

THE BUTCHER'S WIFE

written by

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EXT. OCRACOE ISLAND, NORTH CAROLINA - DAY

From on high a small island sits in the big sea. MARINA begins her tale. She speaks in slow, story-telling gait, as if she had all the time in the world.

MARINA (V.O.)

No telling what would wash up on the island where I was born and raised.

Wind whips through the marsh grass and over the shoals from sea to sound.

Two strong currents collide off those shores and there's been wrecks there as far back as time can remember. Old folk call it the graveyard of the Atlantic. The pirates called it heaven.

An old white lighthouse watches over a seven year old YOUNG MARINA. In a hand made jumper, she wades in the water, head down, hunting through shells for "sea-glass."

They'd tie lanterns around their nags' necks on foggy nights to lure the ships aground for easy plunder. My Grammy D'Arbo has a piece of Spanish Silver from Peter Painter--he's a particular pirate that she claims as kin--but that's another tale.

She retrieves a worn blue bottle with delight, and continues her search throwing back the rejects.

My first memory of ocean treasures was the time a merchant ship wrecked on it's way home from the tropics.

Timbers from a broken crate drift into YOUNG MARINA's line of vision, followed by a stalk of floating bananas that she curiously hauls onto the beach.

First time we'd ever seen a banana.

EXT. BEACH COTTAGE - TWILIGHT

A weathered beach cottage with a front porch perched on a sandy bluff. A widow's walk circles the upper story. Scrub grows wild.

YOUNG MARINA and GRAMMY D'ARBO, an ancient blind woman swing slowly side by side on the porch. MARINA eats a banana.

MARINA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I fancied them right away, but my grammy didn't cotton to them at all. Said she'd done just fine without 'em for  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 sixty years, no need to ulcerate her  
 stomach now. 'Course my grammy don't  
 believe in telephones neither. Unnatural  
 form of communication she says. But  
 she's a lady of very particular tastes.

MARINA tosses her banana skin onto a pile of banana skins in  
 a well tended vegetable garden carved out of the sand and  
 carpeted with fish heads for fertilizer.

EXT. DOCK - DAY

An ELEVEN YEAR OLD MARINA kicks her bare feet slowly as she  
 waits for a bite on her fishing line. The line tenses and  
 she starts to reel it in.

MARINA (V.O.)  
 When I was eleven years old the tide  
 washed in a whole cargo of shoes. There  
 was every sort of shoe a girl could wish  
 for.

MARINA reels in a pair of black patent leather MARY JANES.

I got me the most darling pair of patent  
 leather Mary Janes.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

FISHERMEN and their WIVES and CHILDREN scurry along the beach  
 collecting the washed-up shoes and trading for complete  
 pairs.

MARINA (V.O.)  
 Grammy D'Arbo found herself a real  
 witchy pair of high heeled things. She  
 told me all city girls wore these sort  
 of shoes. 'Course she said they were  
 tramps she'd never deign to wear 'em.

INT. BEACH COTTAGE

YOUNG MARINA'S FEET teeter precariously in the oversized  
 pumps.

MARINA (V.O.)  
 But I did. Then again, Grammy D'Arbo'd  
 never been off island in all her sixty  
 years. 'Course I loved my Mary Jane's  
 most of all. Only shoes I ever really  
 cared for. They seemed so... glamorous.

EXT. DOCK

A FOURTEEN YEAR OLD MARINA swings her feet off the dock in  
 the PATENT LEATHER MARY JANES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA (V.O.)

I cherished those shoes till Grammy had to forbid me wearing them. Said I'd likely end up with teeny-tiny bound little feet like them Oriental girls. 'Course Grammy D'Arbo'd never been to the Orient, but that didn't stop her knowing. So, we depended on the water to bring us what we needed to survive and it never disappointed.

MARINA reels in an enormous flopping blue fish.

Which is why I wasn't the least bit surprised when my husband washed up on shore.

EXT. WIDOW'S WALK, BEACH COTTAGE - SUNRISE

THE GROWN MARINA stares out to sea, now an exotic beauty with a mysterious, glowing allure. On the distant water a fishing skiff bobs into view.

MARINA (V.O.)

Bankers--that's what we call us coastal folk--believe a girl can see her husband-to-be if she walks down stairs backwards gazing in a mirror. I believe that's a fine way to break your neck.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The fishing skiff washes onto the beach. In it sits LEO LEMKE in a Yankees baseball cap and lost look on his face. LEO is a middle-aged New York butcher who's spent so much of his life around sides of beef, he's come to resemble one. He looks completely out of place.

MARINA runs into the shallow water to the boat.

MARINA (V.O.)

Now you might be askin' how I knew this was my beloved and not just another Yankee tourist that the sea had toyed with and set ashore on Ocracoke Island.

MARINA offers LEO a lustrous smile. It's contagious and he smiles back. She holds out a hand. He assumes she's trying to help him out of the boat.

Well all I can say is after all them bananas and patent leather shoes and the chocolate bars that I didn't even tell you about, I knew how to recognize a gift from the sea. And of course I'd

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 dreamed of his arrival for nights prior,  
 so I was out waiting for him. I knew he  
 was the one.

She takes his hand--and climbs into the boat with an amazed  
 LEO.

CUT TO:

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET, NEW YORK CITY - DAY

The dirty white side of a delivery truck fills the screen. A  
 slash of spray-paint color and we pull back to reveal EUGENE,  
 a seventeen year old boy-man with a lock of hair constantly  
 falling across his face, wearing a funky pork-pie hat,  
 finishing a hit-and-run graffiti on the side of a delivery  
 truck, scrawling big and bright, "AGNES MOOREHEAD IS GOD."  
 He dodges behind the truck whose driver continues to unload  
 racks of clothing for delivery to the AVALON boutique. GRACE  
 BRODY, the owner, a Soho gal, mid to late 30's, who moves  
 through life with a bemused air of detachment, oversees the  
 delivery.

We follow EUGENE as he lopes down the heat steamed streets of  
 early summer through a working class neighborhood that has  
 now rapidly gentrified into a costly playground for the chic  
 and trendy.

EUGENE bops past a "GONE FISHING" sign that hangs on the  
 aluminum security gate of LEMKE'S BUTCHER SHOP. In front of  
 LEMKE'S, some neighborhood KIDS struggle to uncap a fire  
 hydrant. EUGENE gives a quick, experienced hand and the KIDS  
 scream with delight as a torrent of water is unleashed into  
 the street EUGENE bops across the street toward:

MOLLY and GINA, the neighborhood grapevines, born circa 1915,  
 come out of their apartment building in sleeveless  
 housedresses and set up three lawnchairs on the sidewalk,  
 leaving the empty one between them.

MOLLY  
 Oy, what I wouldn't give for just a  
 little breeze.

GINA  
 Not till September. At the earliest.

MOLLY  
 So now you're doing the weather?

The muffled sound of the tribal drums of the big band  
 classic, "SING, SING, SING" pound with voodoo urgency from an  
 open window in the apartment building next door.

INT. ALEX TREMOR'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

"SING, SING, SING" continues as WE PAN ACROSS walls of sagging bookcases, overstuffed with an incredibly eclectic collection of well-thumbed volumes from THE COLLECTED WORKS OF FREUD to BLAKE to THE JOY OF SEX to THE ART OF THE DEAL to STEPHEN HAWKINS to M.F.K. FISHER, -- the library of a voraciously curious mind.

We come upon DR. ALEX TREMOR, the most earnest man in the world. He sits behind a drum kit in boxer shorts and a t-shirt with the legend "THE UNEXAMINED LIFE IS NOT WORTH LIVING," headset on head, pounding away, eyes closed, lost in the rhythm of the song. What he lacks in talent--a lot--he more than makes up for with explosive enthusiasm.

ALEX is in his early thirties, a masterful intellect and boyish good looks to which he is oblivious. Here is a man with a big heart held hostage by an over-developed brain.

ROBYN GRAVES, a pretty young soap star, comes into the room in an oversized t-shirt with a cartoon that reads, "NUCLEAR WAR?! WHAT ABOUT MY CAREER???" She shakes her head lovingly at her eccentric and oblivious beau and gently removes the headset and whispers in his ear.

ROBYN

The shower's all yours Ringo.

He opens his eyes momentarily lost.

Mugs, I worry you'll go deaf. Or I will.

ALEX

Can't help it, Mugs, I got the music in me.

He deftly executes a flashy roll across the set, spins his sticks into the air with great elan--and covers his head as they rain down around him.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - DAY

C.U. ALEX'S face, stares intently, looking for signs of imperfection--in his soul, not his visage.

ROBYN (O.S.)

Looking for imperfections?

ALEX, in boxer shorts, confronts himself in a full-length mirror.

ALEX

New patient. I want to look...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He presses a button and a carousel of perfectly pre-knotted ties turns in front of him.

CUT TO:

ALEX, still in boxers with white shirt and blue tie.

Approachable.

He checks his reflection before his critique.

Too casual. He needs to trust me.

CUT TO:

ALEX in red silk tie.

I don't want to intimidate him. Lose the power tie.

CUT TO:

ALEX in Harvard "rep" tie.

Too... Polo? People hate preppies. He'll think I'm too young.

CUT TO:

ALEX back in his shorts, bummed. ROBYN is totally dressed, coiffed and made-up.

ROBYN

Mugs? It's just a tie, and I need the mirror.

ALEX

They count on me.

ROBYN

For fashion tips?

ALEX

Think of it as a first date.

ROBYN

You want them to like you.

ALEX

Yes.

(Catches himself)

No. It shouldn't matter whether they like me or not.

ROBYN

Then your safe with your shorts ensemble.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX

Mugs. It's not that I want them to like me.  
I want them to ...

On each phrase we CUT TO ALEX in a different ensemble considering the impact of his image.

trust me... confide in me... respect me...  
believe in me... let me in their lives... let  
me help them--

ROBYN

Whoa, Trigger, you're working yourself into a  
frenzy.

ALEX back in shorts.

Now, I want you to just think about this as  
choosing a shirt, a suit and a tie.  
Otherwise, you're going to be late, the  
patient will feel rejected, word will spread  
rapidly through the psychiatric community,  
you'll quickly lose your patients, practice,  
license--and this fabulous apartment.

ALEX

Right.

CUT TO

ALEX in a white shirt, seersucker suit, straightens his plum  
tie perfectly.

ROBYN

Perfect.

ALEX

That's a tough word to live up to.

ROBYN

But the effort builds character.

ALEX

You sound like a commercial for the Army,  
Mugs. Love me?

ROBYN

Toujours.

She kisses him on the lips. He checks himself one final  
time, rubs off her lipstick trace and gives himself an  
approving nod.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCRACOCKE FERRY - DAY

LEO and MARINA face the wind at the prow of the ferry as it makes it's way to the mainland. Behind them is parked Leo's powder blue '57 STUDEBAKER.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX TREMOR'S OFFICE - DAY

ALEX moves deftly around his book-lined office performing his morning ritual. He greets each day eagerly, as if the first day of school. The digital clock flips to 8:59.

He carefully adjusts the pyramid of framed diplomas from prestigious universities that peak in a recently earned psychiatric degree. He adjusts the meticulously juxtaposed African masks and primitive sculpture surrounding the shrine to his overweening intellect.

He fluffs and smoothes the cushions on an easy chair and rocking chair that face each other, and perfectly angles the Kleenex box, ash tray, and files on the side table.

He checks his appointment book for the name of a new patient, selects a brand new file and carefully prints "LIDDLE, GEORGE" on the folder tab and inserts a brand new clean pad of paper inside.

Contentedly, he surveys the perfect order of his kingdom as the clock flips to 9:00 a.m. He completes his moment with a quick floss from his pocket container. Then, in a spurt of child-like glee, he produces two drum sticks from his desk door, beats out a rapid tattoo, twirls twice in his swivel chair and quickly reassumes his composure.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

MR. LIDDLE, a middle aged man in a three piece suit with a mournful basset hound gaze, cautiously makes his way down the hall to a door with a tasteful sign, "ALEX TREMOR, M.D., PSYCHIATRY." He hesitates before knocking, then rallies his nerve, but as he raises his hand the door is opened by the ever-anticipatory ALEX with a welcoming smile.

ALEX  
(Warmly)  
Welcome to therapy.

MR. LIDDLE is more than a little apprehensive.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTER BANKS, NORTH CAROLINA - DAY

From on high, a narrow isthmus of land surrounded by endless ocean runs parallel to the wooded coast. The STUDEBAKER putts along the ribbon of road that runs down the center.

An off-key MALE VOICE sings a raucous version of Bessie Smith's barrelhouse blues, "GIMME A PIGFOOT AND A BOTTLE OF BEER."

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE

MR. LIDDLE sits meekly, working over a Kleenex as ALEX enthusiastically tries to engage him.

ALEX

(Charged with his mission)  
Therapy is a voyage of discovery we'll take together. A tremendous opportunity--no--an invitation to examine and change the patterns that shape our lives. It's truly a remarkable process to illuminate our path through the wilderness of our times. It's an absolutely fascinating trip--at times joyous, at times painful but always, always moving forward toward a brave new world.

He looks for MR. LIDDLE's response to find him staring at the shredded tissue in his hand. ALEX tries harder to involve him.

Trust. That's a big one. Please think of this office as your sanctuary where you can say whatever comes to your mind without fear of judgement. Your personal haven where we can look--before you leap.

He smiles encouragingly at the nervous MR. LIDDLE and changes to a more colloquial tone.

All secrets are safe here. There are no stupid questions. We are beyond good and evil.

ALEX enjoys his little intellectual allusion.

Say anything you want to me. Anything.

ALEX waits expectantly for MR. LIDDLE who struggles endlessly in silence. Finally,

MR. LIDDLE

Doctor, the sky is falling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX is at a momentary loss of words at this non-sequitur. But he quickly rallies and nods, concerned and supportive.

ALEX  
Excellent. How long have you felt that way?

The digital clock over the patient's shoulder flips to 9:11.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE - DAY

The STUDEBAKER speeds down the road. The Manhattan skyline wavers in the afternoon heat.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE

The digital clock reads 4:06. STELLA KEFAUVER, a forty year old choir teacher at the St. Anthony's School, smokes vehemently in extreme frustration.

STELLA  
I'm turning into a spinster.

ALEX  
Stella, "spinsters" aren't addicted to married men.

STELLA  
I'm not addicted. I just... can't... resist them...

STELLA paces the office, unconsciously adjusting the diplomas. ALEX restrains himself from re-adjusting them.

I'm just so goddamned tired of teaching holy music to pimple faced kids. These... "affairs," they're all I have to look forward to. A little bit of romance. I pretend I'm Anna Karenina or Madame Bovary--

ALEX  
(Dives in)  
Good, good. Let's work with that for a moment. Now what happened to those two ladies?

STELLA  
They offed themselves.

ALEX  
(An encouraging lightness)  
So much for romance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA

It could be worse.

She shrugs, dejected. He tries another tack to keep her involved.

ALEX

O.k., tell me, what do all your relationships have in common?

STELLA

Dead ends.

ALEX

Uh-hunh.

STELLA

But it's the only excitement I ever get.

ALEX

Don't you meet any single men?

STELLA

Yeah, every day. A church full of brothers in burlap sworn to silence.

ALEX

Still, these short term trysts... Do you think you're confusing... an anxiety provoking friction with true excitement?

STELLA

What's the difference?

ALEX

True excitement isn't always something big and dangerous. We can find it in small moments.

She's unconvinced. He strives to convince her.

Umm, finishing the breakfast dishes.

This doesn't cut it. He starts to free associate.

The right tie... finding a parking spot-  
-that's good til Monday

(Delighted)

The perfect canole... rent control!

STELLA

(Picks up his rhythm, sings)

"Wild geese that fly with the moon on  
their wings..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX

(Joins her)

"These are a few of my favorite things..."

They share a laugh.

STELLA

(Regards him in a new light)

So, it's Julie Andrews I should be looking too.

ALEX

Sorry, I get carried away sometimes. But really, true excitement doesn't leave you feeling depressed and guilty.

STELLA

No, my life does that.

ALEX

But how are you going to discover what might really "turn you on" when you invest all your emotional energy pursuing "dead end" affairs.

STELLA

Jesus, I don't know...

She exhales forcefully in despair.

Maybe I was born to sing the blues.

ALEX

(Leads her in recitation)

We're not "born" to do anything--

STELLA & ALEX

... our lives are a series of considered choices.

ALEX

(Delighted)

Yes!

A SQUEAL OF BRAKES draws their attention to the open window.

CUT TO:

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - DAY

Leo's STUDEBAKER comes to a screeching halt in front of LEMKE'S BUTCHER SHOP as EUGENE dodges in front of the car and the fire-hydrant KIDS let loose a torrent of water into the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STUDEBAKER. A drenched and enraged LEO, in his Yankees cap, leaps out as the KIDS run for their lives.

LEO

You little bastards, I'll make sausage out of you!

Across the street, MOLLY and GINA note LEO's arrival.

MOLLY

The butcher's back.

GINA

Good, I'll have sausage tonight.

They toddle over to greet their neighbor. In the background the delivery truck DRIVER goes into a rage on discovering Eugene's graffitied message.

LEO parks the car and comes around to open the passenger door as MOLLY and GINA wait with anticipation. A WOMAN'S ARM hands out a succession of objects which LEO passes fire-brigade-style to MOLLY and GINA who's mounting curiosity is killing them. Among the objects handed out are: a bouquet of dried wildflowers in the blue "sea glass" bottle we saw wash up in the opening sequence, a handmade sedge broom, a large copper crab pot, the mounted huge blue fish MARINA caught in the earlier sequence, a hand-sewn quilt and finally an old-fashioned worn valise. LEO leans in gently to help out the mystery girl as MOLLY and GINA teeter for a glimpse. Slowly, MARINA, emerges from the car clutching a strange, ancient pendulum clock encrusted with odd stones and buttons. As she steps into the neighborhood in bare feet, a sudden GUST OF WIND blows down the street. MOLLY and GINA hold down their dresses like two geriatric Marilyn Monroes.

Across the street, EUGENE stares as the wind picks his hat up off his head.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE

The GUST OF WIND scatters the pages of Alex's files off his lap and extinguishes the match that Stella has lit for her cigarette. Over her shoulder, his digital clock sticks at 4:23. They both look to the open window.

ALEX

Excuse me a moment.

ALEX goes to the open window. He looks out across the street to the scene of Marina's arrival in front of LEMKE'S. He closes the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET

MARINA inhales her new world, delightedly, looks up to see an unknowing ALEX close his window across the street.

LEO  
Ladies, my new bride--

MOLLY  
Bride?

LEO is abashed by his amazing fortune.

LEO  
Marina Lemke. From Ocracoke,  
North Carolina.

MOLLY, GINA and MARINA all exchange questioning looks and then trade welcoming smiles.

MOLLY  
Sure, sure. I know it, right next door to the  
Lost Colony.

LEO  
(Shocked)  
Uh, yeah...

GINA  
So. Welcome to Sullivan Street.

MOLLY  
We could use a change of weather.

MARINA smiles, lustrous.

LEO  
(Proud)  
Well this is it honey, your new home.  
Our home.

He notices her barefeet.

And you gotta wear shoes in this part of  
the world.

He swoops her up in his arms.

MOLLY  
Leo, you'll get a hernia.

LEO  
(Beams)  
Love's made a young man out of me ladies.

He carries MARINA, her suitcase and clock past the shop,  
tears off the "GONE FISHING" sign and starts into his ground  
floor apartment next door to the butcher shop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GINA  
Who knew Leo liked them Lolita types?

LEO comes back out for the rest of the luggage.

LEO  
I know what you're thinking.  
(Proud)  
She asked me--I'm the man of her dreams.

The LADIES are unconvinced.

What kind of a schmuck would say no?

He goes back in. MOLLY and GINA exchange a knowing look.

CUT TO:

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - DUSK

The late afternoon light lingers golden as a checker cab SCREECHES to a halt in front of LEMKE'S. ROBYN explodes out of the cab. She leans back in yanking out a huge purse, a make-up case, a Barney's shopping bag, a garment bag, etc., slams the door shut with a shake of her shapely hips. As it pulls away, she suddenly remembers something and gives a tremendous NYC whistle. The cab SCREECHES and reverses. She opens up the door, reaches onto the floor and emerges with a huge shotgun. She heads into the butcher shop as several SCARED PEDESTRIANS freeze on the sidewalk, avoiding her and her gun.

INT. BUTCHER SHOP

Well scrubbed white tile and stainless steel. Various skinned carcasses hang in the window including a stuffed sheep's head on which he tosses his Yankee's baseball cap.

LEO proudly shows the shop to his new bride. MARINA looks around.

LEO  
You'll work here behind the counter.  
It's the most important part of the  
business--keepin' the customer  
satisfied.

MARINA  
Do you ever sell Beefalo?

LEO  
You mean beef jerky.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA

No, beefalo. Half steer, half buffalo. Uncle Zeke Dillingworth used to breed 'em. Fry it up, it's kind of chewy but tasty.

LEO

Never heard of it. Here, try this on.

He grabs an apron off a hook and puts it around MARINA, hugs her as he ties it around her waist, takes the opportunity to steal some kisses.

ROBYN bursts into the store.

ROBYN

Leo, you're back.

LEO sees the gun first and jumps, then relaxes when he sees it's ROBYN.

LEO

Hey, Harper, ya holdin' me up?

It takes ROBYN a moment to realize he's referring to her gun. MARINA is delighted at the quintessential New York energy of ROBYN.

ROBYN

Oh this. Harper's going to kill somebody next week. Of course the idiot writers haven't decided whom, but I wanted to start working with the weapon so I'd be more in the moment when it comes.

LEO

(To Marina)

Honey this is Robyn Graves--she's Harper, a big t.v. star.

ROBYN

Hardly--

MARINA

Proud to make your acquaintance.

LEO

This is my wife, Marina  
(Proud)  
Lemke.

ROBYN

(Shocked)  
Wife?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She looks back and forth between LEO and his young bride, trying to assimilate the information.

ROBYN

I mean my god, congratulations. That's wonderful. Leo, you sneaky devil, I didn't even know you were dating anyone.

LEO

(A little uncomfortable)  
Yeah, well it was pretty quick.

MARINA

Long engagements are bad luck.

LEO

(Changes subject)  
So, um, I was just showin' Marina the shop, we're not really open, but I got some stuff in the freezer if ya' want.

ROBYN

Something for the barbecue.

LEO

Let me see what I can do ya.

He disappears into the back. ROBYN sets her many bags on the counter to wait.

ROBYN

(Tries to recover her cool)  
So, Leo married. And you too. That's great. Let's see the ring.

MARINA

We didn't have time for a ring.

ROBYN

Kind of unexpected, hunh?

MARINA

Not really.

ROBYN

Oh... well when did you two meet?

MARINA

(Matter of fact)  
Two days ago.

INT. LEMKE'S BACK ROOM

LEO gets some meat out of a freezer, listens for Robyn's reaction.

## INT. BUTCHER SHOP

ROBYN

(Shocked)

Wow. You're kidding. That's so brave. I mean--it's just that it seems so sudden. That's such a big, confusing kind of anxiety-inducing decision isn't it? Was it something he said? How did you know he was the one?

MARINA

I dreamed about him.

ROBYN

God, I wish I could find some answers when I'm asleep.

The two women lock gazes for a moment. Suddenly the strap on Robyn's purse pops scattering its myriad contents all across the floor.

Shit.

MARINA comes out from around the counter and they crawl around to retrieve the lost objects as they speak.

All I ever dream about is being on stage naked which is just so textbook, I'm embarrassed to tell my boyfriend. I know he wishes I had more... complicated dreams...

(Confides)

so I make them up sometimes. Maybe I can borrow yours, he'd love that... "Honey, I dreamed I was at my wedding--" God that sounds so Maidenform--"And you were the one--"

(Tries out the words)

The one... The one and only... Oh god, how will I know for sure?

MARINA, crouched on the floor picks up Robyn's dog eared copy of Uta Hagen's "Respect for Acting," and holds it tight. She looks away from ROBYN as if watching a movie unfold on the wall. Her voice takes on a distant tone as she struggles to see Robyn's future. ROBYN watches her face, fascinated.

LEO, frozen behind the counter watches the two women on the floor, unobserved.

MARINA

Big feelings... violence... A shot in the dark? An unexpected arising. Love's waiting for you behind a friendly face. Don't be scared of it, you can stand up to it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBYN, awestruck, stares at her, a faithful follower, plops down on the floor.

ROBYN

So Alex is it. I guess you're right, we've just been fooling each other with all this nonsense about shared independence and elbow grease when at heart I'm an old fashioned girl. I could die waiting for Alex to analyze all the pros and cons. God, you're incredible, tell me more--

LEO comes in quickly, steps around the counter to help ROBYN up. He gives her the meat and starts to usher her toward the door.

LEO

(To ROBYN)

Here you go sweetheart. A couple a London broils, you can defrost 'em real quick in your microwave.

ROBYN

Oh thanks Leo. You know your wife is--

LEO

Something special, alright, but if you'll forgive us, it's our first night home and we're gonna close up now.

ROBYN

Oh of course. God how insensitive of me. What do I owe you?

LEO

You can pay me next time-- I don't got any change.

He urges her out the door. She stops and turns back to MARINA.

ROBYN

We'll talk.

MARINA smiles as LEO hustles ROBYN out the door. He locks the door and turns to his wife.

LEO

Honey, why'd you say that stuff to her?

MARINA

(Completely innocent)

I thought she'd like to know.

LEO wonders.

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - DUSK

ALEX strolls down the street toward MOLLY and GINA with a fish-net shopping sack full of groceries. He wears pressed khakis and a t-shirt of Freud smoking a cigar, saying, "Sometimes A Cigar Is Just A Cigar."

MOLLY  
Doctor.

ALEX  
(Greets them warmly)  
Ladies.

MOLLY  
Nice shirt.

ALEX  
(Delighted)  
Thanks.

GINA  
Doctor I had this dream last night.

She gestures for him to sit in the chair between them. He does, breaking off pieces of a protruding baguette and passing them to the ladies, obviously enjoying this nightly ritual.

I was on Star Search. A special guest. With Ed McMahon, you know? So I was doing my baton act, but every time I threw one of them flaming things in the air, Ed was ... pawing me. He was all over me like a cheap suit. And... I liked it.

MOLLY  
(Horrified)  
Ed McMahon?

ALEX  
He's so... unctuous.

MOLLY  
My words exactly.

GINA  
Is that contagious?

ALEX  
I think you're safe.

MOLLY  
(Shudders and mutters)  
Safe sex with Ed McMahon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Across the street ROBYN exits LEMKE'S and catching sight of ALEX waves her gun at him.

ROBYN

Hi honey.

The LADIES wave back.

MOLLY

Hi sweetheart.

GINA

Hi darling.

The three of them gossip as they watch ROBYN cross the street.

GINA

So you met the butcher's wife?

ALEX

Leo's back?

MOLLY

She's young.

GINA

And different.

MOLLY

And young.

GINA

And very pretty.

MOLLY

And very young.

ALEX

(To Molly)

Do I sense a vague disapproval?

MOLLY

(Shrugs)

A waste. He won't know what to do with her.

ALEX

They're consenting adults, they'll figure something out.

ROBYN makes it across the street and kisses ALEX.

(To ROBYN)

Hi mugs. Nice gun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOLLY  
(To ROBYN)  
So, you gonna marry him?

ROBYN  
(Looks to ALEX, coy)  
He hasn't asked me.

GINA  
Not the Doctor, your Uncle Chauncey.

ALEX  
(Reminds)  
Ladies, "Harper" is just a role Robyn plays on "Our Daily Bread." Robyn is a real person, not some perverse imagining of a tortured soap writer.

MOLLY  
(To Robyn)  
Yeah, but are you gonna marry your Uncle Chauncey or not?

GINA  
(To Alex)  
You got a term for that kind of arrangement?

MOLLY  
Come on Harper, what gives?

ROBYN  
(Tempts)  
Promise not to tell?

MOLLY and GINA lean forward eagerly.

MOLLY  
Never.

GINA  
My lips are sealed.

ROBYN starts to tell, then stops, laughing.

ROBYN  
No that would take all the fun out of it.

MOLLY  
Harper, you're evil.

ALEX takes Robyn's arm.

ALEX  
That's why we love her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBYN  
Evening ladies.

ALEX  
I want to go over and congratulate Leo. I heard he got married.

ROBYN  
She's incredible, but not tonight.

Charged with her mission she hurries Alex into his apartment building next door.

ROBYN  
(To Alex)  
You promised you wouldn't wear those shirts outside.

ALEX  
I love this shirt. I think it's... neat.

ROBYN  
Shhh, mugs. Don't talk like that, someone might hear. Here, I got you something at "Barney's."

She hands him "Barney's" shopping bag.

ALEX  
You took your gun to "Barney's?"

They go inside.

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - EVENING

MARINA and LEO come out of the shop. She watches his elaborate locking up ritual.

MARINA  
I'm gonna have some trouble keeping up with all these keys. Never had a lock on my door before.

Across the street, ALEX steps onto his fire escape to start a small Hibachi. He squirts on lighter fluid when he hears the SLAM of an iron gate. He looks across the street to LEO and MARINA finishing pulling down the security gate.

ALEX floods the Hibachi with lighter fluid and lights a match as he watches LEO give MARINA an affectionate swat on the butt. He calls across the street.

ALEX  
Hey Leo, welcome back. I hear congratulations are in order.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEO  
(Beams proudly)  
Thanks Doc. Meet my bride, Marina.

MARINA waves.

ALEX waves back and drops the match causing the drenched coals to go up in a raging inferno as he leaps back shielding his crotch. A pot of water flies out the open window extinguishing the flames. ROBYN pokes her head out.

ROBYN  
Are you all right?

ALEX  
Fine, fine. Just careless.

She disappears back inside. He stands drenched and shivering, glances across the street but MARINA is gone.

INT. LEMKE BEDROOM - NIGHT

MARINA unpacks and makes room for her possessions in the crowded room. LEO emerges fresh from the shower in a towel singing along enthusiastically off-key to a scratchy recording of Bessie Smith doing "T'AIN'T NOBODY'S BUSINESS IF I DO." He sweeps her up in his arms gives her a big kiss and twirls her around to the music.

LEO  
You can't beat Bessie.

MARINA  
Who?

LEO  
(A little surprised)  
Bessie Smith. The Empress of the Blues.

MARINA  
Oh. Sounds kind of scratchy.

LEO  
It's an original pressing. Very rare.

He savors the song, the dance and his beautiful young bride.

MARINA  
This town's just cracklin' with current, I'm never gonna get to bed. You wanna take me to greet some of the neighbors after I finish dressing the bed?

LEO  
Honey we got to get up early for a big delivery.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA

They'll be late arriving. Something about Kentucky.

LEO

They called when I was in the shower?

MARINA

No, but I know they won't be here till after eleven.

She unfolds her quilt onto the bed.

My Grammy D'Arbo sewed this.

LEO

I thought she was blind.

MARINA

She is. It's a weddin' band pattern, isn't it pretty?

LEO

(Tries to catch up)

How do you "know" the delivery's going to be late?

She shrugs. He lets out a long sigh.

MARINA

It's not "crap" Leo.

He whirls to look at her, stunned at her prescience.

I think it's a cracked axle.

LEO

What? Did I marry, Jeanne Dixon?

MARINA

Who?

LEO

Never mind.

She kisses him and whispers in his ear.

MARINA

Don't go anywhere.

She gently extricates herself from his embrace and undresses. He watches as she takes an onion and a buckeye out of her pocket. Without even looking at him she knows he's watching.

It's for good luck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He notices her ancient pendulum clock by the bed TICKING loudly.

LEO

I got a brand new digital radio alarm clock from the bank, it doesn't tick so loud.

MARINA

That clock's been with my folk since Eden. It's a perpetual motion clock.

LEO

(Strained patience)

There's no such thing as perpetual motion.

MARINA

Those ticks are the heartbeat of our marriage. Two hearts beating as one.

LEO

That's nice honey. How 'bout I put it in the other room?

She hops into bed.

MARINA

Tomorrow. So which side do you favor?

LEO

I don't know. I always kind of sleep in the middle.

MARINA

Well we'll just roll about till we get comfortable.

She motions for him to join her which he does.

LEO

(Sighs)

I'm one lucky butcher.

MARINA

I told you honey, luck didn't figure at all.

She leans over him, kisses him and turns off the light.

LEO

(Slight edge)

Whatever. I'm glad I found you.

MARINA

I found you.

## INT. ALEX'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

ALEX scrubs his bathroom, using a toothbrush on the shower tile grout with a copy of Robyn's script propped on the toilet seat in front of him. Completely in character as "Uncle Chauncey," he enjoys running ROBYN through her lines. ROBYN paces in the other room, rehearsing her lines. She appears intermittently in the doorway as he cleans.

ALEX

(total control)

"I want you on the counter. Now."

ROBYN

("Harper")

"I ran from you Chauncey, as far as I could, so why do I keep ending up in your arms. It isn't right."

ALEX

"Right? Since when have I let right or wrong interfere with my desires?"

A huge dastardly laugh. Then he drops "Uncle Chauncey."

No, that was too big.

He studies his script.

Was my emotional state too obvious? I was working on lust and domination.

ROBYN

You were fine but I'm way outside my moment. I mean if Harper marries her Uncle Chauncey... she'll be her own niece. How do I feel about that?

ALEX

(Considers, coaches)

A misplaced Electra complex. Her intellect is in conflict with her libido. Let's try anger.

ROBYN

(As Harper, angry)

"I ran from you Chauncey, as far as I could, so why do I keep ending up in your arms?" So who am I mad at, me or him?

ALEX

(Considers)

Try guilt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBYN

(Tries guilt)

"I ran from you Chauncey, as far as I could, so why do I keep ending up in your arms?" No, no, no, no.

She comes in and stares at herself in the mirror while she tries the line.

"I ran from you Chauncey-- I ran from you?--"

Her mind's not on it. He scrubs merrily away.

I don't know why you won't use my maid.

ALEX

It's sharing these daily tasks that brings a mutual sense of accomplishment and helps forge a basic bond between us.

ROBYN looks at her little boy lovingly, lost in his scrubbing, makes a decision and walks out of the room. He doesn't notice.

A good relationship is like... an immaculate shower--they both take a lot of elbow grease, right mugs?

ROBYN (O.S.)

Scrubbing your john does not make me feel closer to you.

A loud POP of a champagne cork. She stands in the door way with two filled champagne flutes. She brings him one and lifts her glass in a toast.

ROBYN

To us!

ALEX pages through the script.

To love everlasting!

ALEX

Wait a second, wait a second, what page are you on?

ROBYN

Alex, we need to stay in the real world for a moment.

ALEX

But I was just getting into character.

She takes a big breath and charges bravely forward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBYN

I know we agreed to develop our separate identities but darling, honestly, I've already got more identities than I know what to do with so it's time to start combining. We have respect and friendship, a great apartment and passion comes with time. It's time to bite the bullet, step on the glass, slaughter the fatted calf. Mugs, lets.

ALEX

(Jokes)

You haven't sublet your apartment have you?

ROBYN

I'm talking about nuptial bliss never ending.

ALEX

Really?

ROBYN

Really.

ALEX considers. Gets up leaves the bathroom. After a moment ALEX drumming to "SING, SING, SING" fills the air.

INT. ALEX'S LIVING ROOM

ALEX, eyes closed flails away.

ROBYN

This is hardly the time--

ALEX

It helps me think clearly.

ROBYN

I feel at a disadvantage.

He considers this. Gets up, with his drum sticks, puts his arm around her lovingly and sits with her on the couch.

ALEX

Sorry, but you took me by surprise, mugs. I thought we decided that our next move is living together, not marriage.

ROBYN

(Seizes the opportunity to speak his language)  
So I hear you asking me to move in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX

Pay no attention to those voices, Joan.

ROBYN

Alex, I'm serious.

She sighs with frustration.

ALEX

Well, where did this come from all of a sudden?

ROBYN

(Blunt)

Leo's wife.

ALEX

(Thrown)

What?

ROBYN

Leo's wife. I've been to a lot of clairvoyants in my time. This one's the real thing. She's a very wise woman. I could tell.

ALEX

Leo's married a clairvoyant?

ROBYN

She sees us married.

ALEX

(Playful)

And I can see her. Thursday's at 11:00.

ROBYN

Alex, remember the last time you had an open mind. I think it was late '81.

ALEX

O.k., o.k. Let's take this from the top. Leo's married a fortune teller who thinks we should get married.

ROBYN

She said, "Love's waiting for you behind a friendly face. Don't be scared of it, you can stand up to it."

ALEX

Where the hell did Leo meet a gypsy?

ROBYN

Alex! Do you want to get married or not?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX  
Before we answer that question, I'm  
curious--

ROBYN  
Oh no.

ALEX  
She must be something to have such a  
powerful effect on you.

ROBYN  
Can we get off her and onto us.

ALEX  
Well if she's having such a profound  
effect on us, I want to know more about  
her.

ROBYN  
She's nothing. You're just avoiding.

ALEX  
I'm concerned. No. Curious. Yes.  
I mean if you want to talk about getting  
married why would you approach some  
strange woman in a butcher shop? Why  
wouldn't you come to me?

ROBYN  
(Extreme frustration)  
Forget it, forget it. I should have  
just told you I dreamed it. We'd be at  
the altar by now.

ALEX  
Can we talk about this rationally?

ROBYN  
No. Fight like a man, not like a  
shrink.

She downs her champagne, dramatically hurls it through the  
door into the bathroom, smashes it against his sparkling tub  
and walks out of the room. He goes to inspect the damage,  
drumsticks in hand.

INT. BATHROOM

ALEX wipes up the mess in the tub.

ALEX  
All I'm trying to say is marriage is an  
inspired decision. And we'll reach it  
together. In time. We don't need any  
outside help. Mugs?

Her silence is deafening. He goes to investigate.

INT. LIVING ROOM

ALEX comes in looking for ROBYN who's not there.

ALEX  
I told you I'm uncomfortable with the  
term "shrink."

ALEX starts drumming. A DOOR SLAMS loudly somewhere in the apartment.

EXT. ST. ANTHONY'S BELL TOWER - NIGHT

EUGENE sits on a ledge of the parapet staring out at the night city glittering below. His eye is caught by an odd apparition on the roof of Leo's apartment building. There seems to be a woman in her nightgown looking up to the stars. Intrigued he looks closer. Suddenly the church bells start ringing and he claps his hands to his ears.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ROBYN sleeps in the bed. ALEX reads Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales"--in the original Middle English--by the light of his clip-on reading lamp. He mouths the words dramatically.

He hears the CHURCH BELLS RING and looks to his bedside clock--2:23. Puzzled, he gets out of bed in his "THE UNEXAMINED LIFE..." t-shirt. He goes to close the window where he catches sight of the same apparition as EUGENE:

On the roof across the street, MARINA walks slowly from corner to corner searching for something in the sky. She wears her nightgown.

ALEX watches for a while then goes to ROBYN and kisses her awake gently.

ALEX  
Mugs, I want to show you something.

ROBYN  
I've seen it Alex and I'm still mad at you.

ALEX  
No, no come here.

He leads her, groggy, to the window. ROBYN awakens, curious.

ROBYN  
What's she doing?

ALEX  
Sleepwalking. In New York City. At night. Alone. Now is this the "wise woman" we were talking about earlier?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA looks right at them.

ROBYN

Shhh, she's looking right at us.

ALEX

Don't worry she can't really see.

MARINA turns away. ALEX pulls down the shade.

ROBYN

My mother always said never go to bed mad.

He kisses her.

ALEX

Can we keep your mother out of our bed?

She returns the kiss. He picks up his book.

How about a little touch of Chaucer in the night?

She groans. He reads:

"A sylvre nedle forth I drogh  
Out of an aguiler queynt y-nogh,  
And gan this nedle trede anon;"  
Damn. Middle English is so erotic.

He jumps into bed with her, aroused. A bed slat collapses with a loud crack.

EXT. BELLTOWER - NIGHT

A fascinated EUGENE watches MARINA leave the roof.

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - DAY

Morning. MOLLY and GINA set up their chairs. They sit down, armed with Thermos and newspapers. MOLLY carefully pours two cups of coffee, GINA carefully folds two sections of newspaper. They exchange coffee and newspaper and each sips and fans herself as their day begins.

Across the street MARINA and LEO exit their apartment.

GINA

He put her to work fast.

MOLLY

He should have hired her, he didn't need to marry her.

MARINA and LEO lift the solid aluminum security gate and stare in shock. An intricately gorgeous calligraphied

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

masterpiece sparkles in the morning sun and reads:

"WE ARE ALL IN THE GUTTER  
BUT SOME OF US ARE LOOKING AT THE STARS."

They both GASP. Several PASSERSBY stop to admire the window.

LEO  
Who'd a done that?

MARINA  
(Genuinely moved)  
It's beautiful.

LEO  
It's vandalism.

PASSERBY #1  
(To #2)  
What a fabulous new look for the butcher shop.

PASSERBY #2  
But what's it got to do with meat?

A voice behind LEO and MARINA turns their attention. It's  
EUGENE, obviously smitten with MARINA.

EUGENE  
I could wash it off. For a couple of  
bucks.

MARINA looks through him and smiles.

MARINA  
Why not let it linger for a spell?

LEO  
What?

MARINA  
Please?

LEO shrugs. EUGENE is disappointed.

(Impulsively, to EUGENE)  
But I'm sure we can find some chores  
'round the shop if you're handy with a  
broom.

LEO  
We can?

MARINA  
Can't we? We've got a big delivery  
arriving this afternoon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEO

This morning, honey, and can I talk to you a minute?

He pulls her aside and whispers.

I know this kid, he's trouble.

MARINA

He's just misunderstood. Please?

Exasperated, he goes into the store. MARINA gestures for EUGENE to follow her into the shop.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

"SING, SING, SING" plays in Alex's head as he paces the room waiting for a late patient, beating with his drum sticks on a variety of surfaces. He looks at his watch, his clocks, including the still stuck digital. Paces past the window, double takes when he sees EUGENE in a white apron sweeping in front of LEMKE'S with Marina's sedge broom.

CUT TO:

INT. BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

MARINA finishes waiting on a customer as ALEX walks in the store.

MARINA

Stop back soon.

CUSTOMER

Thanks I will. Love your window--it's so, original.

She leaves.

MARINA

(To Alex)

Morning, Dr. Tremor.

He regards her curiously, becomes lost in her beauty for a moment.

What would you be needing?

ALEX

(Recovers)

Actually I'm looking for someone.

EUGENE comes out of the back with the sedge broom, see's ALEX and starts to dodge away.

Eugene.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EUGENE freezes.

ALEX

Can I talk to you for a moment?

EUGENE

Sorry Doc, I'm on the clock.

ALEX

I'll just take a moment of your time.

MARINA

(To EUGENE)

It's alright.

EUGENE reluctantly comes around the counter to huddle with ALEX in whispers. MARINA starts cutting a huge pile of veal chops.

ALEX

Eugene, what are you doing?

EUGENE

Sweeping out the bad luck.

(Off Alex's look)

It's a sedge broom, Doc, all the way from Ocracoke.

ALEX

North Carolina?

MARINA

(Impressed)

You've been to Ocracoke?

ALEX

Well no, not actually, but there was an article in National Geographic. Last September, I think. Pigfish and hushpuppies are indigenous if I'm not mistaken.

MARINA

I never could tolerate pigfish. Such an unattractive name.

ALEX

Uhh, yes it is. Umm, will you excuse me a moment.

(To Eugene)

Did you forget our appointment?

EUGENE

I got a job, I don't need a shrink anymore.

MARINA laughs. ALEX cringes. LEO comes in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEO

Hey Doc, how's it going?

ALEX

Fine thanks, Leo. I'm just having a little chat with Eugene, here, if that's alright.

LEO

Sure, sure take your time.

(To Marina)

Honey, what are you doing cutting all those chops? We'll have nowhere to put them when that damn delivery truck shows up.

MARINA

They won't be arriving today.

She continues to chop.

LEO

They called?

MARINA

Not yet.

ALEX

(Sotto voce)

I thought we had an agreement. You were going to see me for three months before we decided whether or not you need a... psychiatrist.

EUGENE

You and my dad made that agreement. I'm just the troubled kid, Doc.

ALEX

Eugene, I'm glad you've found a job-- it's a positive move. But it doesn't preclude therapy. I still think we've got things to talk about.

LEO

Honey, those chops are gonna dry out and no one's gonna want 'em tomorrow.

She continues to chop. EUGENE starts into the back room.

ALEX

Eugene.

LEO

(Annoyed)

Marina.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She stops cutting, tears a huge sheet of butcher's paper as a manic woman Soho gallery TRENDROID explodes into the shop, elbowing ALEX.

TRENDROID

Out of my way asshole.

As the CUSTOMER raves, MARINA wraps the enormous package. ALEX can't help sneaking curious glances at MARINA, looking away each time she looks at him.

(hyper-speed)

Oh thank god you're open because of course I come home and he's standing there with that little-boy-lost sheepish, "well gee I'm an artist so it's cool if my right brain is oatmeal did Jackson Pollack have to remember to pick up the veal chops?" and I said cut it out Julian that kind of crap stopped being cute the day you got out of art school I pay to put the friggin' food on the table the least you can do is pick it up so now I've got a sit-down dinner for 24 influential critics and gallery trend-setters in less than three hours hoping to God maybe one of them will discover the little bugger and take him off my hands and of course you're thinking "it's her fault what kind of sane woman gets involved with a man with pretensions to paint" but I'm throwing myself on your mercy: I need--

MARINA looks at the woman and one of her EYEGLOSS LENSES CRACKS.

Veal chops.

She takes off her glasses and examines them

(Slows to a halt)

Lots of them. Now...

MARINA hands her the enormous wrapped package.

What's this?

MARINA

Veal chops. Lots of them. Now.

MARINA rings it up on the cash register, oblivious to EUGENE, ALEX, LEO and the TRENDROID staring at her and her cracked glasses.

TRENDROID

(astounded)

Oh. Wonderful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEO  
(hisses under his breath)  
Marina.

TRENDROID pays and starts to leave.

TRENDROID  
Great window.

Leaves.

EUGENE  
(To Marina)  
How'd you do that?

As the PHONE RINGS in the back room.

MARINA  
It's for ...

She catches herself, seeing LEO glaring at her.

Wanna pick that up honey?

LEO looks at her with "who are you" all over his face, goes in back to get the phone. MARINA goes about her business.

ALEX  
(To EUGENE)  
Eugene, why don't you come by tonight at six. Let's talk about this choice.

MARINA  
Don't worry, Doctor Tremor, we'll keep a watch on him.

ALEX  
I appreciate that Mrs. Lemke.

ALEX starts to leave.

MARINA  
Give a howdy-do to your honey for me.

ALEX stops, sees his open.

ALEX  
That's right. You and Robyn had a brief, but ... shall we say "influential" encounter.

MARINA  
(Confused)  
Come again?

ALEX  
You met Robyn last night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA

Oh yes. She's prettier than Queen Anne's lace. I can't wait to see her show.

ALEX

Yes. She spoke highly of you, too. Your enthusiasm for  
(Remembers Robyn's words)  
"nuptial bliss never ending" was quite contagious.

MARINA

I'm sorry?

ALEX

Didn't you suggest we get married?

MARINA

What I say and what people hear aren't always the same thing. Don't you find that in your callin' Doctor?

ALEX

"Callin'?" Oh, well no, I don't think match-making is part of my... profession. Of course there is marriage counseling, but that's not something I handle myself.

MARINA

I never told your sweetheart to marry with you.

(Considers)

I can see you sparkin' to her of course-- a man like you needs someone bigger than life itself... But she's not the one you'll settle with.

ALEX

What?

MARINA

I can't tell you 'xactly who is but don't fret it--

(Shrugs)

Love is the leap that won't be denied.

ALEX regards her as if she speaks gibberish.

ALEX

I'll, umm, keep that in mind.

She puts her hand on his chest and he recoils. She opens her hand to show a lady bug she's plucked off him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA

Means you'll meet a stranger soon.

ALEX

(Strives to communicate in her language)

That would be you, right?

MARINA

We're hardly strangers Doctor. We're neighbors.

ALEX

Right. Can I offer a little neighborly advice?

MARINA

A scholar like you? I'd be honored, though I doubt I could afford your prices.

ALEX

This one's on the house. Umm, I believe in "female intuition," Mrs. Lemke, to an extent--it's just a specific manifestation of the collective unconscious.

MARINA struggles to understand.

But you might want to be careful about ordering your life,

(Pointed)

Or anyone else's on such a... primitive instinct.

MARINA

(Subtle imitation of him)

I'll, umm, keep that in mind.

ALEX

Eugene, I'll see you later.

ALEX leaves feeling triumphant at having helped MARINA.  
MARINA and EUGENE watch him go.

MARINA

(Amused)

His tongue is long enough to cut his throat.

EUGENE

I was just going to say that.

LEO

(Roars into phone)

What d'ya mean. I need that goddamn beef today!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA cringes at the tone in his voice.

MARINA  
(To Eugene)  
Maybe I best scoot out of here till he  
settles. You mind the coop.

She leaves a panic-stricken EUGENE.

INT. "AVALON" - DAY

A funky but chic women's clothing store owned by GRACE BRODY,  
Alex and Robyn's best friend. GRACE is pricing clothes when  
MARINA enters.

GRACE  
Hi.

MARINA  
Afternoon.

Unexpectedly, the store sprinkler system goes off.

GRACE  
Shit.

She runs back to shut it off. MARINA starts to browse in the  
store. GRACE returns, checks for damage.

At least we know they work.

As MARINA browses through the shop GRACE finds she can't  
resist watching her.

GRACE  
I don't think I've seen you in here  
before.

MARINA  
Just moved up here with my husband. You  
know Mr. Leo Lemke?

GRACE  
(Surprised)  
The butcher?

GRACE stares intrigued. The door CHIME rings as a depressed  
STELLA enters, startling GRACE.

Oh. Hi.  
(Wants to continue with MARINA)  
Let me know if you need any help.

STELLA  
Well actually, I do. I'm looking for  
something... dowdy and plain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

Oh. What's the occasion?

STELLA

A church recital.

GRACE goes to select several conservative choices as STELLA browses through the racks next to MARINA. MARINA holds up a blouse in front of her. STELLA is drawn to and lingers on a sexy blue, beaded, flapper-style dress. She notices MARINA smiling at her.

(Off the dress)

"Lead us not into temptation..."

MARINA

(Shares the fantasy)

It's so... glamorous.

STELLA

Been a while since you were in church.

MARINA fingers the dress that STELLA holds and looks off to her own private movie.

MARINA

You should wear it to a... a night club.

STELLA laughs at this absurdity. MARINA watches her laugh and gets a clearer picture.

I see you in front of a roomful of folk.  
Entertaining... singing.

STELLA considers this as GRACE presents her with a variety of conservative choices.

GRACE

You can always frump it up with pearls  
and pumps.

STELLA looks between Grace's selections and the flapper dress. Impulsively she grabs the flapper dress.

STELLA

I'll take this one.

GRACE looks curiously between STELLA, MARINA, the boring dress and the sexy dress.

GRACE

What church did you say you were with?

STELLA

(Looks at Marina, laughs)  
Our Lady of the Nightclub.

MARINA and STELLA laugh. GRACE is very curious about MARINA.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

STELLA paces the office, smoking.

STELLA

Thanks for squeezing me in but I think I've had a break through.

(She braces herself)

I'm going to sing the blues!

ALEX

Let's not give in to despair.

STELLA

No, I figured it out. Well, it wasn't really me, but I think I know how to put some true excitement in my life. I'm gonna sing the blues!

ALEX

"Sing the blues." What exactly does that mean to you?

STELLA

A lounge act.

ALEX assimilates this turn of events.

Actually, I met this wonderful woman in a dress shop. I don't remember exactly what she said but it feels right. I'm gonna sing.

ALEX

(Tries to catch up)

Ok... you feel...you'd like to sing. But.. why do you think a clerk in a clothing store is having such a profound effect on you?

STELLA

No, no she's not a clerk. She's works at the butcher's shop, but she's so wise--

The mention of MARINA starts ALEX ticking.

She gave me hope.

ALEX

Oh, well, hope is good. But... before you launch full steam ahead into a singing career we should look at the emotional reality of performing in front of a group of strangers for the first time.

STELLA

Ok but--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX

I'm only pointing this out to help you but we need to explore the arduous rehearsal process...possible rejection...general ego-damage that can attend the pursuit of fame in such a competitive community--

STELLA

I'm getting discouraged.

ALEX

No, no. That's not my intent at all. I just want to make sure that we've considered all the ramifications.

STELLA

I know you're right. But there's something about her...she gave me hope.

ALEX

How exactly?

STELLA

She helped me pick the dress?

ALEX

Stella, a woman as intelligent and insightful as yourself doesn't need some "clairvoyant" to tell you how to live your life. That's why we're here.

STELLA

Do you think she's really clairvoyant?

ALEX subconsciously starts drumming on his knees.

EXT. BUTCHER SHOP EVENING

GRACE walks down Sullivan Street with a putter in her hand. She pauses to admire Leo's window. Looks in to see MARINA waving at her. Intrigued she goes in.

INT. LEMKE'S

MARINA is putting away the trays of meat. Under her apron, she wears the blouse she was looking at in "Avalon."

MARINA

Evening.

GRACE

Hi. The blouse looks great.

MARINA

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA takes two lamb chops off the tray she's putting away, wraps them up.

GRACE

Who did your window? Maybe I should do something like that at the store.

MARINA gives GRACE the chops.

What's this for?

MARINA

Supper.

She looks through GRACE and smiles.

For you... and a friend.

GRACE

(Offhand)

Friends I got plenty of. It's love that's left me waiting.

MARINA looks carefully at GRACE, looks around to make sure LEO is nowhere in sight.

MARINA

(Tentative)

Leo hates when I get to talking like this but... don't despair, it takes as long as it takes.

GRACE

What?

MARINA looks off to the side.

MARINA

There's two faces... well, not quite faces...

(Firmly)

Two sides.

(Concentrates hard)

Violence. But not on you. Just to men that have treated her unkindly.

GRACE

God love her, I can't wait.

MARINA

I'd stick close to your front porch for awhile. You'll be cookin' for two real soon.

GRACE mulls this over. Takes the meat from MARINA, affirming her believe. She reaches into her purse to pay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA

No payment necessary. It's a gift.

GRACE

Thanks....

(Smiles)

thanks.

She walks out lost in her thoughts. LEO emerges from the backroom pissed.

LEO

Marina, there's a lot of nuts in this city, you don't want people thinking you're one of them.

MARINA

What?

LEO

I thought we agreed no more of this hocus pocus nonsense.

MARINA

It's not nonsense, Leo. Why do you think that Northeaster blew you to Ocracoke Island?

LEO

I was on a fishing trip--

MARINA

You were hookin' off Virginia Beach, honey--you drifted for about two hundred miles. I knew you'd be my man so I fetched you there.

LEO slowly takes off his apron, crunches it up, throws it on the floor in complete frustration.

Honey?

He walks out of the shop.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

ALEX and GRACE practice putting in his living room. ALEX wears a huge pair of white patent leather golf shoes and madras pants.

GRACE

Nice shoes Alex, the Jackie Gleason collection?

ALEX

When I undertake to master something, I'm thorough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE  
You're obsessive.

ALEX  
Why does everybody think I'm obsessive when I'm trying to be passionate? I've got a lust for life.

GRACE  
Poor little Doctor, so misunderstood.

ALEX  
No really Grace. Beneath my seersucker suit rages the heart of.... help me.

GRACE  
A poet.

ALEX  
I like that.

GRACE  
A philosopher

ALEX  
Oh that's nice.

GRACE  
A master chef,

ALEX  
You flatter me.

GRACE  
A Casanova, an interior designer, a matador, our little drummer boy.

ALEX  
Gee Gracie, take no prisoners.

GRACE  
Sorry, cupcake but you do kind of inspire... rocking the pedestal?

ALEX  
Why? Really, why? I want to know.

GRACE  
Something about the importance of being Alex.

ALEX  
You mean earnest.

GRACE  
That too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX

Oh. Well, I thought that was an admirable quality.

GRACE

Everything in moderation.

ALEX

Agreed. Now could you share that with Robyn, she's got a new guru. She's hearing voices... and wedding bells.

GRACE

Love is in the air.

ALEX

No that's pollen.

GRACE sinks a putt. ALEX analyzes the angle of her stroke and steps up to try. He misses by a long shot.

GRACE

We'll have to step up our evening sessions.

ALEX

You must have better things to do with your nights than teach me to golf.

GRACE

Yes, but I already defrosted my fridge.

ALEX

Gracie, there are lots of sensitive, good looking, available women out there. Your fear of rejection is becoming paralyzing.

GRACE

Thank you Dr. Love but when I want a therapist I'll pay for one.

She sinks another one. He prepares to putt. She stands behind, pries open his fingers from his tense grip on the putter.

Ease up. You understand it, now just let go and feel it.

She puts her hands on his, adjusts his form. He closes his eyes, exhales deeply, shakes his neck, shoulders, arms and hands and prepares to putt.

(Tries to sneak it in)

By the way, I can't go away this weekend.

Alex misses the ball.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX

What do you mean you can't go away this weekend?

GRACE

Something's come up.

ALEX

I rented this house five months ago. I've been looking forward to this weekend together.

GRACE

It was unexpected.

ALEX

But we're supposed to have fun and relax goddamnit. And I scheduled you a blind date on Saturday night.

GRACE

Since when has matchmaking been part of your profession and I've already got a date.

ALEX

Oh. Well that's something else. Bring her along.

GRACE

I don't know who she is. Yet.

ALEX

Your own blind date.

GRACE

Not exactly. Now shut up and putt.

ALEX

I'm curious.

GRACE

Oh no.

ALEX

You have a date with somebody but you don't know who.

GRACE

Forget it.

ALEX

No, no. Professional curiosity. I'm always interested in early signs of dementia precox.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

Look Alex, I know it sounds flaky, but I met this wonderful woman who told me I'd be cooking for two very soon. And I really want to believe her.

ALEX

(Fears the worst)  
Believe who?

GRACE

The butcher's wife.

ALEX slams the ball out to the street shattering his window.

EXT. WATTS STREET - NIGHT

EUGENE bounces quickly down the deserted street to an ancient wooden shack with a sign that says, "MECCA'S CHICKENS" It's a bizarre apparition in the relentlessly upscale urban setting. Inside, a chicken SQUAWKS. As EUGENE slips around the back, a furious LEO storms down the street.

In the back of the chicken shack, EUGENE takes a small crow bar from his sleeve and jimmies the bolt.

INT. DELLAGO'S BAR - NIGHT

The smoke filled neighborhood bar accommodates an incongruous mixture of old time BAR FLIES and a smattering of HIP NEWCOMERS. LUIS, the Latino gentleman bartender, stands behind the bar proudly surveying his domain.

LEO enters, heads straight to the bar.

LEO

Hit me Luis. Hard.

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - NIGHT

MOLLY and GINA sit in their chairs. MOLLY tosses a golf-ball up and down.

MOLLY

It flew onto the street. I almost broke my coccyx.

GINA examines the golf ball.

GINA

A Topflite XL.

MOLLY

Thank you Dinah Shore.

Across the street MARINA finishes locking up the butcher shop. They call to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOLLY  
Darling!

GINA  
Honey!

MARINA crosses to them. They motion to the empty chair.

MOLLY  
It's for you

MARINA sits. GINA hands her a piece of newspaper. The three of them fan themselves in silence.

MOLLY  
So?

GINA  
How's love everlasting?

MARINA  
Oh, we're just smoothing out the creases.

GINA reaches deep into the pocket of her housedress, produces a small suede sack on a velvet cord and hands it to MARINA.

GINA  
A wedding present.

MARINA  
What is it?

GINA  
You need a mojo.

MOLLY  
You think?

MARINA  
A what?

GINA  
A mojo. It's a sack of charms... some herbs, dried flowers, a little spice--

MOLLY  
Sometimes some roots, nut shell, spider webs, candle wax, I like a little cumin--

GINA  
Yeah, ya use cumin? I never use cumin. Goat hair's a good one.

MOLLY  
It helps clear up the vision, so what ya see is--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GINA

What ya end up getting.

MARINA

I thank you for it, but--

MOLLY

Hard times demand an open mind.

MARINA looks at the mojo curiously, sniffs it, wrinkles her nose, shrugs and puts it around her neck.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - NIGHT

STELLA lingers on the edge of a crowd listening to a hipper-than-thou JAZZ COMBO finish a number. When one of the PLAYERS approaches her with a hat, she empties her purse into it and says:

STELLA

Excuse me, sir, but...

(Summons her nerve to blurt)

Are you free tomorrow night?

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

ALEX tapes up the hole in his window. He glances out to see a MOTHER HEN and her CHICKS parade down the center of the street followed by MARINA crossing to her apartment building. He double takes.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK DAY - NIGHT

ALEX speedwalks around the perimeter of the park with DR. KEARNEY, his professional mentor. KEARNEY is fifty-five striving to be thirty.

DR. KEARNEY

How's our special case proceeding?

ALEX

Well, there was the expected initial hostility followed by a predictable period of resistance.

DR. KEARNEY

Tell me something I don't know, Doctor. I'm counting on my most brilliant disciple not to disappoint me.

ALEX

(Nervous)

Well we're trying a new course of action which I expect will yield some interesting results.

ALEX watches for his reaction.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. KEARNEY

You might want to look at your tendency to hide behind generic statements when you're nervous, Alex.

ALEX

It's not that I'm nervous. But I know how much this patient means to you.

DR. KEARNEY

It's not what the patient means to me. It has to be what the patient means to you.

ALEX

Of course.

They huff and puff for a few moments.

ALEX

Have you ever had a patient present with somnambulistic tendencies?

DR. KEARNEY

Sleepwalking? Not in years. It's nothing more than a dream state accompanied by unusual motor activity. Really a rather banal manifestation.

ALEX

Banal. Right.

DR. KEARNEY

So Harper's going to sleep walk?

ALEX

(Thrown for a moment)  
What? Oh, no. And it's Robyn.

DR. KEARNEY

Lovely young girl.

They huff and puff.

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - DAY

An extension cord runs from a fourth floor window to a miniature television set on the street below. MOLLY and GINA in their chairs, empty one between, fan themselves with the National Enquirer, and are engrossed in "OUR DAILY BREAD."

On the t.v., ROBYN as HARPER aims a double-barrelled shotgun at a distinguished, elderly man.

ROBYN

(Harper)

"I told you, stay where you are Chauncey or someone's going to get hurt."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHAUNCEY

"Come to Uncle Chauncey my little  
passion  
flower. I only want what's best for us--"

SHOTGUN BLAST.

ROBYN

"Oh Chauncey, Chauncey, I told you one of  
us would end up hurt."

(Cradles the shotgun)

"Why does everything I touch... die?"

MOLLY

It's the gun, sweetheart, the gun.

Sappy THEME MUSIC up, MOLLY turns off the t.v.

GINA

She's a good shot that Harper. A regular  
Dirty Harry.

MOLLY

(Fans herself)

Uccch, what I wouldn't do for one of them  
Nubile slaves.

GINA

So who told you to marry a plumber?

INT. LEMKE'S - DAY

MARINA lays out the trays of food as EUGENE bops in and shyly  
hands her a small wrapped box.

MARINA

Thanks.

She eagerly opens it and out hops a baby chick.

You like it?

MARINA

She's a beauty.

EUGENE

I named her Rosalita.

The CHICK hops around the counter. LEO comes in behind him  
with a large side of beef.

LEO

Eugene, you're late. Get your butt in gear.  
Now.

EUGENE mortified and furious rushes outside to sweep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA

If you want to pass words with me don't be taking it out on him.

LEO

Who said I'm mad at you or is this another one of your flashes from the Twilight Zone?

MARINA

Any wife would know.

LEO

Yeah, well, that boy doesn't need any more encouragement for his clowning around.

MARINA

He's a good boy.

LEO

He's a juvenile delinquent.

LEO notices the baby CHICK.

What the hell is this?

MARINA

Rosalita.

LEO

(Instant suspicion)

What do you want with a live chicken?

No, don't tell me, I don't want to know.

LEO sets down the side of beef, groans. MARINA comes behind, kneads his sore shoulders. She nuzzles his neck.

MARINA

Let's not ever go to bed troubled again.

He kisses her in agreement. He sniffs. Sniffs again.

LEO

New perfume you got on?

MARINA

Kind of.

He sniffs again, wrinkles his nose and sneezes. He slowly pulls the velvet cord around her neck, fishing out the mojo.

LEO

What the hell is this?

MARINA

I think you're allergic to my mojo.

He has a sneezing fit as ROSALITA hops around the counter.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

ALEX tries to fix his stuck digital clock when there's a KNOCK at the door. He opens the door to LEO, in his bloody apron, with a hastily wrapped package of meat.

ALEX  
(Surprised)  
Leo.

LEO  
You got a minute?

ALEX  
I have a patient in ten minutes but come on in.

LEO enters, tentative, looks around curiously.

LEO  
Where's the couch?

ALEX  
I don't use a couch.

LEO  
Oh. I never thought I'd see the inside of a shrink's office. It looks so normal. I expected something a little more... psycho. Pervy.

ALEX  
How can I help you Leo?

LEO  
(Instantly defensive)  
I don't need your help. I'm perfectly normal. It's my wife. I mean I know we've only been married a couple of days but I think she might be... nuts--if you know what I mean.

ALEX  
I think I have an idea. Though "nuts" isn't a word I feel comfortable with.

LEO  
Me neither. See we got married real quick--like the day I met her. She insisted. Swear to god. She told me I was the man of her dreams-- 'course I had no idea she really meant it. So we took some holy vows and I believe a man's only as good as his vows, but now she's got me thinking maybe she just married me 'cause of these dreams of hers--she believes in 'em Doc. It's not  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEO (CONT'D)

natural. I mean it could be some sort of complex in her head, right? Which means she's nuts and if she's nuts then how do I even know if she loves me?

(Pause as he lets this fear sink in)

So I'm thinking dreams, nuts, sounds like your field. And she's really spookin' me now. She's got some live chicken running around and she's wearing some sort of Hojo around her neck. Doc, I've been to Brooklyn, I know about voodoo. You gotta cure her or we're in big trouble.

As ALEX tries to absorb all this, LEO thrusts the bloody package of meat into his hand. ALEX is disgusted and confused.

Beautiful baby back ribs. I thought maybe we can work out some sort of barter deal.

ALEX

Which problem did you think I could help her with exactly? Dreams, Hojo, Voodoo or Brooklyn?

LEO

Just cure her.

ALEX considers the possibilities with a slight smile.

ALEX

Therapy is a voyage of discovery, Leo--

LEO

Yeah, well I think she might have missed the boat.

LEO notices the digital clock.

LEO

Hey I got one of these from my bank too.

He looks closer at the stuck digit.

Only mine ain't broken.

ALEX looks annoyed to the clock.

ALEX

I've got some time tonight.

EXT. PARK AVENUE NIGHT

The PAN AM building looms large over the boulevard that has a meridian of planted tulips running up it as far as the eye can see. EUGENE dodges across traffic with a huge pair of industrial sized gardening shears.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAFE DANTE - NIGHT

GRACE and ROBYN pig out on canoles and "tira mi su" and watch the night flow by.

GRACE

Where's Alex?

ROBYN

Seeing some lunatic. Doctor's wife is not one of my featured roles. Did you ever date a doctor?

GRACE

(Shakes her head)

They tend to get stuck in adolescence. Hazards of an extended education.

ROBYN

Tell me about it. Oh, Gracie what am I going to do? I proposed to him the other night--

GRACE

No!

ROBYN

I know, I couldn't believe it either but I met this incredible woman and she just opened my eyes.

GRACE

Me too.

ROBYN

You're dating someone new?

GRACE

No, no. It's just this girl who works at the butcher's shop--

ROBYN

Oh my god, Marina?

GRACE

You know her?

ROBYN

She's incredible.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

Do you think she's for real?

ROBYN

Absolutely. What did she tell you?

GRACE

I'm not sure exactly. But I cancelled my weekend to wait for some mystery date. Do you think I'm nuts?

ROBYN

Oh Gracie, that's fabulous.

GRACE

Alex thinks I'm insane.

ROBYN

That's his favorite diagnosis.

(Harrumphs in impatience)

Why do we waste our time with men?

They're so much less evolved than we are.

GRACE

Not all of us do.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - NIGHT

ALEX prints "LEMKE, MARINA" on a file folder. Then has a quick floss. Then, unable to resist, spins around in his chair. As he comes around he sees MARINA standing in the doorway watching him amused. He goes to greet her, surprised and dizzy.

ALEX

Mrs. Lemke...

He struggles to suavely remove a piece of floss trapped in his teeth.

Did I leave the door unlocked?

ALEX can't help but examine the locks more closely.

She sits down in his chair. This disconcerts him terribly. She looks slowly around the room. He sits, uncomfortably in the "patient's" chair.

Umm, I don't know if you've ever been in therapy before...

MARINA

Where's your couch?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX

I don't use a couch.

She nods.

It's important you know I can be of absolutely no help unless you want to be here. You're free to go at any time.

MARINA

I promised Leo I'd come.

ALEX

(Opens new file)

Why?

MARINA

I expect he thinks I'm a little touched.

ALEX

"Touched"-- that's an interesting word. What exactly does it mean to you?

MARINA is amused by Alex's transparent attempt to get her going.

MARINA

History of the world, Doctor. When a man can't figure a woman, he calls her crazy.

ALEX

Do you think your husband is worried about you?

MARINA

No. I think he's scared of me.

ALEX

Scared? Why scared?

MARINA

Well that's a fine question. I reckon I just know things... before he does. It gives him the shivers.

ALEX

(Urges her on)

Yes...

MARINA

(Shrugs)

Women have been burned for less.

ALEX

So you "know" things.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He waits for her to continue, she doesn't. He tries to gently explain his stance.

ALEX

Like telling a total stranger they should get up and sing in front of a crowd when she might not be ready for such a bold move and is liable to get terribly discouraged.

MARINA

(Delighted)

You know Stella?

ALEX

Or telling a lonely woman that she should wait for love to find her when she'd be better off getting out there and finding it.

MARINA

But it's true--

ALEX

Or telling my girlfriend to marry me?

MARINA

Here we go again...

ALEX

(Struggles to explain)

People are such fragile creatures and so hungry for quick answers to complex problems... but these little bits of "advice" you offer can send them unprepared... and unprotected into the vagaries of this harsh world and... they can get hurt--which I'm sure is not your intention.

MARINA is surprised by the depth of ALEX's insight, and feels slightly on guard.

MARINA

Certainly not. But I can't help what I see, can I?

ALEX

Do you have visions?

Silence.

Do you hear voices?

Silence.

Do you have dream premonitions?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She makes an impulsive decision.

MARINA  
Do you roller skate?

ALEX is completely lost.

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - NIGHT

LEO hurries down the street.

MOLLY  
Hey Leo, Where's the young Mrs.?

LEO looks up to see MOLLY hanging out her window.

LEO  
She's fine thanks.

MOLLY  
I said "where"--but never mind. Make  
sure she gets this, o.k.?

She drops a small gift-wrapped package down to LEO.

LEO  
Yeah sure.

MOLLY  
So when you gonna give it to her?

LEO  
Don't worry.

MOLLY  
Do I look worried?

LEO bustles down the street.

INT. DELLAGO'S - NIGHT

STELLA, in her brand new "flapper" dress, reviews sheet music spread out on the bar: Bessie Smith's "GIMME A PIGFOOT..." and Debbie Boone's "You Light Up My Life."

STELLA  
What am I doing here? Some mad woman in  
a clothing store put me up to this. No  
wonder I'm in therapy, I'm too  
impressionable. Don't you think?

LUIS  
(Obviously enamored)  
You'll be great.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA  
If only I was black, I'd feel so much better.

LEO enters, heads straight to the bar.

LEO  
Rye and soda hold the soda make it a double I don't want to talk about women and I don't want to talk about my wife.

At the word, "wife," STELLA takes a sudden interest in LEO.

STELLA  
(Lights up)  
Oh, you're married.

LUIS  
Hey Leo, this is Stella Kefauver. Our new lounge act. She's gonna class up the joint.

LEO  
You got your work cut out for you.  
(Downs his drink)  
Hit me again, Luis.  
(Notices Stella's sheet music)  
Bessie Smith? You sing Bessie Smith? A thin thing like you?

STELLA  
O.k., I'll sing the Debbie Boone.

LEO  
No, no. I love Bessie.

LUIS  
Stella, you're on.

STELLA starts toward the stage, returns, downs Leo's whiskey and coughs her way toward the waiting JAZZ COMBO.

EXT. PARK AVENUE - NIGHT

EUGENE opens his shears slowly and carefully snips one perfect tulip from the endless row.

EXT. WEST BROADWAY - NIGHT

ROBYN and GRACE meander down the street, window shopping. GRACE looks at a mannequin with a wild mop of hair.

GRACE  
Do you think I'd look good in a perm?

ROBYN  
Fabulous. Do you like that dress?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

Killer. I bought one just like it. For a hot date.

ROBYN

Did it work?

GRACE

I don't know. I never showed.

ROBYN

Love 'em and leave 'em?

GRACE

Leaving them is easy. Its the loving part I can't get right.

ROBYN sighs and they move to another window.

ROBYN

Tell me about it.

GRACE

What do you mean? You're always in love.

ROBYN

I'm in love with being in love. But sometimes I'm afraid it's just...

GRACE

Acting?

ROBYN

(Sighs)  
Yeah.

ROBYN looks at her then bursts out laughing.

God, you must think I'm so shallow.

GRACE

Just on the surface, doll.

They have arrived at Grace's front door.

Well, here's where I get off. Do you want to get a cab?

ROBYN

(Disappointed)  
No.

GRACE

You want to come up?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBYN

Just for a quick pee.

As they go in giggling, their voices linger on the street.

ROBYN(O.S.)

I'm just so misunderstood.

(Conspiratorially)

You wouldn't have any peanut butter would you?

GRACE(O.S.)

Do you ever eat it with a Hershey Bar?

ROBYN squeals with delight.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - NIGHT

The park is filled with DRUG DEALERS, BOOM BOXERS, and other nighttime HUSTLERS. In the background there is a kiosk renting skates. A SALSA BAND plays loud.

The dry fountain in the center of the park is filled with languid SKATERS swirling in a circle through the warm breeze.

MARINA and ALEX sit in the center of the fountain. Next to her is a bottle of Wild Turkey and a six-pack of Schlitz. She laces her skates enthusiastically. Notices he hasn't put his on.

MARINA

You're shirking.

ALEX

What?

MARINA

You promised to skate with me if I talked to you some more.

ALEX

This is a very unorthodox way to conduct a session.

MARINA

Then just consider it skating.

He reluctantly laces his skates.

ALEX

You were telling me about your "powers."

MARINA

Oh, they're not powers. Just a gift that runs in the family.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX

What kind of a "gift"?

MARINA

Oft' times it's just the way the wind changes, or a peculiar taste in your mouth. A snippet of a dream that suddenly makes perfect sense.

ALEX

And how exactly do the Wild Turkey and Schlitz figure in this ritual?

MARINA

They don't. I just got them to hush you up a little.

She takes a hit of the Wild Turkey then chases with the Schlitz. She proffers the bottle and can to ALEX who refuses.

ALEX

It's highly unorthodox to leave the office, Mrs. Lemke, but it's strictly verboten to drink with a patient.

MARINA

I'm not your patient. I'm only doing this for Leo. Now shut up and drink or I won't tell you how crazy I am.

He considers briefly but resists.

ALEX

It would be wrong.

She sighs in resignation and stands up.

You were saying...

She offers him her hand, helps him up on shaky legs.

MARINA

(Tries to paint a verbal picture)  
O.k. You're standing in the middle of a circle... and depending which way you turn... you can tell what's going on at any particular moment in folks' lives.

ALEX

Wait. What's the circle?

MARINA

(Considers)  
Time, I suppose. Most folk see their lives as a forward journey from the didey  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA (CONT'D)

to the shroud--a straight line. For me, life's a circle. It's always curling back on itself. So that every moment of our lives is happening always. And I can see any point in time depending where I look.

She watches ALEX struggle to grasp what she's just said. She smiles at the SALSA BAND who, as if possessed, find themselves smoothly segueing into "SING, SING, SING." ALEX is distracted by his theme as she starts to turn him slowly in counterpoint to the speeding skaters as she tries to clarify.

If you move fast enough, you can overtake time and pick it up anywhere you want-- no end and no beginning. It's like a fun house full of mirrors. But most people can only see one reflection. It scares them to consider the possibilities.

She takes both his hands and spins them faster and faster as "SING, SING, SING" builds toward it's inevitable climax and one roller couple starts executing a fantastic jitterbug on wheels. The effect is dizzying.

It's like I'm running my own private picture show. Now there you are at six years old with chicken pox, and there's your first sweet kiss. There's getting your diplomas. My, there's a lot. And there's your first drum set--aren't you tickled. I didn't know you were a drummer. Now, there's the first time you tasted lobster, and there's the first little girl broke your heart. Boxing your baby brother, homesick on a camping trip, and there's your mother passing away. She's at peace. See how quick it comes around again.

This is all too much for ALEX to handle. He breaks away to stagger out of the circle, knocking over the madly dancing skaters.

SKATER

Watch it asshole.

MARINA

Sorry, he's just learning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX slumps on a nearby bench. She offers him the beer, he pushes it away.

Dizzy?

They sit in silence for a few moments watching the SKATERS as ALEX tries to assimilate all she has shown him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX

So. Life's a circle of time and you know how to get inside.

MARINA

Yep.

ALEX

But how could you possibly look at everything whizzing by and manage to see anything at all?

MARINA

You don't set your sights on one point, you just let it wash all over you and steer by the rack of your eye.

(Lighter)

Of course, I still can't see it all. I've been all turned around since I left the island. So much current up here, running around my head.

ALEX

Yeah, well, Manhattan's always had terrible reception.

Alex starts to unlace his skates.

MARINA

Go on, ask.

ALEX

What?

MARINA

Sorry, I get ahead of the conversation sometimes. Did you want to ask me something?

ALEX

Actually, I was wondering if sleepwalking ran in your family.

MARINA

Say it again?

ALEX

(A little embarrassed)

Well, I saw you on the roof in your nightgown--

MARINA starts laughing.

MARINA

My, you got a head full of notions don't you.

ALEX is confused.

INT. DELLAGO'S - NIGHT

STELLA finishes a slow, sexy Bessie Smith blues "Romance in the Dark".

STELLA

(sings)

"In the dark, I get such a thrill  
When he pressed his fingertips upon my lips  
And he begged, he said please,  
Just for a little while  
Baby will you keep still  
In the dark..."

She looks over to the bar as LEO and LUIS, enraptured, raise their glasses to her, unaware of the other. She belts a particularly taste rift as the audience bursts into applause. She modestly bows and hurries over to the bar where LEO gives her a private standing ovation. LUIS is jealous.

LEO

(gallant)

Luis, champagne for Mrs. Kefauver.

STELLA

Miss. And call me Stella.

LUIS

Champagne? What do you think this is, the  
Copa? We got Miller's on draft.

LEO clinks Stella's glass, much to LUIS' disgust.

LEO

Stella, that was music to my ears. Gorgeous.  
You sing like an angel.

LUIS

(edges in)

A choir of angels.

STELLA

(elated)

Thank you so much.

LEO

You're some sort of singer, lady. I hear  
your songs and I get pictures in my head.  
All soft and dreamy, like the movies.

STELLA

(In love)

Yeah?

LEO

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUIS

(Intentionally shatters the moment)  
So which movies, Leo? "Father of the  
Bride?"

LEO

(Ignores this)  
What can I say?

STELLA

Oh Leo, you really think so?

LEO

There aren't too many of us that like the  
blues, we gotta stick together.

STELLA

I'd like that.

EXT. MARINA'S ROOF - NIGHT

MARINA peers up through a forest of television antennas and  
water towers.

MARINA

(Looks up at the sky)  
It's hard to get your bearings here.  
You can't hear the wind blowin' through  
the juniper, can't hear the rain on the  
roof, just them upstairs neighbors  
bickering all night. Hard to set your  
course in the city when you can't even  
see the stars.

He looks up at the empty sky in silence, surprised by her  
once again.

ALEX

You were looking for the stars... in your  
nightgown... on the roof... alone...  
in... New York City?

MARINA

And you were watching me. You know if  
you can't bolt your eyes at night my  
Grammy D'Arbo always recommended  
soaking your feet in hot water. Brings  
the blood down from the brain. And you  
got a veritable flood up there with all  
that ponderin'.

ALEX

Right. So... you're a believer in  
astrology.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA

Astronomy. My Grammy taught me the skies when I was real little. So I could always find my way home.

ALEX

Did you travel a lot?

MARINA

Never. But I guess she knew someday I'd marry together with Leo and move away.

ALEX

How exactly did you come to marry Leo?

MARINA

I was supposed to marry Leo.

ALEX

We're not born to--

MARINA

I knew that before I ever set eyes on him.

ALEX

Before you met him?

MARINA

I saw his smile in my dreams.  
(Matter-of-fact)  
Leo is my split-apart.

ALEX is bewildered.

Never heard of them?

He shakes his head, curious, falling under her spell.

No analyzing?

This is a tough request for him.

ALEX

I'll try.

MARINA

O.k.

(Hesitant)

Well now, long ago, when the earth smelled of almonds and lavender-- No, you'll just think this stuff and nonsense.

ALEX

(Genuine interest)  
Almonds and lavender...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA

(Settles down to her tale)  
Before man and woman, when time was  
young, there were these beings.... Gimme  
a drink.

She steels herself with a swig of Wild Turkey, passes it back  
to him, he sets it down.

ALEX

(Encourages)  
"Bein's".

MARINA

Yeah, four arms, four legs, two faces.  
Odd looking, but not so bad. And they  
could bear young 'uns by themselves.

ALEX

Self-reproducing.

MARINA

Imagine having the perfect lover with you  
every hour of the day.

ALEX

There's a thought.

MARINA

(Gets into her story)  
So, they were happier than a pig in a  
puddle, these "self-reproducing" bein's  
'cause they were as one. They didn't  
require any other. But the olden spirits  
that ruled the world coveted their simple  
joy, so boom-bang, they split these  
bein's in half--like short ribs. Are you  
givin' credence to any of this?

As he picks up her rhythm and weaves the story for her, she  
listens with delight.

ALEX

(Remembering)  
So, the... "split-apart bein's" were  
given to despair. All they wanted to do  
was die, but it's never that easy, so  
each half pulled itself together and  
sewed itself up. You can still see the  
scar--the navel.

MARINA

(Impressed)  
Right, the belly button.

She pokes his belly, he blushes at her touch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX

Go on.

MARINA

So we're the kinfolk of these old split-aparts. And mostly we're miserable on account of we spend our lives searching for our long lost other half. But sometimes-- very rarely I think--Boom! There they are. Right before your eyes.

ALEX

Your missing half.

MARINA

And that's it. You're whole forever and will be together always.

For a moment they savor the tale together.

Now how the hell did you know that story?

ALEX

Magic.

She watches him hit off the Wild Turkey and swig the Schlitz, lost in the moment, not realizing what he's doing.

MARINA

I knew you had it in you.

ALEX

Everybody knows it. It's Plato. A corruption of course, but Plato nonetheless.

MARINA

It is not. My Grammy told it to me.

ALEX

She must be well read.

MARINA

Blind since birth.

ALEX

But I thought she taught you the stars.

MARINA

She did.

ALEX

I've never met anyone quite like you, Mrs. Lemke.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA

You ought to get out more. And we've shared a Schlitz, call me Marina.

ALEX

Look Marina, time as a circle--o.k., I'll buy that one. You as the donut hole, that's a stretch. But fooling yourself into believing you married Leo because your Grammy screwed up Plato--that's... dangerous territory.

MARINA

Appreciate the concern, Doctor Tremor, but it's not something I'd expect a man like you to understand.

ALEX

(Desperate to communicate)

But I do understand and I want you to also because your impulsive behavior is jeopardizing your marriage. You have to be honest with yourself. Perhaps a woman as unique as yourself outgrew your environment. You were eager to set forth on your life journey, so when Leo showed up--

MARINA

(Snaps)

Sneeze, your brains are dusty. He didn't just "show up." How the hell do you think he got to Ocracoke North Carolina?

ALEX

Well actually, I suggested he take a vacation.

MARINA

I dreamed him there.

ALEX

Mrs. Lemke, these delusions are not healthy, I want to help--

MARINA

Don't. You're giving me a headache.

ALEX

That's denial giving you a headache.

MARINA

No, it's the noise of you in love with your own voice. You got a mouth like an open mail box and a head full of stump water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She starts to leave.

ALEX

(Pushes too hard)

Don't walk away from this. Your fantasies of being all seeing, all powerful, are dangerous and, and, and--

She's halfway through the door leading off the roof and completely frustrated he fires all his guns to get her attention.

And It's a hell of a way to run your life. If this marriage isn't working out, it's not all your fault. You didn't summon Leo--

MARINA

Of course I did, I just made a mistake!

MARINA stops dead, confronted by her words hanging in the air. ALEX almost bumps into her. She deflates.

ALEX

(Gently)

It's alright. The first step is the hardest. Honestly, I understand what it's like to think you know everything--

She rounds on ALEX, furious with him and herself.

MARINA

You don't know zip about love or life, Doctor, and I don't need you strewin' your learnin' all over me. Not only have I cleaved to the wrong "half" but I've left two other "other halves" wandering all over creation.

ALEX has a hard time following this.

I've made a wreck of Leo's life, my life and two innocent strangers.

(Sudden realization)

And there's only one way to set things right.

ALEX leans in close for the big answer.

I've got to find a wife for my husband.

She takes off through the door. ALEX has a big "What?" all over his face. ALEX HICCUP'S.

INT. ST. ANTHONY'S - NIGHT

Stern and disapproving saints and martyrs look down as STELLA leads LEO through the hushed, vacant chapel.

## INT. STELLA'S OFFICE

STELLA ushers LEO into her small, dusty office.

LEO

Gee's this ain't the kind of place I imagined you working at.

STELLA

You imagined me?

LEO

Oh yeah, sure. But I always thought you blues singers slept all day and stayed out all night.

STELLA

And lived in Paris. So, Leo what's on your mind?

LEO

I got a favor to ask.

STELLA

Sure, anything.

LEO

Actually, it's about my wife. Are you sure you don't mind hearing this?

STELLA

I'm sure I've heard it before. Go on.

LEO

The thing is I think maybe we got married for the wrong reasons. I mean it all seemed to make sense when she proposed but I don't know, maybe I just don't know how to be a husband 'cause since I brought her back here, nothing's been working out.

STELLA

Maybe it's just not meant to be.

LEO

Nah. She keeps telling me I'm the man she was meant to marry. The thing is Stella, I know it's not right but...

(Big pause)

I got this feeling about you.

STELLA

Yeah?

LEO

That maybe you're the woman for me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA

Oh Leo, I get the same feeling too.

They grasp hands and gaze longingly into one another's eyes.

LEO

But my wife... She's so fragile it would send her right off the deep end. A short trip for her.

STELLA

You're right. We'll have a higher love, we won't wallow in the degradation of earthly desires.

LEO

Jesus, you even talk like an angel.

He impulsively gives her Molly's gift-wrapped present meant for Marina. She opens it to find a desiccated toad on a leather thong. He's appalled. STELLA holds it up with great effort.

STELLA

(At a loss)

Oh. A toad. I don't know what to say.  
How, uh, thoughtful.

Suddenly, they throw themselves into each other's arms under the stained glass smile of a benevolent Mary Magdalene.

INT. GRACE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A huge container of Skippy peanut butter sits with a half eaten Hershey's Bar stuck in it. GRACE and ROBYN are passed out on the couch as "DAVID LETTERMAN" drones on.

EXT. PARK AVENUE - NIGHT

EUGENE, with a bulging Hefty bag over his shoulder dodges across the street leaving the previously planted meridian a decimated field of tulip stalks.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - NIGHT

MARINA sits alone in the middle of the fountain lost in thought as a solitary skater circles to the lost songs of his walkman. Suddenly the fountain spews forth streams of water drenching the SOLITARY SKATER.

EXT. MARINA'S ROOF - NIGHT

A perturbed ALEX finishes off the last drop of Schlitz and drops the can to the pile of five other empties. He gazes to the sleeping city below. He HICCUPS again.

## INT. LEO'S BEDROOM - DAY

A sleeping LEO wakes to see MARINA bustling around the room fully dressed.

LEO  
What time is it?

MARINA  
It's 6:30.

LEO  
Why so early?

MARINA  
I've got some fixing up to do. I'll see you later.

She picks up her onion from the dresser and stashes it in her pocket.

Have you seen my buckeye? Oh, there it is.

Gives him a peck on the cheek and is practically out the door when she turns back to ask.

There's coffee on the stove. Did you have a nice evening?

LEO looks away guilty.

LEO  
Yeah, sure.

But she's already out the door. ROSALITA hops onto the pillow next to him.

I'm gonna make soup out of you.

## INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

ALEX, in his business clothes, sits uncomfortably on a bench in between rows of lockers as DR. KEARNY strips off his racquet ball clothes.

DR. KEARNY  
(appalled)  
You ended up on a park bench drinking with a patient?

ALEX  
No, no, no. She wasn't actually a patient and we ended up on the roof.

DR. KEARNY  
Did she pay for your time?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX

Well I got some beautiful baby back ribs.

KEARNY stares in disbelief.

DR. KEARNY

Highly unorthodox but as long as some form of payment is made and you agreed to see her then you are responsible.

ALEX

Doctor I understand it's an extreme choice of behavior but at the time I believed it was the only legitimate way to overcome her resistance.

DR. KEARNY

Classic countertransference. You allowed her to manipulate you into a vulnerable--never mind unprofessional--situation where she controlled you. This is freshman psychology Alex--

ALEX

You're right, you're right. But there's something about this woman--

DR. KEARNY

Dr. Tremor don't blow a great career on a cute piece of ass. Keep your dick in your pants and your id in check and remember we have a mission in this world.

ALEX

Thank you for squeezing me in Doctor.

DR. KEARNY

For my favorite disciple? No problem. And I won't even charge you for the full hour.

KEARNY opens his locker to reveal face-to-face pin-ups of FREUD and DR. JOYCE BROTHERS, catches ALEX staring at them.

Always an inspiration before a game. Now what else can I solve for you my boy?

ALEX

Do you think it's damaging to see my analyst naked?

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - DAY

Morning. MOLLY and GINA set up their chairs. ALEX comes toward the apartment, shaken from his meeting with Kearney.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GINA  
Darling you look terrible.

MOLLY  
You wouldn't look so good either if you  
didn't sleep a wink.

GINA  
I was talking to the Doctor.  
(To Alex)  
Rough night?

MOLLY  
You and Harper?

ALEX  
Robyn. No.

MOLLY  
Sit, talk. Your secret's safe.

ALEX  
(Instantly defensive)  
What secret?

MOLLY  
If we knew we wouldn't ask.

GINA  
If we knew we wouldn't tell.

MOLLY  
If my grandmother had wheels she'd be a  
car.

ALEX  
There's that.

GINA  
Looks like you worked wonders, Doctor.

ALEX  
What?

She gestures across the street to MARINA and LEO exiting  
their apartment.

MOLLY  
The bride and groom, happy again?  
You're a regular miracle worker.

GINA  
Thank you Helen Keller.

ALEX  
(Too quick)  
Ladies, I've got a patient.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He takes off, studiously avoiding looking across the street.

MARINA and LEO lift the solid aluminum security gate. A TON OF TULIPS cascade down around them.

They both GASP.

LEO  
(shocked)  
Is there something you want to tell me?

EUGENE stands behind.

EUGENE  
Say it with flowers.

One look from LEO and EUGENE bolts.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

STELLA  
They like me, they really liked me.

ALEX  
That's wonderful.

STELLA  
It's like--the perfect canole! For the first time I can almost imagine a world without therapy, amen.

ALEX  
Well I'm glad our time together is having such a positive effect.

STELLA  
It's been good but I think I really owe this one to that psychic.

ALEX  
(tenses)  
I thought we dealt with that.

STELLA  
Don't worry, it's not like I'm cured or anything.

STELLA crashes off her high, collapses into her chair and lights a cigarette disconsolately.

Forgive me Doctor for I have sinned.  
But he's such a good man. He likes me,  
he really likes me.

ALEX  
Is he married?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA

Well, yes, but his wife's not well,  
which of course fills me with guilt, but  
she's making him miserable so I  
rationalize by figuring I'm bringing  
some well earned joy to his life.

She looks for Alex's reaction.

You're disappointed aren't you.

ALEX

I'm curious.

STELLA

Well you wouldn't be if you met him.  
This is it. You know when the right  
person walks into your life. I mean I  
always know when the wrong person walks  
in and it doesn't feel that way at all so  
I'm sure Leo's the one.

ALEX

Leo?!

STELLA

That's his name, Leo. I really think  
you'd like him.

ALEX is "The Man who Knew too Much."

INT. BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

The shop looks more like a florist's with tulips jammed into  
every conceivable container. A BUSINESS WOMAN in her early  
40's, neatly dressed and carrying a brief case enters.

BUSINESS WOMAN

Your window! It's so beautiful. And so  
deep! And all these flowers. The shop has  
changed so much.

MARINA

Thank you.

BUSINESS WOMAN

You know I used to come in this shop all  
the time. Then I turned macro.

MARINA checks out the wedding band on her finger.

MARINA

I'm sorry to hear that. Is your mister "macro"  
too?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUSINESS WOMAN

I don't care what that bastard eats. I haven't seen him in months.

MARINA

(Encouraging)

But you're not soured on the notion of marriage?

JUMP CUT TO:

A pleasant SUBURBAN WOMAN responds to Marina's question of the previous scene.

SUBURBAN WOMAN

I just can't kick the habit.

MARINA

In truth you're just an old fashioned girl aren't you?

JUMP CUT TO:

A dazzling REDHEAD with jangling jewelry and tiny skirt.

REDHEAD

Underneath it all yes.

MARINA

You got older men writ all over you and I see you in the kitchen happy as a clam.

JUMP CUT TO:

A middle aged JAMAICAN WOMAN.

JAMAICAN WOMAN

Yes, it's my therapy. Lord, you're psychic.

MARINA

Would you fancy meeting a genteel middle-aged man?

JUMP CUT TO:

The Soho TRENDROID. A well groomed TRANSVESTITE waits in the background.

TRENDROID

(Hyper-speed)

Sorry I like them young and talented and I never go on blind dates arranged by my butcher but I'd be very interested in meeting the artist who did your window. Is he young? Take my card.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She thrusts her card at MARINA as her eyeglass lens cracks.  
Again.

Damn.

She leaves. The TRANSVESTITE comes forward.

TRANSVESTITE  
(Whiskey voice)  
I'm in the market.

STELLA enters the shop clutching a sheaf of fliers.

STELLA  
Great sign! Really makes you want to  
come in here.  
(Suddenly recognizes Marina)  
Oh you! I didn't know you worked here.

MARINA  
Hi. How'd that dress work out?

STELLA  
Great. Everything's working out great.  
Thanks to you I'm singing at this  
cabaret--Dellago's.

MARINA  
Oh I know that place, my husband loves  
it.

STELLA  
(Instantly defensive)  
O.k., it's a bar. But I met this  
wonderful guy there.  
(Sudden idea)  
Maybe you can tell me if we're going to-  
-no, don't. I don't want to know. Just  
pray for me.

TRANSVESTITE  
Pray for us all, darling.

STELLA  
So, is it alright if I put a flyer in  
your window?

MARINA reads the flyer: "Stella Kefauver: You Light Up My  
Blues."

MARINA  
Sure, I'd be proud. I have to tell Leo  
to get up to see you, he just loves this  
old stuff.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA  
(Freezes)  
Leo?

MARINA  
My husband.

Stella's face falls.

INT. LEMKE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

LEO comes in exhausted.

LEO  
Honey, I'm home.

He hears a silvery laugh followed by a burst of GIGGLES. He turns to see three women sitting on the couch. SUZI, a devastatingly stunning Oriental woman in a black cocktail dress; GEORGIA, the pleasant suburbanite; and RACHEL a British spinster tea-totaller. They all sit legs crossed to the left. LEO stares in disbelief.

SUZI  
Hi.

LEO  
Hello.

SUZI  
You must be Leo.

LEO  
(Unsure)  
Yeah, sure. And you must be...?

SUZI  
(Giggles)  
Suzi, silly! And this is Georgia and this is Rachel. And we are so excited to be here. It's just like the Dating Game. May the best girl win.

She dissolves into giggles.

LEO  
Uh-huh. Excuse me for a minute Miss Silly.

INT. KITCHEN

MARINA bustles around the stove. All four burners boil over, the kitchen is filled with steam. She kisses LEO lightly.

MARINA  
Hi honey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEO

Tell me it's a bridge game.

MARINA

Rachel plays bridge, loves meat and is ripe for the pluckin'. Suzi cooks with gas and has a hankering for older men. Georgia loves little ones and I think she knows massage. So which one do you spark to? Quick, before you blink.

LEO stares in horror at his wife's insanity and stumbles out the door.

Damn, a misstep, not a good sign.

(Calls after him)

Wait there's one more coming.

INT. LIVING ROOM

The WOMEN watch LEO tear through the room and yank open the door to the well groomed TRANSVESTITE. Leo's jaw drops.

TRANSVESTITE

I'm Gloria, you must be Leo.

LEO flees.

The meat man goeth.

MARINA surveys her bevy of recruited beauties, and a look of self-doubt flashes across her face.

MARINA

I thought for sure he'd cotton t' one of you.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - NIGHT

ALEX, sits across from a silent MR. LIDDLE.

MR. LIDDLE

The face of God is a one way mirror.

ALEX is distracted by the still stuck digital clock behind MR. LIDDLE's head.

You're not listening to me, I knew it.

ALEX

(Flustered)

You're absolutely correct and I apologize.

MR. LIDDLE

What were you thinking about? You can trust me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A loud banging on the door.

ALEX  
Right. Hold that thought.

MR. LIDDLE  
You're still not listening.

ALEX unbolts the numerous locks to a seething LEO.

LEO  
What the hell did you do to my wife?

ALEX  
Leo, I'm with a patient.

In the background, MR. LIDDLE stealthily creeps over to the wall, tries on an African mask and prances silently.

LEO  
Your fruit cake can wait, mine can't.  
You got her bringing home strange women  
to fix me up with. I don't know what  
kind of advice you're giving out but a  
few more visits with you and we can book  
her a room in Bellevue!

ALEX  
(Completely confused)  
Wait a second, wait a second--

LEO  
Just stay the hell away from her, you're  
a dangerous man.

He's gone. ALEX turns around to find MR. LIDDLE just as he left him, in his seat, staring at the stuck digital clock.

MR. LIDDLE  
Your clock's stuck.

ALEX  
I don't want to talk about it!

INT. MARINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

MARINA and LEO sleep soundly on opposite sides of the bed. She turns over, snuggles up to LEO and slowly smiles in a dream.

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - NIGHT

Middle of the silent night. A New York Times DELIVERY TRUCK barrels around the corner, hefts out a huge stack of newspapers barely missing MARINA as she darts across the street, skirting past a car who's ALARM suddenly sounds.

## INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The CAR ALARM continues as ALEX tosses restlessly in bed while ROBYN snores lightly next to him. There is a faint KNOCK at the door.

ROBYN

(Asleep)

Oh Chauncey, don't touch me there.

## INT. ALEX'S LIVING ROOM

ALEX, in boxer shorts and "Unexamined Life" t-Shirt cracks the door on it's chain. MARINA waits in the hall in her nightgown. She has the soft, dazed air of a somnambulist.

ALEX

Mrs. Lemke. Are you sleepwalking?

MARINA

(laughs)

No.

He slams the door, throws on a raincoat, opens the door. MARINA grins at him. He's wearing Robyn's clear vinyl raincoat. He slams the door, re-opens it in his trenchcoat.

ALEX

What's the matter?

MARINA

Nothing. But I needed to see you.

ALEX

Oh... of course.

ALEX looks back to the bedroom where ROBYN lays asleep.

Why don't we go to my office?

## INT. HALLWAY

ALEX closes his apartment door, meticulously locks all three locks top to bottom. He turns to his office next door and starts to open all the locks but MARINA just places her hand on the knob, turns it and goes in. ALEX, amazed investigates his locks but she yanks him into the office.

## INT. ALEX'S OFFICE

ALEX

I was going to talk to you in the morning. We need to be clear about last night. I'm afraid I acted inappropriately. I never should have agreed to see you under duress. That was unprofessional.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA

Don't trouble yourself.

ALEX

And I never should have allowed the session to leave the office. That was inexcusable.

MARINA

Nothin' to worry--

ALEX

And of course I never drink with patients.

MARINA

No, never--

ALEX

But worst of all I had no business offering a quick-fix analysis of your marriage.

MARINA

Really, it was just a walk in the park.

ALEX

I just hope I haven't done any long term damage. And I hope I haven't turned you off to the therapeutic process.

MARINA

Doctor Tremor I saw you in my dreams tonight.

ALEX

(A fool in love)

Oh, sure well that's not uncommon. Dreams are important. Of course you can keep a little notebook by the bed and write them down if you're afraid of forgetting them--you don't need to analyze them immediately.

(Can't resist)

What was I doing?

MARINA

Smiling.

She kisses him with enormous pent up passion. ALEX succumbs completely for a few erotic moments.

ALEX

Mrs. Lemke--

(Slowly comes to his senses)

Marina--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He reluctantly extricates himself from her grasp. MARINA is confused. ALEX clasps his raincoat closed, paces, trying to shake off her spell.

I can't deny I feel an attraction towards you

MARINA smiles, radiant, wraps her arms around him.

but don't worry, I know what it is, and  
how to remedy the situation.

MARINA

There is no cure for love, Doctor.

She kisses him again.

ALEX

It's a simple case of what we call  
countertransference and--

MARINA silences him with another kiss.

I understand why you're doing this.

MARINA

Good, that makes it simpler.

He starts to give in then gently pushes her away.

ALEX

(Comforting psychiatrist)  
This isn't the way to work out your  
anger at your husband for taking a  
lover.

MARINA

(Half-laugh)  
What?  
(Suddenly serious)  
What?

ALEX

Revenge is never the answer--

They stare at each other.

MARINA

(incredulous)  
That's not possible.  
(Big self doubt)  
I would have known.

ALEX

(gently)  
We can't know everything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her denial turns quickly to the embarrassed rage of the betrayed wife.

MARINA  
(Furious)  
I don't believe you.

ALEX  
I'm sorry.

Tongue-tied he watches the information register on her face. She's about to lose LEO and she's not sure she wants to unless it's on her terms.

I thought you knew. Leo said you were trying to fix him up with other women. And you told me you'd made a mistake--

MARINA  
(Enraged)  
It was my mistake and I was doing the fixing! I'll decide who my husband should marry!

She slams the door.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM

ROBYN bolts awake.

ROBYN  
I didn't want to shoot him!

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE

ALEX methodically bangs his head against the wall and GROANS.

INT. ALEX'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He goes to the window and watches MARINA scurry across the street and into her building.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM

ROBYN sleeps soundly. The sudden pounding of the "SING, SING, SING" drum's wakes her, bolt upright.

INT. ALEX'S LIVING ROOM

A drowsy ROBYN in a "OH MY GOD, I FORGOT TO HAVE CHILDREN!!" t-shirt, stumbles in to find ALEX headphones on, eyes closed, pounding out his troubled state of mind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBYN

Mugs?

She takes the headphones off.

ALEX

I woke you up. I'm sorry.

ROBYN

What's the matter?

Long pause, while ALEX struggles.

ALEX

(seeks refuge in the familiar)  
Mugs, do you think we should get married?

ROBYN

Is something wrong?

ALEX stares at her realizing something is wrong.

ALEX

No. Go back to sleep.

ROBYN

Aren't you coming?

ALEX

In a while.

EXT. TWENTY FOUR HOUR COFFEE SHOP -NIGHT

ALEX, dazed, enters in trench coat and topsiders. An Edward Hopper WAITRESS gives him a bored exhausted look.

ALEX

Two coffees to go and a couple of donuts.

He notices a POLICEWOMAN at the counter giving him a disapproving slow once over. ALEX looks down to see his trench coat open revealing his boxers.

That's alright officer, I'm fine.  
Honestly, I'm a doctor. I treat people like...

He looks down at himself.

Like this.

INT. GRACES' APARTMENT - DAWN

ALEX knocks on Grace's door with two cups of take-out coffee and a bag of donuts. After a moment, a rumpled GRACE comes to the door and takes in Alex's state of disrepair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE  
A rude awakening.

He hands her a cup of coffee and enters.

INT. GRACE'S BEDROOM

Morning glow warms the room as ALEX and GRACE sit up in her bed together, sipping take-out coffee.

GRACE  
Nice t-shirt.

ALEX  
Gracie, I'm very confused.

GRACE  
(Looks away)  
Tell me about it.

ALEX  
It's like I'm having an out of body experience.

GRACE  
Maybe it's the coffee.

ALEX  
I don't believe in out of body experiences.  
(Beat)  
A strange woman showed up at my door in the middle of the night and kissed me.

GRACE  
(Furious)  
She's mine! You opened the door for my mystery date.

ALEX  
(Strives for calm)  
I need to stay on me for a moment.

GRACE  
(Recovers)  
Alright. What about this mystery woman?

ALEX  
She's not a mystery. She's your friend, the butcher's wife.

GRACE goes from stunned surprise to amusement to a big guffaw.

It's not funny.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE  
No, it's perfect.

ALEX  
Perfect? Perfect?! There's nothing perfect about it. This woman is completely insane and now she thinks I'm her man.

GRACE  
Trust her, she's psychic.

ALEX  
(Mounting hysteria)  
And what about my professional ethics, my practice, my mind?!!!

GRACE  
(Direct)  
What about Robyn?

ALEX  
(Confused)  
Robyn? What about her?

GRACE  
(Looks away)  
Nothing, I guess.

ALEX  
Gracie, Gracie, Gracie. What am I going to do?

INT. LEMKE'S - DAY

LEO comes in to see a short-circuited MARINA surrounded by a dozen cabbage halves with a huge cleaver halving her way through another dozen. She slices one in half, checks the inside, pushes it aside in annoyance and grabs the next.

LEO  
What's going on honey?

MARINA  
(concentrates on cabbage)  
I'm looking for an angel in my future.

LEO  
Huh?

MARINA holds up a cabbage, explains impatiently.

MARINA  
Here, look. There's an angel or a devil in each one and I keep turning up devils.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEO looks inside and there is an outline of what might be viewed as devil's horns.

So I guess I've been wasting my time trying to find you a better wife.

LEO

(Guilty, tries to convince himself)  
Of course you were. I've already got a great wife and we're gonna work everything out, don't you worry.

He tries to sidle up to her.

MARINA

Sharp knife sharp wife. Don't ever try to smooth talk a woman with a cleaver in her hand.

EUGENE saunters in.

(To Eugene)

Eugene I want that money back in the till right now.

EUGENE stares at her blankly.

(angry)

You know I know.

EUGENE

What's a till?

MARINA

If you need to borrow some money that's one thing but I've got no time for thievin'.

LEO

Honey--

EUGENE

What are you talking about?

MARINA

You know I know. I'm fifty dollars short from last night's cash out.

LEO

Honey--

Leo produces a fifty dollar bill from his pocket.

Is this what you're looking for?

MARINA realizes her mistake and feels awful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA

Eugene, I'm so sorry.

He turns and leaves brushing past a YUPSTER in ridiculously ornate Western wear enters.

YUPSTER

Do you carry beefalo?

MARINA roars in frustration and storms out.

A simple no would do.

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - DAY

MOLLY and GINA call to MARINA from across the street. A distraught MARINA slumps into the chair between the ladies who fan themselves with newspaper.

GINA

Trouble in paradise?

MARINA

I had no idea this marriage thing was so...

MOLLY

Interminable.

GINA

Tricky.

MARINA

What's happening to me? I can't tell nit from noodles. Everything I touch goes sour on me.

MOLLY

It's men. They cloud the vision--like seeing the world through schmaltz.

GINA

(Translates)

That's lard to you miss "nit from noodles."

MARINA

More like molasses, really. What I know should happen and what ends up happening are all hodge podgie. When I saw Leo I felt sure he was the one but now I'm just touchin' down like a twister, wreckin' everything in my path.

In front of them a taxi rear ends another car. MARINA looks appalled. ROBYN gets out of the cab in hysterics.

MOLLY

(To Marina)

Don't blame yourself.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is not in it's usual pristine state and neither is the rumpled, impatient and preoccupied ALEX.

ALEX

What the hell were you thinking about deflowering all of Park Avenue like some Dutch boy run amok?

EUGENE

Nice tone Doc, feeling a little hostile?

ALEX

Yes! No. We're not here to talk about me.

EUGENE

That's right, it's my dime.

(Drops to the floor, lays down)  
Get a couch. I need some advice.  
Remember I was telling you about that girl that I liked?

ALEX

Right.

EUGENE

Yeah, well she's got one of these "Sybil" things going. One day I'm Romeo the next I'm public enemy number one. I can't figure it out.

ALEX

(Impatient)

The female psyche has eluded men since the beginning of time.

EUGENE

(Ignores this)

So I'm thinking what about my male pride? Maybe I ought to dump her. But then I'm thinking no I'll give it another shot. Maybe I got to pull out all the stops, go for broke you know. Maybe even ask her out.

ALEX

So?

EUGENE

So? What if she doesn't like me? What if she says no? We could be looking at big ego-damage, I'll never get out of this dump.

ALEX

Eugene, when confronted with a risky proposition--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EUGENE

Ten words or less Doc, I'm on the clock.

ALEX, for the first time is at a loss for words. Suddenly,

ALEX

"Love is the leap that won't be denied."

ALEX is shocked to hear Marina's words come out of his mouth. EUGENE regards him oddly, then decides he likes the idea.

EUGENE

I was just gonna say that. Good thinking, Doc. I'll get her to dump that old butcher.

ALEX hyper-ventilates, tries to keep calm.

ALEX

Eugene, I assume when you say butcher you're speaking metaphorically.

EUGENE

No. I'm speaking about the old fart I work for.

ALEX bursts a blood vessel.

INT. ST. ANTHONY'S - NIGHT

STELLA joyously leads the CHOIR in a gospel arrangement of "GIMME A PIGFOOT AND A BOTTLE OF BEER" as LEO comes down the aisle.

STELLA senses a presence, looks panicked and instantly changes her beat as the CHOIR slides smoothly into a lugubrious mass. STELLA turns around slowly to see LEO in a pew, beckoning. She hands her baton to an enormous FAT GIRL in Catholic school skirt hiked up to her thighs, who continues conducting.

STELLA

Leo. What are you doing here?

LEO

I, uh, had to see you.

STELLA

Yeah, I had to see you too.

LEO

It's my wife.

STELLA

I know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEO  
She's loony tunes.

STELLA  
No she's wonderful.

LEO  
Wait a second. You know my wife?

STELLA  
She's the one who got me singing.

LEO  
Marina?

STELLA  
So the thing is--

LEO  
The thing is you're grade-A Stella,  
prime cut, together we're choice. But  
my wife ain't got nobody but me to see  
her through her time of trouble--

STELLA  
We got to break it off, Leo.

LEO  
--I can't just go abandoning her--  
(He catches up)  
Oh. Are all you women always one step  
ahead? It's kind of spooky.

STELLA sadly pulls the desiccated toad from her shirt.

STELLA  
So you want this back?

LEO  
No, no, you keep it. Think of me  
sometimes.

They squeeze hands, moist eyed. A SOB from the FAT GIRL  
turns them back to the silent CHOIR, all eyes upon their sad  
scene.

EXT. ST. ANTHONY'S - NIGHT

LEO shuffles out of the church. Moments later MARINA enters  
briskly. We PAN UP to:

EXT. SAINT ANTHONY'S BELLTOWER - NIGHT

EUGENE sits on the ledge staring at the roof where he once  
saw MARINA. A VOICE behind him startles him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA

Eugene.

He lurches off the ledge, he reaches out and MARINA pulls him back.

EUGENE

Jesus Christ, you trying to kill me?

MARINA

I'm real sorry for accusing you, my head's not with us these days.

He gives her his best soulful, hurt look. Then forgives her with a shrug. They trade smiles.

EUGENE

How'd you find me?

She gazes out at the 360 degree panorama of the glittering city.

MARINA

It does sparkle.

EUGENE

Capture the rapture.

MARINA

I loved the flowers, and the window.

EUGENE

Really?

MARINA

Really. Matter of fact a lady came in the shop and loved it too.

She reaches deep into her pocket, hands him Trendoid's card.

Here. You should call on her. You got a true gift Eugene.

EUGENE

(Impulsively)

Here, check this out.

He rolls up a newspaper, strikes a match, lights a paper torch and proudly displays walls covered in multi-colored, vastly intricate graffiti tapestries. He awaits her reaction as she strains to see his work. She turns back to him astonished at his talent. He beams.

I knew you'd get it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EUGENE (CONT'D)

(Suddenly)

Marina, do you ever get restless? You ever get the urge to hit the road, you know, go mobile?

MARINA

It's hard to tarry, waiting for things to happen.

The share the night for a moment.

EUGENE

Promise you won't tell anyone about this place.

MARINA

Promise.

EUGENE

Cool. But watch out for the bells, sometimes they just go off. I almost went deaf the other night.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

STELLA sobs into her Kleenex, tries to smoke in between outbursts.

STELLA

Oh Doctor, he's such a good man too. But I guess you were right. As usual. If only his wife wasn't such a great lady. And the thing is I know he loves me. And I love him. Such sweet sorrow--god love hurts.

ALEX

(Shocked)

Wait a second. You mean Leo broke it off?

(Thinks aloud)

Maybe they're really not meant for each other.

STELLA

Who?

ALEX

(Impatient)

Leo and Marina.

STELLA

I never told you her name was Marina.

ALEX

Of course you did.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA  
No I don't think so.

ALEX  
(Covers)  
Well, sorry then, my mistake.

STELLA  
No, no that's her name I just didn't remember telling you.

ALEX  
(Inspiration)  
And you two really love each other, right?

STELLA  
Who?

ALEX  
(Losing it)  
You and Leo, for godsake!

STELLA  
Gee, I think so...

ALEX  
Yes or no Stella! Commit!

STELLA  
(Scared)  
Yes!

ALEX  
Right. Then if he's the right man for you, you can't just let him slip by. Do you mind?

He lights one of her cigarettes, she watches him wild-eyed.

STELLA  
But he's married. What about my "addiction to failure in the form of married men?"

ALEX  
(Dancing as fast as he can)  
Your addiction to failure stems from your failure to commit. Your failure to commit stems from your lack of trust--

STELLA  
I'm a little confused--

His foot is in his mouth thigh deep--there's no turning back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX

Now listen to me, Stella. I am your doctor. You have got to commit to this affair once and for all or you're doomed to fail. And if you fail at this affair you're going to end up a lonely old spinster!

STELLA stares in horror at ALEX manically puffing his smoke.

EXT. LEMKE'S - DAY

MARINA is clearly visible through the shop window. Outside, LUIS walks quickly down the street. LEO's head pokes out of his sidewalk trap door leading to the basement. He carries up a whole skinned pig. When LUIS sees LEO he starts to cross the street but LEO has already seen him.

LEO

Hey Luis, how's it goin'?

LUIS

I got nothing to say to you.

LEO

What's the matter buddy?

LUIS shakes his head in disgust.

Across the street, STELLA a wreck in dark glasses, comes quickly out of Alex's building. She sees LEO and darts across the street, hiding behind a car.

LUIS

You gotta ask?

LEO

What? What did I do?

LUIS

You stole my Stella.

LEO is instantly nervous. He gestures to the shop window where MARINA works inside the store.

LEO

You wanna lower your voice please.

LUIS

Oh, you ain't told her? Nice.

LEO

Now look Luis, this is all a lot more complicated than you think.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUIS

It seems simple to me. You stole my girl and you're cheating on your poor crazy wife.

He takes off.

LEO

(Yells after him)

Hey, you wanna watch how you talk about my wife?

STELLA peeks out from behind the car as LEO starts to climb out of the hatch.

STELLA

(Whisper)

Leo.

He looks around for the voice.

Over here.

He spots STELLA. He panics as his gaze darts back and forth between MARINA in the shop and STELLA behind the car.

I've got to talk to you.

She scurries from behind the car and follows him down the trap door stairs.

INT. MEAT FREEZER

STELLA shivers, looks disgustedly at the hanging carcasses. LEO holds his skinned pig.

STELLA

Leo, I'm no homewrecker. Well, actually, that's not true. But I don't want to wreck your home. I like your wife too much. But I love you. And Dr. Tremor thinks maybe we have a future.

LEO

Who?!

STELLA

Dr. Tremor, my therapist. Does it bother you that I'm in therapy?

LEO

Hold this.

He leaves her standing with the skinned pig, appalled.

STELLA

Why am I always left holding the dead animal in this relationship?

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

A disheveled ALEX opens the door to LEO. MR. LIDDLE eavesdrops in the background.

LEO

Why are you fucking with my life?

ALEX

I never laid a hand on her.

LEO

My life, my life! First you start telling my wife to get me a girlfriend. Then you tell my mistress we should have an affair, meanwhile my wife's found out about my mistress only it's no go for her 'cause she didn't hand pick this one and she's giving me looks with the meat cleaver. What did I ever do to you?

ALEX

(Slow disintegration)

It's a very confusing world Leo. I'd be lying if I told you otherwise. Now what's the problem--ten words or less.

LEO

Jesus Christ you shrinks are warped. I'm a married man!

ALEX

Did it ever occur to you that your wife might want you to leave her? Did it ever occur to you that your wife might have found someone else?!

LEO

My wife ain't having an affair.

ALEX

(Savage)

You never know.

LEO

(Ice)

I know. 'Cause if she was I'd cut the guys balls off with a carving knife.

He goes. ALEX, starting to twitch, desperately tries to regain control as he returns to a grinning MR. LIDDLE.

ALEX

I apologize for the interruption. Where were we?

MR. LIDDLE

Good news, Doctor. I think I'm cured.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX  
And how could that possibly be?

MR. LIDDLE  
I saw a psychic.

ALEX  
OUT! GET OUT NOW!

MR. LIDDLE flees as ALEX picks up the stuck digital clock and hurls it at the door.

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - DAY

DR. KEARNY walks down the street at a clipped pace towards ALEX'S building when he sees EUGENE sweeping the sidewalk in front of the butcher shop.

DR. KEARNEY  
Eugene, what the hell are you doing?

EUGENE  
(Appalled)  
An honest day's work. How 'bout you, Dad?

DR. KEARNEY  
I'm here to pick you up from your session with Dr. Tremor.

EUGENE  
You're early.

DR. KEARNEY  
I intended to drop in so the three of us could evaluate your progress.

EUGENE  
How 'bout we get some brews and take in a Yankee game like real men. My treat.

DR. KEARNEY  
Why are you sweeping the sidewalk?

EUGENE  
Alternative therapy.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

ALEX opens the door to a beet-red KEARNEY.

ALEX  
(Surprised)  
Doctor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. KEARNEY

I entrusted the fragile psyche of my only child to your professional care only to find him sweeping the sidewalks in some pathetic attempt at

(Absolute disdain)

"alternative therapy." An explanation is overdue.

ALEX throws in the towel.

ALEX

I'm having a professional break-down. I've done something unforgivable. I've led a patient to break up her marriage and I've led another patient to have an affair with the first patient's husband. I think it's because I want the first patient for myself. Subconsciously.

DR. KEARNY

Subconsciously?

KEARNEY takes control, automatically sitting in ALEX's chair.

Sit down.

ALEX obediently drops into the "patient's" chair.

Now. I thought you were involved with Harper.

ALEX

Robyn! Her name is Robyn!

DR. KEARNY

You know, I didn't blame her for knocking-off that uncle of hers. Not uncommon in incest cases.

ALEX

Doctor please, my life...

DR. KEARNY

So what's your problem? Did you shtup any of them?

ALEX

(Appalled)

No! Of course not.

DR. KEARNY

Then they've got no case.

ALEX

But what if my misguided counselling destroys their lives?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. KEARNY

Alex, Alex, Alex. You've got to stop thinking of yourself as responsible for the fate of the world. We're just psychiatrists trying to muddle through this twisted web of life. You're obviously experiencing a stress induced anxiety reaction which is manifesting itself in your inability to remain objective--

ALEX stares into the mirror of his madness and gets it.

ALEX

No, no, no, no, no.

DR. KEARNEY

Excuse me?

ALEX

You're full of shit-- and so am I.

He impulsively hugs a repelled KEARNEY.

Thank you.

ALEX runs out. KEARNEY is flabbergasted.

DR. KEARNEY

I'm terminating Eugene! The board will hear about this!

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - DUSK

MOLLY and GINA survey their domain from their beach chairs, the vacant one in between.

GINA

So what's the upshot?

MOLLY

I gave him the toad to give to her but I don't know.

GINA

You gave him the toad to give to her? You know how hard it is to find a love toad? I don't go to Brooklyn that often.

MOLLY

Maybe he didn't give it to her?

GINA

Maybe he gave it to someone else?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOLLY

Maybe we're all dead and living someone else's dream?

GINA

Please, who'd dream of us?

MOLLY

Answers, answers, I need some answers.

ALEX flies out of his building, comes to a screeching halt as he sees LEO dejectedly walk toward DELLAGO'S. MOLLY and GINA watch LEO.

GINA

He's been hitting that bar an awful lot lately.

As soon as LEO rounds the corner, ALEX careers across the street. The LADIES whip their heads around like Centre Court Wimbledon.

MOLLY

She got the toad.

INT. LEMKE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A mad POUNDING on the door. MARINA opens it, sees ALEX and starts to close it.

ALEX

Wait--

(Desperate)

I dreamed about you.

Curious she opens the door.

Well, not really but--

She starts to shut the door.

I promise I won't say a word.

He pushes the door open and steps in. Overwhelmed by her sparkling beauty, he kisses her with total abandon then sweeps her off to the bedroom as they tear at each other's clothes.

INT. LEMKE BEDROOM

ALEX and MARINA make passionate love. Suddenly he stops.

ALEX

What's that sound?

MARINA

Two hearts beating as one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX  
No, it's ticking.

MARINA  
It's my perpetual motion clock.

ALEX  
There's no such thing as--

She shuts him up with a long, slow kiss.

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET

MOLLY and GINA listen to the night.

MOLLY  
She definitely got the toad.

EUGENE skulks down the block, turns sharply into an alleyway.

EXT. BACKYARD, LEMKE APARTMENT BUILDING

EUGENE deftly drops over a chain link fence into the yard. He picks his way silently through the junked mattresses and other refuse to a dark, open window and peeks in.

INT. LEMKE BEDROOM

ALEX and MARINA doze in post coital bliss. EUGENE stares furiously. He looks longingly for a moment at the sleeping MARINA as a small smile plays across her lips. He regards ALEX murderously. Then disappears.

As soon as he's gone ROSALITA hops across ALEX'S face and he bolts awake in a state of high anxiety. He looks around the room completely disoriented until his darting eyes land on MARINA. He freaks out.

ALEX  
Oh my god.

He starts to HICCUP.

Oh my god.

A love-dazed MARINA wakes slowly and happily watches a nude ALEX hunt madly all over the room for his scattered clothes.

This is a disaster.

MARINA  
Say it again?

ALEX  
Where the hell are my shorts?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She snakes head first under the covers, hunts around, pops her head out the other end and tosses him his shorts.

MARINA

Where's the fire?

ALEX

How could I have let myself be seduced?

HICCUP.

MARINA stops smiling, slowly comprehends. Starts a slow-burn fury.

MARINA

Oh no.

ALEX

(mounting hysteria)

All I've ever wanted to do since I was six years old was help people, help them find a more rational path through this irrational world. And now after years of practice, years of evolving my own theories and methods for dealing with the chaos of modern living where the hell have I ended up?

(HICCUP)

Banging my morals away in your husband's bed!

MARINA

Oh, that's rich. That's really rich. Some pathfinder you turned out to be. You got so much education pitching around in your head and spewing trash out your mouth you wouldn't recognize your Mr. Freud if you tripped over his cigar. You came here, you kissed me--

ALEX

You kissed me first!

MARINA

Pardon me, I must have been possessed.

ALEX

No worse. You're contagious. That's what makes you dangerous. Everyone you touch goes berserk.

HICCUP.

MARINA

All creation is berserk to you--and you're gonna doctor us all. Well Doctor

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARINA (CONT'D)

Tremor heal thyself. What sort of gentleman plays my heart strings perfectly and before his last kiss is dry skulks away like some old hound with his tail between his legs. You're right. I am deluded. Positively deranged. Marrying Leo was some kind of misbegotten error but believing that you were the man I was meant to be with... madness. Pathetic, deluded insanity.

She hauls out her worn valise and haphazardly throws her belongings into it.

Of course everybody's wandering lost on this island. You can't even smell the tides.

ALEX

The tides? The tides? Can't you for once deal with the problem at hand instead of hiding behind this hoodoo-voodoo bullschlitz!!

HICCUP.

MARINA

Yes I can. You. Get out. Now.

ALEX shirtless, fly open, hair spiked up all over, the perfect wreck, flees the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET

ALEX flies out of Marina's building. A nude MARINA leans out her ground floor window.

MARINA

Don't forget these you belly tempered pigfish!

MOLLY and GINA whip around to watch her pitch Alex's Topsiders at him.

GINA

Maybe she didn't get the toad after all.

ALEX picks up his shoes, tries to fix his fly as he steps into traffic without looking. Car brakes SCREECH.

DRIVER

Out of my way asshole!

As ALEX crosses the street to his apartment LEO enters his building.

## INT. LEMKE'S APARTMENT -DAY

MARINA carefully folds her wedding quilt. She alternates between tears and curses. She doesn't hear LEO come in.

LEO

Honey what are you doing?

MARINA

Leaving.

LEO

Where are you going?

MARINA

I'm sorry, Leo. For all the... havoc.

He looks at her with large, soulful eyes, trying to understand and let go.

I honestly thought we were meant for each other.

LEO

Yeah, me too.

MARINA

You've only been sweet as summer butter to me. I guess we're just not fated to be man and wife.

LEO

You don't need to leave.

MARINA

Yes I do. I'm sorry...for my mistake.

LEO

(gallantly)

I wouldn't have had it any other way.

He gives her a huge bear hug. She kisses him tenderly on the cheek.

## INT. PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMINAL - NIGHT

The HOMELESS and MAD wander dazed under the livid green neon. In front of a gate marked "NORTH CAROLINA," MARINA and LEO hold hands in silence. One last kiss and she boards the bus, clutching her perpetual motion clock. He walks away.

## EXT. JERSEY TURNPIKE - NIGHT

The bus emerges out of the Lincoln Tunnel against the Manhattan night backdrop.

INT. BUS

MARINA looks out the window, tearfully, as the Emerald City recedes. Finally, she turns away. It takes her a moment to realize EUGENE is sitting next to her.

MARINA

Eugene. What are you doing here?

EUGENE

Goin' mobile.

MARINA

Eugene, you can't...

EUGENE

Why not?

She shrugs.

Yeah. I know. But you didn't say goodbye.

MARINA

It was sort of sudden.

He nods. Motions to her clock.

EUGENE

Nice clock.

MARINA

(Rote)

It's a perpetual motion--

(She doesn't trust the myth)  
--it's just some old thing.

EUGENE

It's cool.

Impulsively she gives it to him.

MARINA

Here.

EUGENE

What?

MARINA

Take it.

EUGENE

No--

MARINA

I don't want it.

He considers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EUGENE

I'll keep it for you. Till you come back.

She looks out the window.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

EUGENE stands by the road and watches the bus pull back onto the highway.

MARINA (V.O.)

And there you have it. Bananas from the sea is one thing. Butchers, well, that's another. When I saw his smile, his very coloring in my dreams I was so sure. Sure enough to trade my treasured island for his, eager to embrace the vision of my new life I held so dear. But perhaps I was too sure, perhaps this was a sin of pride. For going home, I no longer knew who's smile I had dreamed. It was a fallacy I had paid for. Everything I held as golden had turned to dross. I had lost my faith. And worse, I had lost my bearings.

EUGENE clutches the clock as the bus disappears into his night. Finally, he dodges across the highway and sticks out his thumb to catch a ride back to Manhattan.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

ALEX, ravaged, bangs slowly on the door. Finally, the door opens a crack on it's chain. GRACE peers out in a pajama top, hair dishevelled, fresh from bed. She tenses at the sight of ALEX.

ALEX

Gracie, the sky is falling.

GRACE

(Flustered)

It's two o'clock in the morning Alex, go home.

ALEX

I need to talk.

GRACE

Yes, we do need to talk but what you need right now is sleep.

ALEX

Can, I umm, stay here tonight. I don't want to be alone--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE  
(Extreme discomfort)  
Alex, this is, um, not a convenient time  
for me.

ALEX  
What?

GRACE  
I'm with... somebody.

ALEX  
(Gets it)  
Oh.  
(Tries to muster appropriate  
enthusiasm)  
Oh. Great, Grace, great.

GRACE  
(Stumbles)  
Well you might not think it's so  
great...

A door opens inside the apartment.

ROBYN (O.S.)  
Is everything alright, Gracie?

ALEX bangs the door open as far as the chain allows  
practically breaking Grace's nose. He stares bug eyed at  
ROBYN in a nightie.

ALEX  
You've got Robyn in there.

GRACE  
(Guilty)  
I know.

ALEX  
My career is a shambles, the woman I  
love walks out on me and now my best  
friend is sleeping with my girlfriend.

GRACE  
(Meekly)  
Uhh... ain't love grand?

ALEX  
That doesn't cut it, Grace.

GRACE  
Alex, I tried to tell you--

ALEX  
Robyn's been a lesbian all this time?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBYN steps to the crack in the door.

ROBYN  
Don't take it apart Alex. We're happy.

ALEX lets this sink in.

ALEX  
(To Grace)  
So I guess you found your mysterious stranger.

GRACE  
Call it a leap of faith.

ALEX  
But I gave her that nightgown...

GRACE  
Call me tomorrow.

ROBYN  
Me too.

GRACE closes the door softly. ALEX is lost.

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - NIGHT

A JAZZ COMBO starts to play on the soundtrack. STELLA's voice begins to sing a smokey, melancholy ballad, "WHAT'LL I DO?" ALEX walks home, broken. EUGENE has painted "LOVE KILLS" in red paint on his door.

STELLA (V.O.)  
(Sings)  
"Gone is the romance that was so divine  
Tis broken and can not be mended.  
You must go your way and I must go mine  
But now that our love dreams have  
ended..."

An unexpected autumn breeze gusts down the street. A solitary leaf floats to the pavement and sudden pelting drops of rain begin to fall.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

Autumn. A hard rain hits the window. ALEX wears a warm tweed jacket. The joy he once displayed so obviously in session has vanished. He sits glazed as a SCARSDALE MATRON babbles on. We don't hear any dialogue in this sequence, just Stella's singing.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - DUSK

ALEX in his trenchcoat with his fish-net shopping sack, moves slowly down the dark autumn street. Rushing PEOPLE brush past him in the rain.

He walks by "AVALON," sneaks a look in the store to see GRACE and ROBYN share a laugh in the warm shop.

Across the street MOLLY and GINA sweep the leaves from their stoop. They shake their heads at Alex's lost look.

STELLA (V.O) (CONT'D)

(Sings)

"What'll I do  
When you are far away  
And I am blue?  
What'll I do?"

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE

A well dressed COUPLE yell at each other. ALEX inadvertently takes out one of his drum sticks from his desk and starts to tap. The COUPLE fall silent and watch him, amazed, as he snaps the stick in two.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DUSK

ALEX walks around the fountain, looking for the magic of his night with Marina but the park is dirty, wet, abandoned and depressing. As ALEX leaves he sees DR. KEARNEY speedwalking towards him. Both men see each other and choose to pretend they don't, ALEX quickly changes course.

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET NIGHT

ALEX walks down the street, through pouring rain, past DELLAGO'S. He looks in the window.

INT. DELLAGO'S

STELLA sings to a large crowd and an adoring LEO.

STELLA (CONT'D)

(Sings)

"What'll I do  
When I am wondering who  
Is kissing you?  
What'll I do?"

INT. ALEX'S HALLWAY

MR. LIDDLE knocks and knocks and knocks on Alex's door. Finally, a depressed, tired ALEX answers the door, almost surprised to see him and ushers him in.

## INT. ALEX'S OFFICE

MR. LIDDLE babbles non-stop. ALEX looks to his taped-up digital clock. All the digits but the stuck one flip in ultra slow motion.

STELLA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(Sings)

"What'll I do  
With just a photograph  
To tell my troubles to?"

As MR. LIDDLE talks with great confidence, a gust of wind disturbs the room. ALEX goes to close the window. He glances out to the roof across the street. His glance becomes a stare when he sees a fleeting figure on the roof. It's looks like MARINA, the very first night he saw her.

He tears out of the room, leaving an astonished MR. LIDDLE, who, once ALEX is out of sight, jumps over and tries out some psychiatric poses in ALEX's chair, ending up whirling around madly. The stuck digit on the bandaged clock flips.

## EXT. ROOF - TWILIGHT

ALEX bursts onto the roof, heart in his mouth, expectation all over his face. The person turns around. It's EUGENE. The two men stare at each other. They both know why they're on this particular roof.

EUGENE

It's a leap, Doc.

ALEX recalls MARINA's words, looks up to the starless Manhattan sky as we

MATCH CUT:

## EXT. COASTAL SKY, OCRACOE - NIGHT

The pin-pricked heavens twinkle above the weathered wooden cottage. ALEX stands outside the front door, steeling himself for his risky proposition.

STELLA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"When I'm alone  
With only dreams of you  
That won't come true  
What'll I do?"

As Stella's song ends ALEX KNOCKS. No answer. He slowly pushes open the door.

## INT. COTTAGE

A small sparsely furnished room. A WOMAN warms herself by the fire, her back to the door. ALEX walks silently into the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

room. The WOMAN doesn't move. A flash of doubt crosses Alex's face but he quickly regains his confidence.

ALEX

(Softly)

I'm sorry. I know I'm a pompous blow-hard... some kind of Freudian freakshow. I've always had a hard time with mysteries. I've never been very good with trust... no, not trust...faith. But Marina, darling, I believe... in you. And I love you.

Silence. Slowly the WOMAN stands up, back still to ALEX, clutches her shawl to herself. ALEX holds his breath as she turns slowly around. She's an ancient crone--GRAMMY D'ARBO. ALEX is completely stunned.

Oh. My... You must be Grammy D'Arbo. It's a pleasure to meet you.

The blind woman stands perfectly still absorbing Alex's presence. He goes to her and extends his hand. She runs her gnarled fingers over his face. And smiles.

GRAMMY

I always wanted her to marry a doctor. She's up on the widow's walk...

He starts to go.

and I never read Plato.

EXT. WIDOW'S WALK - NIGHT

ALEX steps out onto the narrow, railed balcony that wraps around the top of the cottage. MARINA looks out over the bluff and the ocean, up to the canopy of stars.

ALEX

I figured it out.

She turns around to him, at her most vulnerable. He looks up at the glittering multitudes. He takes a step toward her.

I mean if I hadn't suggested Leo take a vacation, you would never have come to Sullivan Street and if you hadn't come to Sullivan Street you would never have met Stella who would never have found Leo and you would have never met Grace who would never have found Robyn--

(Can't resist)

did you know about that one?--And I... well I would never have met you, though

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX (CONT'D)

it's taken me a long time to find you.  
See, you just dreamed about the smile  
across the street. But you knew all  
along.

MARINA

It's not worth nothing if you're the  
only who knows it.

She looks at ALEX and knows that they're meant to be together  
no matter what.

But I'm learning to wait...

She comes to him, he gathers her in his arms and they kiss  
forever. Finally,

ALEX

It's a lonely world without your split  
apart.

MARINA

(Playful)

I've been thinking about that notion...  
and I'm not so sure anymore. But Grammy  
was telling be about magnetic opposites.

ALEX

If the myth fits...

He gazes up at the twinkling sky.

I want to learn to these coastal skies.

MARINA

Not a lot of calling for dream doctors  
down here. Maybe you could learn to  
breed beefalo.

ALEX

Maybe we can just get a place in the  
Hamptons?

He peers out to sea.

My god. Are those bananas on the beach?

EXT. SULLIVAN STREET - DAY

The first winter snow dusts the street. We hear MOLLY and  
GINA before we see them trudging down the snow covered  
streets carrying gift wrapped presents and wearing clear  
galoshes, hats and winter coats.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GINA  
Funny huh?

MOLLY  
Why so funny?

GINA  
How it all works out.

MOLLY  
How should it work out?

GINA  
Well, the butcher and the choir teacher--

MOLLY  
She's not a choir teacher, she's a chanteuse.

GINA  
Pardon me, I hear she sings too.  
So what's it gonna be?

MOLLY  
A little girl for the butcher and twins for  
the Doctor and his wife.

They toddle over to DELLAGO'S. A "JUST MARRIED" banner hangs over the front door. The two OLD LADIES nod in approval and go inside.

EUGENE steps out of a doorway to peer inside the bar. He starts to paint something on the steaming window.

INT. DELLAGO'S

The bar is decorated and covered with a bountiful banquet. LUIS tends bar assisted by a giggling SUZI SILLY. ROBYN brings GRACE a heaping plate of food. MOLLY and GINA, a bottle of Peppermint Schnapps between them, knock back shots.

LEO kisses STELLA, raises his glass, and leads the CROWD in a raucous toast to ALEX and a pregnant MARINA. She gives him a big wet kiss. STELLA starts to sing "GIMME A PIGFOOT," with the JAZZ COMBO.

ALEX and MARINA dance. Over her shoulder and out the window he sees EUGENE.

EXT. DELLAGO'S

ALEX comes to the doorway. EUGENE presents him with a large wrapped gift.

ALEX  
Come on in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EUGENE

Not my style... but thanks.

EUGENE extends his hand and they shake, man to man. EUGENE watches through the window as ALEX presents MARINA with the gift. She opens it and beams. It's her perpetual motion clock. She looks out the window to EUGENE and smiles warmly. He returns a pert salute.

A beaming ALEX takes his seat behind the drums of the JAZZ COMBO, to live out his fantasy as he kicks off the boom-boom-boom drum beat of "SING, SING, SING" and the band jumps in.

EUGENE looks one last time and takes off.

On the bar window, Eugene has painted: "LOVE IS IN CONTROL."

MARINA (V.O.)

Of course I knew Eugene was gonna turn out a right fine artist. That's why I let him keep the window, and yes I knew that Grace and Robyn were meant to be. Now Mr. Liddle--

ALEX (V.O.)

Honey, that's privileged information.

MARINA (V.O.)

(Sighs)

Not so easy being a shrink's--

ALEX (V.O.)

Ahem.

MARINA (V.O.)

I mean a doctor's wife.

EUGENE, glides smoothly past a gallery window with a large sign: "EUGENE KEARNEY: WINDOW WORKS AND OTHER NEW ART." He nods approvingly, gives a nonchalant shrug and disappears into the clean white snow falling silently on Sullivan Street.

THE END