

THE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS

by

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FINAL DRAFT

11/4/1988

FADE IN:

1 INT. APARTMENT - DUSK

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

VOICE

Hey.

Jack looks at the GIRL in the bed, then at the rest of the apartment. Not good.

JACK.

Hey.

GIRL

Whatcha doin' over there?

JACK

Gotta go.

GIRL

How come?

JACK

Job.

The girl glances at the bedside clock.

GIRL

Funny hours.

JACK  
Funny job.

GIRL  
Will I see you again?

Jack looks out at the dirty street again.

JACK  
No.

The girl doesn't appear terribly unnerved by this.

GIRL  
(the tux)  
You weren't wearing that, were you, earlier?

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

JACK  
Brought it.

GIRL  
Thank God. You look like a creep.

JACK  
Thanks.

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

Jack nods, grabs the bag, and moves to the door.

GIRL  
Hey.  
(as he stops)  
You got great hands.

Hearing this, a slow smile forms on Jack's lips and:

2 MAIN TITLES BEGIN

A) OMITTED  
thru  
E)

F) EXT. SEATTLE DOWNTOWN STREET - DUSK

Jeff walking. (Street wetdown.)

G) EXT. SEATTLE DOWNTOWN STREET - DUSK

Jeff walking. (Street wetdown.)

H) EXT. SEATTLE DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT.

Jeff walking on way to work.

I) EXT. SEATTLE DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT.

Jeff walking on way to work.

J) EXT. SEATTLE DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT.

Jeff stops at State Liquor store purchase.

MAIN TITLES END, we...

DISSOLVE TO:

3 EXT. A NICE DOWNTOWN HOTEL (STARFIRE) - NIGHT

As Jack approaches, he takes a hit off a flask of whiskey, then returns it to his pocket. A DOORMAN swings open the door.

JACK.

How'm I doing, Tommy?

DOORMAN.

Two minutes.

4 INT. STARFIRE LOBBY - NIGHT

As Jack enters the lobby, he lights a cigarette, and nods to a waitress (SHEILA) passing by.

JACK

Hey, Sheil. How's tips?

SHEILA

I ain't booking a cruise.

JACK

You seen my brother?

SHEILA

In the john.

5 INT. STARFIRE BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jack's brother, FRANK, is standing in front of the mirror, stuffing the collar of his tux with towels while LOUIS, an old black attendant, looks on. Jack enters.

JACK  
(a nod)  
Louis.

FRANK  
You're giving me an ulcer, Jack.

JACK  
I'm early.

FRANK  
Forty-five seconds doesn't qualify as early, Jack.  
Jesus, who's doing your tux these days?

JACK  
Moon.

FRANK  
Go to China Boy, will ya. You look like you just  
crawled out of bed.

Jack picks up a tiny spray can on the sink, reads it.

JACK  
"Be the envy of all your friends with Crowning  
Glory's Miracle Hair"...?  
(looking up)  
You gotta be kidding.

Jack studies the bald spot on the crown of his brother's head, then shakes the can. A MIXING BALL is heard.

JACK  
This is paint, Frank.

FRANK  
It's not paint.  
(pointing to the can)  
It's a "magical sheath which simulates a dazzling  
head of hair."

JACK

Frank, this is paint.

FRANK

Just help me put it on, okay? You're supposed to spray in a circular motion.

As Frank positions himself, Jack exchanges a glance with Louis. Shrugging, Jack gives the can a shake, steps back, and fires away.

FRANK

Well...?

Jack just stares. There is a dark spot on the back of Frank's head about the size of a scooter pie.

FRANK

Louis?

Louis looks up. His face could conceal a royal flush.

LOUIS

Dazzling...

APPLAUSE is heard as we...

CUT TO:

6 INT. STARFIRE LOUNGE - CLOSEUP - A CARDBOARD STAND-UP - NIGHT

featuring two 8x10 glossies of Frank and Jack (more hair) and in bold letters: "TONIGHT! THE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS!"

We HOLD on the stand-up, then RISE above it to reveal a candlelit lounge, where Jack and Frank sit behind matching grand pianos, a poor man's version of Ferrante and Teicher.

FRANK

(Mr. Smile)

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

The audience -- consisting of middle-aged out-of-towners swilling enormous banana daiquiris -- APPLAUDS.

FRANK

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

JACK  
(lighting cigarette)  
Thirty-one years, Frank.

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

JACK  
Lotta water.

FRANK  
Of course, back then, things were a little different. I was eleven, Jack was seven. and about the only one who would listen to us was the family cat, Cecil. We must've shaved three lives off that cat, eh, Jack?

The audience, having the benefit of the daiquiris, LAUGHS. Jack smiles like he's got a mouth full of razor blades.

FRANK  
But seriously. It's been fifteen years since Jack and I first stepped onto the stage as professionals. But even though we've played some of the finest venues in the world... there's one place that's always been, for us, a very special place, and that place is... this place, the Starfire Lounge.

Jack lays in a few soft bass chords.

FRANK  
Why? Well, I guess you could say it's the...  
(pregnant moment)  
...people.

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

7 INT. STARFIRE KITCHEN - LATER

Jack and Frank pass through the steamy hotel kitchen.

FRANK  
Now when we go in there, don't make trouble,

all right?

JACK

Who's gonna make trouble?

GIRL'S VOICE

Hi, Jack.

A young GIRL in an apron smiles at Jack.

JACK

Hi, Jenny. New earrings?

JENNY

Like 'em?

JACK

Swell. You got something for me?

The girl holds up a huge soup bone.

JENNY

Been hiding it from Hector all day.

JACK

You're a doll.

FRANK

(as they exit)

I mean it Jack. Behave.

JACK

Like an angel.

8 INT. LLOYD'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Frank stands across the desk from the hotel's very young, very condescending assistant manager (LLOYD) as he prepares a cash envelope. Jack stays in the doorway, smoking.

LLOYD

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

FRANK

Uh... thanks, Lloyd.

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

LLOYD

Only Jack, do me a favour, will ya, pal. If you wanna smoke onstage, put on a pair of sunglasses and go play with the niggers on State Street.

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

LLOYD

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

Lloyd slaps a slender envelope onto the desk.

FRANK

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

LLOYD

I'll call you.

FRANK

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

LLOYD

I'll call you.

Frank bites down and takes the envelope from the desk.

JACK

Count it.

FRANK

Huh?

JACK

Count it.

FRANK

Jack...

JACK

Count the fucking money, Frank.

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

FRANK

It's all here.

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

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

9 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jack comes out onto the street with the wrapped up soup bone. Frank follows with the stand-up.

FRANK  
Very nice, Jack. Very nice.

JACK  
Fuck him.

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

JACK  
Fuck him.

FRANK  
Fuck him. Great, terrific. Fuck him.

As Frank reaches his car, he opens the trunk for the stand-up, then counts out Jack's share of the night's money.

JACK  
So we on tomorrow night?

FRANK  
Maybe Thursday. I hear the harpist at the Sheraton's got appendicitis.

Frank slams the trunk closed.

JACK  
Hey.

As Frank turns, Jack tosses him the Miracle Hair can.

JACK  
Don't forget your hair.

10 INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Small, old, sparsely furnished. A piano by the window, an

old phonograph, a bookcase full of records. Few photographs.

As Jack enters, EDDIE, an old black Labrador, walks over and yawns.

JACK

Try to control your excitement, will ya, Ed.

Eddie nuzzles the soup bone.

JACK

Let's see your mouth.

(taking a look)

All right. But go easy.

As Eddie retreats with the bone, Jack breaks the collar of his shirt and pauses by the piano. He considers the keys but, instead, flips on the PHONOGRAPH. As Bill Evans' smoky piano solo "Turn Out the Stars" spills quietly into the room, Jack takes off his tie... then stops. He glances to the kitchen: dishes drip-drying in a rack. He touches an ashtray: clean.

Taking two silent steps backward, Jack peers into the bedroom. Inside, curled up on the bed, is a little girl (NINA). Jack studies her a moment, then, taking the bottle of whiskey from his coat, sits at the piano by the window, staring into the night.

11 EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING (EARLY)

The sun begins to peek through the buildings of Jack's neighborhood. Suddenly, ringing out over the rooftops is "JINGLE BELLS" -- not the entire song, just the first few bars, over and over.

12 INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - MORNING

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

NINA

If you want some coffee? I made some coffee.

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

NINA

(the piano)

I practiced last night. I think I'm ready for "oh, what fun it is to ride."

Jack nods. Suddenly the SOUND of heavy footsteps is heard. Jack and Nina glance up at the ceiling.

JACK

Sounds big. What's he do?

NINA

I don't know. Ma said it's like a lawyer, only the hours are more regular. All I know's he came to take the TV one afternoon and ended up staying for dinner.

JACK

What happened to the donut king?

NINA

Married.

Upstairs, a door slams and heavy feet ECHO in the stairwell. Nina peers out the window.

NINA.

No breakfast. Maybe they had a fight.

Two deep thumps SOUND on the ceiling, a signal.

NINA

Gotta go. Teach me later?

Jack nods. As Nina exits, Jack turns to the couch and gives Eddie a nudge.

JACK

Hey.

12A EXT. WILLIE'S PIANO SHOWROOM - DAY

The front window is cluttered with photographs of celebrity patrons, including two of Jack and Frank in their tuxedos.

13 INT. PIANO SHOWROOM - DAY

Inside, Jack and Frank pick through a sea of rentals.

FRANK

I just think it's time you came out for a visit, that's all. I mean, how long's it been? A year?

JACK

(pointing to a piano)  
Try the Bosen.

As Jack plays a little "Alfie" on one grand, Frank follows suit on another. Jack frowns and glances across the room, where a fat MAN sits absorbed in the racing form.

JACK

When you getting the Steinways back in, Willie?

WILLIE

Wednesday next.

Jack frowns again, moves to another piano.

FRANK

Look. Here's what I'm saying. You come out to the house next weekend. You spend a few hours with the kids. You have a ball.

JACK

I hate your kids, Frank.

FRANK

You're their uncle.

JACK

Only by relation. Besides, they hate me too.

FRANK

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

JACK

They tried to electrocute me.

FRANK

It was an accident.

JACK

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

FRANK

Cindy.

JACK

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

FRANK

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

JACK

You got weird kids, Frank.

FRANK

(wearying of this)

Look. It's Cindy's birthday. It'd be nice if you came out.

Jack

(pointing)

Try the Yamaha.

Jack and Frank do a little "I Think I'm Going Out Of My Head", then Frank looks up for a verdict.

JACK

(exiting)

Tag 'em.

FRANK

The Capri, Willie. Monday and Tuesday.

14 INT. CAPRI HOTEL/LUAU LOUNGE - NIGHT

Decked out in Hawaiian shirts, Jack and Frank bang out "The Girl From Ipanema," while the audience -- three sorry-looking businessmen -- stares glumly at the grass-skirted waitresses yawning by the bar.

FRANK

...Thank you. The concludes our show for the evening. Jack and I only hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as we did.

15. INT. CAPRI HOTEL MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

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

MAN (CHARLIE)  
Frankie.

FRANK  
You wanted to see me, Charlie?

CHARLIE  
Yeah, yeah. Come on in.

FRANK  
Little slow tonight.

CHARLIE  
(waving it off)  
Mondays. How's Jack?

FRANK  
Okay.

CHARLIE  
The reason I wanted to see you alone... I mean the kitchen crew, the maids -- everybody loves him. But me, he makes me nervous.

FRANK  
Sometimes he makes me nervous.

CHARLIE  
Yeah. Well, anyway.

Charlie takes an envelope, hands it to Frank.

FRANK  
What's this?

CHARLIE  
Your pay.

FRANK  
What about tomorrow?

CHARLIE  
It's all there. Both nights.

FRANK  
What are you saying, Charlie?

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

FRANK

Twelve years.

CHARLIE

Maybe it's time we took a vacation from one another.

FRANK

Vacation? Christ, Charlie, it's a Monday night. You said so yourself... I've got the pianos for two nights...

CHARLIE

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

16 INT. CAPRI HOTEL LOBBY , NIGHT (MINUTES LATER)

As Jack waits, he notices an elegantly dressed woman watching him. She smiles. As Jack considers her, Frank appears, carrying the stand-up.

JACK

Charlie's aim getting any better?

Frank keeps walking. Jack notices the stand-up.

JACK

What's with the board?

FRANK

We're dark tomorrow.

JACK

Dark?

FRANK

Don't worry. Charlie stayed true. I'll give you your share this weekend. At the house.

As Frank moves quickly out of the door, the CAMERA PUSHES IN SLOWLY on Jack's face.

17 OMITTED

thru

18a

19 EXT. STREET/FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY

A taxi dumps Jack out onto the street of shabby tract houses. In his rumpled city suit, Jack looks like a cheap gangster amid the weedy lawns and overgrown junipers. He stuffs the gift he's carrying into his coat and walks up to the small white house, presses the bell. No response.

The back yard is small, with a short chain link fence surrounding it. Two kids -- a girl (CINDY) and a boy -- wearing party hats and buoyance devices, are splashing around in a build-it-yourself above-ground pool. When they see Jack coming, they hunker down like crocodiles, only their heads visible.

JACK

Hey, kids. Dad home?

The two heads say nothing.

JACK

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

Still nothing. Jack frowns, takes out a cigarette, pats his pocket for matches. No matches.

JACK

Shit.

The kids' eyes widen at this profanity. Jack ponders things a moment, then steps over the fence.

At which point, the tiniest head begins to SCREAM.

JACK

Hey, kid. Take it easy.

No use. The kid's a world-class screamer. Suddenly Frank comes racing out of the house.

FRANK

Cindy! What is it?

(seeing Jack)

Jack.

JACK

Your doorbell doesn't work.

FRANK

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

(to Jack)

It's probably just the excitement of seeing you again.

As Jack nods slowly, we...

CUT TO:

20 INT. FRANK'S DINING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

A battered birthday cake, which reads "Happy Birthday Cindy", sits amid crumpled party hats and shreds of gift wrap. Jack stands alone, looking out the window into the back yard. Turning, he glances at the cake, then exits.

21 INT. FRANK'S HALLWAY - EARLY EVENING

At the end of the hallway, shadows cling to the ceiling outside the kitchen and VOICES can be heard -- the sound of family. As Jack moves towards the light, a half-open door catches his eye. Stopping, he pushes the door open, flips on a lamp.

22 INT. BAKER BOYS' ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Elvis has Graceland. The Fabulous Baker Boys have this little room in a tract house in the suburbs.

Memorabilia is everywhere: music ribbons, newspaper clippings, photographs of Jack and Frank at every age, always dressed alike, smiling identical smiles. The first stand-up is there, carefully mounted and framed. Sheet music, dusty and dog-eared, is everywhere, piled in drunken stacks.

But most noticeable are the pianos: two tiny uprights, perfectly matched, their simulated ivory keys yellowed with age.

Jack enters and surveys all around him. There is a shelf crowded with shot glasses from a hundred hotels, and, next to that, a stack of souvenir coasters from another hundred. Seeing a tiny monkey with "Hula Girl

Hideaway" printed on it's belly (lighter), Jack gives one of the little plastic arms a flick and -- snap -- the little tiki torch in the other hand flames up. Jack lights the unlit cigarette in his mouth, replaces the monkey.

Slowly, Jack's eyes come back to the pianos. He taps a key on the one nearest him and a curious expression falls over his face. He moves to the other piano, taps a key. They're in tune.

Turning, Jack sees that little Cindy is standing behind him, holding a pocket radio. She looks at it, then takes a step forward and holds her arms up to him. Jack looks wary. She shakes her arms impatiently and he bends down. Putting her hands on his neck, she gives him a kiss, then runs out of the room.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Looks like you've found yourself a girlfriend.

Jack looks up, sees Franks' wife, DONNA.

JACK

The young ones always break your heart.

Donna nods, gestures to the pianos.

DONNA

Which one was yours? I can never remember.

Jack taps the one nearest to him and Donna nods again, then studies a photo on the wall.

DONNA

Funny... I don't ever seem to come in here... you guys were really something, weren't you?

JACK

Yeah, well, Frank always made sure we dressed sharp. Said that was half of it.

Donna nods. She and Jack obviously don't talk much.

DONNA

So, how's that dog of yours?

JACK

Losing his teeth.

Donna nods slowly, then does a little shiver.

DONNA

Gee, it's cold on here, isn't it? Think I need a sweater.

Donna starts to exit, then stops by the door.

DONNA

Thanks for coming, Jack. The radio, that was nice.

As Donna exits, Jack notices a stack of glossies on a table. As he touches them they fan into a dozen images of himself.

23 INT./EXT. FRANK'S CAR - NIGHT

As Frank drives Jack back to his apartment, Jack taps an unlit cigarette on the dash.

FRANK

(a shiver)

Jesus, it's gonna be mean this year, huh?

Jack taps the cigarette.

JACK

What happened the other night, Frank? With Charlie.

Frank says nothing, just driving.

JACK

He paid us off, didn't he? Fifteen years, Frank. No one paid us off.

FRANK

He made a deal. There's no shame in it.

Jack stares at Frank, then looks back out the window.

FRANK

We gotta talk.

JACK

Talk.

FRANK

I been thinking maybe we should make some changes.

(pauses)

I been thinking maybe we should take on a singer.

Silence. Jack taps the cigarette again.

FRANK

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

JACK

I wouldn't say exactly halfway, would you?

FRANK

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

JACK

That's what we agreed.

FRANK

If you're unhappy with the arrange...

JACK

I'm not unhappy.

FRANK

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

JACK

Frank. Fuck it. Okay?

(beat)

How much? For the singer.

FRANK

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

Jack laughs coldly.

FRANK

What?

Jack says nothing, just tapping the cigarette again.

FRANK

Two pianos isn't enough anymore, Jack.

Jack looks out the window, at the night flickering by.

JACK

It never was.

24 INT. WILLIE'S REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

A YOUNG WOMAN in a pink sweater and short black skirt stands in a tiny room in the back of Willie's showroom, holding some sheet music. Sammy Davis Jr.'s face is on the sheet music. Frank is sitting with a notepad on his lap. Jack is at the piano.

FRANK

Good morning, miss...?

YOUNG WOMAN (MONICA)

Moran. Monica Moran.

FRANK

All right, Miss Moran...

MONICA

Actually, that's my stage name.

FRANK

I'm sorry?

MONICA

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

FRANK

Blanche...

MONICA

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

FRANK

Well, that's fine.

MONICA

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

FRANK

Right.

MONICA

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

FRANK

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

MONICA

"Candy Man."

(worried)

Is that all right?

FRANK

It's one of Jack's favourites.

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

MONICA

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

Monica begins to hand Jack the sheet music.

FRANK

Uh... he knows it.

MONICA

Really? Isn't that a coincidence?

JACK

Small world.

Monica smiles. She likes Jack.

FRANK

Well, shall we?

Probably not, but Jack begins to play anyway. Swinging her arms and tapping her foot, Monica gets a feel for the rhythm, then launches in -- between beats -- so that Jack has to scramble over a chord to rescue her.

MONICA

"Who can take a sunrise

Sprinkle it with dew

Toss it in the air and make a groovy lemon pie

The Candy Man can

The Candy Man can..."

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

FRANK

Thank you, Miss Moran, that's enough.

Monica -- eyes closed, arms flung wide -- is fully caught up in the moment. Frank looks at Jack. Jack shrugs and continues to play.

FRANK

Miss Moran... Miss Moran... BLANCH!

Monica's eyes pop open, her mouth shut.

MONICA

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

FRANK

Yes, it is.

MONICA

Well... thanks.

(to Jack)

Bye. Boy, you're good.

JACK

Drive carefully.

As Monica exits, Jack and Frank glance at one another apprehensively and a --

25 MONTAGE BEGINS

in which a parade of singers come forth to offer their own unique interpretations of:

A) "Feelings,"

B) "I Gotta Be Me," (sung by twins)

C) "This Is My Song," and perhaps most appropriately,

D) "What Kind Of Fool Am I?,"

When it's all over, Jack and Frank -- ties limp, collars broken -- look like they've been mugged.

FRANK

This must be statistically impossible.

26 INT. WILLIE'S SHOWROOM - DAY

A YOUNG WOMAN appears in the doorway, heavily BACKLIT. A silhouette in high heels. Willie, eating a corn beef on rye, looks up.

YOUNG WOMAN

Hey. You one of the Fabulous Baker Boys?

27 INT. WILLIE'S REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY (SAME TIME)

Frank is counting names on his note pad.

FRANK

Thirty-seven. Thirty-seven girls and not one who can carry a tune.

JACK

There was a certain surreal quality to it.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)

Goddamnit!

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

SUSIE

Brand new Thursday. Believe it?

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

SUSIE

This where the auditions are?

FRANK

This is where the auditions WERE. We're finished.

SUSIE

What about me?

FRANK

You're an hour and a half late.

SUSIE

Yeah, well, I had a little trouble catching a cab.

FRANK

Punctuality. First rule of showbusiness.

SUSIE

(looking around)

This is showbusiness?

FRANK

(in no mood)

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

SUSIE

(touching her lip)

Just like that, huh? I come all the way down here, break a heel, and you're not going to give me a chance because I have gum on my lip and I'm a few minutes late?

FRANK

You're an hour and a half late. Do you want me to say it again?

SUSIE

It's not exactly bewitching me.

(stepping in)

Besides, you're not going anywhere.

FRANK

I beg your pardon?

SUSIE

Intuition, I've had a hunch about this all day. Only I gotta say, in my mind it was a little more glamorous. And anyway, if I'm so late how come you're still here?

FRANK

We ran long.

SUSIE

Uh huh. So where's the winner?

Frank looks a little thrown. Susie nods knowingly and makes a little clicking noise as she taps her head.

SUSIE

See? What I tell you? Intuition.

FRANK

(pleading)

Jack.

Jack studies the girl, shrugs.

JACK

What've we got to lose?

FRANK

Terrific. Thirty-eight.

SUSIE

What's that? Thirty-eight? You guys have some kind of code or something?

Jack gestures as if to say, 'it's nothing.'

SUSIE

(to Frank)

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

Frank ignores this and sits down with the notepad.

FRANK

Name?

SUSIE

Susie. Susie Diamond.

JACK

Catchy. You have any previous experience as a singer, Miss Diamond?

SUSIE

No.

FRANK

You have any entertainment experience at all?

SUSIE

Well... for the last couple years I've been on call for the Triple A Escort Service.

Jack and Frank exchange a glance.

FRANK

Any RATIONAL reason you think you can sing professionally, Miss Diamond?

SUSIE

Well, I figure if you want to see if you can swim, throw yourself in the water. What's the worst that can happen?

FRANK

How about drown?

SUSIE

You know, my bet is that you're too literal a person.

JACK

(intervening)

What is it you'd like to share with us today, Miss Diamond?

SUSIE

„More Than You Know..

JACK

Key?

SUSIE

Low.

Jack nods and begins to play.

SUSIE

Real slow, okay?

Frank slumps in his chair, ready to be tortured again.

SUSIE

„More than you know  
More than you know  
Man of my heart  
I love you so  
Lately I find  
You're on my mind  
More than you know...

Whether you're right  
Whether you're wrong  
Man of my heart  
I'll string along  
You need me so  
More than you'll ever know....

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

SUSIE

So?

FRANK

Uh... We'll let you know.

Jack shoots Frank a glance.

SUSIE

Don't leave a girl hanging. Second rule of showbusiness.

Frank's not amused.

SUSIE

Yeah, well, okay. 'Bye, Bakers. Nice socks.

Susie walks out barefoot. Jack's eyes have Frank pinned.

FRANK

I just thought we should talk about it between ourselves. I mean, don't you think she's got a little too much... personality?

JACK

I think she's got half a voice. That makes her a goddamn diva in this choir. We put one of those other girls onstage, we're gonna get arrested.

(leaning forward)

And in case you didn't notice, I'm not sure anybody's gonna be keeping track of how many notes she hits.

FRANK

What? Her? She looks like a tramp.

JACK

Trust me.

FRANK

(the notepad)

Look, not all of them were awful. Here, Teresa Meyers. A very nice low soprano. Sweet, unassuming...

JACK

Low soprano? That girl could make bats cry. Besides, she was sixteen. What're we gonna do, help her with her algebra between sets?

Frank stares glumly at the notepad.

JACK

Frank. There ain't no pearls in a litter box.

FRANK

All right. I'll call her.

Frank rises wearily, then freezes.

JACK

What?

28 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SHOWROOM - DAY

Jack and Frank dash outside. Nobody.

FRANK

We can always look her up in the book.

JACK

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

The sound of a MATCH STRIKING is heard. There, lighting a cigarette in the doorway, is Susie. She exhales.

SUSIE

Intuition.

29 INT. WILLIE'S REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY.

The new trio poises for their first rehearsal.

FRANK

Ready?

Jack nods.

FRANK

Ready?

Susie, sitting on a stool smoking, nods without looking up from her lyric sheet. Frank pauses, then...

FRANK

Ready?

Jack squints strangely at Frank. Frank turns to Susie.

FRANK

Ready?

SUSIE

What are we, an orchestra all of a sudden?

Frank glares at her.

SUSIE  
READY.

Frank begins to play the opening passage of "Can't Take My Eyes Off of You". Jack joins in, then Susie. Unfortunately, Jack and Frank, accustomed to playing alone, are a tad overwhelming.

SUSIE  
Fellas, fellas...

Jack and Frank stop.

FRANK  
What's the problem?

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

Jack and Frank look at one another.

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

Jack and Frank just stare.

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

FRANK  
(icily)  
No. We are not supposed to be backing you up.

SUSIE  
What I mean is...

JACK  
We'll bring it down.

Susie's eyes shift to Jack.

JACK  
Okay?

SUSIE

Okay.

30 EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

Once again, "Jingle Bells" is heard. Plaintively picked out on PIANO.

31 INT. BATHROOM - JACK'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING (SAME TIME)

A tuxedo, freshly pressed, hangs in the shower as Eddie watches Jack soap his face with a shaving brush, then picks up a razor. As NINA CLINKS badly on the final note of "in a one horse open sleigh", Jack almost slices open his throat.

JACK

Sharp! F Sharp!  
(eyeing his throat)  
Jesus.

As Nina appears in the doorway, she sees the blood welling on Jack's neck.

NINA

You're bleeding, Jack.

As Jack gives her a "no kidding" look.

JACK

Hand me a towel, Chopin

Nina starts to gather up towels, cleaning up, and hands one to Jack. She notes the shaving brush.

NINA

You shave like a old movie, Jack.  
(nodding to ceiling)  
Bigfoot gets his out of a can.

JACK

Yeah? How do you know?

NINA

I saw his stuff in the bathroom.

JACK

Sounds serious.

NINA

Uh uh. No toothbrush.

JACK

What do you mean?

NINA

No toothbrush. Toothbrush is serious. The donut king...?

JACK

Yeah?

NINA

He had a toothbrush. And toothpaste.

JACK

I thought he was married.

Nina exits with an armful of laundry.

NINA (O.S.)

He was married, but he was serious.

32 INT. HILTON LOBBY - NIGHT (AN HOUR LATER)

As Frank paces, Jack smokes calmly.

FRANK

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

JACK

She'll get here.

FRANK

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

JACK

Awe inspiring.

FRANK

Yeah, well, yours isn't. Let me run a comb through  
it.

JACK

Get out of here!

FRANK

It's not gonna hurt you.

JACK

I'll hit you, Frank. I swear.

Frank hesitates, like a basketball player trying to feint an opponent, then takes a flick at Jack's hair. Jack cuffs him on the shoulder.

FRANK

You hit me.

JACK

I told you I was gonna hit you.

He looks capable of hitting him again, too.

FRANK

All right, I'm a little wound up.

JACK

You're a fucking alarm clock.

FRANK

I just wish she'd get here.

JACK

She's here.

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

FRANK

Christ, look at her.

(walking over)

Good evening, Miss Diamond. You're late.

Susie is still looking at the stand-up, which is unchanged except for a small notation at the bottom: WITH GUEST VOCALIST..

SUSIE

Guest vocalist? Who's next week? Beverly Sills?  
And how come you guys are the only ones with  
your pictures on the poster?

FRANK

We'll talk about it later. Where's your dress?

SUSIE

(to Jack)

What's he talking about?

FRANK

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

SUSIE

Do I look like I,m naked?

FRANK

That! Are you insane!

SUSIE

(to Jack)

He doesn,t like the dress, right?

Before Jack can reply, Frank grabs Susie,s arm.

SUSIE

Hey!

FRANK

Come on. We don,t have much time.

33 INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DRESS DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

As the trio dashes into Ladies Wear, Frank begins to flip frantically through the dress racks.

FRANK

What do you wear? An eight?

SUSIE

(offended)

A six.

FRANK

My wife wears a six. You don,t look like a six to me.

SUSIE

I WEAR A SIX.

FRANK

Okay, okay. Here, how about this?

SUSIE

Save it for your wife.

FRANK

Jack, you find anything?

Jack has drifted to lingerie.

JACK  
Maybe.

FRANK  
Here, how's this?

Frank holds out an inky black dress. Susie sizes it up.

FRANK  
Close enough. Let's go.

Frank begins to drag Susie into the dressing room.

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

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

SUSIE  
(from the dressing room)  
Nine.

FRANK  
Nine?

SUSIE (O.S.)  
NINE!

FRANK  
(to himself)  
Big feet.

34 INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - SHOE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank and Jack work the shoe department quickly.

FRANK  
See anything?

JACK  
How about these?

Frank grabs the shoe out of Jack's hand and gestures to a SALESMAN who looks like Jimmy Breslin.

FRANK

Hey! Do these come in black?

SALESMAN

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

FRANK

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

SALESMAN

(glowering) Yeah. They come in black.

FRANK

Okay. Give me a pair of nines. Pronto.

The salesman glances casually at Jack.

SALESMAN

Does he want a pair, too?

35 INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DRESS DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

As Jack and Frank return to Ladies Wear, Frank jettisons the shoe box and tissue paper.

FRANK

All right, we got your shoes.

Just then, Jack and Frank notice Susie, standing in front of a mirror in the new dress. The dress is open down to the small of her back. It's a nice back.

SUSIE

(turning)

What do you think?

FRANK

Uh... good.

SUSIE

(to Jack)

Zip me up?

As Jack takes the zipper, he gives Frank a what did I tell you, glance.

SUSIE

Shoes?

FRANK  
Right.

Frank puts the shoes down and Susie steps in.

SUSIE  
They're tight.

FRANK  
They're nines.

SUSIE  
Well they're aspiring to be sevens.

FRANK  
We can buy new ones tomorrow. Don't worry.  
We'll take these out of your share.

SUSIE  
You're a prince.

36 OMITTED

37 INT. HILTON KITCHEN - NIGHT

As the trio rushes in, Frank hands Jack the Miracle Hair can, then turns to Susie.

FRANK  
Okay, now remember, Jack and I go on first, I do the set-up, then introduce you. And you say...

SUSIE  
(as Jack sprays Frank's head)  
Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, I can't tell you how thrilled I am to be here.

As Susie starts to inquire about Frank's head, RAY, the assistant manager, leans into the kitchen.

RAY  
Winding your watch these days, Frankie?

FRANK  
We had a little emergency, Ray.

RAY

(seeing Susie)

Who's this, Minnie Pearl?

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

FRANK

Scissors! We need scissors here!

RAY

(exiting)

I want seventy-five minutes, Frankie.

FRANK

Jesus... Let's go, Jack. Fix your tie.

WAITRESS

(in passing)

Good luck, guys. It's a pretty ugly group. They're sending back the cheeseballs.

As Jack and Frank exit, Susie turns and sees a TINY MAN in an apron holding a meat cleaver.

TINY MAN/CARLOS

No scissors.

38 INT . HILTON LOUNGE - NIGHT

As the Bakers slide quickly behind their pianos, Frank bumps his head on the microphone.

FRANK

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

The audience peers at Jack as if he were some curious life form they've never seen before. Jack and Frank exchange a wary glance.

39 INT. HILTON KITCHEN - NIGHT

Susie, sitting on a stool, fits something on her wrist while Carlos looks for a good angle to get at the tags. As the waitress passes by, Susie snares a drink.

WAITRESS

Hey!

SUSIE

Just a sip. To kill the butterflies.

WAITRESS

Okay. But no lipstick. Hey, what's that on your wrist?

SUSIE

The next hour and a half of my life.

Carlos brings the cleaver down with an ominous chop.

40 INT. HILTON LOUNGE - NIGHT

An audience of stone.

FRANK

This is nice. I feel an unspoken warmth here. We may not know each other's names, but over the years we've shared something. A little music. A little laughter. Maybe even... a few tears. But I guess that's what life's about, huh?

Dead silence. As Frank glances at Jack, Jack cuts a rueful grin.

FRANK

Well, anyway. This is a very special evening for Jack and I, because tonight we have with us a young lady who we think is very exciting...

Smoking nervously offstage, Susie checks her wrists, which is fitted with tiny cards, each containing the lyrics to a song.

FRANK

As far as I'm concerned, she couldn't have chosen a better place to make her debut.

(solemnly)

Because, for us, there's one place that's always been a very special place. And that place is this place, the Ambassador Lounge. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to a very special lady with a very special way of singing a song, Miss Susie Diamond...!

Absently crushing her cigarette into a container of cocktail napkins, Susie strides to the microphone, which, unfortunately, is not on.

FRANK

(whispering)

The switch. Hit the switch.

SUSIE

Switch?

(hitting it, voice booming)

What fucking switch?

Silence. Susie looks at the audience.

SUSIE

Pardon me.

Jack and Frank glance at one another, then quickly plunge into the opening number.

SUSIE

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

The feeling at this point, it would seem, is not mutual. Susie glances at her wrist, finds the song she wants, then grabs the microphone. It's stuck. She gives it a yank, trying to free it, but pulls so hard that the rubber band holding the cards snaps.

Mystified, Jack and Frank watch as the couple nearest the stage is showered in tiny cards. Then they notice Susie.

She's frozen. Stiff.

Jack looks at Frank. Frank looks at Jack. Then...

FRANK

(singing)

I work at the Palace ballroom...

Every head in the lounge, Jack's included, swivels to Frank.

FRANK

But gee that place is cheap  
When I get back to my chilly old room  
I'm much too tired to sleep...

Jack looks at Frank like he's insane. Frank nods earnestly to him as all heads swivel to Jack.

JACK

(reluctantly)

I,m one of those lady teachers  
A beautiful hostess you know  
One that the palace features  
At exactly a dime a throw....

Jack,s voice -- damning evidence that he and Frank are related -- brings Susie around. She takes the next lines right out of Frank,s mouth.

SUSIE

Ten cents a dance  
That,s what they pay me  
Gosh how they weigh me down

Ten cents a dance  
Pansies and rough guys  
Tough guys who tear my gown....

Compared to what preceded her, Susie sounds like Streisand. The audience -- bewildered, but oddly charmed -- applauds spontaneously. The effect on Susie is immediate. Hitting on all cylinders now, she grips the microphone like a trophy.

SUSIE

Seven to midnight I hear drums  
Loudly the saxophone blows  
Trumpets are tearing my eardrums  
Customers crush my toes...

Sometimes I think I,ve found my hero  
But it,s queer romance  
All that you need is a ticket  
Come on big boy, ten cents a dance....

41 EXT. HILTON SERVICE ENTRANCE - NIGHT (LATER)

The new trio comes out into the night.

FRANK

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

SUSIE

I apologised.

FRANK

(to Jack)  
Did you hear it.

JACK  
Fucking.

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

FRANK  
FUCKING.

SUSIE  
For Christ sake, I SAID it. I didn't DO it. Besides, I don't think they were too offended, do you?

Susie pulls out some crumpled bills. Frank grabs them.

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

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

FRANK  
WE DO NOT TAKE TIPS. I'll apply this to the cost of the dress.

Frank puts the money away. Susie watches, steaming.

SUSIE  
Then I want my name on the poster. And my picture! And these shoes are too goddamn tight!

Susie hurls the shoes at Frank and stalks off barefoot. Jack, leaning against a wall, watches with amusement.

JACK  
Nice girl.

On Frank's expression we hear the opening NOTES of 'Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You,' and a MONTAGE begins.

42 INT. VARIOUS LOUNGES - NIGHT - MONTAGE

of Susie and boys performing the song in one lounge after another, playing to increasingly enthusiastic crowds, no empty tables now. As the song ends, we close on the cardboard stand-up, newly done over with a picture of

Susie and an accompanying exclamation: „SEE THE SENSATIONAL SUSIE DIAMOND!“. As the final CHORD sounds, the

MONTAGE ENDS and we --

43 INT. LLOYD'S OFFICE AT STARFIRE - NIGHT

Where, once again Jack and Frank stand before the supercilious Lloyd.

LLOYD

I gotta hand it to you, guys. This two Jacks and Jill bit -- very sharp. Where'd you find her, anyway. The girl.

FRANK

Ah, you know these kids. They hang around. We figured we'd give her a break.

LLOYD

You've got a kind heart, Frankie. Well, give her a tip from me, will ya: The smaller the dress, the larger the crowd.

(closing an envelope)

Okay, guys, there you go. Don't spend it all in one place.

As Frank reaches for the envelope, Lloyd pulls it back.

LLOYD

Oh... maybe you want to count it, Jack.

FRANK

We trust you, Lloyd. You know that.

Frank takes the envelope and starts to leave.

LLOYD

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

Frank glances at Jack, giving it to him.

JACK

We'll call you.

As Lloyd's face falls, we --

44 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE OF HOTEL - NIGHT (STARFIRE)

An exultant Frank spins giddily out of the hotel.

FRANK

Did you see his face? Did you see it! We'll call you..

Jack calmly lights a cigarette, says nothing.

FRANK

The world is good, little brother... Don't let anybody tell you different...

As Frank dances away with the stand-up, Jack notices Susie standing at the corner, watching Frank too, a slight smile on her face.

SUSIE

Night, Baker.

45 EXT. CITY - DAY

The city, gray and cold. Once again we hear a tentative PIANO: Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way. Oh what fun it is to ride... Oh what fun it is to ride... Oh what fun...

46 OMITTED

47 EXT. VETERINARY CLINIC - ESTABLISH - DAY

47A INT. VETERINARY CLINIC WAITING ROOM - DAY

Jack and Eddie wait with several other pet owners and their pets.

48 INT. VETERINARY OFFICE - DAY

Jack looks on as a VET examines Eddie's mouth.

DR. FINNEGAN

Mmm... mmm hmm...

(looking up)

They gotta go.

JACK

Go? What do you mean?

DR. FINNEGAN

Five,s my guess. Maybe more. Won,t know till I get in there.

JACK  
How will he eat?

DR. FINNEGAN  
Cottage cheese to start. A banana now and then.

JACK  
No bones?

DR. FINNEGAN  
(patting Eddie)  
,Fraid those days are over, my friend. Don,t worry, Mr. Baker. We,ll knock him out. He won,t feel a thing.

As Dr. Finnegan exits, Jack looks at Eddie.

JACK  
You shoulda brushed, pal.

49 OMITTED

50 INT. MOONLIGHT LOUNGE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Jack, wearing a Santa hat, sits on a busing cart backstage, smoking. Frank and Susie, in the midst of a discussion, are also wearing Santa hats.

SUSIE  
Look, all I,m telling you is what Bernadette over the Hilton said. The nights we play, she,s drawing three times the tips because the Chivas is jumping out of the bottle and the room,s pearls instead of polyester.

FRANK  
I don,t understand. You,re saying we should...

SUSIE  
Ask for a percentage of the bar.

FRANK  
Mel Torme doesn,t get a percentage of the bar.

SUSIE  
Maybe he never asked.

HOUSE MANAGER  
(passing by)  
Five minutes, Baker.

FRANK  
(to Jack)  
You hearing this?

JACK  
How much you say she,s drawing?

SUSIE  
Let,s put it this way. Two months ago she,s  
wearing a Timex. Now she,s got a Seiko strapped  
to her wrist. And it sure as hell wasn,t the Hilton  
that put it there.

FRANK  
You,re not actually listening to this, are you?

Jack rolls the tip of his cigarette in an ashtray.

JACK  
Jerry Stein books the Hilton, right?

FRANK  
For eight years.

JACK  
Forget the bar. We,d look like amateurs. But why  
not bump him for an extra hundred up front.

FRANK  
And if he tells us to take a walk?

JACK  
We play the other side of the street.

FRANK  
I don,t like it. It,s not the way we play the game.

Susie watches Jack crush out his cigarette.

JACK  
The game is changing.

51 INT. MOONLIGHT KITCHEN - NIGHT (AFTER THE SHOW)

Becky, the pretty young kitchen worker, drops a bunch

of bananas into a bag.

BECKY

The cottage cheese is at the bottom. You're sure this is what you want?

JACK

(exiting)

Perfect. Merry Christmas, Becky.

52 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE MOONLIGHT - NIGHT

As Jack exits the hotel, he finds Susie standing on the sidewalk, shaking her purse. She sees the bag he's carrying.

SUSIE

Ol, Freckles in the kitchen slip you a stack of T-bones?

JACK

Not exactly.

Susie fishes a pack of cigarettes out of her purse. Empty.

SUSIE

Damnit!

Jack offers his pack.

SUSIE

No thanks. I never touch American cigarettes.

(searching again)

Three fifty a pack and I go through 'em like toothpicks.

JACK

Huh?

Susie hands Jack the empty cigarette box. It has an exotic design.

SUSIE

Paris Opals. Three fifty a pack. Know how much that is a piece?

JACK

Seventeen cents.

SUSIE

Seventeen and a half. But I figure, If you're gonna be sticking something in your mouth, might as well make it the best.

JACK

As Jack ponders this, Frank steps outside in a lumpy Santa suit.

FRANK

What do you think?

Jack and Susie just stare.

FRANK

Thought I'd give the kids a thrill.

(moving off)

Don't forget Monday. Bright and early. We've got a long drive.

As Frank leaves, Susie goes back to her purse.

SUSIE

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

(finding an Opal)

Ah, here's a lost soul.

Jack flicks out his lighter, snaps it. Susie inhales.

SUSIE

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

JACK

(studying her)

You feel like a cup of coffee?

SUSIE

(looking up)

Now? On Christmas Eve?

Jack nods.

SUSIE

Nah. Gives me the shakes. Anyway, I'd better get home. Rest the pipes.

JACK

You want me to walk you?

Susie looks at Jack a little funny.

SUSIE

No. Thanks.

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

SUSIE

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

JACK

Forget it.

SUSIE

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

JACK

Forget it.

SUSIE

Nothing personal...

Jack holds up his hand. Susie just stands there.

JACK

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

53 EXT. VET CLINIC - NIGHT

A sign flickers: „Twenty-Four Hour Emergency Care.“

54 INT. VET CLINIC - NIGHT

Inside, a KID with deep-set eyes is bent over a magazine.  
Jack enters, still wearing his tux.

KID

Super Chief around the corner.

JACK

Huh?

KID

Bathroom. Super Chief around the corner.

JACK

No, I, uh, left a dog here this morning.

The kid looks up, eyes Jack's tux warily.

KID

Regular hours are eight to five.

JACK

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

KID

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

JACK

Yeah, well, I thought maybe...

KID

Hey, pal. We're not communicating, are we?

The kid shakes his head with contempt.

KID

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

JACK

(uncomfortable)

Yeah.

KID

All right. Hold on.

JACK

The name's Baker...

KID

Save it. What's he look like?

JACK

(puzzled)

Black. Lab.

KID

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

The Kid disappears. Jack stands frozen, watching the swinging door come to rest, looking like a man who, unexpectedly, finds a razor pressed to his throat.

Suddenly the door swings back open.

KID

Nope. Just a couple poodles.

As the kid hunches down again, Jack stares at him. Slowly, as Jack's shadow falls across his magazine, the kid looks up. Jack looks like he could EAT a dead poodle.

JACK

I WANT MY DOG.

KID

Listen, pal. Get the hell...

Jack, quick as knife, pinches the Kid's nose between his thumb and forefinger.

JACK

No, YOU listen, you little fuck. You either get off your candy ass and get me my dog or I'm gonna roll that magazine and stick it straight down your throat.

(leaning in close)

Are we communicating now?

55 OMITTED

55A INT. HALLWAY - JACK'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Jack, with Eddie slung over one shoulder, mounts the stairs to his apartment.

56 INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (SAME TIME)

Nina is watching an old Christmas movie in the dark, the walls of the apartment dripping with black and white snow.

JACK

(entering)

Hey. How about a little light in here.

Hearing Jack, Nina turns and flips on a lamp.

NINA

Eddie!

JACK

Forget it. He's still circling the airport.

Jack plops Eddie onto the couch and heads for the kitchen.

NINA

I didn't know he was coming home tonight.

JACK

Yeah, well, we sorta skipped the paperwork.  
Besides, it's Christmas, right?

Nina just nods, strokes Eddie. Jack studies her, then grabs a carton of eggnog and two glasses.

JACK

So, where's Ma tonight?

Nina just shrugs.

JACK

You play her the song.

NINA

Maybe tomorrow, she said.

Nina looks up and sees the carton of eggnog.

NINA

From Hurley's?

JACK

Eighty proof. Think you can handle it?

Nina nods. As Jack fills the glasses, Nina takes the Santa hat from his pocket.

NINA

Jack.

JACK

Yeah.

NINA

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

JACK

(a beat)

Okay.

Jack settles next to Nina, staring out the window with her.

NINA

I think I,m getting drunk.

Jack studies the lights twinkling in the darkness beyond the window.

JACK

That,s what you,re supposed to do on Christmas Eve.

57 INT./EXT. FRANK,S CAR - MORNING

As Frank drives through the city, Susie pores over a slick hotel brochure.

SUSIE

Get this: Each room is an event, an excursion into unprecedented luxury. Step outside and the adventure continues with your own private terrace.... Jesus, this place is like OZ.

Frank glances at the brochure dispassionately. Susie looks up from the brochure.

FRANK

You don,t think it really looks like that, do you?

SUSIE

It,s right here. Pictures.

FRANK

Welcome to the road, Dorothy. You,re about to lose your virginity.

58 EXT. FRONT OF JACK,S BUILDING - MORNING

As Frank turns the corner into Jack,s street, Jack is sitting on a suitcase in front of his building... with Eddie.

FRANK

What the hell...?

As Frank stops the car, he gets out, looks at Eddie.

FRANK

He,s just seeing you off, right?

Jack picks up his suitcase, moves to the trunk.

FRANK

Jack. This is not possible. Jack...

59 INT./EXT. FRANK'S CAR - MORNING

Jack and Eddie sit in the back. Susie hangs over the front seat, studying Eddie.

SUSIE

You try mashed potatoes? Or how 'bout yams? I love yams. Put me right to sleep.

FRANK

He doesn't need to sleep, he needs to eat.

SUSIE

I'm just throwing out suggestions.

FRANK

The dog just had oral surgery. Why don't you two give him a few days before you set him up at a smorgasboard.

Frank, so agitated he's let the car wander, gets some vigorous HONKING from the next lane.

FRANK

(yelling out the window)  
That the only tune you know!

JACK

Hey. You're spooking Ed.

FRANK

(to himself)  
I'm spooking Ed.

60 EXT. KING'S HOTEL - DUSK

The hotel, done in a sort of King Arthur motif.

61 INT./EXT. FRANK'S CAR - DUSK

As Frank guides the car down a simulated cobblestone drive, Susie smiles.

SUSIE

Is it just me? Or is that one spectacular hotel?

FRANK

(unimpressed)

Stunning.

Two boys in jodhpurs descend upon the car immediately, opening the doors with exaggerated courtesy.

SUSIE

Why, THANK YOU.

(to Jack, Frank)

I'll see you boys inside?

As Susie strolls inside, she gives them a little wave with the brochure.

62 INT. KING'S MANOR, LOBBY - NIGHT

Susie stands in the lobby, fixed on the brochure. We HOLD on the picture in her hands -- a lobby of rich velvets and handsome woods, gleaming under a magnificent vaulted ceiling -- then TILT UP SLOWLY to the real thing.

A perfect match.

As the doors behind her open, Susie turns to see Jack and Frank enter. They stop cold. Eddie yawns.

SUSIE

Come on, Toto. Tell the Tin Man and the Scarecrow to get the lead out. Dorothy's got a five day engagement. Guaranteed.

63 INT. FRANK AND JACK'S ROOM - NIGHT

A magnificent room, with a pair of mammoth fruit baskets.

Frank is lining family photographs on the dresser.

FRANK

I took the right side of the closet like always, okay?

JACK

Okay.

FRANK

Since I have the bed on the right and the drawers on the right, I figured it's easier to remember.

JACK

Good idea.

FRANK

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

JACK

Right.

Just then, Susie enters from the other side of the suite, through the connecting bathroom. She has a piece of fruit in her hand.

SUSIE

Looks like Carmen Miranda had an accident in my room.

(seeing their baskets)

They must get a deal on these things. What do you make of this?

Susie holds up the tiny furry fruit in her hand.

FRANK

Kiwi.

SUSIE

Jesus. It's got more hair than you, Frank.

(exiting)

No peeking at tub time.

63A EXT. HOTEL GROUNDS - INNER COURTYARD - NIGHT

The inner courtyard is a maze of low hedges and small bridges, with a tiny stream running through it all. As Susie and Eddie inspect the menagerie of topiary animals along the way, Jack and Frank follow several yards behind.

FRANK

I'm telling you right now, I'm not gonna put up with it. Did you see what she ate at dinner?

Jack, working his mouth with a toothpick, studies Susie's trim figure up ahead.

FRANK

Prime rib, confetti pasta, a festive cheese platter, my potato, and two desserts. Two.

JACK

You never eat your potato. Besides, we're not paying for it. What do you care?

FRANK

You think they'd don't keep track of these things?

Frank spots Eddie, up ahead, sniffing a topiary animal.

FRANK

Oh, that's very attractive. Your dog just went to the bathroom on an elephant.

JACK

I think it's a unicorn.

FRANK

And she has no business talking about my head.

JACK

Frank. Relax, will ya. You know what happens when you get tense on the road.

Frank gives Jack a look.

JACK

Howard Johnson? Four years ago.

FRANK

I do not sleepwalk.

JACK

Frank. I found you down in the lobby at 3 A.M. sitting by the Christmas tree in your pajamas.

FRANK

I went down for a pack of Chiclets, I saw the tree, I sat down for a few minutes. That is not sleepwalking.

JACK

Then how come you leave the bathroom light on?

Frank, a little thrown, stops.

FRANK

I leave the light on in case either of us has to get up in the middle of the night.

JACK  
(walking on)  
Mm hm.

FRANK  
You want me to leave it off tonight? Fine, I'll leave it off...

64 INT. JACK AND FRANK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Pitch dark, except for a tiny sliver of light coming from the bathroom. Suddenly, the BLARE of BIG BAND MUSIC is heard coming from Susie's side of the suite.

A bedside lamp flicks on. Frank.

FRANK  
What the hell is this?

Jack squints awake. Eddie, in the chair by the window, looks up groggily.

FRANK  
Do you hear this? Do you?

JACK  
I do now.

Frank, wearing boxers, gets out of bed.

FRANK  
This is great. Before we play a single note, we're gonna get thrown out.

Jack sits up, takes a cigarette.

JACK  
So she's playing a little music.

FRANK  
A little music! She's got the Harry James Orchestra in there.

JACK  
Ellington.

Frank yells through the bathroom.

FRANK  
Hey!

JACK  
Frank.

FRANK  
What?

JACK  
You look a little tense.

FRANK  
Of course I'm a little tense. It's two o'clock in the morning. She's gonna wake up everyone in the hotel.

Suddenly there's a KNOCK on the door.

FRANK  
See? See?

As Frank opens the door, a hulking FIGURE is there.

HULK  
Massage?

SUSIE'S VOICE  
Down here, gorgeous.

Susie is leaning out her door, Perdido, is BLASTING into the hallway. She eyes Frank's boxers.

SUSIE  
Funny, I would have figured you for jockeys, Frank.

65 OMITTED  
thru  
68

68A EXT. "KING'S MANOR" HOTEL - MORNING

69 INT. FRANK AND JACK'S ROOM - MORNING (SAME TIME)

Jack, rubbing a bad night's sleep out of his eyes, glances over at Frank's bed. Eddie is lying there, lost in deep slumber. A light SNORING is heard and Jack looks

down between the beds.

Frank. Blissfully asleep.

70 INT. "KING'S MANOR" DINING ROOM - DAY

Darkness. Quickly, one chandelier after another burns on, illuminating a grand dining room. At the far end sit two dazzling Steinways.

SUSIE

Holy shit.

The trio, standing by a panel of light switches, stares up at the chandeliers.

SUSIE

You know, it's the least dusted lighting fixture in the world. Fulla spiders. That's a fact.

Jack and Frank don't quite know how to respond to this.

SUSIE

Guy I met on an escort gig sold 'em.

As Jack and Frank nod, Susie looks at the stage.

SUSIE

Hey, turn 'em off.

Susie dashes to the other end of the room, to the stage.

SUSIE

Come on. Kill 'em.

FRANK

(doing it)

Do you mind telling us exactly what it is we're doing?

SUSIE

(out of the darkness)

When I say go, you hit the lights. Okay? Okay?

FRANK

(sarcastically)

Sure. Why not?

SUSIE

Okay... Go!

As Frank hits the switches, the chandeliers trip on, sending a rolling wave of light towards the stage.

SUSIE

Ladies and gentlemen! The Sensational Susie Diamond!

As the stage bursts to life, Susie is revealed, head thrown back, arms outstretched. Lena Horne couldn't do it better.

Finally, Susie breaks her pose. Jack and Frank are staring at her.

SUSIE

Oh. And The Fabulous Baker Boys...

As Jack and Frank look at each other, MUSIC begins, and we --

CUT TO:

71 INT. KING'S MANOR, DINING ROOM

A sea of elegantly-dressed couples dancing cheek to cheek on the dance floor, while others sit at candlelit tables, sipping wine. As the stage drifts INTO VIEW, Susie steps forwards and begins to croon, The Look Of Love, while Jack and Frank underscore her voice with lush phrasings. The atmosphere is dreamlike, hypnotic.

Almost too good to be true.

72 EXT. FRANK AND JACK'S TERRACE, NIGHT (LATER)

The trio is on the terrace, surrounded by champagne buckets and caviar, radio purring SOFT MUSIC. Frank's hair looks a little wild, as if someone has been rubbing his head.

FRANK

(euphoric; smashed)

Why kid ourselves? It's time to set new goals. Cruise ships... it's ours if we want it.

SUSIE

Fulla rats. I guy I escorted gave me the lowdown.

FRANK  
(undeterred)  
After that... Europe.

SUSIE  
Europe?

FRANK  
Music,s the international language.

SUSIE  
I thought love was.

FRANK  
Mark my words. From this night forward, our  
lives will never be the same.

SUSIE  
Tell you what, Frank. You get more pop out of  
two glasses of champagne than anyone I know.

FRANK  
This is a long way from Hula Girl Hideaway,  
huh, Jack? Remember? Banana trees in the lobby.

JACK  
Takahama,s Tahitian.

FRANK  
Takahama,s? We play there. I thought we just  
stopped for teriyaki.

JACK  
Three nights.

FRANK  
(to Susie)  
It,s amazing. He can remember every place we  
ever played. The day, the month, the year, how  
many shows -- you name it. When was  
Takahama,s, Jack?

JACK  
August. ,74.

FRANK  
See? He,s brilliant. Really. Brilliant. Hey, Jack.

JACK  
Hm.

FRANK

You're brilliant.

JACK

Thanks.

FRANK

(to Susie)

Same with music. You should've seen him when we were kids. No one could ride the keys like Jack. Miss Simpson would play something once and that was it -- he had it.

Susie, intrigued by this, studies Jack.

SUSIE

Really?

FRANK

I never won a single blue ribbon until the day Jack showed up drunk at Spring Recital and played 'Moon Over Cuba' instead of 'Clare de Lune.'

Susie glances at Jack.

JACK

The mood just hit me.

FRANK

Hey... 'Moonglow.'

Frank turns up the VOLUME of the radio and looks at Jack with a smile. Jack shoots him a warning glance.

SUSIE

'Moonglow,...?'

FRANK

High school formal. I didn't know how to dance. Jack did the boxstep with me for a week.

JACK

It wasn't a week, it was an afternoon.

SUSIE

You two are closer than I thought.

JACK

He paid me.

FRANK

Worth every penny. It was my first big social with Donna. We fell in love on the dance floor.

I have a beautiful wife, two beautiful children... all because of my brother.

JACK

I think you're overestimating the boxstep.

Suddenly Frank slips into Susie's arms and begins to dance with her, humming to the radio. Susie laughs, then goes with him. Jack takes a sip of champagne, watching.

FRANK

It was just like this on our honeymoon. The moon, the stars... Remember, Jack?

JACK

I wasn't there.

FRANK

Oh, right. My first solo gig. God, she was gorgeous. Couldn't believe she was mine. How come I got so lucky, Jack?

JACK

You're a lucky guy.

FRANK

I am. I am a lucky guy. She could've married anyone, but she chose me...

(to Susie)

You know I've never kissed my wife on New Year's Eve. Not once. Always onstage somewhere.

This seems to make Frank a little melancholy and he almost stops dancing. Finally, he pulls away.

FRANK

I think I'm drunk. You two dance. I gonna go sit with the wallflowers.

As Frank turns Susie toward Jack, they glance at each other awkwardly.

SUSIE

I don't know. I'm not used to leading.

FRANK

Come on, Jack. Give the girl a glide.

SUSIE

I think maybe your little brother prefers to dance alone.

Susie smiles slightly, offers Jack a cigarette.

JACK

No thanks. I never touch French cigarettes.

Susie,s drunk enough that this tickles her a bit. Jack steps forward and takes her hand and they begin to move.

SUSIE

Your brother,s a pretty good dancer.

FRANK

Big heartbreaker. Never had to say a word. Couple turns on the dance floor and that was it.

SUSIE

(amused)

REALLY.

FRANK

(tapping his knees)

Got ,em right in the knees. They practically had to carry the girls off the floor.

SUSIE

How thrilling.

JACK

Frank, why don,t you have another drink?

FRANK

I,m sleepy.

JACK

Why don,t you go to sleep then.

FRANK

All right.

Frank grabs a bottle and disappears into the bedroom.

SUSIE

Looks like I lost my chaperone.

JACK

I think you,re safe.

Jack presses in closer, moving smoothly to the music.

SUSIE

So, where do you keep all your blue ribbons,  
Baker?

JACK

Frank keeps them.

Jack slides his hand a little lower on Susie's back.

SUSIE

Nice night, huh?

JACK

Hm-hm.

Susie swallows, melting into the rhythm of Jack's movements, into his body, drifting to the purr of the MUSIC, swirling under the stars. Suddenly, she dips in a little quivering motion and Jack catches her.

JACK

Careful.

Susie looks a little shocked by her body's betrayal. She separates from Jack and takes a step back.

SUSIE

I... I think I've had too much to drink. Champagne goes right to my... head.

JACK

Maybe we should call it a night.

Susie nods. A smile flickers on Jack's lips, then he turns away. Susie looks down.

At her knees.

73 INT. FRANK AND JACK'S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Seemingly empty, both beds unmade and unoccupied, a champagne bottle on the carpet, a tuxedo jacket hanging cockeyed on the closet floor, and Frank... fast asleep in the chair by the window.

74 INT. KING'S MANOR, LOBBY - MORNING (EARLY)

As Susie steps out of the elevator, THEO, the clerk at the front desk, motions to her.

THEO

Oh, Miss Diamond. These just arrived for you.

A dozen red roses are sitting on the desk.

THEO

Looks like you've got an admirer.

SUSIE

There's no card.

THEO

The gentleman who left them said he would be in contact with you. I can have someone put them in water if you like.

SUSIE

Nah, that's all right.

Susie takes the roses and turns back to the elevators. As the doors open, Eddie trots out, heading off across the lobby. Susie watches him go by, then we...

CUT TO:

75 INT. KING'S MANOR, CORRIDOR - EDDIE - MORNING

A moment later, coming toward us down a corridor off the lobby. As he passes out of sight, Susie appears at the opposite end.

SUSIE'S POV

as Eddie disappears into the grand dining room. Curious, she follows. As she draws closer, the SOUND of a piano becomes clear. Peering inside, she finds Jack playing alone at one of the grands onstage.

76 INT. KING'S MANOR, DINING ROOM - MORNING

In the vast emptiness of the room, the piano resonates powerfully and the music Jack makes is like nothing we've heard him play before. Fluid and unpredictable, it is played with the focused abandon of a jazz hand. Susie watches, transfixed.

As he finishes, Jack notices Susie, but says nothing, instead pouring himself another glass of whiskey and starting to play again.

SUSIE

Working overtime?

JACK

I like the crowd.

Susie smiles slightly.

JACK

(the roses)

Win a pageant?

SUSIE

First runner-up. Story of my life.

Jack doesn't react, just keeps playing. Susie drops the flowers onto a table and walks over to the piano.

SUSIE

What's this? You're playing?

JACK

(shrugging)

Just thinking out loud.

SUSIE

Nice.

JACK

Hm?

Susie watches Jack's hand glide deftly over the keys, then looks at his face. He is oblivious to all but the sounds he is making.

SUSIE

(quietly)

Nice.

77 INT. "KING'S MANOR" LOBBY - MORNING

Frank steps out of the elevator, looking like a man with the worst hangover in history.

THEO

(cheery)  
Good morning, Mr. Baker

FRANK  
(grim)  
Hi, Theo.

THEO  
Your wife's called again.

FRANK  
Yeah, what is it now?

THEO  
(reading a note)  
Little Frank refuses to ride his new bike unless the training wheels are removed, he's locked himself in the bathroom, and he has Cindy with him. He's says he'll only talk to you.  
(pointing)  
You can use the courtesy phone around the corner if you like.

Frank nods wearily. He goes to the phone, begins to dial, then hears the SOUND of Jack's piano. Hanging up the phone, he wanders down to the dining room and looks inside.

78 INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

Susie is leaning over the piano, smoking a cigarette, a shoe dangling from her toe as she watches Jack play. There is something intimate in her posture.

There is something about it Frank doesn't like.

79 INT. KING'S MANOR, BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

As Jack smokes calmly, Frank paces tensely. He takes a few steps, glances at Jack, then resumes pacing, stops, looks at Jack again.

FRANK  
You know I think it's been five years since I saw you without a cigarette in your mouth. Five years.

Jack, a cigarette dangling from his lip, just stares at Frank.

FRANK

The whole goddamn room upstairs smells like an ashtray. You know that, don't you? The sheets, the carpet, the drapes, the towels, my tux, my shirt. Do you want to smell my shirt? Do you?

JACK

Maybe later.

FRANK

I'm not kidding about this. Do you have any idea what an insidious habit that is? I mean, how many cigarettes do you smoke in one day? It must be hundreds.

JACK

This is just a wild stab, but... is something bothering you, Frank?

FRANK

Leave her alone. I mean it.

Jack looks at Frank, puzzled.

FRANK

Jack. This isn't some hatcheck girl you can leave behind at the Sheraton. You got two shows a night with her.

As Jack realises what Frank means, his eyes harden.

JACK

You don't know what you're talking about.

FRANK

I know trouble. And its name starts with an ,S.,

JACK

Do me a favour, Frank. Relax.

FRANK

Do me a favour, little brother. Stick to cocktail waitresses.

80 INT. ,KING,S MANOR, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Moments later, onstage. Frank is addressing the audience.

FRANK

You know, meeting here each night as we do, sharing these few moments, I feel as if we're

becoming one big happy family.

Jack, still burning from Frank's comments backstage, eyes Frank coolly.

FRANK

The candlelight. The music. You. Everyone of you. Just being yourselves. People being people. What's all this mean? I don't know. Who's to say? All I can tell you is, it makes it very special for us up here to have you out there. Right, Susie?

SUSIE

Right, Frank.

FRANK

Right, Jack?

JACK

Right. But if I could, I'd just like to add one thing... I love you, Frank.

FRANK

(stunned)

What?

JACK

I love you. I just wanted to say it.

Frank stares incredulously at Jack. Suddenly the audience breaks into APPLAUSE.

FRANK

Uh, well, thanks for sharing that with us, Jack.

(moving quickly)

So. Susie. How 'bout it?

SUSIE

Huh?

FRANK

Got another song for us?

SUSIE

Oh. Yeah. I gotta bunch of them.

FRANK

Well then... shall we?

As Frank stares over at Jack, Jack lights a cigarette and exhales a long plume of smoke.

81 INT. FRANK AND JACK'S ROOM - NIGHT (AFTER THE SHOW)

Eddie watches Jack and Frank undress in heavy silence. Susie, washing up, listens from the bathroom.

FRANK

You came in late on 'Little Green Apples.'

JACK

(pointedly)

I'm sorry?

FRANK

You heard me.

JACK

You came in early, Frank. You've been coming in early for the last decade.

FRANK

I never miss the beat.

Jack lets out a derisive chuckle.

FRANK

I NEVER MISS THE BEAT.

JACK

That's because you make it up as you go along.

Frank stops undressing, stares at Jack.

FRANK

Take it back.

JACK

Take it back? What is this? Third grade?

FRANK

TAKE IT BACK.

Jack frowns at his brother, then tosses him a kiwi.

JACK

Eat a kiwi, Frank.

Frank flings the kiwi back at Jack. Jack ducks.

JACK

Hey!

81A INT. BATHROOM (SAME TIME)

Susie peeks through the door. Jack is standing in his boxers, a pineapple in his hand, pointing at Frank.

JACK

Go to bed, Frank. Or this is gonna get ugly.

SUSIE

(to herself)

It,s the fucking Newlywed Game.

Shaking her head, Susie exits, flicking off the light.

FRANK (O.S.)

Hey!

SUSIE

(flicking it back on)

Sorry.

82 INT. JACK AND FRANK,S ROOM - MORNING

We START on the kiwi, lying in a battered lump on the windowsill, PASS OVER a pack of cigarettes on the night table, then SETTLE on Frank... nestled under Jack,s shoulder, dead to the world.

Jack blinks awake. Slowly his eyes slide over...

83 INT. SUSIE,S ROOM - MORNING (SAME TIME)

As Susie strokes her hair before the mirror, the phone RINGS.

SUSIE

Yeah?... No, Mr. Baker,s next door... Huh?...

Urgent?... No, never mind, I,ll get him.

Susie passes through the bathroom, opens the door.

SUSIE

Phone call, Frank. They say it,s... important.

Susie stops, seeing Jack, smoking now, with Frank still slumbering under his shoulder. It,s a rather striking

tableau.

SUSIE

Guess you guys made up, huh?

84 OMITTED

85 INT. FRANK AND JACK,S ROOM - A SUITCASE - DAY (LATER)

Frank moves like a twister through the room, tossing his belongings in a suitcase.

FRANK

We made a deal. Man to man. Training wheels for a month, then we,d see.

SUSIE

He ran into a car?

FRANK

Mrs. Ramondino,s station wagon. It wasn,t moving. It was just parked on the street. He barely made it out of the driveway. All right, who,s got a pencil?

SUSIE

Pencil?

FRANK

I want you to take down the New Year,s show. Remember, at ten o,clock you start with ,Thanks For The Memories,, then...

JACK

I know the show, Frank.

FRANK

I just think it,s best if...

JACK

Frank. Go.

Frank gives in, grabs the suitcase, then pauses by the door.

FRANK

Guess I,m gonna get to kiss my wife on New Year,s after all.

86 INT. JACK,S ROOM - DAY (SEVERAL HOURS LATER)

Jack has lined a row of kiwis on the windowsill and is shooting rubber bands at them.

87 INT. SUSIE,S ROOM - DAY (SAME TIME)

Susie is smoking a cigarette, staring out the window. She glances at the bathroom once, twice, then takes the newspaper and passes through.

88 INT. JACK,S ROOM - DAY (SAME TIME)

SUSIE

Any word from Egghead?

Jack shakes his head. Susie nods, offers the paper.

SUSIE

I,m through with it.

JACK

Oh. Thanks.

SUSIE

Left the crossword.

This doesn,t seem to excite Jack, but he nods anyway.

SUSIE

Well. Happy reading.

89 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Susie retreats, frowns to herself, then notices Jack,s shaving cup. Curious, she takes the brush, runs the bristles over her cheek, then spins the cap off a bottle of aftershave, sniffs.

90 INT. JACK,S ROOM - DAY

Jack, up and pacing, pauses as he passes the bathroom, listening to the strange STIRRINGS inside.

91 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Susie inspects a few more items, then exits. Seconds

later, the door opens tentatively and Jack enters. He eyes his things, adjusts the shaving brush. He glances at the riot of powders and creams crowding Susie's sink. Picking up a tiny perfume vial, he gives it a spray: it packs quite a wallop. Startled, he waves his hand to defuse the odor.

92 INT. SUSIE'S ROOM - DAY

Outside, Susie pauses on her cigarette, sniffs the air.

93 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Jack replaces the bottle, accidentally causing a stir among a few other others, then exits. As Susie re-enters, a tiny nail polish bottle wobbles upright. She studies the bottle, sniffs again, then pokes her head into Jack's room.

94 INT. JACK'S ROOM - DAY

SUSIE

Anything yet?

JACK

Not a peep.

SUSIE

Well. I think I'll take a bath.

Jack nods. Susie nods.

95 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Susie pulls the door closed, frowns again, then turns on the bath. Taking a bottle of Mr. Bubble, she sits on the toilet and sprays pink lazy eights into the tub.

96 INT. JACK'S ROOM - DAY

Jack stops, pivots and sends a kiwi towards the waste-basket. SWISH.

97 INT. SUSIE'S ROOM - DAY

Susie goes to the bedroom, strips, slips into a robe. There are cigarettes burning in every corner of the room.

Oblivious, she lights another.

98 INT. JACK'S ROOM - DAY

Eddie ducks as a plum sails over his head. The carpet around the waste-basket is littered with fruit. Jack grabs a coconut, eyes the basket, then notices a crescent forming on the carpet outside the bathroom. He raps on the door, gets nothing.

99 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Jack enters just as Mr. Bubble glides over the lip of the tub.

100 INT. SUSIE'S ROOM - DAY

Susie, staring at the ocean like Garbo, hears the BOTTLE tumble, then sees the water. She dashes in.

101 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

As the door pounds Jack, Susie does a little slip-slide-spin on the sudsy floor and tumbles into Jack's arms.

Not exactly "From Here To Eternity", but the room IS pretty steamy and Susie's robe has slipped off one very nice shoulder. Jack looks at the shoulder, then into Susie's eyes. Susie looks back. Swallows.

SUSIE

Thanks.

They stand like this, sort of like a statue, then the phone RINGS. They disengage. Jack goes to the phone.

JACK

Yeah... Oh, hi, Frank.

(to Susie)

It's Frank.

Susie nods, pulls her robe closed.

JACK

So. How's little Frank?... Yeah?... Well, that's a

relief, huh?... No, I understand, call me when you have more time... Huh? Oh, nothing. We're taking a bath. Well, Susie's taking a bath, I'm doing the crossword. Huh?... What's that?... Newt?... Yeah, I know what it is. Turns up a lot, huh? okay, I'll remember. Thanks. 'Bye...

Jack hangs up the phone, looks at Susie.

JACK  
Kid's in the pink.

Susie nods, tightens her robe again.

SUSIE  
Well. Thanks for the catch. Coulda got quite a bump.

JACK  
It was nothing.

Susie nods, pulls the door closed.

102 INT. "KING'S MANOR" BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Susie, wearing a very sexy black silk dress, joins Jack. She hands him a piece of paper.

SUSIE  
Theo at the front desk just dropped this on me.

JACK  
(reading aloud)  
"Ladies and gentlemen, due to a family emergency, my dear brother is unable to share this most special of evenings with us..."

SUSIE  
Frank must've dictated it from the hospital. There's patter for all the songs, too.

As Jack stares at the paper, Susie inspects her hair in the reflection of a silver tea tray.

SUSIE  
Gotta give it to ol' Egghead. Never gives the kite too much string.

As Susie turns back to Jack, he crumples the paper.

JACK

So what do you want to open with tonight?

103 INT. KING'S MANOR, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A banner stretched between two chandeliers, proclaims  
,HAPPY NEW YEAR!. As the CAMERA DESCENDS,  
Jack can be heard picking out a familiar TUNE, but  
showering it in blue notes, drawing it out, giving it  
smoke.

Susie's face drifts up INTO FRAME, her eyes closed,  
but the CAMERA CONTINUES to drop, moving like  
syrup down her body, over the silk that clings to her hips  
and thighs, down her legs to a pair of wicked  
arch-breaking heels.

She's standing on Jack's Steinway.

SUSIE

(cooing)

,Another bride,  
Another June,  
Another sunny honeymoon  
Another season  
Another reason  
To make whoopie....

Caught somewhere between Ray Charles and Marilyn  
Monroe, Susie's voice slides silkily from a whisper to a  
growl, her fingers running like sand over her body.

SUSIE

,A lot of shoes,  
A lot of rice,  
The groom is nervous,  
He answers twice,  
It's really killin.,  
The boy's so willin.,  
To make whoopie....

As Jack knocks hell out of the bridge, Susie melts onto  
the piano like a kitten, stretching out languorously on her  
back. On the dance floor, men in tuxedos sneak guilty  
glances while their wives just stare, mouths agape. In less  
that a minute, Susie's managed to turn a dignified resort  
hotel into a sizzling roadhouse.

SUSIE

Picture a little lovenest  
Down where the roses cling  
Picture that same sweet lovenest  
See what a year can bring...  
(toying with Jack's chin)  
I tell you the boy's washing dishes,  
baby clothes  
He's so ambitious,  
Oooh, I tell you he sews,

Susie runs her fingers through Jack's hair and slides  
oh-so-slowly off the piano, slinking toward the audience,  
and suddenly it's apparent: she's winning them over.

SUSIE

It's really killin,  
The boy's so willin,  
To make whoopee....

104 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT (HOURS LATER)

Now a mass of swarming jubilation. Suddenly, the  
lights begin to dim.

SUSIE

All right, boys and girls. Find a friend. This is it.  
Ten. Nine...

Gradually the entire room joins the chant.

SUSIE/EVERYONE

... Eight. Seven. Six. Five. Four. THREE. TWO!  
ONE! HAPPY NEW YEAR!

A blizzard of confetti fills the air as people scramble for  
that certain someone to kiss in the new year. In this  
moment, Jack and Susie find themselves oddly distanced  
from the happiness below them.

Susie glances at Jack, then finally goes to him. As their  
lips touch, they kiss lightly, then pull away awkwardly.  
As Susie turns away, Jack sounds the first chord of  
Auld Lang Syne, and the room rises as one voice.

SUSIE/EVERYONE

Should old acquaintance be forgot....

105 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT (HOURS LATER)

Dark and lonely now, the tables and floors covered with confetti, like virgin snow. Jack sits on a table, looking out at the moonlit ocean. Susie comes up behind him, carrying a half-empty bottle of champagne.

SUSIE

So. Make any resolutions?

Jack shakes his head. Susie sits down on the table next to him, their arms almost touching.

JACK

You?

SUSIE

Nah. I figure that stuff's all a bunch of crap anyway. You do what you do, right?

JACK

Right.

Susie takes a drink, looks over at the empty stage.

SUSIE

Boy, ol. Egghead would've blown a gasket if he'd seen us tonight, wouldn't he?

Jack just takes a drag on his cigarette, says nothing.

SUSIE

You're good, aren't you?

As Jack looks up, Susie's eyes shift, staring straight into his.

JACK

I can carry a tune.

SUSIE

Better than that.

Jack just looks out the window again, takes another drag on his cigarette. Susie studies his face, then pushes off the table, walks over to the window.

SUSIE

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

JACK

Must've been a cheap date.

SUSIE

Soap convention.

Jack glances over at Susie.

JACK

Soap?

SUSIE

Yeah, they got a convention for everything. This guy was some big roller in suds. At least he was clean. Some of the guys I met through the service, you wouldn't believe. The older ones, they were okay. Nice. Polite. Pulled the chair out for you. But the younger ones...

Jack watches as Susie takes another hit off the bottle.

SUSIE

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

Susie smiles to herself, then her face changes, becomes almost wistful.

SUSIE

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

(pause)

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

Susie glances at Jack, uncomfortable.

JACK

I never liked the Hartford much myself.

Susie's eyes lock into Jack's, then she turns a little and starts to roll her neck.

SUSIE

My neck is so tight. Usually singing relaxes me, but I don't know, tonight...

Jack watches her a moment, then stands up and sweeps the hair off her shoulder, placing his hands on her neck, massaging the muscles softly. She swallows.

SUSIE

Thanks.

Jack hesitates, then unhooks the catch, letting the panels divide a bit.

SUSIE

Thanks.

As Jack,s fingers work down to Susie,s shoulders, the dress begins to divide slowly, the fabric pulling silently apart. Susie turns her head a little just as Jack,s fingers slip under the silk, skimming down her sides, just below her breasts. He leans in and kisses her neck.

SUSIE

Oh shit...

106 OMITTED

107 INT. "KING'S MANOR" CORRIDOR - MORNING

As the service elevator opens, two maid exit left, then Eddie trots out and turns right.

We TRACK him for a moment, then he stops: by a room service tray sitting outside a door. He sniffs finds nothing to his taste, then moves down the hall to the next tray.

Finally, after several stops, Eddie returns to the elevator and waits... three T-bones in his mouth.

108 INT. SUSIE,S ROOM - MORNING

Jack, quiet as a mouse, slips out of bed, gathers his clothes, and in approximately ten seconds, is dressed.

SUSIE

You,d make a helluva fireman, you know that?

Jack stops, looks over his shoulder.

SUSIE

You practice that at home with a stopwatch?

JACK

Didn't want to wake you. Early riser.

Susie glances out the window. It's gotta be about noon.

SUSIE

Yeah. Listen. I didn't expect you to rush out and buy me a corsage this morning, you know. Your school rings safe.

Jack nods, slips into the bathroom.

109 INT. BATHROOM - DAY (SAME TIME)

As he closes the door, Jack looks in the mirror.

JACK

Shit.

110 INT. SUSIE'S ROOM - DAY (SAME TIME)

Susie stares at the bathroom door, then notices Jack's tie slung over the bedpost.

SUSIE

Shit.

111 INT. "KING'S MANOR" LOBBY - DAY

As Jack stands at the front desk, members of the hotel staff pose for photographs with Eddie.

JACK

I don't get it.

THEO

What's that, Mr Baker?

JACK

Ed. He barely touched a thing while he was here, but I don't know... I could swear he's GAINED weight.

Theo points his finger to a line on the checkout form.

THEO

(as Jack signs)

Well, we're sure going to miss him. All of you.

It's too bad your brother missed all the excitement last night.

Jack glances up.

JACK

Yeah. Too bad. You seen Miss Diamond?

THEO

I believe that's her talking to the gentleman in the blue suit.

Across the lobby, Jack sees Susie talking to a man in the far corner.

THEO

Have a nice day, Mr. Baker.

JACK

Yeah, you too...

112 EXT. THE CITY SKYLINE - NIGHT

Home.

113 INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

As Jack and Eddie enter, Jack sets his suitcase on the floor and flicks on a lamp. A string, hanging like a smile from one side of the bedroom door frame to the other, droops with paper letters: „WELCOME HOME.“

In the kitchen, Jack opens the refrigerator. A container of cottage cheese. Two desperate bananas. One beer. Opting for the beer, he goes to the piano by the window, sits down.

He taps out a skeleton phrase, teases it, then, like the morning Susie found him in the dining room, begins to expand on the idea, filling the room with music.

113A EXT. DINER - DAY

In the front window, the usual photos of celebrity patrons, including one of Susie placed between those of Jack and Frank.

114 INT. DINER - DAY (SAME)

Susie and the brothers sit at a table strewn with empty coffee cups and half-eaten food. Frank has several slips of paper before him with names and dates.

FRANK

That takes care of the week of the fifth. After that, we got the Avedon downtown or the Plaza. Four day turns. What do you think, Jack?

Jack is staring out the window. Bored.

JACK

You with me, Jack?

SUSIE

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

Susie, as she says this, pours sugar into her Coke.

FRANK

(watching)

It's not that bad. Besides, Blackie Carson books the Avedon. He's always been good to us.

JACK

(drily)

He's hasn't been that good to us.

FRANK

All right, we'll take the Plaza. After that, we're locked into the Capri for five days, then we got our choice...

SUSIE

The Capri? Oh Christ, not the goddamn Luau Lounge again.

FRANK

What's the matter with the Luau Lounge? They don't salt their peanuts?

SUSIE

Singing 'Feelings', knee deep in paper orchids and plastic tiki lamps isn't exactly my idea of a fun evening.

FRANK

Fun? Who promised you fun? We get paid,  
remember?

SUSIE

I,m just saying maybe we should vote on it. Or  
maybe... we should ask Jack what he thinks.

FRANK

I don,t have to ask Jack what he thinks. I know  
what he thinks.

Jack, hearing this. shifts his eyes coolly to Frank.

FRANK

It,s five days. The money,s green. We,re there.

Susie, looking tense, watches Frank go back to his slips.  
Jack taps an unlit cigarette on the table.

FRANK

And by the way, speaking of ,Feelings,, you  
might think about brushing up on the lyrics. The  
other night, at the resort, you sang the first verse  
twice.

SUSIE

Really? That must explain the gasp I heard from  
the audience.

FRANK

Okay. Let,s hear it. We,ve trashed the Avedon and  
the Luau Lounge. What,s our beef with  
,Feelings,?

SUSIE

Nothing.

Frank nods, starts to go back to the slips.

SUSIE

EXCEPT... who cares? I mean, does anybody  
really need to hear ,Feelings, again in their  
lifetime? It,s like parsley...

(taking a sprig from her plate)

Take it away and no one would know the  
difference.

FRANK

,Feelings, is not parsley.

SUSIE

To you, ‚Feelings, may be goddamn filet mignon.  
To me, it,s parsley. Less that parsley.

Jack, mildly amused, settles against the window to listen.

FRANK

Look, ‚Feelings,, despite what you may think of it, has always been one of the bright moments in the show and a consistent crowd pleaser. Consequently, we have an obligation to play it. If we didn,t the audience would be disappointed.

SUSIE

Yeah, well, they weren,t exactly crying their eyes out on New Year,s.

Frank stops shuffling the slips, looks up slowly.

FRANK

You passed over ‚Feelings,?

SUSIE

Yeah. And for your information, ‚Bali Hai, went out with the bathwater too.

Frank looks from Susie to Jack.

FRANK

Well, I see. The cat goes away for a night and the mice take over the orchestra.

SUSIE

Hey. I ain,t no mouse.

FRANK

That,s right. You,re parsley.

Big silence.

JACK

I think you better calm down, Frank.

FRANK

I think you better make sure it,s your head that,s doing the thinking these days, little brother.

Susie stands up, takes her coat.

SUSIE

This food,s been sitting here too long. It,s starting to make me feel SICK.

Susie turns and slams out the door.

JACK

Why don't you loosen the leash.

FRANK

Let's not let a whiff of perfume blow off fifteen years. Be reasonable, Jack.

JACK

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

115 EXT. JACK,S BUILDING - EARLY EVENING

Susie paces under a street lamp, working on a Paris Opal. She takes a glance up at Jack,s window, then drops her cigarette to the sidewalk. There are half-a-dozen others already there. Deciding, she enters the building.

115A INT. JACK,S BUILDING - STAIRWELL

Susie arrives at Jack,s door, knocks. A moment passes, then it swings open.

Nina.

116 OMITTED

&

117

118 EXT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT (LATER)

The murmur of MUSIC can be heard.

119 INT. BASEMENT - JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

Jack sits at the bar, sipping a whiskey gingerly, watching a trio perform on the dimly-lit stage. A BLACK MAN in a suit steps up next to him.

JACK

(watching the trio)

How you doing, Henry?

HENRY

Can't complain. What do you think of the kid?

Jack glances at the baby-faced pianist onstage.

JACK

When's his mother pick him up?

HENRY

He's been playing here a year. You oughta come around more often, Jack.

JACK

He's good. That Tyler on drums?

HENRY

(nodding)

Some old man, huh? Guy'd fall down a fucking staircase and keep the beat.

As the bartender passes, Henry motions to Jack's drink.

HENRY

On the house, Tony.

(to Jack)

So how about Jack Baker? Still stompin' at the Sheraton?

JACK

Keeps me out of trouble.

HENRY

So what're you doing here?

Jack crushes out his cigarette.

JACK

Lookin' for trouble.

120 EXT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT (LATER)

Susie arrives, glances around. She hesitates, then pushes through the doors to the club.

121 INT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT (SAME TIME)

As Susie descends the cement stairs inside, a man with a saxophone rushes past her, heading for the street. Patrons

linger in the corridor, drinks in hand, talking animatedly, laughing.

The main room is even darker, full of shadows smoking cigarettes. Susie looks for Jack, doesn't see him, then settles by the bar.

SUSIE

Double vodka.

Across the room, the men's room opens and two black men exit, but no one else. Scanning the tables again, Susie sees only the same unfamiliar shadows.

Then she hears the PIANO.

Turning slowly, Susie discovers Jack, hunched over the piano onstage, playing with the trio. At first, he toys with the melody, finding his way, then seduces the song away from itself entirely. Lost in concentration, he plays more expressively, ending with a passionate cascade of notes as he reconstructs the melody. As the audience APPLAUDS, Susie settles back into the shadows of the bar. Hidden, studies Jack.

His face is calm. Peaceful.

122 INT. STAIRWELL - JACK'S BUILDING - NIGHT (LATER)

Jack trots up the stairs to his apartment, then stops suddenly. Susie is sitting on the landing, one shoe off, massaging her bare foot.

SUSIE

Oh. Hi.

(uncomfortable)

I was in the neighbourhood. Thought I'd drop by.

Jack nods, eyes her foot.

SUSIE

(shrugs)

Big feet.

Jack says nothing, starts up the stairs.

SUSIE

Look, don't get nervous or anything. I just came over to...

Susie,s voice falters as Jack hooks her stray shoe on his finger and continues toward his apartment.

SUSIE  
...talk.

Jack doesn,t want to talk.

123 EXT. JACK,S BUILDING - MORNING

As the sun comes up.

124 INT. JACK,S BEDROOM - MORNING

Naked, Susie slips quietly out of bed, gathers her clothes, dresses. Twelve seconds, tops. Only one problem: only one shoe.

Limping to the bathroom, Susie catches herself in the mirror, grimaces, then hobbles to the front room...

...Just as Nina pushes open the window and enters from the fire escape. Both stop cold, stare at each other.

NINA  
I guess you found him, huh?

SUSIE  
Yeah...

NINA  
I came to walk Eddie.

Susie nods. Nina eyes Susie,s footwear situation, then slips off the windowsill and goes to the kitchen, where Eddie,s leash is hanging on the wall.

NINA  
You don,t have a toothbrush with you, do you?

Susie, puzzled, shakes her head. Nina nods, then points behind Susie. There, on the bookshelf, is her shoe.

SUSIE  
Oh... thanks.

As Nina exits with Eddie, Susie stares at the door, a little confused, then goes to retrieve her shoe. There, sitting on the shelf, is an old photograph of Jack and Frank. Wearing

boyish grins and bad suits, they hold a bottle of liquor out for the camera.

JACK

Terry,s Tap Room.

Susie jumps, surprised to see Jack, dressed now. He smiles, nods to the photo.

JACK

First gig we ever played. The guy that ran the place gave us the bottle but wouldn,t open in.

SUSIE

How come?

JACK

(charming)

Told us to save it. Said someday it would soften the edges of the bad times and make the good ones seem even better. The best idea would,ve been to drink it before we played Terry,s Taproom.

Jack watches Susie study the photo.

JACK

Coffee?

SUSIE

Yeah... no. I mean...

JACK

Look, if you want to leave...

SUSIE

No... yeah. That is...

JACK

I,ll see you tonight at the Hilton. Okay?

Susie nods, but doesn,t move.

SUSIE

Listen. The reason I came by last night... I,m thinking about leaving. The act.

Susie looks at Jack, but he says nothing.

SUSIE

It,s a... I met this guy over New Year,s, at the hotel. He liked my voice. And, well, it,s... He

thinks I can sell cat food just singing about it.  
Crazy, huh?

Susie tries to laugh. Jack nods.

SUSIE

I mean, it's nothing big. Mostly local stuff probably.

JACK

Take it.

SUSIE

Well, I haven't decided. I'm just thinking about it...

JACK

Take it.

Susie stops, studies Jack's face.

SUSIE

So how long you been taking care of the kid upstairs?

JACK

I don't take care of her.

SUSIE

Doesn't look that way to me...

JACK

What's the difference?

SUSIE

(beat)

Yeah, well, anyway, like I said, I know Frank's got us booked through March.

JACK

Don't worry about Frank.

SUSIE

What about you?

JACK

What's that got to do with anything?

SUSIE

Well... nothing. I just mean, I don't want to leave you guys with an empty mike...

JACK

Hey. There's always another girl.

Susie looks at Jack. His face is unflinching.

SUSIE

(grabbing her coat)

Right. Well... Thanks for the advice. I'll think it over.

As the door slams behind Susie, Jack's face changes, resolve giving in to ambivalence.

125 INT. HILTON OLD AMERICA LOUNGE - NIGHT (AS IN SC. 38)

As Susie croons, waiters pass by.

SUSIE

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

126 INT. HILTON BACKSTAGE - NIGHT (AFTER THE SHOW)

Susie whips on her coat tensely.

SUSIE

I can't sing it anymore.

FRANK

What?

SUSIE

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

127 INT. HILTON KITCHEN - NIGHT (SAME TIME)

Frank follows Susie into the kitchen, where a KID in an apron is chopping onions.

FRANK

(patiently)

Look, Susie. We talked about this. I told you why we...

SUSIE

(stopping)

I'm going to throw up Frank. Do you understand?  
I'm going to vomit right into somebody's Pina

Colada.

FRANK

It's just a song. It's a couple times a night. Ten minutes of your life. That's all.

SUSIE

And ten minutes tomorrow night, and ten minutes the next night, and the next night. Frank, I can't sing that fucking song anymore!

As Susie storms out of the kitchen, the Kid in the apron looks over.

APRON

Volare?

128 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE HILTON - NIGHT

Susie comes up alongside Jack.

SUSIE

I,m quitting.

JACK

Congratulations.

SUSIE

As of now.

JACK

Well, if you ever need a recommendation, let me know.

SUSIE

Jesus, you're cold, you know that? You're like a fucking razor blade.

JACK

Careful. You,ll have me thinking you're going soft on me.

Susie stops, looks at him in amazement.

SUSIE

You don,t give a fuck, do you? About anything.

Jack stops, turns.

JACK

Hey. What do you want from me? You want me to tell you to stay? Is that what you're looking for? You want me to get down on my knees and beg you to deliver the Baker Boys from doom? Well, forget it. We survived for fifteen years before you strutted onto the scene, sweetheart. FIFTEEN YEARS. Two seconds and you're bawling like a two year old. You shouldn't be wearing a dress. You should be wearing a diaper.

SUSIE

Jesus. You and Egghead ARE brothers, aren't you?

JACK

Damn straight. And let me tell you something. Over the years they've dropped like flies in every fucking hotel in this city, but we're still here. We've never held a day job in our lives. He may be an easy target, but add it up and you'll see; Frank's done fine.

SUSIE

Yeah. Frank's done great. He's got the wife, the kids, the little house in the suburbs. Meanwhile his brother's sitting in a shitty apartment with a sick dog, Little Orphan Annie, and a chip on his shoulder as big as a Cadillac.

JACK

(tensely)

Listen to me, princess. We fucked twice. That's it. Once the sweat dries, you still don't know shit about me. Got it?

SUSIE

I know one thing. While Frank Baker was home putting the kids to sleep last night, little brother Jack was out dusting off his dreams for a few minutes.

Jack just stares at her.

SUSIE

I was there. I saw it in your face. You're full of shit. You're a fake. Every time you walk into some shitty daiquiri hut, you're selling yourself on the cheap. I know all about that. I used to find myself at the end of the night with some malt ball mogul, then wake up in the morning and tell myself it didn't matter. You kid yourself that you got this empty place inside where you can put it

all. But do it long enough and all you are is empty.

JACK

I didn't know whores were so philosophical.

SUSIE

At least my brother, not my pimp.

Susie turns to walk away, then stops and looks back.

SUSIE

You know I had you pegged for a loser the first time I saw you. But I was wrong. You're worse. You're a coward.

As Susie turns away, we HOLD on Jack.

129 INT. HILTON LOUNGE - THE AMBASSADOR LOUNGE - NIGHT

The site of Jack and Frank's first night with Susie. As busboys move in and out, Jack and Frank stand with Ray, the assistant manager.

RAY

Sick? How sick?

FRANK

The flu.

RAY

So she's got a few sniffles.

FRANK

Doctor's orders.

Ray frowns, looks at the two pianos across the room.

RAY

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

FRANK

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

RAY

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

JACK

What're you doing?

FRANK

Just until we find another girl.

JACK

Cancel, Frank.

FRANK

We're in for three weeks solid, Jack.

JACK

Better give her pneumonia.

130 INT. STARFIRE LOUNGE - NIGHT (2 NIGHTS LATER)

Jack and Frank, onstage. A small crowd.

FRANK

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

JACK

Thirty-one years.

No response. As Frank clears his throat nervously, Jack studies the bored, brutally indifferent faces of the people in the lounge.

FRANK

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

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

FRANK

Yeah, well, anyway. It's nice to be back here at the Ambassador Lounge, because this place has always been a very special place for Jack and I...

Jack watches a woman dribble her drink accidentally and let out a peal of laughter.

FRANK

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

As Frank launches into „People, Jack watches the woman wipe her chin, still laughing, and we --

CUT TO:

131 EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT (LATER)

Jack moves down the block, then starts to slow as he sees Susie up ahead, standing on the corner, talking with a man. She says something to him, laughs, and the man gives her a peck on the cheek and walks away. As she begins to search her purse, Jack approaches. Just as her face comes INTO VIEW, she senses him and turns, startled.

Not Susie.

For a moment, he just stares at her.

JACK  
Sorry.

132 INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Jack enters and slams the door. He looks wired up, restless. Lighting a cigarette, he flicks on the TV, gets only haze, adjusts the antenna, still gets nothing, then gives it a pop with his fist... still nothing. Infuriated, he steps back, eyes the TV, then gives it a kick with his foot, sending it tumbling. He studies it, unsatisfied, turns to the bookcase, and clears a shelf with a sweep of his arms. He looks at the debris at his feet, sees the „Terry's Tap Room, photo of he and Frank and picks it up, studying it as he drags on his cigarette. Sliding behind the piano, he props the photo there, and begins to play, searching for something interesting, but he's too distracted. He stops, tries again, loses the groove after a few bars and then begins to pound the keys furiously in frustration. As he stops, his eyes shift to the photograph of he and Frank.

Two skinny kids, smiling goofily.

133 INT./EXT. FRANK'S CAR - NIGHT

As Frank guides the car through the wet city streets, Jack cradles a whiskey flask, occasionally taking a hit. It's two A.M. and raining hard.

JACK

We're not getting paid then.

FRANK

No.

JACK

Nothing. We get nothing.

FRANK

I told you, Jack. It's a telethon. No one gets a cent.

JACK

What's it for?

FRANK

I don't know. Some disease.

JACK

What disease?

FRANK

I don't know.

JACK

You don't know?

FRANK

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

JACK

What channel's it on?

FRANK

Seventy-one.

JACK

Seventy-one? What's seventy-one?

FRANK

(defensively)

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

Jack stares at Frank, then takes another drink.

JACK

Right.

134 INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

Jerry Lewis need not fear. This is strictly a tinfoil and crepe paper operation. In front of a huge tote board, a kid in a wheelchair is doing basketball tricks before the camera.

FRANK

I'll see when we're on.

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

EARL

You the magician?

JACK

No.

EARL

(disappointed)

Oh. What do you do?

Jack points to the pianos across the room.

JACK

Piano.

EARL

(hopeful)

Two at a time?

JACK

My brother and I. One each.

EARL

(disappointed again)

Oh.

JACK

(indicating the kid in the wheelchair)

What's wrong with the kid?

EARL

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

JACK  
Accident?

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

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

FRANK  
We're on after Meadowlark.

JACK  
Are you fucking kidding me? Are you fucking kidding me?

FRANK  
What?

JACK  
We're playing for a goddamn gymnasium!

FRANK  
(worried)  
What?

Just then, the kid in the wheelchair rolls off and a guy in a cheap rented tux strides in front of the camera. He's VINCE NANCY, the host.

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

The audience APPLAUDS.

VINCE  
As most of you know, young Jimmy put a nasty twist on that knee trying to win one for good ol' Grant High this year. Luckily, the doctors tell us Jimmy'll be able to play next season. That is... if there is a next season.  
(Uncle Sam)  
That's where you come in. Pick up that phone. Make a donation. Let's keep our kids off the streets and in the gym where they belong.

APPLAUSE.

VINCE

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

(consulting a card)

He, uh, they, uh, we are very pleased to have with us two of the most respected men in the musical entertainment field... The Fabulous Bunker Boys! Come on out here, guys.

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

VINCE

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

(to camera)

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

The audience APPLAUDS. Jack glares at Frank.

VINCE

Well all right then. What are we waiting for?

Take it away, guys.

As Jack and Frank begin to play. As the music rises, the studio becomes very quiet, almost still. Unfortunately, Jack and Frank are barely through the opening passage when a thunderously loud BELL begins to ring. Suddenly Vince steps out again.

VINCE

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

(to Jack, Frank)

I'm afraid you fellas'll just have to wait a minute. All right boys. Bring it out.

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

FRANK

Jack...

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

VINCE

What the...

JACK

(pointing at him)

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

FRANK

(whispering)

Jack, you're on television.

JACK

Shut up, Frank.

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

EARL

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

JACK

Get your hand off me.

EARL

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

JACK

Go fuck yourself.

Earl's eyes go hard.

EARL

You're a real tough guy when the ladies are around, aren't you, Ace?

JACK

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

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

FRANK

Hey, leave him alone.

JACK

(eying Earl's sweatshirt, cap)

Buy all your clothes at the same place, Earl?

Earl shoves Jack out of the studio, hard. Jack stumbles

back, ends up in a heap.

EARL

Who do you think you are, asshole? Liberace?

135 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

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

FRANK

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

(pause)

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

Jack stops and stares at Frank incredulously.

JACK

What are you? A fucking moron? It's three o'clock in the morning, Frank. Who's watching? Paperboys?

FRANK

Look. I didn't know when we were going to be on until yesterday.

JACK

Basketballs, Frank. You had us playing for basketballs.

FRANK

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

JACK

WHAT?

FRANK

It wasn't professional, Jack.

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

JACK

What's happened to you, Frank? You been kissing ass so long you're starting to like it? You let that guy turn us into clowns tonight. We were always

small-time, but we were never clowns, Frank.  
What's happened to your dignity?

FRANK

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

Frank steps forward and reaches into Jack's coat, coming away with the whiskey.

FRANK

This where you get your dignity, Jack? This where you get your courage?

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

FRANK

No, let's do it straight for once.

Frank tosses the bottle into the street, where it SHATTERS.

FRANK

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

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

FRANK

Great. Terrific. Walk away. You're good at that, Jack. You never could commit to anything, even a conversation.

JACK

Is that what that was? Sounded more like a speech

to me. Next time save it for the PTA.

FRANK

(beat)

You just had to, didn't you, Jack? You couldn't keep your cock in your pocket.

Jack stops, glares at Frank.

JACK

Hey. Who I fuck and who I don't fuck is none of your fucking business. Got it?

FRANK

It is when it affects my business.

JACK

Your business. YOUR business? Your business exists because of me.

FRANK

YOU? Who're you kidding? I make the calendar, I pay the expenses. Christ, I even make your shoes are shined. What do you do? Show up for a couple hours a night and smoke cigarettes.

JACK

Frank. If someone requested 'Chopsticks', you'd ask for the sheet music.

FRANK

(stung)

If it wasn't for me, little brother, you'd be playing for dimes out of the back of a truck.

JACK

Yeah, you're a real pro, Frank. You were doing such a bang up job a few months ago, you had 'em paying us NOT to play. That's fucking genius.

Enraged by this, Frank glares at Jack, then suddenly bolts forward, drilling hard with his shoulder, driving Jack into the wall.

JACK

Jesus, Frank! What the fuck's the matter with you?

Jack twists Frank around and pushes him off, but Frank charges back.

JACK

Goddamnit, Frank! Knock it off!

As they pound off the wall again, Jack's anger suddenly multiplies on itself, as if fuelled by fifteen years of frustration. Flinging Frank against the wall, he becomes the aggressor, pounding, pulling, and slamming him in fitful rage. Frank is suddenly scared.

FRANK

Jack!... Jack!...

Frank slides down the cement wall, trying to protect himself. Unrelenting, Jack comes down with a vicious fist at Frank's face, catching his fingers instead.

FRANK

My hands! My hands!

Jack grabs one of Frank's hands roughly, twisting the fingers back.

FRANK

(terrified)

Jack!

Jack twists Frank's fingers harder. A knuckle cracks.

FRANK

Jack! JACK!

Frank's voice ECHOES high above the SOUND of the rain. Jack stops, looks at Frank's hand, still clasped in his own. Letting go, he stares at his own hands, the skin split and bleeding. He no longer looks dangerous. He looks hollow, frightened.

JACK

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

Before Frank can say anything, Jack turns away, leaving his brother on the sidewalk, and disappears in the rain.

136 EXT. CITY SKYLINE - DAWN (A FEW HOURS LATER)

WOMAN'S VOICE

(singing)

Who can take a sunrise  
Sprinkle it with dew...  
Toss it in the air  
And make a groovy lemon pie

The candy man can...  
The candy man can...

137 INT. DINER - DAWN (SAME TIME)

Jack, looking like he's gone fifteen rounds, is sitting at the table by the window, his head against the glass. He opens one eye, sees a waitress smiling over him. Monica Moran.

MONICA

You're one of the 'Fabulous' guys. I remember.

JACK

Wrong number.

MONICA

Ah, you can't kid me. I see you every day.

She points behind the cash register, to the wall covered with photographs. Frank. Himself. Susie...

MONICA

That's why I took the job. The day I came in I seen you and your brother's faces hanging there and I figured it was like a sign or something. Like destiny.

Jack looks away from the photo of Susie, nods.

JACK

How you doing, Monica?

MONICA

Swell. Only it's Blanche here.

Jack nods, starts to take his coffee, but Monica pushes it away and turns over a fresh cup.

MONICA

Nah, don't touch that. That's three hours cold.

(pouring)

Yeah, I been sitting over there just waiting for you to wake up. Finally, I figured maybe you had an appointment or something.

(shaking her head)

Boy, it's weird, huh? You meet people, and you think you're never gonna to see them again...

Jack studies Monica's body and she pulls away with the

coffee pot. She notices.

MONICA

Guess you got caught in the rain, huh?

JACK

(looking at her)

Yeah, I got caught in the rain.

Monica looks at Jack, then laughs a little nervously.

MONICA

God, I still can't get over it. You just walking in here...

JACK

When do you punch out?

MONICA

(swallowing)

You're my last ticket.

Monica looks a little nervous, but hopeful. Jack studies her -- it would be easy -- but then his eyes shift to the photo of Susie again.

JACK

Well, button up on the way home, Blanche. It's cold out there.

138 INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING (AN HOUR LATER)

As Jack enters, he finds Nina sitting by the piano, trying to master a paddleball toy.

NINA

(not looking up)

Hi, Jack.

As Nina whacks the tiny red ball off the paddle, it makes a dull, snapping SOUND. Thwack. Thwack. Finally, she misses, looks up, sees Jack's rain-rumpled tux.

NINA

You better take that tux in, Jack. I could drop it off this afternoon.

Jack says nothing, takes off the jacket. Nina starts with the paddle again. THWACK. THWACK.

NINA

You want me to make some coffee?

Jack hangs his jacket on the closet door and pauses by the bookcase. Everything he had knocked off has been carefully replaced. He runs his fingers over an ashtray -- clean.

NINA

Jack...?

Jack turns and watches Nina slap the ball. THWACK. THWACK. Missing, she looks up.

NINA

... Coffee?

Jack shakes his head slowly and Nina goes back to the paddle. THWACK. THWACK. THWACK. The sound is driving Jack crazy.

JACK

(quietly)

Could you stop that please?

NINA

(not hearing)

How 'bout eggs? I could make you some eggs if you want...

THWACK. THWACK. THWACK. Suddenly, Jack steps forward and whips the toy out of her hands.

JACK

Will you knock it off with that fucking thing?!

Nina looks up, startled.

JACK

You're driving me nuts.

(mocking her)

You want some eggs, Jack? you want some coffee? What's the matter with you? You're not my housekeeper and I'm not your fucking father. I can't babysit you every time Mama gets an itch!

Nina, flushed with fear and hurt, turns and slips out the window, up the fire escape. Jack stares after her, still seething, then looks at the paddle in his hand, loses his anger. He notices Eddie staring at him.

JACK

What're you looking at?

139 EXT. THE FIRE ESCAPE - MORNING (A FEW MINUTES LATER)

Jack climbs out his window and scales the iron ladder to the roof, where Nina is sitting, dangling her legs over the rain gutter, chin in hand.

Jacks sits next to her, drops the paddle into her lap.

NINA

You're having a bad day, right?

JACK

Right.

NINA

It's okay. My Ma used to have lots of those. Sometimes that's why I came down. Even when there was no one sleeping over.

Jack nods, studies the skyline.

JACK

What do you say we go over to Empire and get a couple Coney's.

NINA

Can't. I'm going to the zoo with Howard.

JACK

Howard?

NINA

Ma says I can't call him Bigfoot anymore.

Suddenly, from down in the street, the SOUND of a car horn is heard. Nina looks down.

NINA

Uh-oh. I think he's early.

Nina gets up, pauses by the ladder.

NINA

You ever go to the zoo, Jack?

JACK

Sure.

NINA

No one ever took me to the zoo before. Boy, he must REALLY be serious.

Jack watches as Nina takes the ladder, starts to descend.

JACK

Hey.

(as she stops)

Teach you later.

Nina looks at him, a little surprised.

JACK

What're you going to do? Go around playing  
Jingle Bells, the rest of your life?

Nina smiles, then disappears over the side of the building. Jack picks up the paddle she's left behind, studies it.

THWACK. THWACK.

As the SOUND of the paddle ball FADES, it's overtaken by the sound of a bluesy piano and we --

DISSOLVE TO:

140 INT. THE TINY JAZZ CLUB - DAY

MOVING INTO IT SLOWLY, hearing the MUSIC long before the CAMERA reveals Jack, at the far end of the room, sitting alone at the piano. It's afternoon and sharp blades of sunlight slice into the ghostly room from street level windows. After a moment, a huge figure appears in the f.g., his back to us. It's Henry, the owner. He watches Jack until he finishes.

HENRY

I've got Tuesdays and Thursdays open the rest of the month.

Jack runs his hands lightly over the keys, just touching them, making no sound.

141 EXT. SUSIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY)

Susie steps out of her apartment building, pauses by the

mailboxes.

SUSIE

You're risking your life, you know.

Jack is leaning against a car, watching her.

JACK

You got a gun?

Silence. Jack pushes away from the car, comes closer.

JACK

You look good.

SUSIE

You look like shit.

JACK

No, I mean it. You look good.

SUSIE

I mean it too. You look like shit.

JACK

So how's the cat food business?

SUSIE

Terrific. I'm doing vegetables now.

Jack nods.

JACK

What kind?

SUSIE

Carrots, peas. None of the important ones.

Jack nods, taps the cigarette on the railing, thinking.

JACK

You know, the other night...

SUSIE

I was out of line.

JACK

No. I was out of line.

Susie looks a little surprised by this.

SUSIE

Well, I was a little rough on Egghead. I mean, beats the hell out of me, but... I kinda miss him.

JACK

Yeah, well, he grows on you after awhile.

As Jack stares off down the street, Susie studies his face.

SUSIE

So... you find another girl?

JACK

I didn't look.

As Jack looks up, Susie locks into his eyes, vulnerable to him, then glances away.

SUSIE

Well, I'm gonna be late.

(singing)

Peas, peas try our peas

Our peas are a deli-ca-see....

From Strangers In The Night, to that. It's a funny world, huh?

Jack nods.

SUSIE

Yeah, well, bye, Baker,

Susie brushes by Jack and heads up the street.

JACK

Hey.

She stops, turns.

JACK

Am I gonna see you again?

SUSIE

(not giving in)

What do you think?

JACK

Yeah. I think I'm gonna see you again.

Susie looks at him suspiciously. Jack smiles at her.

JACK

Intuition.

Susie just looks at Jack, saying nothing, then she can't stop herself... she smiles.

142 EXT. FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY

As the cab pulls away, Jack is left standing alone in the the street. He glances at the house, then goes to the front door. As he presses the new doorbell, a cacophony of CHIMES resonates inside the house and a moment later, the door swings open.

Little Cindy, in a lollipop-print dress. Jack eyes her warily, still not sure he's in her good graces.

CINDY  
(cheerfully)  
Hi, Uncle Jack.

JACK  
(relieved)  
Hi, kid. Nice dress.

CINDY  
Thanks.

JACK  
Daddy around?

Cindy steps aside, points down the hall.

JACK  
Thanks.

143 OMITTED

144 INT. BAKER BOYS ROOM - DAY

Frank is taking things off the shelves, putting them into boxes. Coming to the Hula Girl Hideaway monkey, Frank studies it curiously, then gives the arm a flick, igniting the little torch in the other. He tosses it in a box.

JACK  
You don't want that?

Frank turns. Jack steps in.

FRANK

How the hell,d you get in here?

JACK

Cindy. We,re pals now.

FRANK

Great. Have your pal show you the way out.

As Frank turns back to the shelf, Jack just glances around the room, not leaving.

JACK

Everything goes, that the idea?

FRANK

That,s the idea.

JACK

You,re just throwing it away?

Frank turns, a little shocked.

FRANK

No. Into the garage. I,m just getting too old for trophy dens, that,s all. And, anyway, it,s about time Little Frank had his own room.

JACK

You gonna paint?

FRANK

We,re gonna paint.

JACK

What color?

FRANK

(turning)

Look, Jack. Let,s cut the bullshit. You came here to talk business, right? Okay, fine. We,ll put the other night behind us and in a couple weeks everything,ll be the same again. Okay? Now you can go.

Frank goes back to the boxes.

JACK

I didn,t come here to talk business.

(beat)

I,m not coming back, Frank.

Frank stops, looks at Jack.

FRANK

So what's there to talk about?

JACK

We're still brothers.

FRANK

I'm touched, Jack. Really.

JACK

Frank...

FRANK

Look, Jack. If you want to piss away everything we've built over fifteen years, that's fine. Just spare me the ruminations on brotherly love.

JACK

Listen to me, Frank...

FRANK

I don't want to listen to you anymore, Jack. What're you going to tell me? That I wasted your life? That I twisted your arm for fifteen years? Well, forget it, little brother. That's a lie. Hear me? A fucking lie.

JACK

(with sudden anger)

You're right. Okay? You're right. I don't blame you, Frank. I don't blame anyone. I just can't do it anymore.

(beat)

I'm drying up inside, Frank. I've been drying up for years. Do you understand? Somewhere along the way I started to close down. It's like I had this big house and one day I just started painting the windows black, one by one. I mean, I sit in the fucking Hilton or the Sheraton or wherever, practically every night of my life, and from the minute I get onstage, I'm waiting for it to end. We play the same goddamn songs the same goddamn way every night. That isn't enough for me. It just doesn't mean anything to me.

(beat)

It's dishonest. I can't do that anymore. I've been lying to myself long enough.

Frank stares at Jack for a moment, then turns back to the boxes.

FRANK

If you see anything you want, take it.

Jack stands there, staring at his brother's back, defeated. He starts to leave, then something catches his eye. From a dusty shelf, he pulls out a bottle.

JACK

Okay if I take this?

As Frank turns, Jack tosses the bottle to him, hard. Frank scrambles to catch it, then looks at it. It's the bottle from the photograph in Jack's apartment.

JACK

Come on, Frank. I'm trying.

Frank looks up, reacting to the nakedness of Jack's statement, then looks at the bottle. It seems to hold some special magic for him.

JACK

How're your hands?

FRANK

My hands are fine. Don't worry about my hands. And don't worry about me. I don't need this any more than you do, little brother. We both know I can make just as much teaching ,Campdown Races, to these snotty kids in the neighbourhood as being a lounge rat. Don't kid yourself.

Jack just nods. Frank studies him for a long moment, then looks at the bottle again. Finally, making a decision, he flips it back to Jack.

FRANK

Open it.

Jack just looks at him.

FRANK

Open the fucking bottle.

As Jack holds the bottle carefully, he watches Frank grab a handful of souvenir shot glasses.

FRANK

What's your pleasure? We got the airport Ramada.  
We got the Travelodge on 410. And... the Mallory.

JACK

I'll take the Mallory.

FRANK

Forget it. I want the Mallory. You take the  
Travelodge.

Jack smiles slightly and takes the glass. As he and Frank  
settle on the tiny piano benches, Frank notices the dust on  
the glasses.

FRANK

Looks like these got a few years on them.

JACK

This'll kill 'em.

Frank nods. Jack hesitates, then breaks the seal on the  
bottle, pours. As they swallow, each grimaces, looks at  
the other.

JACK/FRANK

(in unison)

Not bad.

It suddenly grows silent, each sitting in his old familiar  
place, staring into his glass.

JACK

How come you keep them in tune?

Frank looks suprised, then shrugs.

FRANK

Habit.

Frank looks at his glass and his mind leads him to  
something uncomfortable.

FRANK

Maybe this is horrible. I mean, I know it's like  
breathing to you... But sometimes, when I was up  
there with you, playing, it was almost like I had it  
too. That feeling.

Jack glances at Frank. He looks old, sitting on the tiny  
bench. Suddenly, Frank lifts his glass, eyes the tiny hotel  
rendered there.

FRANK

Jesus, when was the last time we played the Mallory?

JACK

(thinking)  
,78... November.

FRANK

Right. It was someone's birthday. Halloran?

JACK

Daughter. Sweet sixteen.

FRANK

Christ, that's right. How could I forget. What a nightmare.

JACK

She asked for it.

FRANK

I told Halloran we didn't do vocals, but he said --

JACK AND FRANK

(in unison)  
,What my Sissy wants, my Sissy gets..

JACK

She got it alright.

Jack and Frank glance at one another, little boy mischief glowing in their faces. Suddenly, they swivel on the pianos and begin to play ,You're Sixteen.

JACK AND FRANK

(singing)  
,She comes on like a dream  
Peaches and cream  
Lips like strawberry wine  
She's sixteen, she's beautiful  
and she's mine...

Ribbons and curls  
Ooh, what a girl  
Eyes that sparkle and shine  
You're sixteen, you're beautiful  
and you're mine....

As Jack and Frank finish, they're laughing. After a moment,

their voices die and the room is quiet again. Full of ghosts. Each stares at the tiny keyboard before him, awkward with the intimacy of the moment. Is quiet for a very long time. Finally, Frank looks over.

FRANK

Well... One more time?

Jack glances up and sees that Frank has his empty glass held out. He picks up the bottle and pours.

JACK

One more time...

FADE OUT

THE END