabeth's hospital... a big healthy boy of nine pounds...

SECOND IRISH WOMAN

Oh, that's nice. So the doctor was wrong, wasn't he?

FIRST IRISH WOMAN

Oh, no! She died right in the hospital...

SECOND IRISH WOMAN

Oh, that's a sad story. And her husband is that little fellow, works in Peter Reeves.

FIRST IRISH WOMAN

That's the one.

SECOND IRISH WOMAN

Oh, that's a sad story.

Angie has nothing better to do than give his attention to

the last lines of the story. Perturbed, he turns and leaves.

NEAR ELEVATED SUBWAY. NIGHT.

With street NOISES over the scene, Marty and Clara walk along through the intricate understructure of the elevated subway toward Webster Avenue.

STREET.

Marty and Clara walk slowly along a side street in Marty's neighborhood. The streets are almost empty; perhaps an occasional PEDESTRIAN on the other side of the street. The cars are parked bumper-to-bumper in lines along the curb. The five-story apartment buildings are mostly dark, an occasional window lit.

Marty suddenly stops and bends down; his shoe lace has become untied. Clara sits back against the fender of the nearest car and continues talking.

CLARA

...It's really a fine opportunity for me. But I'm not sure I want to be a department head. It's mostly executive and administrative work. Well, anyway, I told you about my father, and he depends on me a great deal, and...

MARTY

(still concentrating
on his shoelace)
Why don't you just move out to Portchester?

CLARA

Well, that's what I was saying. My father is getting old. And we're very close. He's a wonderful man, really...

She pauses as he straightens. He looks at her a moment.

MARTY

I think you're kidding yourself, Clara. I used to think about moving out, you know? And that's what I used to say. "My mother needs me." But when you really get down to it, that ain't it at all. Actually, you need your father. You know what I mean? You're living at home, and you got your father and mother there, and you can go on like that – being a little girl all your life.

CLARA

I'm afraid of being lonely.

MARTY

Oh, you won't be so lonely. You'll make friends right away.

CLARA

Actually, I don't make friends easily.

MARTY

What're you talking about? You're a real likeable person. You'll make friends out there in Portchester one, two, three. You'll have people visiting you all the time. I'll come visit you. I'll borrow my brother Freddie's car, or you can call me up when you feel blue, or I'll call you up. And it's gonna be nice. Don't be so afraid.

They have only gone a few paces farther when Marty's shoelace comes loose again. He fidgets self-consciously, bends down and begins to retie it. The VOICE of Ralph, the well-dressed man, established previously, is heard.

RALPH'S VOICE

(off-screen)

Hey, Marty!

Marty and Clara both look off...

STREET. CAR WINDOW.

Ralph is leaning out the car window twisting to look back up the street.

RALPH
(yelling)
Hey, Marty!

Marty and Clara look around to find the source of the voice.

RALPH
Marty! Over here!

Marty and Clara again look around trying to find Ralph. Marty spots him leaning out of the window of a '47 Chevy parked in the background.

MARTY
Hello, Ralph.

RALPH
(yelling)
Hey, Marty, come over here a minute.

Marty and Clara start walking toward the Chevy.

INSIDE THE CHEVY.

Ralph and MABEL, a young woman in her early thirties, are seated in front. In the rear seat of the car, LEO is sandwiched in between a MISS LOUISE KELLY and a MISS ELAINE RITCHIE.

RALPH
(explaining to girls)
You'll like this guy. This guy's a nice guy.

LEO
Who's this? Marty?

RALPH
Yeah.

LEO
(confirming Ralph's
statement)
Oh, this guy's a nice guy.

STREET.

Marty stops and excuses himself from Clara to walk slowly toward the Chevy. It's about five cars down from him. The camera pans with him.

OUTSIDE THE CHEVY.

Ralph is leaning out of the window again, watching Marty approach.

MARTY
(approaching the car)
Hello, Ralph, what's new?
(looks through the
back window,
recognizes Leo)
Hiya, Leo.

LEO
Hiya, Marty.

RALPH
(indicates with his
head that he wishes
to hold a whispered
conference with Marty)
Hey, Marty, come here a minute.

Marty leans with his elbow on the open front window of the car, his head bowed, waiting for Ralph to speak his piece. He studiously avoids looking at the girls in the car.

RALPH
(lowering his voice)
Hey, Marty, we got an odd squirrel
here, you interested?

Marty allows his eyes to flicker quickly over the girl in the seat next to Ralph.

MARTY
Waddaya mean, Ralph?

RALPH
(turning his head
toward the rear of
the car and raising
his voice)
Hey, Louise, I want you to meet Marty
Pilletti. Marty, that's Louise Kelly,
inna back seat there.

MARTY
Hiya.

Louise, not an unattractive girl by any means, is a little
surlly at the moment. She merely nods at the introduction.

LOUISE
What are we going to do, just sit
around here all night?

RALPH
(addressing Marty's
bowed head in a quick
mutter)
Listen, Marty, these three squirrels
are nurses. We're all going over
Leo's house later because there's
nobody there. These are the squirrels
I told you about. Money inna bank,
man. Wanna get inna car? She's a
pretty nice-looking doll.

MARTY
I'm with a girl, Ralph.

RALPH
Get ridda her. This is money inna
bank.

MARTY
I can't do that, Ralph, because
somebody already brushed her off

once tonight.

RALPH

This is a good deal here, Marty.

Marty straightens, looks surreptitiously back to the corner where Clara is standing.

Clara stands alone on the corner. She is an angular, awkward, plain girl. Marty brings his attention back around to Ralph who is leaning out of the car window.

MARTY

(bending down to Ralph)

I can't do it, Ralph. Thanks anyway.

(looks toward back seat)

Very nice to have met you all.

LOUISE

Come on, let's get outta here.

LEO

Hey, Ralph, we might as well get going.

Ralph bends forward and starts the car.

MARTY

I'll see you, Leo.

LEO

I'll see you, Marty.

Marty takes a step or two back from the car, and Ralph begins the business of wheeling the car from out of its parking place. The car backs and fills once or twice and eventually clears and whisks into the street.

Marty stands looking after the departing car, then slowly turns and goes back up the sidewalk. He joins Clara and we...

DISSOLVE TO:

PILLETTI HOME, KITCHEN. NIGHT

Marty and Clara come into the dark house. Nobody is home.
Marty and Clara's silhouettes block the doorway momentarily.

MARTY

Wait a minute. Lemme find the light.

He finds the lights. The kitchen is suddenly brightly lit.
The two of them stand squinting to adjust to the sudden glare.

MARTY

I guess my mother ain't home yet. I
figure my cousin Thomas and Virginia
musta gone to the movies, so they
won't get back till one o'clock at
least.

Clara advances into the kitchen, a little ill at ease, and
looks around. Marty closes the porch door.

MARTY

This is the kitchen.

CLARA

Yes, I know.

MARTY

Come on inna dining room.

He turns the light on as he enters. Clara follows him into
the...

DINING ROOM.

MARTY

Siddown, take off your coat. You
want something to eat? We gotta whole
half-chicken in the icebox.

CLARA

(alighting tentatively
on the edge of a
chair)

No, thank you. I don't think I should
stay very long.

MARTY

Sure. Just take off your coat a minute.

He helps her off with her coat. He remains behind her, looking down at her. Conscious of his scrutiny, she sits uncomfortably, breathing unevenly. Marty takes her coat into the dark living room. Clara is patient but nervous. Marty comes back, sits on another chair, and there is an awkward silence.

MARTY

So I was telling you, my kid brother Nickie got married last Sunday. That was a very nice affair. And they had this statue of some woman, and they had whiskey spouting outta her mouth. I never saw anything so grand in my life.

(the silence again
falls between them.)

And watta meal. I'm a butcher, so I know a good hunka steak when I see one. That was choice filet, right off the toppa the chuck. A buck eighty a pound. Of course, if you wanna cheaper cut, get rib steak. That gotta lotta waste on it, but it comes to about a buck and a quarter a pound, if it's trimmed. Listen, Clara, make yourself comfortable. You're all tense.

CLARA

Oh, I'm fine.

MARTY

You want me to take you home, I'll take you home.

CLARA

Maybe that would be a good idea.

She stands. He stands. He's a little angry. He turns and

sullenly goes back to the living room for her coat.
Wordlessly, he begins to help her into the coat.

Standing behind her, he puts his hands on her shoulders,
then suddenly seizes her, and begins kissing her on the neck.
As Marty holds Clara, kissing the back of her neck, the
dialogue drops to quick, hushed whispers.

CLARA
No, Marty, please...

MARTY
I like you. I like you. I been telling
you all night, I like you...

CLARA
Marty...

MARTY
I just wanna kiss, that's all.

He attempts to turn her face toward him. She resists.

CLARA
No...

MARTY
Please...

CLARA
No...

MARTY
Please...

CLARA
Marty...

He releases her and turns away violently.

MARTY
All right! I'll take you home! All
right!

He marches a few paces away, deeply disturbed. He turns back

to her.

MARTY

All I wanted was a lousy kiss! What do you think, I was gonna try something serious with my mother coming home any minute!? What am I, a leper or something?!

He turns and goes into the living room to hide the flush of hot tears threatening to fill his eyes. Clara is also on the verge of tears.

CLARA

(more to herself than to him)

I just didn't feel like it, that's all.

Slowly, she moves to the archway leading to the living room. CAMERA ANGLES to include the living room where Marty sits on the couch with his hands in his lap, staring straight ahead. The room is dark except for the slanted light coming from the dining room.

Clara goes to the couch and sits on the edge beside him. He doesn't look at her.

LIVING ROOM.

MARTY

I'm old enough to know better. Comes New Year's Eve, everybody starts arranging parties, I'm the guy they gotta dig up a date for. Let me getta packa cigarettes, and I'll take you home.

He starts to rise but instead sinks back onto the couch, looking straight ahead. Clara looks at him, her face peculiarly soft and compassionate.

CLARA

I'd like to see you again. Very much. The reason I didn't let you kiss me

was because I just didn't know how to handle the situation. You're the kindest man I ever met. The reason I tell you this is because I want to see you again very much. I know that when you take me home, I'm going to just lie on my bed and think about you. I want very much to see you again.

Marty stares down at his hands.

MARTY

(without looking over
at her)

Waddaya doing tomorrow night?

CLARA

Nothing.

MARTY

I'll call you up tomorrow morning.
Maybe, we'll go see a movie.

CLARA

I'd like that very much.

MARTY

The reason I can't be definite about it now is my Aunt Catherine is probably coming over tomorrow, and I may have to help out.

CLARA

I'll wait for your call.

MARTY

We better get started to your house, because the buses only run about one an hour now.

CLARA

All right.

She stands.

MARTY

I'll just get a packa cigarettes.

He rises and goes into his bedroom. CAMERA ANGLES to include door to bedroom. Marty opens his bureau drawer and extracts a pack of cigarettes. He comes back out and looks at Clara for the first time. They start to walk to the dining room. In the archway, Marty pauses and turns to her.

MARTY

Waddaya doing New Year's Eve?

CLARA

Nothing.

They quietly slip into each other's arms and kiss. Slowly their faces part, and Marty's head sinks down upon her shoulder. He is crying, detectable from the slight shake of his shoulders. The girl presses her cheek against the back of his head. They stand. The SOUND of the kitchen door opening splits them out of their embrace. A moment later Mrs. Pilletti's voice is heard.

MRS. PILLETTI'S VOICE

(off-screen)

Hallo! Hallo! Marty?!

She comes into the dining room, stops at the sight of Marty and Clara.

MRS. PILLETTI

Hello, Marty, when you come home?

MARTY

We just got here about fifteen minutes ago. Ma, I want you to meet Miss Clara Snyder. She's graduate of New York University. She teaches chemistry in Benjamin Franklin High School.

This seems to impress Mrs. Pilletti.

MRS. PILLETTI

Siddown, siddown. You want some

chicken? We got some chicken in the ice box.

CLARA

No, Mrs. Pilletti. We were just going home. Thank you very much anyway.

MRS. PILLETTI

Well, siddown a minute. I just come inna house. I'll take off my coat. Siddown a minute.

Mrs. Pilletti pulls her coat off.

MARTY

How'd you come home, Ma? Thomas give you a ride?

MRS. PILLETTI

(nodding)

Oh, it's a sad business.

(turning to Clara)

My sister, Catherine, she don't get along with her daughter-in-law, so she's gonna come live with us.

MARTY

Oh, she's coming, eh, Ma?

MRS. PILLETTI

Oh, sure.

(to Clara)

Siddown, siddown. Marty, tell her siddown.

MARTY

Might as well siddown a minute, Clara.

Clara smiles and sits. Mrs. Pilletti likewise seats herself, holding her coat in her lap.

MRS. PILLETTI

(to Marty)

Did you offer the young lady some fruit?

MARTY

I offered her, Ma, she don't want nothing.

CLARA

No, thank you, really, Mrs. Pilletti.

MRS. PILLETTI

(to Clara with a sigh)

It's a very sad business, I tell you. A woman, fifty-six years old, all her life, she had her own home. Now she's just an old lady, sleeping on her daughter-in-law's couch. It's a curse to be a mother, I tell you. Your children grow up and then what is left for you to do? What is a mother's life but her children? It is a very cruel thing when your son has no place for you in his home.

CLARA

Couldn't she find some sort of hobby to fill out her time?

MRS. PILLETTI

Hobby! What can she do? She cooks and she cleans. You gotta have a house to clean. You gotta have children to cook for. These are the terrible years for a woman, the terrible years.

CLARA

You mustn't feel too harshly against her daughter-in-law. She also wants to have a house to clean and a family to cook for.

Mrs. Pilletti darts a quick, sharp look at Clara. Then she looks back to her own hands, which are beginning to twist nervously.

MRS. PILLETTI

You don't think my sister Catherine should live in her daughter-in-law's house?

CLARA

Well, I don't know the people, of course, but as a rule, I don't think a mother-in-law should live with a young couple.

MRS. PILLETTI

Where do you think a mother-in-law should go?

CLARA

I don't think a mother should depend so much upon her children for her rewards in life.

MRS. PILLETTI

Well, maybe that's what they teach you in New York University. In real life, it don't work out that way. You wait till you are a mother.

CLARA

It's silly of me to argue about it. I don't know the people involved.

MARTY

Ma, I'm gonna take her home now. It's getting late, and the buses only run about one an hour.

MRS. PILLETTI

(standing)

Sure.

CLARA

(standing)

It was very nice meeting you, Mrs. Pilletti. I hope I'll see you again.

MRS. PILLETTI

Sure.

Marty and Clara move toward the kitchen.

MARTY

All right, Ma. I'll be back in about an hour, an hour and a half.

MRS. PILLETTI

Sure.

CLARA

Goodnight, Mrs. Pilletti.

MRS. PILLETTI

Goodnight.

Marty and Clara go out through the kitchen. CAMERA STAYS on Mrs. Pilletti, who stands expressionlessly by her chair, staring after them. She remains there rigid even after the kitchen door has OPENED and SHUT.

FORDHAM ROAD. NIGHT

The biggest intersection in the Bronx is near the Grand Concourse at Fordham Road, which is the biggest boulevard. Despite the hour, the sidewalks are crowded with PEOPLE. The TRAFFIC is heavy with buses.

We PICK UP Angie walking up Fordham Road just about to the Grand Concourse. As he reaches the northeast corner of the intersection and stands, waiting for the light to change, he looks off-screen. Something captures his attention, and he calls out.

ANGIE

Hey!!

STREET OUTSIDE A DEPARTMENT STORE.

In front of Alexander's Department Store, the street is crowded, and a bus queue waits for the downtown Concourse bus. Marty and Clara are part of the queue.

ANGIE

(starting toward Marty)

and Clara, shouting)
Hey!

Angie starts into the street without waiting for the lights to change. Impatiently, he has to wait until traffic stops for the light.

ANGIE
(shouting as he goes)
Hey, Marty! Hey!

Marty and Clara still stand, seeming not to hear Angie.

ANGIE'S VOICE
(off-screen)
Hey, Marty! Marty!

Marty and Clara turn and stare off-screen.

Angie pushes his way through the CROWD on the sidewalk and manages to join Marty and Clara.

ANGIE
Where you been, for Pete sakes?! I
been looking all over for you.

MARTY
I looked for you, Angie, before I
cut out, but I couldn't find you.

ANGIE
I been looking all over for you!

Angie is absolutely unaware of, or simply refuses to acknowledge the presence of the girl. He has pushed himself in between Marty and Clara, and addresses himself entirely to Marty.

MARTY
What happened, Angie, was that we
thought we were just gonna go for a
short walk, and then we thought we
were gonna come right back, but we
got to talking. Listen, Angie, I
want you to meet Clara...

(he tries to turn the
sullen Angie toward
Clara)
Clara, this is my best friend, Angie.
I told you about him.

CLARA
How do you do?

Angie acknowledges the introduction with a surly nod.

ANGIE
(completely ignoring
Clara now)
Waddaya gonna do now?

MARTY
I'm gonna take Clara home. It's close
to one.

ANGIE
You want me to ride down with you?

MARTY
What for?

ANGIE
It's early.

MARTY
It must be one o'clock.

ANGIE
It's Saturday night! There's still
plenty-a action around!

MARTY
Angie, by the time I get Clara home,
it's gonna be one, one-thirty. By
the time I get home, it's gonna be
two o'clock. I gotta get up for ten
o'clock mass tomorrow.

Angie stares with thick, sullen jealousy at his best friend.
He turns sharply and starts away from Marty and Clara.

ANGIE
(as he goes)
All right, I'll see you!

MARTY
(calling after him)
Where you going?

Angie, feeling rejected and jealous, moves swiftly out into the other PEDESTRIANS on Fordham Road.

MARTY
(calling more loudly
after him)
I'll see you tomorrow after mass!

He stares for a moment at the departing form of his friend, then turns to Clara with a shrug and a smile, as if to say, "I don't know what's the matter with him." The long-awaited downtown bus ROARS up to the corner, blocking our view of Marty and Clara.

LOWER-MIDDLE-CLASS BRONX STREET. NIGHT.

Marty and Clara stroll along the walk toward the front doors of an apartment house.

APARTMENT HOUSE LOBBY. NIGHT.

Marty and Clara enter and cross the lobby toward the stairway. They move slowly.

MARTY
You got an elevator in this house?

CLARA
We just live one flight up.

MARTY
So I'll call you tomorrow.

CLARA
Okay.

Clara leans against the iron banister of the stairway.

CLARA

Call me about two-thirty, because I
won't be home from my aunt's till
about then.

The doors of the ELEVATOR slide open, and a middle-aged COUPLE comes out. They have obviously been having a heated exchange; but at the sight of Marty and the girl at the stairway, they become silent. They march across the lobby and out to the street in repressed silence. The door CLANGS behind them.

Marty and Clara have waited stiffly through this interruption, and now they look at each other and smile.

MARTY

Okay, so I'll see you tomorrow night
then.

CLARA

Okay.

Marty turns and moves across the lobby toward the street door.

OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT HOUSE.

Marty stands a moment in the clear black night air, expressionless, but within him, a strange exhilaration is beginning to stir. He mosies away from the building along the sidewalk, CAMERA panning with him.

He strikes out suddenly with a spirited stride, as if he knew where he was going.

176TH STREET.

CLOSER SHOT of Marty marching along 176th Street. He quickly reaches the Grand Concourse. Here he pauses a moment, a little at a loss for what direction to take – then remembers he needs the uptown bus.

He moves across the wide street to get to the other side of the boulevard. Again, he seems to lose track of which

direction is homeward.

He walks uptown a ways with a strange jerky stride, pausing every once in a while to see whether there's a bus coming.

Suddenly Marty breaks into a dog-trot, then drops back into the stiff stride as he approaches...

THE INTERSECTION OF THE GRAND CONCOURSE.

The corner near the bus stop is deserted. Marty stops, leans against the pole of the bus stop sign.

Abruptly, he turns and walks uptown a little further.

SERIES OF INTERCUTS: Marty strides, walks, stops short, goes to the curb desultorily, a few paces into the street, moves back. The traffic moves by him. He stands in the wide street, then with a gesture of magnificent expansiveness, he raises his arm and calls out.

MARTY

Taxi! Taxi! Hey, taxi! Taxi! Taxi!

CLOSE-UP of Marty standing in the street, crying...

MARTY

Taxi!... Taxi!...

FADE OUT.

PILLETTI HOME, MARTY'S BEDROOM. DAY

Marty is in his trousers and T-shirt. He whistles as he assembles his toilet articles for a shave. He starts out toward the living room, still whistling. Bright sunlight pours through the curtains on his window.

SECOND FLOOR.

Marty's whistling accompanies him to the second floor where he turns into the bathroom. CAMERA ANGLES to include Mrs. Pilletti's bedroom, disclosing her wearing an old faded batiste kimona, pattering around her room and cleaning. As Marty's toneless tune reaches her, Mrs. Pilletti turns her

head and stares off, listening.

THOMAS AND VIRGINIA'S APARTMENT. DAY.

Catherine, in the living room, is packing her meager but neatly folded belongings into an old European carpet bag. She has regained her stiff, mordant crustiness. The mild WAIL of a baby can be heard.

BEDROOM.

The crowded bedroom is furnished in white modern. It is cluttered by a baby's bassinet and other baby items. Virginia sits on the edge of the bed, holding the baby, quieting it. She is half-dressed, wearing her pajama top, a half-slip, no stockings; her hair is still uncombed. Thomas slouches against a chest of drawers, in morning semi-deshabille. He is obviously sick with guilt. Virginia looks anxiously at her husband then to the baby in her arms.

VIRGINIA

(heavy whisper)

Don't you think I feel lousy about this too?

THOMAS

All right, Ginnie. I don't wanna talk anymore about it.

(sits on a wooden chair, unrolls a fresh pair of socks he's been holding)

I don't think I got one hour's sleep the whole night.

(raises one leg to put a sock on, pauses with his heel on the edge of his chair)

Last night was the first time in my life I ever heard my mother cry, you know that?

VIRGINIA

Tommy...

THOMAS
(snapping)
I don't wanna talk about it!

He pulls his sock on angrily, then lets his leg fall back to the floor and just sits, one sock on, one sock in his hand. He looks sullenly in the direction of his wife.

THOMAS
(continuing, huffy)
I know what you're gonna say. A man's gotta stop being his mother's baby sooner or later. How many times you gonna say it? She's my mother, you know. I oughta have some feelings about her, don't you think?

VIRGINIA
Why do you always put me inna position of being the louse?

THOMAS
(in a furious whisper)
Virginia, I don't wanna hear no more about it!

He stands, then becomes aware he has to put on his other sock. He sits down again and pulls the second sock on. Virginia has had a hot reply in her mouth, but she forces it back. She rocks the baby a little.

VIRGINIA
Tommy, I love you, and I know you feel lousy right now, but we're never gonna be happy unless we have a chance to work out our own lives. We can't keep talking in whispers like this the resta our lives. We gotta have some privacy. We...

Thomas has risen, a slim, dark, unsettled young man in undershirt and trousers, holding his shoes in one hand. He starts toward the...

FOYER.

Thomas strides down the little foyer. He turns and looks into the living room. He watches his mother packing strange brown parcels into her bag.

THOMAS

(scowling)

Can't you wait five minutes? I'll drive you over inna car. I just gotta put my shirt on, that's all.

The old lady nods brusquely.

LIVING ROOM.

Thomas stands with his head bowed to hide the tears he feels sweeping into his hot eyes. Then he returns to his bedroom in his stocking-feet, carrying his shoes.

BEDROOM.

Thomas comes in just as Virginia bends over the bassinet, having gotten the baby back to sleep. Thomas cries to her in a furious whisper.

THOMAS

All right, get dressed, because we're gonna drive my mother over. Why couldn't you get along with her?! Why couldn't you make just a little effort?! She's a little hard to get along with! All right! All I asked you was try a little.

He turns from her, sits down on the bed miserably angry with the world, his wife, his mother, himself. The baby begins to whimper again. Virginia turns wearily to her husband.

VIRGINIA

Tommy...

THOMAS

(roaring out)

I don't wanna hear anymore about it, you hear me?

MARTY'S HOME, FRONT PORCH. DAY.

A small procession consisting of Thomas carrying his mother's carpet bag, his mother carrying small paper-wrapped bundles, and Virginia holding the baby comes across the front hedge. Thomas leads the parade with a muffled sorrow. They turn up the porch to the front door. Virginia remains in the small front yard. She is miserable.

PILLETTI HOME, DINING ROOM. DAY.

Mrs. Pilletti is dressed in hat and coat and all set to go to mass. She is bent over the dining room table piling the breakfast dishes and crumbing the table. She looks up as Thomas comes in carrying his mother's bag. Aunt Catherine is right behind him. Beyond the porch, we can see Virginia walking the baby around outside.

THOMAS

Hello, Aunt Theresa.

MRS. PILLETTI

Hello, Thomas, how do you feel?

THOMAS

(setting the bag down)

Ah, my mother, she drives me crazy. I hadda beg her to let me drive her over here. The martyr. She always gotta be the big martyr.

CATHERINE

Hey, will you go to mass, please. This one, he woke up this morning with salt in his nose. Do this! Do that! Will you leave me in peace, ah?

A burst of spirited song soars from upstairs. Mrs. Pilletti, Aunt Catherine and even Thomas pause to look up in the direction of the voice.

HALLWAY/STAIRWAY.

Marty descends the stairs whistling. He carries his jacket over his arm. He makes some final adjustments to his tie.

DINING ROOM.

Alert to Marty's mood, Mrs. Pilletti, Aunt Catherine and Thomas stand, waiting for him to join them downstairs.

MARTY
(ebulliently)
Hello, Aunt Catherine! How are you?
Hello, Thomas. You going to mass
with us?

CATHERINE
I was at mass two hours ago.

MARTY
Well, make yourself at home. The
refrigerator is loaded with food. Go
upstairs, take any room you want.
Thomas, you going to mass with us?

THOMAS
(nods)
Yeah, yeah, sure.

He abruptly goes out into the living room and onto the front porch.

MRS. PILLETTI
(to Catherine)
You wanna cuppa coffee?

Marty has followed Thomas out into the living room.

MARTY
Boy, beautiful day, hey, Thomas?

THOMAS
Sure, great if you ain't married.

Thomas goes out the door onto the porch. Marty stands in the open doorway. He looks out into the warm sunshine in the front yard.

MARTY

Hi, Virginia.

He goes out into the yard to Virginia. He is as gay as a bird. He takes the baby from Virginia's arms, holds it high up above him.

MARTY

(to baby)

Hey, little boy, you sure getting fat. You weigh more than a side-a beef now.

(beams at the baby)

Hey, Thomas, so I was telling you yesterday you was over my house – Mr. Gazzara, my boss, so he wantsa sell his shop, go out to California because his kids are all married, and he...

Thomas hasn't been listening to Marty and crosses quickly to Virginia.

THOMAS

Wadda you so sore about?

VIRGINIA

Oh shaddup, will you do me a favor?

Marty comes up to them, holding the baby.

MARTY

So Thomas, he does about twelve, thirteen hundred gross. Rent's a hundred and two. The problem, of course, is the supermarkets. That's what I wanna ask you. If I get together with a coupla other merchants, make our own supermarket...

Thomas has been trying to listen to Marty, but his thoughts are all with his own problem. He whirls on Virginia.

THOMAS

What about the time she wanted to make an old-fashioned Italian dinner for my brother, but you wouldn't let her!?

VIRGINIA

(with her own temper)

Waddaya talking about?!!

THOMAS

Once a month you couldn't let her use the kitchen!

VIRGINIA

I told her she could use the kitchen any time she wanted...

THOMAS

...You hadda be the boss inna kitchen alla time!

VIRGINIA

She don't wanna use my pots and pans!

MARTY

So Tommy...

VIRGINIA

Waddaya want me to do, go out and buy a whole new setta pots and pans?!

The baby in Marty's arms has started to cry a little.

MARTY

Tommy, gimme a coupla minutes, because I promised Mr. Gazzara I'd let him know tomorrow. See, what I wanna know, Tom, if a buncha individual retail merchants get together, how does it operate? On individual mark-ups? You know what I mean? Say I'm the butcher and Aldo Capelli, he's the dairyman and grocer, so suppose I mark up thirty-five percent, but he works on forty, so...

THOMAS

Waddaya talking about, do you know what you're talking about?

MARTY

No, I don't know. That's why I'm asking you.

The baby starts to cry again. Thomas turns to his wife.

THOMAS

Take the baby, will you?!

Virginia hurries over and takes the crying baby from Marty's arms, walks around comforting the child. Thomas turns back to Marty.

THOMAS

Wadda you wanna buy a shop for, will you tell me? You gotta good job, you got no wife, you got no responsibilities. Boy, I wish I was you, boy. Waddaya wanna tie yourself down with a shop? What's he want? Five thousand down? You're gonna have to carry a mortgage sixty, seventy bucks a month. A mortgage anna note from the bank. For Pete's sake, you're a single man with no responsibilities. Stay that way, boy. Take my advice.

MARTY

Well, you see, Thomas I figure the big problem is the supermarkets. But Patsy's shop, that's a specialized trade. The supermarkets don't carry Italian meat.

THOMAS

Who buys Italian meat anymore? You think my wife buys Italian meat?
(throws a baleful
glance at his wife)

She goes to the A&P, picks up some lamb chops wrapped in cellophane, opens up a canna peas, and that's dinner, boy.

VIRGINIA

Sure, all you wanna eat is that greasy stuff your mother makes.

Marty is a little taken aback by Thomas's frontal assault.

MARTY

Well, I understand the problem about the supermarkets, but I was talking to this girl last night, and she made the point that a likeable personality is a valuable business asset.

THOMAS

Marty, see that my mother is nice and comfortable, eh?

MARTY

Sure. This girl said...

THOMAS

What girl, what does she know?

(he whirls on his wife again)

Why don't you let her hold the baby once in a while?! Your mother, boy, she wantsa take the kid for a day, that's fine!

VIRGINIA

(her temper flaring again)

Your mother handles the kid like he was a yoyo!

Marty stands, watching the young couple yakking at each other. The little baby starts to cry again.

KITCHEN.

The two old sisters sit at the kitchen table, two untouched cups of coffee in front of them.

MRS. PILLETTI

Hey, I come home from your house last night, Marty was here with a girl.

CATHERINE

Who?

MRS. PILLETTI

Marty.

CATHERINE

Your son Marty?

MRS. PILLETTI

Well, what Marty you think is gonna be here in this house with a girl?

CATHERINE

Were the lights on?

MRS. PILLETTI

Oh sure.

(frowns at her sister)

This girl is a college graduate.

CATHERINE

They're the worst. College girls are one step from the streets. They smoke like men inna saloon. My son Joseph, his wife, you know, she types onna typewriter. One step from the streets, I tell you. Mrs. Pilletti ponders this philosophy for a moment.

MRS. PILLETTI

That's the first time Marty ever brought a girl to this house. She seems like a nice girl. I think he has a feeling for this girl. You heard him sing. He been singing like

that all morning.

Catherine nods bleakly.

CATHERINE

Well, that's all. You will see. Today, tomorrow, inna week, he's gonna say to you, "Hey, Ma, it's no good being a single man. I'm tired-a running around." Then he's gonna say, "Hey, Ma, wadda we need this old house? Why don't we sell this old house, move into a nicer parta town? A nice little apartment?"

MRS. PILLETTI

I don't sell this house, I tell you that. This is my husband's house. I had six children in this house.

CATHERINE

You will see. A coupla months, you gonna be an old lady, sleeping onna couch in her daughter-in-law's house.

MRS. PILLETTI

Catherine, you are a blanket of gloom. Wherever you are, the rain follows. Someday, you gonna smile, and we gonna declare a holiday.

Marty comes in from the living room, a little down after his session with Thomas and Virginia.

MARTY

Hello, Ma, waddaya say, it's getting a little late.

MRS. PILLETTI

Sure.

Marty goes to the sink to get himself a glass of water. He examines a piece of plaster that has fallen from the ceiling.

MARTY

Boy, this place is really coming to pieces.

(turning to his mother)

You know, Ma, I think we oughta sell this place. The whole joint's going to pieces. The plumbing is rusty. Everything. I'm gonna have to replaster the whole ceiling now. You know what we oughta do? We oughta get one of those new apartments they're building down on Southern Boulevard. A nicer parta town, you know? ...You all set, Ma?

Mrs. Pilletti exchanges a brief frightened glance with her sister.

MRS. PILLETTI

I'm all set.

She sends another frightened look at her sister and follows Marty out into the living room.

MARTY'S PORCH.

Marty, his mother, Thomas and Virginia with the baby file down the porch to the street on their way to church. Marty and his mother are both troubled. The anger has left both Thomas and Virginia, but they are both silent. At the far end of the alleyway, as they reach the street, Virginia puts her free arm through her husband's elbow. Thomas looks briefly at her and they exchange a look of commiseration. Everyone turns and disappears off into the street.

CHURCH.

A HIGH, WIDE ANGLE SHOT of the church establishes that stage of Sunday morning between the nine and ten o'clock masses. People flock around the doors of the church.

INSIDE THE CHURCH.

The parishioners are making their ways to the door. A few silent penitents still kneel here and there in the long empty rows of pews. The large, almost empty church is filled now

with organ MUSIC.

Both Marty and his mother seem a little depressed as they stand at the doorway just inside the church, as the nine o'clock mass people flow out, and the first of the ten o'clock mass people file in.

MRS. PILLETTI

That was a nice girl last night,
Marty.

(Marty nods)

She wasn't a very good-looking girl,
but she looks like a nice girl.

(she pauses, Marty
makes no reply)

I said, she wasn't a very good-looking
girl... not very pretty...

MARTY

(still amiable)

I heard you, Ma.

MRS. PILLETTI

She looks a little old for you. About
thirty-five, forty years old?

MARTY

She's twenty-nine, Ma.

A nearby kneeling penitent looks disapprovingly at Mrs. Pilletti and shushes her. The mother nods briefly.

MRS. PILLETTI

She's more than twenty-nine years
old, Marty. That's what she tells
you.

MARTY

What, Ma?

MRS. PILLETTI

She looks thirty-five, forty. She
didn't look Italian to me.

Marty frowns but remains silent.

MRS. PILLETTI
I said, is she Italian girl?

MARTY
I don't know. I don't think so.

It's Mrs. Pilletti's turn to frown. A silence. She turns back to Marty.

MRS. PILLETTI
She don't look Italian to me. What kinda family she come from? There was something about her I didn't like. It seems funny, the first time you meet her, she comes to your empty house alone. These college girls, they all one step fromma streets.

Marty turns, on the verge of anger with his mother.

MARTY
What are you talking about? She's a nice girl.

MRS. PILLETTI
She didn't look Italian to me.

A silence hangs between them.

MRS. PILLETTI
I don't like her.

MARTY
You don't like her. You only met her for two minutes.

MRS. PILLETTI
Don't bring her to the house no more.

MARTY
What didn't you like about her?

MRS. PILLETTI
I don't know! She don't look like

Italian to me. Plenny a nice Italian girls around.

MARTY

Well, let's not get inna fight about it, Ma.

The kneeling woman shushes them again. By now the nine o'clock worshipers have filed out, and Marty joins the flow of ten o'clock people moving in. His mother turns back to him again.

MARTY

(stopping her before she gets started)

What are you getting so worked up about? I just met the girl last night. I'm probably not gonna see her again.

They continue down the aisle of the church.

BAR. DAY.

An hour later, the after-mass CROWD is there. It's a little more crowded than weekdays. A WOMAN with a glass of beer in one hand, rocks a baby carriage with the other.

Marty enters the bar, moves along, ad-libbing "Hello" to someone at the bar, gets the attention of Lou, the bartender.

MARTY

Hello, Lou, Angie come in yet?

BARTENDER

He was here last night till about two o'clock. I hear you really got stuck with a dog last night.

MARTY

(glancing quickly at him)

Who told you that?

BARTENDER

Angie. He says she was a real scrawny-looking thing.

MARTY
She wasn't so bad.

He turns away from the bar annoyed, notes Ralph, sitting alone in one of the booths, reading the Sunday comics. Marty ambles over to him.

MARTY
Hello, Ralph. How'd you make out with those nurses last night, Ralph?

RALPH
(looking up)
Oh man, you shoulda come with us last night, Marty. That one for you was a real lunatic. How'd you make out?

The abruptness of the question rather startles Marty. It is not an expression he would normally associate with an evening with Clara.

MARTY
Oh, I hadda nice time...I didn't try nothing. She's a nice girl. I just met her last night, you know. I just talked with her. I didn't even try nothing...

He feels very ill at ease and a little guilty for defending himself.

MARTY
Listen, you see Angie, tell him I went home, I'll meet him after lunch.

He moves back down the bar and goes out into the street.

DISSOLVE TO:

MARTY'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM. AFTERNOON

Marty is seated at the dining room table. He has removed his jacket, tie and shirt, even his shoes, and is making himself

comfortable over a late Sunday lunch. With him are Angie and Joe, the Critic. Lounging in a chair but not at the table is Leo.

JOE

...so the whole book winds up, Mike Hammer, he's inna room there with this doll. So he says, "You rat, you are the murderer." So she begins to con him, you know? She tells him how she loves him. And then Bam! He shoots her in the stomach. So she's laying there, gasping for breath, and she says, "How could you do that?" And he says, "It was easy."

LEO

(without looking up
from his magazine)
Boy, that Mickey Spillane, boy he can write.

Angie reaches over to Marty's plate and filches a piece of rissole, evidently annoying Marty.

MARTY

We gotta whole pot inna kitchen. We give you a plate-a your own.

ANGIE

Oh, I couldn't eat nothing. My mother just stuffed me right up to the jaws.

This doesn't prevent him from filching a second piece of rissole.

JOE

What I like about Mickey Spillane is he knows how to handle women. In one book, he picks up a tomato who gets hit with a car, and she throws a pass at him. And then he meets two beautiful twins, and they throw passes at him. And then he meets some beautiful society leader, and she

throws a pass at him, and...

LEO

Boy, that Mickey Spillane, he sure can write.

ANGIE

Listen, somebody turn onna ballgame. It must be after one o'clock by now.

Marty looks down at his watch, then stands and starts for the phone, sitting on a chest of drawers at the other end of the room.

ANGIE

Who you gonna call?

MARTY

I was gonna call that girl from last night. Take her to a movie tonight.

ANGIE

Are you kidding?

MARTY

Listen, Angie, I wanna tell you, you were very impolite last night. I introduced you to the girl, you just turned and walked off. Now, why did you do that?

ANGIE

You got me mad, that's why. Hey, Joe, show Marty that picture.

Joe, having finished his dissertation on Mickey Spillane, is now studying another girlie magazine. He proffers an opened page to Marty, who stands over by the phone.

MARTY

Put that away, for Pete's sake. My mother's right out onna porch.

JOE

I wonder where they find those girls

that pose for them pictures.

LEO

Those are Hollywood starlets.

MARTY

Put it away, Joe. My mother'll come walking in.

Joe closes the magazine.

ANGIE

Marty, let's go downna Seventy-Second Street area tonight.

MARTY

I don't feel like going, Angie. I thought I'd take this girl to a movie.

ANGIE

Boy, you really musta made out good last night.

MARTY

We just talked.

ANGIE

Boy, she musta been some talker. She musta been about fifty years old.

JOE

I always figure a guy oughta marry a girl who's twenny years younger than he is so that when he's forty, his wife is a real nice-looking doll.

LEO

That means he'd have to marry the girl when she was one year old.

JOE

I never thoughta that.

MARTY

I didn't think she was so bad-looking.

ANGIE

She musta kept you inna shadows all night.

RALPH

Marty, you don't wanna hang around with dogs. It gives you a bad reputation.

ANGIE

Let's go downa Seventy-Second Street.

MARTY

I told this dog I was gonna call her today about two-thirty.

ANGIE

(angry)

Brush her. Listen, you wanna come with me tonight, or you wanna go with this dog?

MARTY

Waddaya getting so sore about?

ANGIE

I looked all over for you last night, you know that?

He turns away sulking. Marty doesn't pick up the phone but returns to his seat, upset.

JOE

Another book that I read by Mickey Spillane, I can't remember the name of it, but it was about this red-headed tramp he finds inna street, and he gives her some dough, because he's sorry for her... Wait a minute, I think that's the same book I was telling you about before...

MARTY

(to Angie)

You didn't like her at all?

ANGIE

A nothing. A real nothing.

Marty lowers his head. Over this, Joe's VOICE DRONES on.

JOE'S VOICE

(off-screen)

You know something...?

CAMERA ANGLE HOLDS on Marty looking down, as Joe's VOICE continues.

JOE'S VOICE

(off-screen)

...I can't tell one-a those Mickey
Spillane books from the other, but
he's a real good writer, though...

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

SNYDER APARTMENT. NIGHT

CLOSE ON television screen. Ed Sullivan is on, indicating the time is a little after half past seven. CAMERA PULLS BACK, disclosing Clara, Mr. and Mrs. Snyder in their living room. Apparently the Sullivan show is very funny at the moment, for the television audience roars with laughter. CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSE ON Clara. Another ROAR of LAUGHTER from the television that Clara watches, although her eyes are flooded with tears, several of which have already traced wet paths down her cheeks. Another ROAR of laughter.

DISSOLVE TO:

PILLETTI HOME, DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

Marty, Mrs. Pilletti and Catherine are eating silently at the table. Catherine reads an Italian newspaper as she eats.

MRS. PILLETTI

So what are you gonna do tonight,
Marty?

MARTY

I don't know, Ma. I'm all knocked out. I think I'll just hang arounna house and watch...

Suddenly he pauses, sharply aware of the repetition in his life. Mrs. Pilletti is also aware of it.

MARTY

Maybe, I'll go out and see what Angie and the boys are doing...

They eat silently a moment.

187TH STREET. BAR. NIGHT.

CLOSE-UP of Marty leaning against the wall in front of the bar. A group of young men lounge about, killing time.

Angie, Leo and Joe are among them. There are perhaps four or five other young MEN, loosely divided into two groups. The group that concerns us has Marty and the others mentioned and GEORGE, a young man in a sport jacket.

LEO

What time is it?

JOE

About eight o'clock.

ANGIE

(to George)

You don't feel like going downna Seventy-Second Street?

GEORGE

It'll take an hour anna hour back, and the whole evening's gone.

JOE

What's playing on Fordham Road? I think there's a good picture in the Loew's Paradise.

GEORGE

You guys feel like working up a game-
a cards?

ANGIE

Come on, let's go down Seventy-Second
Street, walk around. We're sure to
wind up with something.

CLOSE-UP of Marty, his head down, his eyes closed. The group
continues their dialogue back and forth. Their VOICES can be
heard as Marty's head slowly comes up.

JOE'S VOICE

(off-screen)

I'll never forgive LaGuardia for
cutting out burlesque outta New York
City...

GEORGE'S VOICE

(off-screen)

There's a burlesque in Union City.
Let's go over to Union City...

ANGIE'S VOICE

(off-screen)

Yeah, you're the one who don't even
wanna take a ride onna subway for
half an hour. Now, you wanna go alla
way over to Union City...

GEORGE'S VOICE

(off-screen)

I feel like playing cards. I saw
Richie Rizzo, that's what he said he
felt like doing...

JOE'S VOICE

(off-screen)

I don't feel like playing cards.
Waddaya feel like doing tonight,
Angie?

ANGIE'S VOICE

(off-screen)

I don't know. Wadda you feel like

doing?

JOE'S VOICE

(off-screen)

I don't know, Angie. Wadda you feel like doing?

A fury rises in Marty's face. He cries out at them.

MARTY

"What are you doing tonight?"... "I don't know, what are you doing?!" ...

CAMERA ANGLES over to the others who, at this outburst, stare at Marty astounded.

MARTY

(continuing)

The burlesque! Loew's Paradise! Miserable and lonely! Miserable and lonely and stupid! What am I, crazy or something?! I got something good here! What am I hanging around with you guys for?!

He has said this in tones so loud that it attracts the attention of the few PEOPLE on the street. A little embarrassed by the attention he's getting, he turns, opens the door to the bar, and goes into it.

After a stunned moment, Angie hurries after him.

INSIDE THE BAR.

Marty marches the length of the room toward the phone booths in the rear. CAMERA ANGLES to disclose Angie right behind him.

Marty is about to enter one of the phone booths, but he stops as Angie hurries up to him.

ANGIE

Watsa matter with you?

Marty pauses, one foot in the booth.

MARTY

You don't like her. My mother don't like her. She's a dog, and I'm a fat, ugly little man. All I know is I hadda good time last night. I'm gonna have a good time tonight. If we have enough good times together, I'm gonna go down on my knees and beg that girl to marry me. If we make a party again this New Year's, I gotta date for the party. You don't like her, that's too bad.

Marty has been fishing in his pocket for his address book. He opens it to its proper page and steps decisively into the phone booth.

Nearby, Angie prowls around outside the booth. The booth door is open. Marty starts to dial. A hush fills the room except for the CLICKING of the telephone dial.

INSIDE THE PHONE BOOTH.

The look of fury has drained from Marty's face. He holds the receiver to his ear, glances out toward Angie. CAMERA ANGLES to include Angie.

MARTY

(his old amiable self)

When you gonna get married, Angie? Aren't you ashamed of yourself? You're thirty-three years old. All your kid brothers are married. You oughta be ashamed of yourself.

Still smiling at his very private joke, Marty returns to the phone, and after a fraction of a second...

MARTY

Hello... Clara?...

As Angie looks miserable, and Marty slowly reaches out and pushes the phone booth door shut, and continues to talk into the phone, we very slowly...

FADE OUT.

THE END