

WHERE THE HEART IS

aka

GETTING READY

by

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and

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EXT. DEMOLITION SITE DAY

MAIN TITLES OVER

Dust churns and swirls. A cloud of it separates and STEWART, a powerful man in his fifties, appears, urgently shouting instructions. His words are drowned by the heavy beat of the music. The dust swallows him again. A wall crumbles, then a building collapses, then another. Men run from a crumbling house; the devastation suggests urban warfare. A huge metal ball swings on its chain against the side of a building, revealing that this is a demolition site, which lies among warehouses that are being yuppied into expensive apartments. Brooklyn Bridge casts its elegant shadow onto the mayhem.

EXT. DEMOLITION SITE NIGHT

2

Across the river Wall Street blazes with light. The site is now floodlit. Men separate the debris into piles. Bulldozers and earthmovers push the rubble. STEWART inspects and supervises the work. He is in total command. A monarch of all he destroys. The area has almost been cleared, except for one lone house with a crumbling, but romantic Dutch facade which stands on the corner of the block. Picketers are stationed around it defying the menacing bulldozers. STEWART eyes their placards: "COMMITTEE TO SAVE THE CITY", "SUPPORT LANDMARK STATUS FOR THE DUTCH HOUSE".

EXT. DEMOLITION SITE DAY

3

Trucks cart off loads of rubble. Bulldozers level and grade the land. The site is practically cleared. Only the Dutch house remains and the picketers still stand vigil outside it. Two officials appear picking their way over the rubble toward the house. They push their way through the group of picketers. The protestors cheer as the two men nail a preservation order onto the door.

STEWART and HARRY, his worried lawyer, drive over the rubble in a jeep. They reach the Dutch house and STEWART leaps out, followed by HARRY.

HARRY

How can they do this to us?

STEWART

(shakes his head)

They want to turn this town into a tomb.  
Every rat-infested ruin becomes a monument.  
Keep the city safe for cockroaches.

Continued

HARRY

Is there any way to build around it?

STEWART

Yeah. The tallest tower in Brooklyn with a dent in its side.

STEWART reaches the cheering picketers. He glares at them. Suddenly he recognizes his own daughter, DAPHNE, who has just joined the group.

STEWART

(indignant)

You? You're in on this?

(turning to Harry, appalled)

My own daughter. It's one thing to stick up for the whales and the rain forests but to betray your own father for a falling down Dutch toilet.

DAPHNE

(shouting back)

I'm not with them. Mom sent me down here to tell you not to be late tonight.

STEWART

(disconcerted)

Well, it's just the kind of thing you would do.

DAPHNE

(furious)

Right...

DAPHNE grabs the nearest placard, holds it up and shakes it at her father. A mobile T.V. unit appears on the scene, to the jubilation of the picketers.

INT. STEWART'S BROWNSTONE HOUSE HALLWAY EVENING

4

As STEWART comes through the front door, he is met with a blast of loud rock music.

He peels off his dripping raincoat and is jabbed in the kidneys by the handlebars of his son's Harley-Davidson which is parked awkwardly in the hall.

His daughter CHLOE comes clattering down the stairs clutching cans of film and canvasses.

Continued

CHLOE

Please, let me take the limo, Dad,  
I'll send it right back to you.

STEWART

(rubbing his side)  
Out of the question.

CHLOE,

It's raining, I'm crazed. You want to ruin  
the most important day of my life?

STEWART,

It's my fault you're late? I made it rain?

CHLOE

(kissing him)  
Thanks, Dad.

The driver, JOSE, comes through the front door.

CHLOE

Quick, Jose, grab these. We're on our way.

As CHLOE leaves, STEWART climbs the stairs.

His son, JIMMY, sneaks out from the kitchen and approaches the  
motorbike.

STEWART spins round pointing an accusing finger at the bike.

JIMMY

Sorry, Dad. That acid rain kills the chrome.

JIMMY edges his way toward the door. He turns back, smiling.

JIMMY

(teasing)  
Saw you on TV, Dad. "A victoree for the  
Committee to save the citee!"

Continued

STEWART glares at him, which wipes the smile off JIMMY's face. He slinks out.

INT. LIVING ROOM NIGHT

5

STEWART enters. The effect of the 18th century antiques and the Baccarat chandeliers is marred by a pile of electronic Hi-fi and computer equipment connected by a tangle of cables. STEWART throws switches and hits buttons, but the music blares on. He reaches over and rips out the electric plug from the wall.

INT. FIRST FLOOR LANDING NIGHT

6

STEWART steps out onto the landing. Shoes and stockings are scattered on the stairs. DAPHNE looks over the rail of the floor above on which more clothes are draped.

DAPHNE

Who stopped the music?

STEWART

I stopped the music. Me. Your father. The laughing stock of New York. I stopped it. Forever.

JEAN, his wife, half dressed, peers down.

JEAN

You're late.

STEWART

Are you ready?

JEAN

Not quite.

STEWART

So how can I be late?

INT. DESIGN SCHOOL NIGHT

7

Girl students model wild clothes, moving to the pounding beat of rock music. Some of them look as models should but one is plump and short, another unfashionably voluptuous. They parade down a "runway," jutting from a stage, on which is inscribed, "STUDENTS GRADUATION SHOW".

Continued

EXT. DESIGN SCHOOL NIGHT

8

STEWART guides his wife, JEAN, and daughter, DAPHNE, through the teeming rain and into the design school. JEAN has a Bloomingdales plastic bag over her head to protect her hair. DAPHNE's bag is from Stephen Sprauss. Since they cannot see, STEWART holds their elbows and steers them. They bump into the door before he can open it. They turn their heads towards him in blind accusation. He is very wet.

INT. DESIGN SCHOOL HALL NIGHT

9

A young flamboyant student, LIONEL, who has designed the clothes, leads the models out into the outrageous finale. The audience of thrilled parents and friends applaud ecstatically. A panel of teachers, famous designers and artists make notes and try to maintain a judicious neutrality.

LIONEL catches his father's eye; he beams up at him proudly. His father, JOHN, sees STEWART, JEAN and DAPHNE shaking off rainwater from their coats as they enter. He waves at them indicating the empty seats beside him. STEWART gives a last shake of his body like a sheepdog, spraying several people. The walls are hung with student paintings and fashion illustrations. Pottery and sculpture are on display.

CHLOE, their other daughter, wrapped in a cloak, comes up to them.

CHLOE

Mom, I'm up next. Promise, you won't cry.  
And Dad, please don't groan.

She runs to the stage. JEAN, STEWART and DAPHNE squeeze into their seats.

CHLOE stands before a lowered screen. She signals up to the projection booth, a tiny wooden box.

INT. PROJECTION BOOTH

10

A young man, TOM, his nose pressed against the glass port, has been watching anxiously for her signal.

TOM

Go!

Continued

In his excitement TOM brings down his fist, hitting his friend, JIMMY painfully on the top of the head. JIMMY winces but manages to set the projector going. They are squeezed into the tiny space, crammed together. JIMMY now gives TOM a retaliatory punch, but Tom's eyes fixed on CHLOE, who throws off her cloak and steps semi-naked in front of the screen.

TOM

Your sister's even more... you know... than I imagined.

JIMMY clutches his head in delayed reaction to the pain.

INT. DESIGN HALL NIGHT

11

The film projects a drape that hangs down and joins up, seamlessly with the real drape that goes across CHLOE's shoulder and waist, her breasts revealed.

CHLOE

For my degree work, I have developed a technique based on 18th century trompe d'oeil. It involves painting on the human body. In this case my own and my sister Daphne's, whom I would like to thank.

DAPHNE smiles, flattered and proud. Her mother squeezes her arm.

IMAGES ON SCREEN

12

Painted, naked bodies merge into and emerge, from backgrounds of bizarre landscapes. A moving trompe d'oeil.

INT. DESIGN SCHOOL HALL NIGHT

13

STEWART looks at his wife as though what he is seeing is her fault.

JEAN

(defensively)

It's art, darling, You just look at it. You don't have to understand it.

Despite defending it, JEAN does not look totally convinced herself.

Continued

IMAGES ON SCREEN

14

Nipples are painted onto DAPHNE's closed eyes. She opens them, stares defiantly at the audience, then closes them again.

INT. DESIGN SCHOOL HALL NIGHT

15

STEWART lets out a strangled cry. He turns his pained face to DAPHNE. She meets his eye boldly, then blinks like she did in the film.

LATER

The audience is standing around, sipping wine. STEWART is talking to LIONEL's father, JOHN.

STEWART

Education, I believed in it, I paid plenty for it and all she's got to show for it is a pornographic film.

JOHN

At least she's...normal.

STEWART

You call that normal?

JOHN looks across at LIONEL, the dress designer, who is being congratulated by admirers.

JOHN

Well she's not a...you know...like my boy Lionel.

STEWART

Look. You put him through college, now put him out on his own.

JOHN

(sighing)

He'd probably sue me for being antigay. No way would he leave home.

STEWART

At their age I already had my first ball and chain.

JEAN appears at his side.

Continued

JEAN

Is he boring you with his balls and chains?

CHLOE, JIMMY and DAPHNE are standing by the stage. Friends pass and kiss CHLOE, congratulating her.

DAPHNE

Was I pretty in it?

JIMMY

Daphne, all we saw was your ass, your furburger and your tits. No one could possibly recognize you.

DAPHNE

Yes, but objectively do you think that the parts you saw were pretty?

JIMMY

You're my sister. What can I say?

DAPHNE

Well, you could lie. Chloe, tell me the truth.

CHLOE

I think you're pretty. I think everybody was bored by my film.

DAPHNE AND JIMMY

No. No. They loved it.

DAPHNE and JIMMY hug and squeeze their sister.

LIONEL comes running up and flings his arms around the three of them. They all congratulate each other.

LIONEL

This truly amazing man has just offered me a contract to produce my own collection. Can you believe it?

JIMMY

So how much is he paying you?

LIONEL

(annoyed)

It doesn't work like that, Jimmy!  
They're giving me a huge cut of the profits.

Continued

CHLOE

Don't mention it to Dad.  
He'll expect us to earn a living too.

They all enjoy this joke.

JIMMY

It would be scandalous for us to  
work when there are plenty of people  
who really need to. It wouldn't be right.

DAPHNE

It would be immoral.

Their friend, Tom, who was in the projection box with JIMMY  
swaggers up and puts his arm around CHLOE, who stiffens.  
From behind his back he produces a bunch of tiger lilies that he  
presses into her arms.

TOM

(suavely)

Chloe, that was amazing... What can I say?  
Roll over Picasso.

CHLOE cringes behind the flowers. DAPHNE smiles adoringly at  
TOM.

JIMMY

Picasso? You never looked at a painting  
before you met Chloe.

TOM

Chloe's work has opened my eyes.

JIMMY

Opened your flies.

LIONEL's father, JOHN, has been congratulating his son. He turns  
to CHLOE.

JOHN

(groping for words)

Amazingly...artistic...yet stunningly...sexy.  
How would you like to do a calendar for a  
client of ours, an insurance company?

CHLOE

You mean for money?

JOHN

Quite a lot of it.

Continued

CHLOE

It's very flattering but I want to be a serious artist.

JOHN

(prickly)

The most serious artists in New York work in advertising. I'd venture to say that it's the only true art of our times.

JEAN throws her arms around CHLOE.

JEAN

I'm so proud of you, Chloe.

INT. LIMOUSINE NIGHT

16

JEAN sits between her two daughters, CHLOE and DAPHNE on the back seat. She is hardly visible as their voluminous dresses billow over her. STEWART and JIMMY face them on the jump seats.

JEAN

(solemnly)

Girls, you have the world at your feet, try not to trip over it.

CHLOE and DAPHNE exchange a perplexed glance. JIMMY looks out the window.

JIMMY

Dad, we're crossing the Brooklyn Bridge.

DAPHNE and CHLOE feign shock-horror.

DAPHNE

Crossing the river?

CHLOE

Leaving Manhattan?

JIMMY taps on the glass partition.

JIMMY

Hey, Jose, wrong way.

STEWART

No. I'm putting you on the right way. The straight and narrow.

Continued

The limo turns off the bridge and down to the demolition site where the Dutch house now stands alone. It is surrounded by mud and rubble.

STEWART indicates the house.

STEWART

Do you love it? Everybody loves it.

EXT. DUTCH HOUSE NIGHT

17

They climb out of the car and view the house without enthusiasm. STEWART starts towards it.

CHLOE

It's poetic, like a flower stopping a tank.

STEWART

Good. So you like it. I'm letting you kids have it.

JEAN studies their reactions nervously.

JEAN

I'm gonna fix it up. I know just the designer.

DAPHNE,

Oh, I don't think we're ready to live on our own, Dad.

STEWART

Think of it as a survival test.

JIMMY

(brightening)

You mean it's only a game?

STEWART unlocks the front door and slaps the keys into JIMMY's hand. He peels off some notes.

STEWART

Starting from now, and with very strict rules. No designers. You fix it up yourselves. Here, you each get \$250.

CHLOE

But what do we do when we've used up the two-fifty?

Continued

STEWART turns back to the car. They find his air of resolution scary.

STEWART  
Use your wits. Find ways of making money.

DAPHNE  
I suppose getting a job would be cheating?

STEWART  
No. Not at all. Jobs are allowed.

JIMMY  
It doesn't sound much of a game to me.

JEAN  
This is impossible, Stewart. You didn't say they had to move in right away. It's a ruin. You can't do this.

STEWART  
(flaring up)  
I can't? I can. I am.

DAPHNE  
You can't spoil us and then stop spoiling us when it suits you.

JEAN  
Your father thinks it's time to fly the nest.

CHLOE,  
It's not a nest, it's a big Brownstone with a lot of rooms.

STEWART holds the car door open for JEAN.

STEWART  
Get in, Jean.

DAPHNE tries to dart into the car. STEWART firmly blocks her way.

STEWART looks them over. There is a catch in his voice.

STEWART  
There'll come a day when you'll thank me for this.

Continued

JEAN

I will not abandon my children.

STEWART bundles her into the car.

STEWART

Home, Jose!

He gets into the car and they drive off. JEAN's desolate face is pressed to the window. CHLOE and JIMMY watch incredulously.

CHLOE

I'm worried about him. Is he losing his mind?

JIMMY

(shrugs)

We just pushed our luck too far and he snapped.

DAPHNE runs after the car.

DAPHNE,

Take me home. I don't want to play this game.

INT. DUTCH HOUSE NIGHT

18

CHLOE, DAPHNE and JIMMY wander about the house. As they go they turn on all the lights. The house is completely empty. DAPHNE is in what could be the living room. It is very long, at one end French windows let on to a glass conservatory, overgrown with dying vines, palms and ferns.

DAPHNE

Why isn't there any furniture?

CHLOE

(off, shouting)

No beds!

DAPHNE

(peering into the conservatory)

There's a bit of a jungle.

Continued

INT. KITCHEN NIGHT

19

JIMMY

Worse still, there's no fucking nothing in the kitchen.

CHLOE and DAPHNE appear at the kitchen door. JIMMY is standing before an empty space between the kitchen cabinets.

Jimmy

No stove.

DAPHNE

(opening cupboards)

Hey, look, I've found a teabag. Why don't I make tea?

JIMMY

Yeah. You can sit on the water until it boils. Chickenass.

DAPHNE

(turning on the hot water faucet)

I'll just let the water run very hot. It may not be perfect tea but it's better than nothing.

CHLOE

Well, you better fill up the sink and dip the teabag into that, then you can lap it up with your tongue because I can't see a glass or a cup anywhere.

DAPHNE

(astonished)

The water's not hot.

DAPHNE throws the teabag onto the floor and starts to rant and rave about the house.

Continued

15

INT. HALLWAY NIGHT

20

DAPHNE

(on and off)

Capitalist shithead idiot. How can he treat us like this? This is child abuse. I'll report him to the Bureau of Child Welfare, Amnesty International. I'll do something awful and then he'll never forgive himself. And serve him right.

INT. LIVING ROOM NIGHT

21

CHLOE goes to the phone, taking her address book from her purse.

CHLOE

I'm going to call someone and stay over.

CHLOE shakes the receiver.

CHLOE,

It's dead. And it's way too late to just turn up anywhere. Our father planned this whole thing. The timing. Everything.

JIMMY appears from the conservatory carrying a red velvet drape.

JIMMY

Don't you see what he's doing? It's like when we were kids squabbling in the car. He'd put us out and drive off. And just when we thought he'd never come back, he'd come back.

Jimmy settles himself under the drape, his head resting on CHLOE's purse.

DAPHNE

(watching Jimmy)

No way do I sleep under a drape.

Jimmy

He'll make us sweat it out here for a couple of days and then we'll be back at the house same as ever.

Continued

CHLOE  
 (crawling under the drape  
 next to JIMMY  
 But just a little more humble.

DAPHNE  
 I will never eat humble pie. He can shove  
 his humble pie.

DAPHNE looks at them defiantly for a moment. Her lower lip  
 begins to quiver. She crumples to her knees and crawls under the  
 drape.

EXT. DEMOLITION SITE DAY 22

STEWART, HARRY (the lawyer) and HAMILTON (STEWART's banker) are  
 walking the site.

STEWART  
 I've made demolition an art. This is a  
 business that should be growing.

HARRY  
 Nobody tears down any more. It's all  
 refurbish, renovate, use the old shell.

STEWART  
 When I think that my company has destroyed  
 more buildings than World War Two, I could  
 weep. I have enough capacity to level  
 Manhattan.

HARRY  
 It's the maintenance that kills us.

HAMILTON,  
 Unfortunately we have a larger problem here.  
 If you can't develop this site, you're stuck  
 with a big loan and the meter's running on  
 the interest.

By this time they have reached the back of the Dutch house.  
 STEWART gives HAMILTON a hard look.

STEWART,  
 You mean your bank's stuck with me. The way  
 I feel I could tear down the place with my  
 bare hands.

Continued

HARRY

We could bulldoze it, pay the fine. But they'd withdraw our building permits for the tower.

They peer in through the conservatory windows.

HAMILTON

I believe you've got squatters.

INT. LIVING ROOM/CONSERVATORY DAY

23

JIMMY, DAPHNE and CHLOE sit on the bare floor where some newspapers have been spread out and take-out food laid upon the pages like a picnic. They are dressed in their wilted clothes of the night before.

DAPHNE glances up and sees her father and the two men peering in.

DAPHNE

There are three dirty old men peering in at us. And one of them is our father.

CHLOE

Act cool. Make out we're having a ball. It'll drive him crazy.

JIMMY jumps up and leaps about the room, knuckles dragging, doing a credible imitation of a chimpanzee. The girls laugh joyously and appear to be having an animated conversation.

CHLOE AND DAPHNE

Rhubarb, rhubarb...

EXT. DUTCH HOUSE DAY

24

STEWART searches their faces for some kind of distress, he is disappointed.

STEWART

Would you believe that boy dropped out of Harvard and not out of a tree.

He turns away in disgust. HAMILTON and HARRY exchange a worried look. Is STEWART losing his mind?

Continued

INT. LIVING ROOM DAY

25

CHLOE

He's stopped looking, you can act normal.

DAPHNE

(thrilled)

Did you see the look on his face?

As JIMMY sits down on the floor to finish his food, they hear tapping on the window at the front of the house. They look up and see JEAN beckoning them. DAPHNE leaps up.

DAPHNE

Mom. She's come for us. We're going home.

They all race to the window. Behind JEAN they see an open trailer piled high with their belongings, including JIMMY's motorbike. JEAN shrugs apologetically. They look at each other, stunned.

CHLOE

He really means it.

JIMMY

We're in deep shit and sinking fast.

DAPHNE

(looking heavenward)

It's a nightmare. Please let me wake up in my own room. Please.

EXT. DUTCH HOUSE DAY

26

JEAN is helping CHLOE and DAPHNE unload the trailer. JIMMY hefts a mattress onto his back and starts towards the house.

JEAN

I wept when I saw your empty rooms at home.

JIMMY

We wept when we saw the empty rooms here.

He staggers into the house.

Continued

DAPHNE starts to pull out different objects, grouping them together on the rubble. She lifts out a computer screen and keyboard and places it onto a different pile nearby. This pile is obviously Jimmy's. There are other bits and pieces of electronics and computers, a train-set and a cardboard box full of Matchbox cars. There are beds, a few armchairs, a table and chairs.

JEAN

You always said you couldn't wait to leave home.

CHLOE

You didn't believe us, did you?

DAPHNE

That was just to scare you.

CHLOE goes to take something from DAPHNE's pile.

DAPHNE

That's my pile, Chloe. You organize your own pile.

CHLOE

Alright, Daphne, alright. It s only a pile.

DAPHNE

Maybe, but it's the only pile I have. That pile is my past.

CHLOE pulls some more of her things from the back of the trailer. Paintbrushes, paints, canvasses, finished paintings. DAPHNE takes out a child's chair and sits on it, overcome with nostalgia for her childhood. JEAN lifts a large painting down from, the trailer. It is a copy of Manet's "Dejeuner Sur L'Herbe". JEAN's head peeks over the top.

JEAN

Remember, Chloe? You copied it on your semester in Paris.

JIMMY returns and takes his computer lovingly into his arms and heads back to the house. JEAN watches him with a sad smile.

JEAN

At least you'll have your toys, Jimmy.

JIMMY turns, clutching the computer.

Continued

JIMMY

This is not a toy, Mom. This is my future.  
This is the future of the world.

DAPHNE

You'll loan us money if we're really broke,  
won't you, Mom?

JEAN

Oh, if only I could. He says he  
knows I'll cheat so now I have to keep an  
account of every cent I spend.

CHLOE

(wide-eyed at her mother)

That's going to be an epic in itself.

JEAN

I don't know how you'll manage. You'll have  
to rent out rooms to strangers.

EXT/INT. DUTCH HOUSE DAY

27

The Dutch house sits forlornly amongst the rubble. There are puddles of water across the mud. Stepping stones reach up to the front door.

Flat against the front window, in elaborate writing, a large sign reads, "ROOMS TO RENT".

JIMMY is taping plastic sheeting to a broken window.

A WALL STREET TYPE in an expensive suit approaches, looking furtively about him, perhaps searching for an illicit love nest.

INT. DUTCH HOUSE LIVING ROOM DAY

28

CHLOE and DAPHNE are on their knees scrubbing the floor. DAPHNE stops. She looks up crying.

CHLOE

Don't be such a baby.

DAPHNE

I'm not crying for myself. I'm crying for the people who had to do this for us all our lives. Mary and Mrs. Jose. Even Mom once or twice.

Continued

JIMMY's face lights up as he sees the prospective lodger picking his way across the stepping stones.

JIMMY cries out and the girls join him at the window expectantly.

The WALL STREET TYPE pauses on each stone, hugging his briefcase to his chest as he jumps to the next stone. He takes a large step, and, straddled between two stones, he slides pitifully into the mud. The three hopeful faces collapse in disappointment.

INT. LIVING ROOM ANOTHER DAY

29

There is frost on the windows.

INT. CELLAR STEPS AND BOILER ROOM DAY

30

JIMMY strides down the steps into the boiler room. He starts to attack an antiquated boiler. He kicks it and beats it with a crowbar, grunting like a frenzied Samurai.

INT. LIVING ROOM DAY

31

The steam pipes ring and splutter from JIMMY's blows. DAPHNE is huddled over her school books. CHLOE is breaking up a chair and feeding it into the feeble fire that is burning in the grate. DAPHNE sweeps her books violently onto the floor.

DAPHNE

I was so happy studying Psychology and Human Resources. All I wanted was to be trained so I could help the homeless, so how can I study this crap when I desperately need help myself?

Jimmy has come into the living room.

JIMMY

Dad always told you, if you want to help the homeless, you should go into the construction business.

Jimmy goes over to the radiator under the window. He puts his hand on it and turns to his sisters in surprise.

JIMMY

it's warm!

The girls rush over.

Continued

As the three press themselves against the warm radiator, they see Two HOOKERS, one black, and one blonde getting out of a car and wiggling their way towards the front door.

JIMMY leers. His sisters shake their heads reprovngly. They duck down so as not to be seen.

The doorbell rings. The three of them remain sitting on the floor.

CHLOE

I guess I'll have to prostitute myself.

JIMMY

Let's keep that as a last resort.

CHLOE

(hitting him)

My art, not my body. I better do that insurance calendar.

They look at her with pity. JIMMY stands up, draws himself up proudly and goes out into the hall.

INT. HALLWAY DAY

32

He sadly caresses his motorbike, opens the front door and wheels it out.

INT. LIVING ROOM DAY

33

CHLOE

Do you think he's going to sell it?

DAPHNE

If he's prepared to do that, I better go out there too, and try something.

DAPHNE walks out, solemnly prepared to meet her doom.

Continued

EXT. SOUTH BRONX STREETS DAY

34

JIMMY, wearing all the paraphernalia of a messenger boy, rides his bike through the dereliction of the South Bronx. As he pulls up at a light, THREE BLACK KIDS jump the bike, one from behind and one on each side. The one at the back, now seated, pins JIMMY with his arms. The other two, each standing, on a pedal, clutch the handlebars, wrestling JIMMY's hands away from the controls.

JIMMY accelerates away, trying to throw off his attackers, but they force the brakes on and slow the bike down. The REAR MAN neatly pulls JIMMY off the back of the bike, throws him to the ground and jumps back on. The THREE BLACK BOYS ride off like a circus act.

JIMMY staggers to his feet, watching them go.

JIMMY

And I could have sold it.

A BAG LADY cackles with mirth. As she passes she points a mocking finger at him.

EXT. SUPERMARKET DAY

35

Daphne looking very pleased with herself is pushing a cart loaded with cans and bottles. She wheels it into the supermarket.

INT. SUPERMARKET DAY

35A

She stops at the machine that pays five cents a can or bottle. As she is about to feed it she notices, to her shame, a line of bums, each with a market cart full of cans and bottles, waiting their turn. Daphne smiles apologetically and pushes her cart to the end of the line. They eye her suspiciously. She is moved by their plight, and embarrassed to be there. An old bag lady ahead of her has pitifully few cans in her basket. She eyes Daphne's cart enviously. Impulsively, Daphne takes an armful of her cans and bottles and deposits them into the bag lady's cart.

DAPHNE

Here. I've got plenty.

The bums stare at her. She struggles to keep her composure. She's close to tears. Finally she abandons her cart and flees.

Continued

INT. LIVING ROOM DUTCH HOUSE DAY

36

DAPHNE lies on the floor in a fetal position, her thumb in her mouth, her eyes staring blankly at the Manet painting which is propped up against the wall.

JIMMY is in the conservatory, fiddling with his computer equipment that he has installed there. He is programming an image of a collapsing building. It looks like Taj Mahal. Over and over it falls. Each time his adjustments make it look more convincing. He is so absorbed that his limbs jerk in sympathy with the movements on the screen. He leaps up, crumples, hops, stamps his feet, convulses. He improvises sound effects - explosions, whistles, bleeps. He seems to be having a frustrating time of it.

CHLOE enters, weighed down with paints, brushes and packages of other artists materials.

JIMMY, seeing these purchases, darts over to a jar on the mantelpiece. He sticks his hand in.

JIMMY

You blew the last of our money.

CHLOE

(sketching a design on  
the wall in charcoal)

I can't paint without paint and I only get paid when I deliver the calendar, which is twelve large paintings away.

JIMMY

No one in their right minds is going to rent a room in this rat hole. There's only one thing for it, each of us has got to find a friend and talk him into lodging with us.

The doorbell rings. CHLOE looks out the window.

CHLOE

Oh God, a priest.

DAPHNE jumps to her feet.

DAPHNE

Jimmy, open the door. Tell him we're all sick. We're full up.

JIMMY gives his sisters the finger, furious with them. He opens the door. The girls dive behind the sofa.

Continued

PRIEST

I saw the sign.

JIMMY

For a room? Well you'll have to see my sisters about that. They're in there, hiding behind the couch.

JIMMY storms out the door. The two girls, lying flat behind the sofa, look up at the PRIEST and smile sheepishly.

INT. STOCKBROKERS, OFFICE DAY

37

A large area is filled with rows of desks, each with a computer screen. Everybody is on the phone. Most of them are on two. The BROKERS shout and wave bits of paper. RUNNERS fly up and down between the desks, snatching the paper from the waving hands and dropping others onto desks.

JIMMY dodges his way through the chaos, looking for TOM. He finds him at his desk and on the phone. JIMMY spins TOM around on his swivel chair. The telephone cord is almost strangling TOM, but he continues to shout into the phone. He kicks and thumps JIMMY, but to no avail.

TOM

American Demolition? Yeah, yeah, I'll look into it. It's a good moment. The shares are way down, after that Dutch House disaster.

TOM hangs up, then takes back the receiver and hits JIMMY with it. Holding it in the air, he swivels round on his chair, untangling himself from the cord.

TOM

One of our clients wants to raid your father's company.

JIMMY

I want you to rent a room in our place.

TOM

In that slum?

JIMMY

You told me your stepmother wants you out of the house.

Continued

TOM

Yeah, but I was thinking of a penthouse, not a flophouse.

JIMMY

Your room will be right next to Chloe's.

TOM raises an eyebrow. The phone rings, he answers it.

TOM

(to JIMMY)

I'll take it.

(into phone)

No. Not you. Not at that price.

EXT. BROWNSTONE HOUSE DAY

38

DAPHNE thumps her fists against the front door.

DAPHNE

(shouting)

Let me in! I hate it there! I want to come home!

INT. DINING ROOM ON UPPER FLOOR DAY

39

JEAN and STEWART sit at the large dining room table. STEWART eats heartily, his newspaper propped up before him. JEAN stiffens as she hears DAPHNE's cries from below. STEWART shakes his head sternly in answer to her pleading eyes.

DAPHNE (POV)

Mommy, please! I haven't eaten decently for days. Jimmy's lost his bike. I'm losing my mind.

STEWART

(taking another mouthful)

Be strong, Jean. It's the only way they'll learn.

JEAN jumps up and makes a dash for the door. STEWART leaps after her.

INT. DRAWING ROOM DAY

40

STEWART chases JEAN around the elegant furniture. JEAN eludes his grasp and escapes.

Continued

INT. ENTRANCE HALLWAY AND STAIRS DAY

41

JEAN flies down the stairs with STEWART in hot pursuit. She almost gets to the front door but STEWART tackles her to the floor, she struggles forward but he hangs on to her ankle.

JOSE and his Wife, the cook, watch impassively from the open kitchen door.

EXT. BROWNSTONE HOUSE DAY

42

JEAN appears at a lower window, she sends DAPHNE mute signals of her helplessness and sympathy. DAPHNE lights a match and cups her hands around it, shivering. The letter box, opens, revealing STEWART's eyes inches away from DAPHNE's.

STEWART

(an emotional whisper)

Daphne, my baby, this hurts me more than it hurts you.

DAPHNE

If that were true, you'd be screaming in agony.

DAPHNE throws down her matches, kicks the door and turns away.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE WALKWAY EVENING

43

CHLOE, LIONEL and TWO THAI WOMEN in saris traipse across the walkway in procession. CHLOE is pushing a rack of clothes on casters. She has difficulty in keeping it on a straight course.

LIONEL is pushing a cart containing half a dozen tailor's dummies and bolts of cloth. One of the THAI WOMEN pushes an old baby carriage with two sewing machines in it, while the other steadies them.

LIONEL

(frustrated)

Why did I let you charm me into this?

CHLOE

(feebly)

Don't forget it's a Landmark now. Maybe you could put it on your label, you know, like a French chateau wine.

Continued

LIONEL

Nothing but mud and ruins. Who's going to take me seriously in a dump like that?

CHLOE

I would. Well, I would if I didn't know you so well.

LIONEL is wearing a stylish, wide-brimmed hat. He pulls it off and throws it off the bridge.

LIONEL

That hat's a Manhattan hat. I can't wear it over there.

EXT. UNDER BROOKLYN BRIDGE EVENING

44

The hat floats down. A decrepit-looking STREET BUM sees the hat descending and chases it with surprising agility. He catches it neatly and puts it on his head. He finds himself standing next to DAPHNE, who contemplates the flowing water of the Hudson. She looks like she is about to throw herself in.

BUM

(southern accent)

Do it, if you're going to do it! I can't stand the suspense!

DAPHNE turns and sees the BUM looking at her with a mocking smile.

DAPHNE

(haughtily)

I'm waiting for the tide. I don't want to wade through that smelly mud, do I?

BUM

You can always jump off the bridge.

DAPHNE

(angrily)

No I can't. I'm scared of heights.

BUM

If its for love, don't do it. The pain is bad but it only lasts between 12 and 14 days. Believe me.

DAPHNE

(shakes her head)

I'm punishing my parents.

Continued

BUM

(he gets it, smiles)

Make sure there's someone reliable around  
to fish you out before you do it.

He shakes his head and turns away. DAPHNE watches him join a small group of down-and-outs huddled around a fire under an arch of the bridge. She looks about her and, for the first time, sees this sad, cold place where the homeless live, rows of cardboard boxes as their shelter.

Concerned for them, she forgets about herself. She walks towards the little group. The BUM is doing conjuring tricks for his disinterested audience. He appears to pluck from thin air lightweight supermarket bags which float up into the sky like balloons.

DAPHNE applauds, delighted. Suicide has slipped her mind.

DAPHNE

You're a magician.

BUM

A lifetime of deceit.

DAPHNE's face lights up with a joyful notion. She plucks up courage.

DAPHNE

Look, I have to find a friend to live  
in our house. Well, I only have one  
friend and I don't think she likes me.  
I wonder, Sir, would you teach me magic if...?

The BUM eyes her shrewdly. He is amused.

INT. DUTCH HOUSE DAY

45

The house is now full and the family and their lodgers go about their business in their separate rooms.

CHLOE is painting a winter landscape onto the wall of her room.

TOM, in his tiny bedroom, next door to CHLOE's, is getting dressed. His suits and shirts hang from clotheslines stretched across the room. It is so confined that he must lie on the narrow bed in order to pull on his pants.

Continued

LIONEL is in his workroom, where he also sleeps, draping and shaping material on a model, OLIVIA. He accidentally sticks a pin in her and she punches him.

DAPHNE is listening to very loud music in her bedroom. She moves restlessly but rhythmically around the room, getting dressed and gathering up her school books. Now and again she remonstrates with an imaginary adversary, kicks the door, catches her reflection in a mirror, regards it despairingly and finally throws herself down onto the bed.

The BUM is sitting contentedly on the toilet reading "The New York Times".

JIMMY's bed is in the conservatory and he has set up his computer near it, half hidden by the foliage. He taps at the keyboard programming his video game, but in an urgent need to pee, he finally tears himself away, runs up the stairs and past the TWO THAI WOMEN working at sewing machines on the upper landing. He tries the bathroom door, which is locked. He rattles it irritably. He turns away and speeds back the way he came, but trips on a swathe of cloth, and twisted in it, he tumbles halfway down the stairs.

LIONEL, hearing his cries, appears on the landing beside the THAI LADIES.

DAPHNE and CHLOE come out of their rooms as JIMMY picks himself up and snarls at LIONEL.

JIMMY

You never said we'd have Hong-fucking-Kong in the hallway!

LIONEL

That's an unprovoked racist slur.

THAI WOMAN

Excusing me. We're from Bang-fucking-Kok.

CHLOE

This has nothing to do with Purna and Mya, they don't live here.

JIMMY

OK. Let's just talk about the rent.

Continued

DAPHNE

(always ready to erupt)

Anyway, fashion is bad ecology. It makes us hate what we are wearing and buy things we don't want.

The BUM from Brooklyn Bridge appears from the bathroom, holding "The New York Times".

BUM

At my age, I need an hour in the bathroom in the morning, and there's always one of them skinny, titless mannequins in there, fluffing up her hair.

Everybody turns and glares at THE BUM.

JIMMY

Start paying your rent, you can shit all day.

DAPHNE,

He'll pay once he's worked up his magic act. I'm trying to get him some engagements right now.

The BUM winces at the prospect. JIMMY, now bursting, dashes for the vacated bathroom.

LIONEL

You're so ungrateful. I've given you seven and a half percent of my couture business.

JIMMY (OFF)

Seven and a half percent of zip is zilch.

LIONEL

You all agreed I could defer my rent for two months until the collection is ready.

JIMMY (OFF)

The only lodger who comes across around here is my friend Tom!

Right on cue, TOM appears, immaculately dressed. He goes past them on the stairs, ignoring the rumpus.

CHLOE

He doesn't have to be so smug about it. Do you, Tom?

Continued

TOM

Oh yes I do.

JIMMY

(emerging from the  
toilet)

We're broke. We're desperate. The  
fag doesn't pay. The Shit doesn't pay...

CHLOE

(furious)

Don't call him the fag.

DAPHNE

Don't call him The Shit.

BUM

(drawing himself up  
with dignity)

At least I 'm The Shit, you're just a shit.

LIONEL strides over to JIMMY and pins him with a venomous look.

LIONEL

And this is your contribution? The slum  
landlord harassing tenants?

JIMMY

When I sell my video game...

LIONEL snorts derisively.

SHERYL (POV)

Hi! Sheryl Corman. I'm here about the room.

The crazed faces freeze, then smile sweetly as they turn to greet the newcomer. At the bottom of the stairs is a very pretty girl. THE SHIT takes in SHERYL's designer clothes and comes forward with a crafty smirk on his face. JIMMY is dumb-struck by SHERYL's California glow.

THE SHIT

Ah, yes. Well you better know right off.  
This establishment only accepts cash. Three  
months in advance. We have official Landmark  
Status.

TOM

What are you talking about, three months in  
advance.

Continued

SHERYL

I don't care. Six months if you like.  
 (looking about her)  
 The Karma here is major. Fifteen people  
 achieved Glossolalia in this house in 1935.

JIMMY

Glosso - what?

SHERYL

Glossolalia, speaking in tongues. I'm  
 researching it for my Masters: The Paranormal  
 in Religion.

INT. LIVING ROOM/CONSERVATORY NIGHT

46

They have been feasting and drinking. Now they are dancing.  
 CHLOE is bombed and doing a wild, leg-kicking dance about the  
 room. TOM watches her admiringly. JIMMY is dancing with SHERYL,  
 besotted with her.

SHERYL

I'm getting in touch at so many levels. It's  
 awesome. This house just vibrates with the  
 most amazing frequencies. Can't you feel it?

JIMMY

Every time I touch you I can feel it.

TOM pours himself a drink. CHLOE has her back to him. A "slow"  
 comes on. He walks over to her confidently, taking her by the  
 waist. He turns her into his arms. He is shocked to see it is  
 DAPHNE, not CHLOE.

TOM

I thought you were Chloe.

DAPHNE

Sisters. We're the same... but different.

TOM

Different? In what way?

DAPHNE

You'll have to find out for yourself, won't  
 you?

He smiles. They dance. JIMMY is showing his computer gear to  
 SHERYL.

Continued

JIMMY

This is the real nervous system of the planet. My brain is connected to half the world through this, just by plugging in and punching keys.

He leans towards her, snakily.

We're doing the same thing, it's just our equipment that's different.

She slips from under him as he tries to kiss her.

SHERYL

Let's keep it cerebral.

He pretends to beat his head against the wall in a paroxysm of sexual frustration.

CHLOE, exhausted from her wild dancing, slumps down next to THE SHIT. She lets her head fall onto his shoulder.

CHLOE

(sighing)

Well, we made the most of Sheryl's rent. Bills all paid and a party thrown in.

THE SHIT

A moment's pause on the road to damnation.

JIMMY slumps down next to them, deeply melancholic.

JIMMY

Broke again and can't get laid.

CHLOE

We've just got to stay afloat for a month till Lionel and I finish our projects. Jimmy, there's nothing else for it. You'll have to sell your soul to save your sisters.

JIMMY groans.

JIMMY

Work for Dad? Anything but that. Never.

Continued

INT. STEWART'S OUTER OFFICE DAY

47

JIMMY comes into the outer office where THE GIRLS, sitting at their computer screens, greet him cheerily.

It is a big open office. At the far end, separated by a glass wall, STEWART can be seen pacing up and down his private office.

JIMMY approaches his father's SECRETARY, keeping an eye on his FATHER, who waves his fists, points accusing fingers and rants, soundlessly.

JIMMY

(nervously)

How's the great dictator? Firing someone?

SECRETARY

(cheerfully)

No, just dictating. I think it's a letter to the New York Times.

JIMMY

Can you sneak me in?

SECRETARY

(glancing at her watch)

Well a couple of minutes. We're expecting the real estate developers who are supposed to buy the Dutch House site from us. He's going to try and convince them to build around it.

INT. STEWART'S OFFICE DAY

48

STEWART is declaiming into the dictating machine.

STEWART

This perverse passion for preservation, for pickling the past, for turning this city into a museum is...is...

He looks up as JIMMY puts his head around the door.

STEWART

What do you want?

JIMMY steps in and opens his arms in a gesture of surrender.

Continued

JIMMY

OK, Dad. We can't make it on our own. You win. I'll come back and work for you. Learn the business.

STEWART

(sarcastically)

So, at long last you've discovered a passion for demolition.

JIMMY

Well, I like bulldozers, Dad. But I'm still not in love with them.

STEWART

So what do you have to offer?

JIMMY

I'll computerize the business. You know, modernize the place.

STEWART

I've got computers coming out of my ears.

JIMMY

Yeah, Dad, but you don't love them, you just put up with them.

STEWART smiles, acknowledging JIMMY's point. He looks tenderly at his son for a moment, then shakes his head skeptically.

STEWART

You're not ready to take me on.

He waves JIMMY away.

JIMMY

Try me!

The father and son stand opposite each other, bracing themselves, legs spread, hands raised, palms outwards. It is obviously a game they have played over the years. The purpose is to unbalance the opponent, either by slapping the opponent's hands and forcing him backwards by sheer strength or by withdrawing your hands as your opponent strikes so that he topples forward, carried by his own weight.

They clash full force, neither budges. Then follows a series of false moves and feinting. Their eyes are locked together, they know each other's game. The desk buzzer sounds, but STEWART ignores it, concentrating on the contest.

Continued

STEWART smiles, which angers JIMMY. He lunges at STEWART's palms who pulls them away, causing JIMMY to fall forward. He tries to regain his balance by windmilling his arms, but topples to defeat. As STEWART turns away, quietly triumphant, he locks eyes with the TWO REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS who have been watching, appalled, through the glass. Behind them, looking dismayed, is HAMILTON, the banker and HARRY.

INT. CONSERVATORY DAY

49

DAPHNE, carrying her school books, looks in at TOM and JIMMY, who are working on a tangled complex of computers. They both peer at a small screen, their heads almost touching. They type onto the keyboard. They laugh, then concentrate on the screen again.

DAPHNE sighs loudly from the doorway. Sensing her presence, they tear their heads away from the screen.

TOM/JIMMY

Hi! Hello, Daph.

DAPHNE

Don't call me Daph! Do I look like a Daph?

(she smiles at Tom)

You can call me Daph, Tom.

TOM

Jimmy's got a great new game coming along here. Take a look.

DAPHNE goes to them, leaning down between their heads. But instead of looking at the screen, she eyes TOM admiringly.

DAPHNE

What about Dad?

JIMMY

I tried. I tried. I fell on my face.

DAPHNE

(moaning)

That's terrible. It's terminal. No money. We're non-people.

JIMMY

We don't need Dad. I've sold Tom a piece of my new game - for cash. We can all stay alive on that for a while.

Continued

TOM

(looking sheepish)

If I can get hooked on it, I figure there must be a million like-minded assholes out there dying for the same fix.

TOM reaches forward and presses the keyboard. The Stock market prices come up.

TOM

Let's see how the market's doing. That's a much easier game to play and everybody wins, well nearly everybody.

DAPHNE

(raising her voice)

All you boys think about is playing games on a computer when the real world is falling apart around us?

TOM and JIMMY blink at her, uncomprehending.

EXT. DEMOLITION SITE DAY

50

An apartment building is being prepared for demolition. STEWART enters the lobby and walks past open windows stretching across the ground floor, shouting instructions. He is wearing a hard hat. HARRY comes running up behind him, trying to catch up.

HARRY

Stewart! News!

STEWART

The Dutch house?

HARRY

We should be so lucky!

STEWART

What then?

HARRY

Bona fide take-over bid! A raider. They're offering our stockholders twenty percent over the current market price.

STEWART

(bitterly)

That's all we need. A proxy fight.

Continued

HARRY

Hey Stewart, we've got to consider it, with so much of our assets tied up in that Dutch house site.

STEWART

(angry)

Capitalism is in the toilet if any Wall Street whippersnapper can buy up a business, kick out the professionals who built it up, sell off the assets and leave it in ruins.

They are now walking quickly from the building. Other men emerge from it and follow. A down-and-out is chased from the derelict building and shuffles off mumbling abuse.

HARRY

We're obliged to notify the stockholders of the offer.

STEWART

I'll buy back the stock myself if I have to.

HARRY

You don't have that kind of money.

STEWART produces a radio remote control detonator. He looks up and signals.

STEWART

(eyes on his watch)

I'll raise the money. No-one is going to destroy what I've built up.

He checks that the building is evacuated. One of his men sounds a warning siren. STEWART pushes the button. The building crumbles in on itself.

STEWART

Poetry, poetry.

Dust settles on STEWART and HARRY.

DAPHNE (V.O.)

I think I take after Dad. I always have these great urges to destroy.

Continued

INT. DUTCH HOUSE CHLOE'S ROOM DAY

51

CHLOE is preparing DAPHNE for one of the Live Paintings that she has been commissioned to do for the calendar. DAPHNE stands against a backdrop painted in trompe d'oeil. CHLOE paints on DAPHNE's naked body so that it becomes part of the scene behind her.

DAPHNE

(Chloe's face is an inch  
from hers)

You think it's hereditary?

CHLOE

Hmmm?

DAPHNE

Is it genetic? To want to destroy?

CHLOE looks through her camera. She returns to DAPHNE. The live painting gives the illusion that the walls of the room are collapsing, revealing a strange winter landscape beyond.

DAPHNE

Why am I January? Why can't I be June?  
(pause for answer)

Do I look cold and bleak? Is that what  
freezes out all the boys?

CHLOE

Hmmm?

DAPHNE

(flaring up)

I'm glad I'm not you, Chloe, I'd bore myself  
to death!

CHLOE clicks the camera, catching the haughty, angry expression of DAPHNE's face, as LIONEL comes through the door.

CHLOE

January. Perfect.

LIONEL

Yes. But a bit risque for an insurance  
company calendar, isn't it?

CHLOE

It's a risk I'll have to take. You can't  
take out insurance against failure in art.

Continued

LIONEL  
(with unconvincing  
bravura)

I never consider the possibility of failure.

CHLOE  
(shrewdly)  
You're stuck, aren't you?

LIONEL  
Me stuck...?  
(then feebly)  
I guess I am.

INT. LIONEL'S WORKROOM DAY

52

The room is covered in swathes of cloth and half-dressed dummies. There are rolls of material hanging from long metal pipes that stretch the lengths of the walls. Lionel is at a drawing board showing his sketches to CHLOE and DAPHNE, who is still dressed in her live painting gear and body make-up.

DAPHNE  
(making an effort)  
Hmm. Lovely. Wonderful. Oh, beautiful.

CHLOE studies them seriously and silently. LIONEL watches them anxiously.

LIONEL  
(quickly: fishing)  
I did those today. Roughs really. Just scratches.

They are highly finished, and look like they involved a lot of work.

DAPHNE  
Yes, I suppose they are.

LIONEL  
Suppose they're what?

DAPHNE  
Roughs. Scratches. But lovely scratches.

LIONEL  
(grasping at straws)  
Really?

He turns to CHLOE, anxiously awaiting her opinion.

Continued

CHLOE  
(kindly)  
Just a little bit Joan Collinsy.

LIONEL  
What do you mean, Joan Collinsy? What do you know about fashion?

DAPHNE  
(encouragingly)  
They would look lovely on our mother, Lionel.

LIONEL  
That's very hurtful and not at all helpful.

DAPHNE flares up, but manages to bite her tongue. She goes out slamming the door.

LIONEL  
(touchy)  
Why's she so touchy?

CHLOE puts her arms around him and looks at the drawings over his shoulder.

CHLOE  
(gently)  
I never told you this but I thought your show was so original and amazing. You got to make what you like, not what you think other people like. Don't you think?

LIONEL  
(smiling)  
I can't think, when you're smothering me like this!

INT. THE SHIT'S BEDROOM DAY

53

DAPHNE enters the room, holding a cup of coffee. THE SHIT is lying under a pile of covers. The place is a litter of dirty cups and glasses, clothes and newspapers.

DAPHNE  
Shitty!, Wake up. It's two o'clock. Here's a lovely cup of coffee.

He opens one eye and runs it over DAPHNE's body paint.

Continued

THE SHIT

I hope to Christ I'm dreaming. You look like you fell off a wedding cake.

He takes the coffee and sighs and looks bleakly out of the window.

THE SHIT

Ah, Daphne, all I see around me are empty-brained idiots, spraying aerosol cans at their armpits, punching holes in the ozone layer. It looks like I just might live to see the end of the world. Ain't nobody's going to miss us when we blow ourselves up.

DAPHNE

We know all that. But while we're waiting for the end you gotta find a way to pay your rent. You're a magician. You have a gift. And guess what? I've found you a little job.

THE SHIT chokes on his coffee.

THE SHIT

I need at least another three months of rehearsals, Daphne honey.

DAPHNE

(hard)

Oh no you don't. You have an engagement.

SCENE 54 DELETED

INT. HOUSE DAY

55

THE SHIT, assisted by DAPHNE, stands before a children's party doing tricks. A live dove is turned into a roast pigeon. A bunch of flowers wilts. Some children play and fight, ignoring his efforts, others are immersed in a video game. Only one little boy stands very close, watching THE SHIT intently.

THE SHIT

(bitterly)

What are you looking at?

Continued

INT. LIVING ROOM/CONSERVATORY DAY

56

CHLOE paints THE SHIT's body and the wall behind him. He watches her absently. She has painted a great, flooded landscape. The water appears to be cascading into the room. THE SHIT bestrides it.

THE SHIT

Nobody wants my old tricks anymore. Your brother is the real magician of today, with that Pandora's box of his.

INT. CONSERVATORY DAY

57

Jimmy is watering the tropical plants, they look a lot healthier than they did.

JIMMY

(under his breath)

Come on you lazy fuckers, grow.

THE SHIT is sitting at JIMMY's computer screen, tapping away at the keyboard with one finger. He turns to JIMMY, a nasty crooked smile on his face.

THE SHIT

James, I think I've hacked into the American Express computer. What's your father's card number?

JIMMY dives at the computer and breaks the connection.

JIMMY

(furious)

Don't do that with my computer. It s not all twisted and crooked like some old con-artist.

THE SHIT

So you admit I'm an artist.

INT. LIVING ROOM DAY

58

The evil smile remains on THE SHIT's face, but his eyes are full of prophesy. He is perched against the magical, flooded landscape. He is Merlin.

Continued

THE SHIT  
 Floppy discs, bytes, IBM compatible. Mine  
 eyes have seen the true magic of the age.

CHLOE takes her photo.

CHLOE  
 Got you.

INT. BROWNSTONE HOUSE NIGHT

59

JEAN and STEWART's house is silent and empty. STEWART appears in the hallway, carrying a newspaper. He looks up the stairs, listens, then shakes his head.

He returns to the drawing room.

INT. DRAWING ROOM NIGHT

60

STEWART  
 Keep hearing things. It'll take a while to  
 get used to the silence.

JEAN is looking through family photo albums.

JEAN  
 I'll never get used to it.

STEWART  
 (sharply)  
 Peace at last. I don't miss them.

JEAN  
 You never really knew them, always working.

STEWART leans over her and flicks the pages of the photo album.

STEWART  
 What's this then? Who's that?

He points to pictures of himself playing with his small children.

JEAN shakes her head and smiles to herself, infuriating STEWART. He stares at her, challengingly.

JEAN keeps her eyes on the photos.

Continued

JEAN

(sighs)

I think we should peek in on them.  
See if they're alright.

STEWART,

Jean, stay away. You'll only upset yourself.

She sighs again. A deep silence falls over the house. He starts to hyperventilate.

STEWART

I've got enough pressure without your silent accusations. I can't breathe in here.

He storms from the room and the front door slams.

EXT. DUTCH HOUSE NIGHT

61

STEWART wanders over the site. He looks up at the house, then in at the window. He hesitates, then finally goes to the front door. He opens it with his keys.

INT. HALLWAY HOUSE NIGHT

62

He walks through the hall. Soft rock music is playing, laughter and the hum of voices come from the living room. He peers through the half-open door.

DAPHNE, JIMMY, CHLOE, TOM, LIONEL and OLIVIA (the model) are all draped over the big, ugly second-hand sofas and armchairs in a variety of abandoned attitudes. OLIVIA is brushing CHLOE's long hair. JIMMY's legs are propped up over the arm of the sofa, his feet move to the music. The fire casts a soft light on the gathering. One of CHLOE's bizarre landscapes dominates the wall behind them. THE SHIT, holding an imaginary partner, dances across the room, executing a series of elaborate steps.

CHLOE

(hugging DAPHNE)

It doesn't matter, Daphne, we have each other. Which is more than most people have.

DAPHNE,

Most people wouldn't want us!

Continued

STEWART starts to enter, but hesitates. He is moved. He turns away, back to the front door. As he turns the handle it is opened from the outside by SHERYL. They look at each other for a moment. She can see that he is very disturbed.

SHERYL  
(gently)  
Who are you?

STEWART  
(after a pause)  
A distant relative.

He edges past her and melts into the night.

INT. LIVING ROOM/CONSERVATORY NIGHT

63

SHERYL enters the living room and joins her friends.

TOM  
We almost have each other. Jimmy almost has  
Sheryl, I almost have Chloe.

They all laugh at TOM.

SHERYL  
I think your father was here.

Silence drops like a stone.

INT. LIVING ROOM DAY

64

A landscape covers the wall. CHLOE touches part of the painting with her brush, it moves. It is TOM. He lifts his arm slightly, so that he emerges from the picture. CHLOE is painting his body so that it disappears into the wall.

CHLOE  
How do you know you're in love with me? What  
is it you like about me?

TOM  
Come to think of it, I don't like anything  
about you. I'm just hopelessly in love with  
you.

CHLOE, absorbed suddenly with a painting problem, gives a cry of disgust. TOM looks shattered.

Continued

CHLOE

I can't get this right. Can we try again tomorrow?

TOM

Fine with me. I love when your brush caresses my body.

EXT. TOM'S PORSCHE DAY

65

The car speeds over the Brooklyn Bridge. TOM is on the phone.

TOM

Jimmy, it's ten-thirty.

JIMMY (OFF)

i'm awake, I've been up for hours.

TOM

Patch into the Reuter feed. I'm out of touch.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM IN CONSERVATORY DAY

66

JIMMY is under the bedcovers, trying to wake up. He leans over to his desk where his computers stand. He clicks a button and the screen brightens.

JIMMY

Yeah. OK.

INT. PORSCHE DAY

67

TOM

Look at your father's stock. It was going through the roof when I left the office. I bought a bunch myself before the raiders moved in.

JIMMY (OFF)

They just went up another point.

Continued

49

INT. STEWART AND JEAN'S BEDROOM DAY

68

STEWART and JEAN are getting ready to go out.

STEWART, a telephone wedged between neck and shoulder, scrambles about the floor, looking for a stud button.

STEWART,  
Up another point? We've got to buy quick.

JEAN  
(Pirouetting)  
What do you think? Lionel designed it for me. Is it right for the White House?

STEWART  
(banging his elbow  
as he hangs up)  
Well, it's white. I guess it's right.

JEAN  
(slumped down at her  
dressing table)  
Oh God. I feel so twitchy. Meeting the President.

STEWART  
(rubbing his elbow)  
Just be yourself.

JEAN  
That's the last person I want to be.

STEWART grimaces and continues to search for the stud.

JEAN powders her nose. There is a file of documents on the table before her.

JEAN  
I don't understand why you have to borrow money from the bank to buy back your own business. And now you want me to sell my beautiful house in Connecticut.

STEWART has finally found his stud and is struggling to get it in. He is breaking into a sweat.

Continued

STEWART

(irritably)

I'm not selling the house. I'm only offering it as collateral. If the worse comes to worst, I can always sell back the stock to pay the bank loan and redeem the deeds of the house.

JEAN flicks through the pages of the document, as though it had a bad smell.

JEAN

Bizarre, giving you this honor, just when everything's going wrong for you.

STEWART picks up the documents and shakes them at JEAN.

STEWART

I'm not going to argue with you. It's my money, I earned it, I bought that house for you.

JEAN

(taking the papers and pen)

And now you want it back.

Pen suspended over the document, JEAN turns and looks up at STEWART who is looking over her shoulder.

JEAN

Well...say you love me then.

INT. LIVING ROOM DAY

69

TOM's painting almost finished. CHLOE has made him disappear completely. She goes to her camera.

TOM

I love you...

CHLOE

Great. You've disappeared.

TOM

(feebly)

Help.

Continued

INT. WHITE HOUSE DAY

70

A reception in a stateroom. STEWART and JEAN along with some thirty others are gathered for a "Captains of Industry" awards ceremony. A podium has been set up, displaying the handsome plaques to be presented. The press and television are present.

JEAN looks out of the window at Pennsylvania Avenue and the monuments beyond, and then looks up proudly at her husband.

PRESIDENTIAL AIDE

The President will be here momentarily. When you shake his hand for the press photos, grasp it lightly. The President has a touch of tennis elbow.

This is greeted with good-humored laughter.

STEWART is rehearsing with JEAN what he intends to tell the President...

STEWART

...and then i'm going to remind him, that if we don't stay dynamic, we re dead. We've got to tear down the old and build up the new, like we always have. Do you think he saw my letter in the New York Times?

JEAN, alarmed at his ranting, tries to humor him.

JEAN

Just say, "Thanks, Mr. President, it's a great honor." Then he'll probably ask you how you got started in demolition.

STEWART

(grinning)

I blew up bridges in Korea, Mr. President, and never got out of the habit.

JEAN

(sighs)

Well, why not? That always gets a laugh.

STEWART

(peevd)

What would you say then?

Continued

JEAN

If I was getting a medal?

I richly deserve this, Mr. President. Thirty years trying to hold things together, while he destroyed everything around him, and finding out when the kids were gone that we had nothing to say to each other.

There are tears in her eyes, her voice breaks.

STEWART is alarmed, moved. He takes hold of her.

STEWART

Jean, sweetheart...

PRESIDENTIAL AIDE (OS)

Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States of America!

The band plays "Hail To The Chief".

STEWART draws himself up stiffly to attention.

JEAN sniffs and tries to hold back her tears.

INT. DUTCH HOUSE KITCHEN DAY

71

It is breakfast time. The whole household is in the kitchen, each person preparing his/her own fare. A T.V. set is perched on the icebox playing a breakfast show. They keep an eye on it, waiting anxiously.

DAPHNE cuts fresh fruit into a bowl.

SHERYL pours yoghurt onto cereal.

THE SHIT makes tea.

CHLOE is making toast. A loaf of sliced bread is propped up beside her.

JIMMY knocks over his mug of coffee and it spills over the kitchen counter. JIMMY quickly grabs a couple of slices of bread and soaks up the liquid with it like a sponge.

Continued

SHERYL carries her bowl of cereal to the kitchen table, where LIONEL is crouched sleepily over his coffee, and TOM sits behind the "Wall Street Journal", his breakfast laid out neatly in front of him. The award ceremony comes on TV and they all cheer. There is a close shot of STEWART as he approaches the podium. JIMMY, CHLOE and DAPHNE leap to their feet, whooping.

KIDS

You tell him. Give it to him, Dad!

STEWART swallows, then mouths, "Thank you, Mr. President", and turns smartly away.

There is a shot of a teary-eyed JEAN.

SHERYL

Your mother looks so proud and your father must be out of his skull.

INT. BANK DAY

72

STEWART strides angrily through a big open office where lines of operatives tickle the keyboards of their V.D.U.'s, HARRY the lawyer, in tow.

STEWART

I should never have gone public.

HARRY

It made you a paper millionaire.

STEWART

And what am I now, a paper tiger!

He is furious. His anger is intimidating.

INT. HAMILTON'S OFFICE DAY

73

STEWART's fist hits the desk. In contrast to the high-tech outer area, the office is leather and wood panel.

STEWART and HARRY have laid out documents on HAMILTON's desk.

HAMILTON shakes his head regretfully.

STEWART

No! What do you mean: No? What happened to loyalty?

Continued

HAMILTON

You can't get emotional about money, Stewart.

STEWART

Why not? Money is emotion. Most people today, the only feelings they have are for money.

STEWART gestures to HARRY who draws another document from his briefcase, as STEWART paces the room.

HARRY

Stewart's Brownstone, value three million dollars. Connecticut house, another one and a half, plus his twenty-nine percent of American Demolition, plus, plus, plus.

HAMILTON joins STEWART at the window. They look across at the next building where, at every window, computer serfs gaze at cathode ray tubes.

HAMILTON

I'm just counselling you not to buy back your own stock, not while you're so...upset.

STEWART

You know the stock is undervalued, Hamilton. The property we have alone...which is why this prick is trying to steal it from me.

HAMILTON,

Who knows what's going to happen to property values, Stewart?

STEWART

(exploding again)

You've got collateral coming out of your ass!

HAMILTON,

The computer doesn't like the deal, Stewart.

STEWART

Who's running the bank, you or the little green numbers?

HAMILTON,

Computers, they're getting out of hand, Stewart.

His anxious eyes sweep over the view. Computer screens glow like alien eyes in every bay and window.

Continued

HAMILTON

Impulses, flashing around the globe.  
We're just neurons in a big neurotic brain.

At a window in the building opposite is TOM. He looks up, startled to see STEWART staring at him. STEWART nods at TOM. TOM returns a nervous wave.

STEWART

You're losing your mind, Hamilton

HAMILTON

I'm losing my mind?

STEWART

Just make the loan, Hamilton.

HAMILTON gives in and goes to his desk.

HAMILTON

I must be.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE DAY

74

TOM sits at his desk watching STEWART and the banker HAMILTON. He reaches across to his neighbor's desk and grabs a pair of binoculars and raises them to his eyes.

TOM

Jesus! I can't believe my luck!

His NEIGHBOR, EDGAR, tries to grab the binoculars from him.

EDGAR

What's she doing? What's she doing?

VIEW THRU BINOCULARS

75

The banker signs a paper and hands it to STEWART.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE DAY

76

TOM taps out a telephone number on the computer system on his desk, still peering through the binoculars.

Continued

TOM  
Hi! Tom here. Buy me another hundred,  
American Demolition. I've a feeling they're  
going North again.

He picks up the binoculars.

VIEW THRU BINOCULARS

77

STEWART, HAMILTON, and HARRY are all talking urgently into  
different phones and gesticulating.

TOM focuses the binoculars on STEWART and correctly interprets  
the phrase that STEWART is repeating.

TOM (V.O.)  
(synchronizing Stewart)  
Buy American Demolition. Buy American  
Demolition.

INT. NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE DAY

78

A DEALER, arm stretched high, waves a paper.

DEALER  
American Demolition. I'm buying.

Other dealers surge from all quarters, clamoring to sell and buy  
American Demolition, like dogs fighting over a bone.

EXT. DUTCH HOUSE DAY

79

A bunch of stray dogs fight over a bone.

DAPHNE, coming home from school, her books under her arm, breaks  
up the scrap.

DAPHNE  
Remember you're animals. Stop behaving like  
human beings.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE DAY

80

With the phone glued to his ear, Tom watches American Demolition  
stock going higher and higher. His neighbor, EDGAR, on the  
phone, signals across to him.

Continued

EDGAR  
 (covers the mouthpiece)  
 Stewart's still slugging it out with  
 the raider.

TOM  
 (shaking his head)  
 Is he mega-stubborn.

EDGAR raises a hand in warning.

EDGAR  
 (whispering)  
 Hey! Tom, the raider's getting ready to  
 unload. You better be quick.

TOM  
 (into phone)  
 Sell! ... Yeah, American Demolition.

TOM and EDGAR cheer and hug.

INT. LIVING ROOM DUTCH HOUSE DAY

81

JIMMY is dressed as Cupid. A pair of wings flop against his  
 back.

CHLOE wires a halo to his head. Behind him is an oversize nude  
 painting of SHERYL. JIMMY has a pocket calculator in his hand.  
 He taps the keys and grimaces.

JIMMY  
 Another three weeks before Lionel  
 finishes his collections. How long  
 to go on the calendar?

CHLOE  
 About the same.

JIMMY  
 We won't make it on what we've got.  
 People can tell when you don't have it.  
 They look at you as if you smell bad.

CHLOE  
 And it's not only what it can buy, just  
 having it is sexy. Even Tom...

JIMMY  
 (eyeing her shrewdly)  
 Is he getting to you?

Continued

CHLOE

Well...

JIMMY

Let me drop a hint, then I can raise his rent.

CHLOE

Don't you dare. If he even suspected he'd be totally unbearable.

INT. HALLWAY DAY

82

SHERYL enters the house, followed by a young black man, MARCUS. She looks into the living room and sees JIMMY dressed as Cupid.

SHERYL

You look just darling!

MARCUS looks appreciatively at the nude painting of SHERYL.

MARCUS

(to Sheryl)

So do you!

They start up the stairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM DAY

83

JIMMY, stung with jealousy, flies after them.

JIMMY

(to Chloe)

Hey, wait up.

CHLOE

Don't do anything nasty while you're wearing that halo!

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL DAY

84

SHERYL and MARCUS disappear into SHERYL's bedroom, just as JIMMY appears at the end of the hallway. He tiptoes toward her door. Suddenly strange, sexual noises start to come from it. He turns away angrily, bumping into LIONEL's rack of clothes stored in the middle of the landing.

Continued

JIMMY fights his way through them, taking out his jealous rage on the hanging clothes. As he emerges on the other side, his halo askew, he sees DAPHNE, carrying a tray of coffee and THE SHIT, wearing a yogi's loincloth and dragging chains and padlocks behind him.

THE SHIT

(listlessly)

I'm getting weary of these chains, Daphne.

DAPHNE

Don't lose heart, Shitty. If you get this number down, we can take it to Vegas.

(to JIMMY)

Coffee? Is Sheryl back?

DAPHNE strides off towards SHERYL's room. JIMMY speeds after her.

THE SHIT turns away, clanking back down the hall.

The cries from SHERYL's room sound even more passionate.

DAPHNE taps on the door and bursts in.

JIMMY, anguished, sticks his head round the opening.

INT. SHERYL'S ROOM DAY

85

SHERYL holds a microphone to MARCUS' lips. He seems to be in a deep trance, his body beating up and down. Sweat pours down his face and his shiny chest.

JIMMY is relieved.

DAPHNE

Coffee, Sheryl?

SHERYL shakes her head.

DAPHNE approaches MARCUS.

DAPHNE

Coffee?

He beats his body forward, jolting his head up and down, as though in affirmation.

DAPHNE

Sugar?

Continued

He makes the same movement.

DAPHNE drops two lumps into his cup.

SHERYL  
Is anybody there?

MARCUS  
Who's asking?

SHERYL  
Sheryl Corman.

MARCUS  
Why does she ask?

SHERYL,  
It's for my Master's on the Paranormal. Try  
The Reverend Henry Swallow. He lived in this  
house. See if he'll talk in tongues.

DAPHNE and JIMMY watch, wide-eyed.

MARCUS  
(snapping out of his  
trance)  
It's no good, I just can't get it on.

SHERYL  
Are you taking me for a ride?

MARCUS  
(leering,)  
I wouldn't mind.

He laughs goodnatureedly. SHERYL is amused despite herself.

INT. LIVE PAINTING ROOM DUTCH HOUSE DAY

86

JIMMY resumes his position. His eyes are shining, a silly smile on his face.

JIMMY  
They weren't humping, just talking in  
tongues.

CHLOE slips a belt round his waist and heaves him up by a pulley system so that he is suspended up onto a little cloud, from which he can point his arrow at SHERYL's naked breast.

Continued

61

INT. ENTRANCE HALL DUTCH HOUSE DAY

87

TOM bumps into THE SHIT as he comes through the front door.

TOM

(striding up the stairs)

Not right now, I've got to make a call before  
the market closes.

THE SHIT

American Demolition still falling?

TOM

(smugly)

Total collapse!  
Boy, did I get out at the right time.

THE SHIT watches him go. He looks rather pathetic in his yogi  
loincloth.

INT. BATHROOM DAY

88

LIONEL's model, OLIVIA, is pulling off a dress.

THE SHIT enters.

THE SHIT

Will you chain me up?

OLIVIA

I'm much better with a whip.

DAPHNE enters.

DAPHNE

I'll do it, Olivia.

INT. LANDING DAY

89

THE SHIT is now chained up.

DAPHNE places the padlock key between his teeth. He takes a deep  
breath and submerges into the glass tank filled with water which  
stands on the landing. Under water he starts to wriggle out of  
the chains.

DAPHNE watches him anxiously. The doorbell rings.

Continued

DAPHNE skips down the stairs and opens the front door. A bedraggled, weeping JEAN stands in the doorway. She keeps her finger pressed on the doorbell. The continuous peal has brought the rest of the household to the door.

DAPHNE

(trying to pry her  
mother's finger from the  
buzzer)

Now, mother, we don't want to get  
a cramp in the finger.

JEAN is rigid, every muscle frozen.

JIMMY and CHLOE peer down from the landing. TOM and LIONEL appear from their rooms.

DAPHNE gets a whiff of her mother's breath and looks wide-eyed at the others.

TOM comes forward and slaps JEAN across the face.

JEAN crumples into his arms and sobs.

CHLOE

(hitting TOM)

How dare you hit my mother.  
How dare you!

Everybody crowds around, trying to comfort JEAN.

INT. LANDING TANK DAY

90

THE SHIT still wriggles in the tank. He is banging his head against the wall of the tank. Now and again he mouths the word "help". The key is no longer in his mouth.

INT. Kitchen DAY

91

JEAN empties her purse onto the kitchen table.

JEAN

This is all I have left in the world.

JIMMY sorts through the loose change and crumpled bills.

Continued

JEAN

They're taking our house,  
everything! I can't reach your  
father. He's ruined.

They all start to shout at once.

JIMMY

Is that it? 85 dollars and 38 cents?

DAPHNE

But we're rich. This can't happen to us.

CHLOE

(to TOM)

Do you understand?

TOM

Yes, I do. Perfectly.

JIMMY

Well, explain then.

TOM

It's like this. A raider bought  
stock in your father's company,  
trying to buy it out. But your  
father outbid him, pushing the stock  
up. When the raider saw he couldn't  
take over, he sold all his stock  
taking a big profit, as did others, myself  
included.

JIMMY

(angry)

So your money used to belong to Dad?

TOM

Then came the story in the Wall  
Street Journal about this house  
holding up development and it  
started a stampede of selling. And  
I guess the bank stepped in and took  
over your father's stock and all his  
assets.

JEAN

(wailing)

Yes, they collected all the  
collateral. Oh, my beautiful house  
in Connecticut.

Continued

INT. STEWART'S Office DAY

92

HARRY, the lawyer, sits head in hands.

Stewart's SECRETARY is weeping softly.

HAMILTON is acutely uncomfortable.

STEWART has a dangerous look in his eyes. He throws a bunch of computer discs across the room like frisbies.

STEWART

It's all yours, Hamilton - twelve floppy discs. A life's work.

His voice is raised and faces stare anxiously through the glass partition which gives on to the big general office.

HAMILTON glances around nervously.

HAMILTON

The bank would appreciate it if you'd go on running the business until we liquidate or sell or whatever we have to do.

STEWART

I'm not cut out to work for a bank.

STEWART pulls on his jacket, takes out his wallet, opens it out with a violent flick, revealing a chain of credit cards, driver's license, etc. He feeds it into the mouth of a shredder. He starts to go.

HAMILTON

Now where the hell do you think you're going?

STEWART,

Out! I'm down and I'm going out. Down and out.

INT. OUTER Office DAY

93

He strides out into the general office. They follow him. The girls freeze at their computers, just like the illuminated photo display that lines one wall, buildings caught in the instant of collapse.

STEWART stops and regards his staff, suddenly calm.

Continued

STEWART

All the chains have fallen away.  
Desk chains, job chains. Free. I  
go naked into the world. I leave  
you my debts, my doubts, my despair.

He kisses his SECRETARY.

STEWART

If I didn't screw you, I meant to.  
(turning to Harry)  
Your loyalty was an accusation.  
Blame someone else.  
(a wave to the masses),  
Look after yourselves, I can't  
anymore.

And he is gone.

INT. KITCHEN DAY

94

JEAN is wailing. JIMMY slams down the phone. He turns to the  
others, panic-stricken.

JIMMY

He's gone. Walked out. Right. OK.  
I'm the head of the family. It's a  
crisis. It's OK. I'll think of  
something...I can't think of anything.

TOM

Panic won't help.

CHLOE

We'll manage and without you, Tom  
Hudson. You betrayed the whole  
family. I hope I never see you  
again.

TOM

(dignified)

Right. You wait. You'll come  
crawling.

He gets up and heads for the door.

CHLOE

I will not.

Continued

DAPHNE

I might, Tom.

JIMMY

What are you saying Chloe? We're broke, we can't afford principles.

TOM cannot keep it up, his proud look collapses into petulance.

TOM

This is so unfair. It was just business. Nothing personal.

He turns on his heel and storms out.

SHERYL

Well, I guess you'll all have to get jobs.

They stare at her open-mouthed. In the deathly silence they hear THE SHIT's anguished cries.

They all speed from the room.

INT. LANDING DAY

95

They run up the stairs to find THE SHIT submerged and chained in the tank. He is crouched in it, weighted down by the chains. He survives only by forcing his body up so that his face breaks the surface long enough to grab a mouthful of air, before sinking back again.

THE SHIT

Help!...Whores!

They lift him out and lie him on the floor.

DAPHNE

Where's the key, Shitty?

THE SHIT

I swallowed it.

JIMMY

Swallowed the key? Well, let's hope it opens your bowels.

Continued

SCENE 96 DELETED

EXT. RIVERSIDE BY BROOKLYN BRIDGE NIGHT

97

STEWART weaves from side to side as he walks. He passes down-and-outs sleeping rough. He takes an occasional swig from a bottle in a brown paper bag. He sings softly to himself: "Blue Moon", perhaps. He stops and stares down at the river as though seeing it for the first time. The tide is out, marooning garbage on the mud.

STEWART

You started out as a little stream of pure water, trickling over rocks. How did you come to this? All mud and filth and turds.

INT. UNDER AN ARCH OF BROOKLYN BRIDGE NIGHT 98

He reaches the line of boxes where DAPHNE and THE Shit first met.

STEWART paces up and down peering into the boxes which are mostly occupied. He shouts drunkenly in at them but he is ignored.

Continued

STEWART

I am an apprentice vagrant. Is there a man among you to give advice?

A BLACK MAN crawls out of his box. A dusty frayed threepiece suit gives him an air of faded dignity. He weighs up STEWART with a shrewd eye.

BLACK MAN

These boxes are highly prized. You can't just walk in here with a skinful of whiskey and demand one. You have to be talking serious money.

STEWART

(with a dismissive wave of his arm,)

Capitalists...I'm finished with them.

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE NIGHT

99

He staggers off to the edge of the river. He leans over and sees a builder's cradle hanging from a pulley system. He climbs over the wall onto it and lies down. The cradle is counter weighted and it lowers him into the muddy water with a bump that tosses him into the slime.

INT. UNDER AN ARCH BROOKLYN BRIDGE NIGHT

100

STEWART crawls, covered in mud and slime, like a creature from the deep, into a vacant box. THE BLACK MAN looks him over and prods him with a stick.

STEWART kicks out a foot and snarls.

BLACK MAN

Behave yourself, boy. You want a box? It'll cost you five.

STEWART

Three.

BLACK MAN

(booming)

I said five.

STEWART

OK, OK, five.

Continued

INT. LIVING ROOM DUTCH HOUSE NIGHT 101

HAMILTON stands ill at ease in the living room. All the members of the household are present.

THE SHIT is slowly being freed of his chains by JIMMY, who is filing away at the links with a metal saw.

HAMILTON

Without Stewart all we can do is fire the men and sell off the assets, which includes this house, I'm afraid.

DAPHNE

We refuse to leave.

HAMILTON

There's an eviction order ready.

THE SHIT is freed and stretches his body.

JEAN

I'm so worried about your father. Walking out like that. It's his pride. Humiliation doesn't bother me, but he's not used to it.

CHLOE

Did he say where he was going?

HAMILTON

Down and out, and free of his chains and that's a quote.

JIMMY

We better find him, take care of him.

THE SHIT

No money. No home. He has joined the family of the lost and the forgotten. They will soon know the whereabouts of a new recruit.

EXT. GARBAGE DUMP DAY

102

Gulls swarm over a mountain of refuse, rising and falling in time to the waltz music, as bulldozers pile up the garbage ever higher. Stooping men, faces masked with pieces of cloth against the foul dust, scavenge amongst the detritus.

STEWART and THE BLACK MAN trudge among them.

STEWART stops, lets out a wailing groan.

THE BLACK MAN consoles him.

BLACK MAN

Hey man, loosen up. You got culture shock, that's all.

STEWART

(shakes his head)

No, just an attack of nostalgia seeing that fine bulldozer.

THE BLACK MAN gives a whoop as he retrieves a tangled coil of copper wire. He hands it to STEWART who takes it absently. Two men fight over a kitchen chair, tumbling into the rubbish and rolling down the slope.

STEWART

My life is over. I see that now. I'm on the scrap-heap. I am on the scrap-heap.

BLACK MAN

You done big things. A lot of great men die young. They do their thing quick, and get out of here.

EXT. UNDER THE ARCH BROOKLYN BRIDGE DAY

103

DAPHNE, CHLOE and JIMMY watch at a polite distance.

THE SHIT has been consulting his former neighbors and comes over with the news.

THE SHIT

He's hooked up with Marvin X. I know his haunts; he scavenges the dumps, he begs at the Roseland, he favors a soup kitchen on the Lower East Side. We'll split up.

Continued

71

JEAN is kneeling down to peer into Stewart's box. She is watched by some of the homeless. She appeals to them, her voice trembling.

JEAN

How can he live in this box, he  
always insists on a king-size bed?

JIMMY reluctantly hands over some money to DAPHNE and CHLOE. THE SHIT has his hand out.

CHLOE

All we're talking about here are  
subway tickets.

JIMMY waves a thin wad of notes.

JIMMY

This is our inheritance. 85 dollars and 38  
cents.

EXT/INT. ROSELAND BALLROOM DAY

104

As JEAN and THE SHIT approach, they see bums begging at the ballroom entrance. As they get closer they are disappointed to see that they are not STEWART and MARVIN X.

Inside the lobby, another bum shuffles pathetically to the music, holding out his cap. JEAN is surprised to see that THE SHIT is welcomed with respect by the MANAGER. She glances up at the "Hall of Fame" photographs, sees one of THE SHIT with a dancing partner, holding up a trophy. She catches THE SHIT's eye and looks back at the photograph.

He gives a Maurice Chevalier shrug. The music drifts up from the ballroom.

THE SHIT

Shall we...quickly?

int. DANCE FLOOR ROSELAND DAY

105

A number of geriatric and arthritic couples perform intricate dance steps.

JEAN

It's been years. I've forgotten  
the steps.

Continued

## THE SHIT

Your head's forgotten. Your heart  
hasn't.

EXT. GARBAGE TIP DAY

106

A swell in the music from the Roseland plays on, as DAPHNE and CHLOE pick their way over the refuse, handkerchiefs held to their faces, searching for their father. The gulls dip and rise. The down-and-outs look up from their scavenging at the two pretty girls. One huge fellow wears a balaclava with just two eye-holes. He is drinking from a bottle, sucking the beer through the knitted wool which is wet with froth. They are fascinated but frightened too.

int. ROSELAND DAY

107

A swell in the music.

THE SHIT takes JEAN into an ambitious spin. They stagger, recover. She smiles radiantly.

EXT. SOUP KITCHEN LOWER EAST SIDE DAY

108

The foxtrot trots on over a long line of down-and-outs waiting for their meals. It is a sorry sight. JIMMY walks down the line searching the sad faces for his father. A sound of wailing and chanting intrudes, and drowns out the foxtrot.

INT. CHAPEL DAY

109

An evangelical prayer meeting.

SHERYL, wearing earphones, sits at a recorder.

MARCUS, the black paranormal, assists her, holding a microphone out to the congregation. He turns the mike to a hugely fat woman who is speaking in tongues, babbling in some unknown language.

## FAT WOMAN

Viden, herban, solden, hipna, hodel.

It sounds like lines from an Ingmar Bergman film.

Continued

THE PREACHER anoints her with chicken blood, USHERS scatter chicken feathers in the air. As the faithful sing out, the feathers ebb and flow on their breath, finally settling and sticking to the sweaty faces.

PREACHER

She's saying: "God needs your dollars and he needs them now!"

Looking over THE PREACHER's shoulder, MARCUS sees STEWART and MARVIN X, hovering at the side of the chapel. MARVIN X is eating furtively while STEWART watches the proceedings with a half-crazed fascination.

A trestle table bearing food runs up one side of the chapel. Most of it is pieces of fried chicken, presumably made from those sacrificed for the ceremony. MARVIN X takes chicken legs and hides them about his person. He gnaws hungrily on one of them.

THE PREACHER stands before STEWART.

PREACHER

Christ wants your soul, Brother.

STEWART stiffens, trying to suppress his rising emotions.

PREACHER

Speak your heart. Give God your tongue.

STEWART is wild-eyed. He starts to rant and rave.

STEWART

Speak my heart? Home is where the heart is. I lost my home, like a lot of other people here, I guess. Lost my family, too. Most likely losing my mind. But I know one thing. Chicken feathers ain't the answer. No, sir. You can't fight chicken shit corporate raiders with chicken feathers, I'm telling you.

THE PREACHER places his palm over Stewart's eyes, and daubs some blood and feathers on his forehead.

PREACHER

Brother, you're half-way to speaking in tongues, 'cause we certainly can't make sense out of what you're saying.

Continued

MARVIN X comes to his friend's aid.

MARVIN X  
Preacher, it's just jive talk from  
another ghetto.

When THE PREACHER takes his hand away, STEWART sees SHERYL, a vision of beauty, her blonde hair glowing with backlight, coming towards him through the crowd. She is smiling at him, a warm beautiful smile.

STEWART  
(softly)  
I have seen the light. An angel of  
the Lord.

SHERYL comes to him, looks into his eyes, compassionate.

SHERYL  
Hey, Mr. McBain!

PREACHER  
He has seen the light!

MARVIN X is faking a trance, much the way MARCUS did earlier. MARCUS taps him on the shoulder roughly. He opens one eye.

MARCUS  
Dad. No-one's looking, you can snap  
out of it now.

MARVIN X  
Marcus. My son.

They fall into each other's arms.

INT. ROSELAND DAY 110

A slow dance. THE SHIT and JEAN are cheek to cheek.

INT. CHAPEL DAY 111

The dance music carries over.

STEWART takes SHERYL into his arms. She humors him.

Continued

SHERYL

There, there, Mr. McBain. It's the Solstice. Full Moon. You must be a Taurus. I'll get you home.

EXT. GARBAGE TIP DAY 112

DAPHNE and CHLOE are fleeing, but their way is blocked by the big man with the balaclava. As they try to pass him to the left, he steps to the left. They go right, he goes right. It is like a dance and it matches the beat of the dance tune on the soundtrack.

INT. ROSELAND DAY 113

The dance ends. THE SHIT bows. JEAN curtseys.

EXT. GARBAGE TIP DAY 114

The girls dart, one each side of the big man, and make their escape.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. LIVING ROOM DUTCH HOUSE DAY 115

STEWART is lying on the sofa under a blanket. JEAN sleeps sitting in an armchair at his side. He awakes, looks round the room. In his weakened state everything appears heightened and warped.

The live paintings on the walls lead his eye into infinite vistas of imaginary worlds. He turns his head and glimpses JIMMY at the glowing green screen of his computer.

JIMMY's tapping on the keyboard sounds, to STEWART, like jungle crickets. STEWART gets to his feet unsteadily and staggers towards the conservatory.

INT. CONSERVATORY DAY 116

STEWART enters the conservatory, pushes aside the foliage, revealing an enchanted forest, stretching away before him. One tree looks almost human. He gasps and stumbles towards it. The tree moves, turns and smiles at STEWART. It is LIONEL, dressed and painted as a tree.

Continued

LIONEL

You feeling yourself again, Mr. McBain?

STEWART is startled, CHLOE leans past him and continues to paint LIONEL's body so that it merges with the forest.

CHLOE

You definitely look better than you did yesterday. Half dead and babbling. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

STEWART

Speaking in tongues, probably.

DAPHNE

(off)

Daddy, look!

He turns and DAPHNE in her magician's outfit, pulls a white dove from nowhere and it flies past STEWART, up into the foliage.

DAPHNE

(reproachfully)

I've decided to forgive you.

She skips away from him, to be instantly replaced by OLIVIA. She swirls around STEWART in diaphanous chiffon seeking LIONEL's approval.

OLIVIA

I don't think they should be cut on the bias, Lionel.

LIONEL

(irritably)

You wear them, I'll design them...

(he squints)

Maybe you're right.

STEWART finds himself surrounded by laughing girls and billowing silk. Suddenly a hand grabs his arm. It is JIMMY's. He sits his father down in front of the computer and hands him a control box. STEWART hesitates, looking puzzled at the screen.

JIMMY

Now, you have to press here and try and stop me from demolishing your building. Come on, it's therapeutic.

Continued

STEWART stares dumbly at the computer screen. A title reads "Demolish the Taj Mahal". A wrecking ball crashes into it, destroying the domed roof.

JIMMY

(off)

You have to try and get your little man out of the crumbling building while I try and destroy your exits.

STEWART

But it's the Taj Mahal. This is criminal.

JIMMY

(gently)

It's only a game, Dad. Got the idea from you.

The game, continues. STEWART desperately tries to escape but JIMMY's ball and chain keep making dead ends. Every time it hits the building, STEWART cries out. Yet another exit crumbles before his eyes. For a moment STEWART himself is projected into the game. He sees himself trapped, rubble crumbling in on him. He cries out, a great bellow of anguish comes up from deep inside him. Jimmy stops the game, alarmed.

JIMMY

I thought you'd be pleased.

JEAN awakens with a start and THE SHIT bursts into the room, alarmed.

STEWART strides out of the conservatory and into the Living Room. Everybody follows, concerned. STEWART slumps back onto the couch, head in hands. JEAN sits down next to him and puts her arm around his shoulders.

JEAN

Try and rest, Stewart. It's nothing serious, just a nervous breakdown.

STEWART

Everything has broken down. Values, the family, America, honest labor. Everything I ever stood for. Gone.

JIMMY

Now you've got all that out of the way, Dad, you can start living.

Continued

STEWART searches their faces as they form an arc around the couch.

JIMMY  
(chastened)  
Only kidding.

STEWART  
(wearily)  
Isn't there a single cause that any  
one of you would stand up and fight for?

They look sheepishly at each other and "um" and "er".

JIMMY  
(shaking his head)  
I suppose deep down I'm shallow.

CHLOE,  
I'm sure there's something. I just can't  
think of it at the moment.

DAPHNE  
Well, there's the bald eagle, but I  
wouldn't fight for it. I'm a  
pacifist.

STEWART is nodding off. They all tip-toe out of the room and into the hallway, leaving JEAN to watch over STEWART. She peers down at her unshaven, wild-looking husband.

JEAN  
I can read you like a book and  
you're still a stranger.

INT. HALLWAY DAY

117

The doorbell rings. DAPHNE opens it. A tall man is smiling warmly.

MAN  
McBain?

EVERYBODY  
Yes.

He steps inside and quickly touches each one of them with a document he holds in his hand and gives it to JIMMY.

Continued

MAN

Writ for eviction duly served. Good morning. Thank you.

He leaves.

JIMMY drops the order as though it were contaminated.

Lionel

We can't leave. I show the collection in a week and then we'll be rich.

DAPHNE

I'm not budging and that's that.

She stamps her foot on the eviction order.

JIMMY

Even if we stick it out, we've still got no money. I better go find Tom.

CHLOE

We don't need charity from that traitor.

THE SHIT/LIONEL/DAPHNE

Oh yes we do.

CHLOE

The insurance company will just have to give me an advance on the calendar.

INT. LOBBY INSURANCE COMPANY

118

CHLOE is suitably intimidated by the soaring atrium and the busy foyer which presumably was the architect's intention. She hovers by the reception desk, listening to the clickclack of expensive shoe leather on the marble floor. LIONEL's father, JOHN, greets her.

JOHN

Chloe! Welcome! Sorry to hear about your father's problems.

He makes a sweeping gesture, to include the lobby area.

Continued

JOHN

Try to imagine it. Huge "blow ups" of your calendar right here in the lobby.

They thread their way through trees to get to the elevator.

CHLOE

They're cutting down all the forests and planting trees indoors instead.

JOHN gives her an odd look.

CHLOE

Anyway, that's what my sister says.

He leads her into the elevator. He frowns and drops his voice.

JOHN

How's my son, Lionel?

CHLOE

Making some lovely dresses.

JOHN

Not wearing them I hope.

The elevator doors close concealing CHLOE's response.

INT. STOCKBROKER'S OFFICE DAY

119

JIMMY makes his way through rows of frenzied dealers. They scream, they shout, they make frantic signals across the floor. JIMMY, quite indifferent to the mayhem, reaches TOM's desk but finds it vacant. He approaches TOM's two NEIGHBORS and tries to catch their attention.

JIMMY

Tom Hudson. Where is he?

They completely ignore him. DEALER ONE is weeping as he sits hunched over his phone. DEALER TWO is on his feet hollering across at another dealer and then yelling numbers into a phone. JIMMY shouts into DEALER TWO's face.

JIMMY

Tom! Where's Tom?

He gets no response. He glances at the DEALER's phone number, sits on TOM's desk and taps it out.

Continued

DEALER TWO grabs the phone on the first ring, holding it to his spare ear.

JIMMY

Where the fuck is Tom?

DEALER TWO gives not a glance at JIMMY who is only three feet away from him.

DEALER TWO

Tom's gone down to the Floor, trying to salvage something from the shipwreck.

Jimmy puts the phone down, turns to DEALER TWO, their faces inches apart.

Jimmy

Sorry to hang up on you.

The DEALER spares him only a puzzled glance.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM insurance COMPANY DAY 120

A high cavern of a room with girders spidering the walls and ceiling.

CHLOE's calendar pictures flash on to a large screen. Some of the insurance company's senior executives watch from a sprawl of couches and armchairs.

LIONEL's father, JOHN, representing the Ad. agency, smiles encouragingly, urging her on.

CHLOE is a tiny figure next to the screen, embarrassed and giving a feeble commentary.

CHLOE

Then comes March. Yes. March.  
Well, it's sort of about a month  
before April.

LIONEL's father, JOHN, jumps in, covering for her.

JOHN

Absolutely brilliant. It's the environment. It's Nature. It's us. And I love the clever suggestion of lurking disaster. - fire, earthquake, flood. Remember, you guys have a first here.

(He points at an imaginary banner above him)

"ACTS OF GOD. Only we insure against them".

CHLOE

(blurting out)

I really need an advance to finish the sequence. I know payment is on delivery, but if you could possibly...

JOHN

I don't see that as an insuperable problem, do you, Henry?

But HENRY, the senior executive, is listening intently to a MAN who has come nervously into the room and is talking urgently into his ear. HENRY lets out a yelp and jumps to his feet. He manages a strangled few words before dashing out of the door behind the screen.

HENRY

The market's taking a dive.

They all rise to follow him, leaving CHLOE stranded. Enraged, CHLOE runs after them. She catches John by the arm. The slides keep on changing, making an ironic commentary on their confrontation.

CHLOE

Oh, no you don't! I've grovelled. I've compromised my art. We're broke. We're being evicted. Your own son is starving.

JOHN

As you can see, we all have our problems. Finish the sequence. You have a contract. They'll have to pay.

He struggles to escape her. She hangs on.

Continued

JOHN

For Chrissake let me go. I'm in the market too. I'm probably getting killed out there.

CHLOE

You might get killed in here.

He breaks loose. Chloe falls back into the screen, crashing into one of her own landscapes.

INT. STOCK MARKET FLOOR DAY

121

It is naked panic and raging hysteria. The dealers on the Floor stand under the big board. They fight and clamor and send back their tic-tac signals to their partners at the desks, who are in telephone contact with clients, banks, insurance companies, stockbrokers.

JIMMY struggles through the mob, searching for TOM. He finally spots him curled up on the floor in a fetal position. His eyes are glazed. JIMMY shakes him.

JIMMY

You been sniffing something? Listen. Come home. All is forgiven. We need your money and you need us.

TOM

The bottom's dropped out of the market. I'm wiped out. I'd slit my wrists if I could afford a razor. And you're looking to borrow money from me?

TOM laughs, a disturbing, hysterical laugh. JIMMY slaps his face.

TOM

What did you do that for?

JIMMY

You did it to my mother.

TOM punches JIMMY's arm. They start to wrestle on the floor, giggling. Suddenly a TV cameraman and lights are focused on them. A woman REPORTER narrates into her mike, shouting over the din.

Continued

REPORTER

...and as the stock market continues  
in turmoil, fights are breaking out  
between dealers...

JIMMY and TOM stop and sit up, blinking at the lights.

INT. BATHROOM DUTCH HOUSE DAY 122

STEWART stands before the bathroom mirror. He has a three day  
growth of beard. He stares long and hard at his reflection.

STEWART

I don't know who you are, but I'm  
going to shave you anyway.

INT. LIVING ROOM DAY 123

THE SHIT, wearing a long robe, an entranced look on his face, has  
one arm outstretched, the other hand resting on DAPHNE's head who  
is sitting upright in a chair.

SHERYL watches them, fascinated.

DAPHNE

(medium-like)

You see, Sheryl, you find it easier  
to talk to paranormals than to  
normals. That's because real people  
aren't real for you. You can't  
relate because you've got no  
relations.

SHERYL

Oh God, you've seen right through  
me.

THE SHIT looks proudly at DAPHNE, then addresses SHERYL.

THE Shit

I showed her how to fake it, but it  
turns out she has a genuine  
gift...And then as a finale, I plan  
to do a little levitation.

He leans back and his legs rise into the air until his whole body  
is horizontal.

Continued

SHERYL  
 Incredible. I knew it. Everything is  
 possible in this house!

THE SHIT lifts his long gown to reveal that he is holding out a pair of artificial legs horizontally, while his own are planted firmly on the floor. He smirks. SHERYL grins and groans at her own gullibility. DAPHNE darts to the window hearing a similar groan from outside.

DAPHNE'S POV THROUGH WINDOW

124

JIMMY leads TOM, who is catatonic, across the stepping stones towards the front door. Just ahead of them is CHLOE returning from her mission at the insurance company. She turns, sees them and makes a gesture of despair. JIMMY points to TOM and shrugs.

EXT. DUTCH HOUSE DAY

125

JIMMY  
 He's out of it. Did they pay up?

CHLOE shakes her head and takes TOM's other arm. He groans. She cuddles him.

INT. HALLWAY DAY

126

As CHLOE and JIMMY help TOM into the house, the two THAI SEAMSTRESSES come down the stairs clutching bags and coats. LIONEL appears on the landing pleading with them.

LIONEL  
 Purna, Mya, please just give me a  
 week, for the sake of Allah  
 or whomever.

They shake their heads firmly.

PURNA  
 No pay. No way.

They pass CHLOE, Jimmy and TOM and disappear through the front door.

JEAN appears from the kitchen as STEWART emerges from the living room, dressed and shaved.

Continued

JEAN

I've never seen you looking so calm,  
Stewart.

STEWART

Serene would be a better word.

JEAN

No guilty feelings? No sense of  
shame?

STEWART

(calm)

You can't provoke me, Jean. All the  
anger's gone too.

JEAN comes face to face with her son and daughter, TOM groaning  
between them.

JIMMY

Stock market crashed again.

CHLOE

He's in shock.

(lip quivering)

So am I.

STEWART twitches at the sight of TOM, but holds himself in  
control. TOM comes to himself and grunts irritably and looks  
spitefully at his companions.

It is all too much for CHLOE, she falls into her mother's  
arms, sobbing.

LIONEL wails.

INT. LIVING ROOM DAY

127

SHERYL is sobbing, while THE SHIT swings a watch chain before her  
eyes.

SHERYL

My parents divorced when I was nine.  
Families confuse me.

DAPHNE.

They confuse me too.

Continued

THE SHIT  
...four and five and six...

SHERYL  
You're so right. I just can't  
handle relationships.

She is overcome by sobbing and crying.

THE SHIT  
(consoling)  
Think of a wheat field swaying in  
the wind...

Shouts and screams from the hallway distract them. SHERYL and THE SHIT start for the door in alarm, but DAPHNE does not stir. She is in a trance, hypnotized. THE SHIT hesitates, throws her a worried look, then dashes out.

INT. HALLWAY DAY

128

STEWART lunges for TOM and grabs him by the lapels, driving him back towards the door.

STEWART  
Out of my house, Judas!

TOM has JIMMY and CHLOE on each arm and together they push STEWART back again. SHERYL and THE SHIT appear and try to pull them apart.

TOM  
Your house? It's more my house than  
it is your house with all the  
useless shares I have in  
American Demolition.

STEWART's rage gives him strength. He drives them back again.

STEWART  
You little swine. You ruined me!

TOM  
I tried to save you and it ruined  
ME!

They stop, panting for breath, eyeball to eyeball.

Continued

STEWART

Save me? How?

TOM

I thought your stock had hit rock bottom. I bought them up to keep the business in the family. Now with the crash, they're nearly worthless.

JEAN

I don't understand, but I'm very touched.

THE SHIT dashes back into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM DAY

129

THE SHIT clicks his fingers in front of DAPHNE's glazed eyes.

THE SHIT

Snap out of it. You know I can't hypnotize to save my life.

She snaps out of it, gets up and walks straight out into the hallway, much to THE SHIT's relief.

INT. HALLWAY DAY

130

JEAN and CHLOE climb the stairs and take the weeping LIONEL into their arms.

STEWART sits down heavily. The others lean against the walls panting, or slide to their knees whimpering with despair.

SHERYL is still sobbing.

DAPHNE

I feel great. Isn't life wonderful?  
Let's do something.

They stare at her in astonishment. JEAN perks up.

JEAN

Lionel, if we all pitched in, couldn't you still get the show ready in time?

SHERYL looks up through her tears.

Continued

SHERYL

I can sew.

JIMMY

So what? So can I.

SHERYL

What?

JIMMY

(laughing)

Sew.

LIONEL gets up, touched.

LIONEL

Would you? You'd do that for me?

DAPHNE

We'll sew our hearts out!

LIONEL

What about Chloe's calendar?

CHLOE

I'll finish that too.

They are suddenly light-hearted.

THE SHIT

(disgusted)

If you all go on being so syrupy I'm gonna throw up.

TOM gets an inspiration.

TOM

The Porsche! Sell it before the creditors snatch it!

He runs out.

DAPHNE

Isn't he incredible? The ultimate sacrifice.

STEWART,

Goddamn it, let's get at it!

They all follow LIONEL up the stairs.

Continued

EXT. PORSCHE DEALER MANHATTAN DAY 131

TOM drives up and sees Porsches parked everywhere and the Sales Office besieged by desperate Yuppies trying to sell their cars.

INT. Lionel's WORKROOM DAY 132

They all work feverishly, sewing, cutting, fitting. LIONEL works on OLIVIA, tucking and pinning. SHERYL and JIMMY sit at the sewing machines.

DAPHNE, JEAN and CHLOE are sewing hems.

THE SHIT is at the ironing board.

STEWART is threading needles, spectacles on his nose.

INTERCUT with these workroom activities is:

INT. CHLOE'S LIVING ROOM DAY 133

STEWART is dressed as King Lear. CHLOE paints the Blighted Heath, paints STEWART's clothes, making them merge into it, then paints the naked bodies of SHERYL, DAPHNE and herself so that they resemble the bark and twisted, branches of windtortured trees. Painting her father's face brings them into an intense intimacy.

CHLOE

...I clung to your neck and you, swam miles out to sea. And I wasn't afraid because you were the strongest Daddy in the world.

STEWART

I thought, I would live forever and, now you've grown and gone, and I'm clinging to the wreckage.

CHLOE

Then this wave hit us and swept me away from you. And even as I was drowning I still trusted you. And when you finally plucked me out of the sea, I saw the fear on your face and then I was afraid.

Continued

STEWART smiles. They finally understand each other.

JIMMY is behind the camera. CHLOE arranges the two girls and then herself so that they perfectly match the backing.

STEWART

Is it fear on my face you want now?

CHLOE

That's right.

JIMMY turns on a fan. The girls' arms are stretched out like menacing branches, their hair blows forward towards STEWART. He looks back at them, perplexed and pained. CHLOE seeing his expression, calls out:

CHLOE

Now, Jimmy, now.

JIMMY clicks away.

JIMMY

That's the last of the film.

CHLOE

Eleven months out of twelve. Just one more to do and all that money waiting for us.

INT. LIONEL'S WORKROOM DAY

134

STEWART, LIONEL, DAPHNE, CHLOE, JEAN, OLIVIA and SHERYL slump around the workroom exhausted.

LIONEL

I guess that's it. We did it.

CHLOE

It's a brilliant collection.

LIONEL

But I can't afford to show it. I need a venue, a runway, models...

STEWART

Hell. If we all got jobs for a couple of weeks we could put the money together.

THE SHIT comes in with a large saucepan. In the bottom of it is an inch or two of soup.

Continued

THE SHIT

The soup kitchen's run out of soup.  
This used to be the land of plenty.

INT. UNEMPLOYMENT BUREAU DAY

135

There are several cubicles and each has a line of people waiting.

STEWART has reached the head of his. CHLOE is behind him with TOM.

STEWART

Bulldozers.

CLERK

(patronizingly)

Not at your age.

STEWART leans forward menacingly.

STEWART

I have a high explosives license and  
a vengeful nature.

In the next line it is JEAN's turn. DAPHNE, SHERYL and JIMMY wait behind her.

JEAN

Experience? Well, I'm a buyer.

CLERK

Which stores have you bought for?

JEAN

Most of them. From them, not for them.

DAPHNE elbows past her mother.

DAPHNE

Daphne McBain. Magician's assistant.  
Fortune telling, E.S.P.

CLERK

You read minds? Then I don't have to tell  
you what vacancies I got, do I?

Continued

DAPHNE

No you don't.

She turns away.

EXT. DUTCH HOUSE DAY

136

CHLOE, DAPHNE, JEAN, STEWART, THE SHIT, LIONEL, JIMMY, SHERYL and TOM return home from the Unemployment Bureau.

THE SHIT and JIMMY start running towards the house. JIMMY skips from stone to stone agilely. THE SHIT runs through the wet mud. TWO MEN are sealing the windows and doors, a pile of belongings stands just outside the house.

JIMMY

(grabbing one man)

What the fuck are you doing?

MAN

Eviction...

THE SHIT runs up and grabs the other man who throws him into the mud.

THE SHIT

(sitting in the mud)

Jesus, a man can't even ask a question.

MAN

You've been evicted, accept it.

The others come rushing up, Tom in the lead. The TWO MEN stride off.

DAPHNE goes over to THE SHIT who makes no attempt to get up.

THE SHIT

I slipped. Compulsory eight count.

DAPHNE helps him up.

DAPHNE

You were very brave.

JEAN

This is more than, I can stand. The third house I've lost in a week.

Continued

LIONEL is sorting through the pile of belongings, checking his material and dresses.

LIONEL

It's alright, calm down. My collection is safe.

JIMMY goes up to the front door. It has been sealed and padlocked. He peers through the boarded-up windows.

STEWART takes a run at the door and charges it with his shoulder. It doesn't budge. He lets out a cry and clutches his shoulder, falling to his knees in pain.

THE SHIT, SHERYL, DAPHNE and CHLOE appear from behind the house, pulling the old trailer they had originally used to move in. They start to load it with their possessions.

JEAN

What'll we do?

CHLOE

Why don't you stay with a friend?

JEAN

And abandon you all in your hour of need? I wouldn't dream of it.

STEWART

(clutching his arm and  
through gritted teeth)

She has no friends. Only relations.

DAPHNE

Couldn't your parents help us,  
Lionel?

LIONEL,

Don't you think I've tried them? Dad  
was wiped out by the crash, too.

STEWART

I'm gonna lean on that son-of-a-bitch,  
Hamilton. He dumped us in the street,  
he'll have to take us in.

Continued

EXT. TOP OF TRAILER EVENING

137

The group are now sitting on the top of their belongings, like the family in "The Grapes of Wrath". The trailer is attached to the Porsche, and is pulled through the Manhattan streets. STEWART's arm is bound up in a flowered silk scarf.

EXT. HAMILTON'S HOUSE MANHATTAN NIGHT

138

The Porsche and the trailer pull up outside HAMILTON's house. As STEWART climbs down from the trailer and strides up to the front door, HAMILTON emerges holding a suitcase. The door slams behind him. He looks up at STEWART with dazed eyes.

HAMILTON

Margot's thrown me out of the house.

STEWART

Why?

HAMILTON

The bank fired me for backing lunatic schemes like yours. The computer identified me as ineffective.

STEWART

Jesus, Hamilton. You better come with us.

STEWART takes HAMILTON's suitcase and tosses it onto the trailer with his good arm. The others watch, perplexed.

SHERYL

I know someone!

INT. APARTMENT HOUSE NIGHT

139

MARCUS opens a door and shows SHERYL the interior. Six of his young brothers and sisters are sleeping in the room. He shrugs. SHERYL is embarrassed.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREETS NIGHT

140

The Porsche and trailer, now with MARCUS added to the group, drive through the streets. MARCUS leans over the front of the trailer and taps on the roof of the Porsche, at the same time pointing to a building ahead. It is a Welfare Shelter. Derelicts, drug addicts and bag ladies hang around outside.

Continued

DAPHNE

They better give us rooms. We pay taxes for those places.

STEWART

You pay taxes? I pay taxes! They owe me!

He jumps off the trailer and strides into the shelter, his jaw set with determination.

THE SHIT

No way do I set foot in there. Why do you think every self-respecting down-and-out sleeps, in the street? Because he doesn't relish the idea of being robbed, knifed and raped in a Welfare Shelter.

STEWART reappears from the Shelter, pale and shaken. He climbs back onto the trailer.

STEWART

Haul ass!

JIMMY

Where to?

STEWART

Anywhere but here.

int. PORSCHE NIGHT

141

TOM

We'll run out of gas if we go on wandering around Manhattan like this.

EXT. POLICE STATION NIGHT

142

The trailer and Porsche are parked on the opposite side of the street from the police station. It is raining and the wind is blowing.

JEAN, THE SHIT, STEWART, DAPHNE, LIONEL, JIMMY, CHLOE, MARCUS, SHERYL, HAMILTON and TOM are faking a fight, shouting and screaming in front of the police station. CHLOE gives DAPHNE a film slap across the face. DAPHNE claps her hands and throws back her head, pretending to be hit. LIONEL does one to JEAN but their timing is all off.

A POLICEMAN pokes his head out of the door.

Continued

POLICEMAN

Get the fuck out of here.

And he slams the door.

The group stop fighting and look at each other despairingly, exhausted.

DAPHNE

We can't even get arrested.

THE SHIT

Is there no justice...

DAPHNE

Just think of those nice warm cells in there.

STEWART

Hey. I got a box under the Brooklyn Bridge. I paid good money for it.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE NIGHT

143

Under the arches a group of tramps, including MARVIN X, armed with sticks and batons, defend their ground against LIONEL, THE SHIT, MARCUS, JIMMY, TOM, STEWART, DAPHNE, CHLOE and JEAN.

MARVIN X

(menacingly)

OK, Stewart has a box, but not the rest of you. We are a well established down-and-out community. We cannot be overrun by penniless fly-by-nights.

MARCUS

Hey Dad, what about me?

MARVIN X

No nepotism, neither.

The penniless fly-by-nights back away, then turn to the Porsche. They have nowhere to go. They huddle together. The rain lashes against their faces.

THE SHIT

This is as low as you can get. This is whale shit. The bottom of the ocean.

(to DAPHNE)

I was better off in my box!

Continued

JEAN

(brightly)

Well, at least now there is nowhere  
to go but up.

They glower at her.

SHERYL

I guess I'll get a plane back home  
to L.A.

JIMMY

L.A.? We've sunk that low?

TOM

Home to step-mother. Humiliation before  
hunger.

They embrace sadly, shake hands, the tight bonds that bound them,  
falling away. Thunder and lightening rack the sky. STEWART  
shakes his fists at the heavens.

STEWART

Rain's not enough, huh? A tempest now!

JIMMY

(lighting up)

Dad, there might be a way. The  
Dutch house. It's structurally  
unstable, right?

STEWART

Sure is. So what?

JIMMY

Do you think a storm like this  
could...?

TOM

Knock it down? Got it.

JIMMY

With a little help. Dad, do you  
still have the keys to the  
explosives store?

Continued

EXT. DUTCH HOUSE NIGHT

144

The house, its windows boarded up, is whipped by rain and wind. A hundred yards away, the Porsche and trailer are parked. A piece of transparent plastic sheeting covers the trailer. Under it, the forms of JEAN, DAPHNE, CHLOE, SHERYL, THE SHIT, MARCUS and LIONEL can be seen. They peer out through the rip in the plastic.

INT. PORSCHE NIGHT

145

STEWART and TOM sit in the front seat. JIMMY and HAMILTON are crushed into the back, their heads thrust forward between the other two.

STEWART holds a remote control detonator. All heads are turned towards the Dutch House.

HAMILTON

You really think we'll get away with this?

JIMMY

No-one will even notice the explosions with this thunder about.

STEWART

Now it comes down to it, I haven't got the stomach for it any more. What the hell do I get out of it anyway?

HAMILTON

The site can be sold. The bank paid off. I'll be exonerated. Jean will get her Connecticut house back. Tom's stock, your stock, will be worth something.

STEWART

Anything due to me, I want split between Harry and the workers.

TOM

Mine will go to the family.

STEWART

Your family?

TOM

Your family.

Continued

STEWART is touched. His mind is made up. He taps the detonator, pauses, taps it again.

A rumbling sequence of explosions.

EXT. DUTCH HOUSE NIGHT (miniature) 146

The roof of the house lifts up and flies off.

INT. PORSCHE NIGHT 147

STEWART taps out another sequence on the detonator.

EXT. DUTCH HOUSE NIGHT (miniature) 148

The front of the house cracks, crumbles, seems to be blown away by the storm. Passers-by watch in amazement. A cop reaches for his walkie-talkie. Another wall appears to crash before the storm. The plastic sheet on the trailer bulges and billows as the occupants hug and cheer.

INT. PORSCHE NIGHT 149

They watch in wonder.

JIMMY

That was your masterpiece, Dad.

STEWART

And my swan song.

EXT. DUTCH HOUSE Night 150

A jagged wall is left standing. On it is one of CHLOE's paintings. A view of an idyllic landscape. Rain beats down on it.

Continued

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE DAY

151

A landscape not unlike the one painted on the wall of the Dutch House.

CHLOE is reconstructing Manet's painting "Dejeuner Sur L Herbe". STEWART and JIMMY are the two men, dressed in period costume. SHERYL is discreetly naked and looks directly at camera. Beyond is DAPHNE, the second girl, paddling in the lake behind the picnickers. In the foreground are the discarded clothes and picnic remains. They all keep perfectly still and for a moment it appears to be a painting.

CHLOE, comparing it with her reproduction that stands on an easel beside her, lines up the shot through her camera.

CHLOE

Perfect. Just perfect. One of those rare perfect moments.

STEWART

(studying the painting)

I guess it was. He sure captured it.

(looks at the others,  
smiling)

I guess this is too, eh, Jimmy?

JIMMY

It was. As soon as you say it, it isn't.

STEWART

(getting up)

Can I take these clothes off now?

SHERYL

Can I put mine on?

CHLOE

That concludes the calendar, folks.

JIMMY pulls a towel out from behind him and drapes it over SHERYL's nakedness.

JIMMY

(whispers in her ear)

You've got a perfect pair of...

SHERYL looks at him threateningly.

Continued

JIMMY,  
...I mean they're a perfect match.

JIMMY jumps up, pulling off the clothes he wore for the painting.

JIMMY  
Take me, I'm yours.

She hits him. He squeals and, naked but for his underpants, runs towards the lake.

JIMMY  
Help! Rape!

DAPHNE still holds her pose, standing in the lake.

DAPHNE  
Is it over? Nobody ever tells me anything.

STEWART is changing back into his own clothes behind a tree.

CHLOE dismantles her camera from the tripod. Behind her stands a large country house with a grand flight of steps stretching down from a terrace.

TOM is walking backwards, looking up at the house. He approaches CHLOE.

TOM  
Everything paid and cash to spare.

CHLOE  
And I thought The Shit was the greatest con-artist the world has ever known.

TOM  
It's the art of business. I'm an artist too. I've worked it all out with your mother. You get that wing, it's got wonderful north light. I've got lovely workrooms for Lionel, and Jimmy can set up his video game research over there. And I can handle our investments with a fax and a phone in any old spare room.

Continued

CHLOE

One thing we've learned, we need a  
lot less than we used to.

JIMMY runs up to TOM with a big handful of wet mud. He threatens TOM with it.

TOM

(menacingly)

Don't Jimmy. I'm talking very  
seriously about your future here.

JIMMY

Oh right, sorry Squire.

As he turns, he catches sight of his father as he struggles into his boxer shorts. JIMMY, gathering up his courage, tip-toes towards him and slaps the mud pat onto his father's rear and runs away, laughing.

STEWART lets out a roar, and shoots off after his son.

JIMMY plunges into the lake.

STEWART picks up a handful of mud and, throwing it, hits JIMMY smack in the face.

JIMMY tackles him and STEWART falls heavily into the water.

The MODELS and DAPHNE giggle with delight.

LIONEL emerges from the house, skips across the terrace, hips swaying like a fashion model. He glides down the steps, obviously rehearsing what the models will be doing. He stops and claps his hands in a brisk manner.

LIONEL

Come on, girls. Picnic's over.

The girls sigh and get up.

STEWART and JIMMY are playing the hand-slapping game. They hit each other's hands with tremendous force and both topple back into the mud, laughing.

Continued

LATER.

In a shady place under the trees, STEWART is stretched out on the grass asleep. There is the sound of music. He opens his eyes. Through a gap in the foliage he has a glimpse of ethereal creatures moving back and forth in the strange light. One of them starts towards him. As it nears he sees it is DAPHNE in her conjuror's assistant's outfit. She blocks out his view for a moment but reveals it again. This time STEWART realizes what he has been watching is LIONEL rehearsing his fashion show with THE SHIT acting as an MC.

STEWART

Daphne, I just saw the light.

DAPHNE

You mean the answer, the truth?

STEWART

No. Just the light falling in a certain way.

DAPHNE

(sitting down on the grass beside him)

But what does it all mean. Why are we here? What's the point of life?

STEWART

The point is...moments like this.

DAPHNE

You mean this is it? We're not getting ready for something? We're just getting ready...for nothing?

STEWART

(looking at LIONEL and the models)

I think it's a rehearsal.

DAPHNE

(brightening)

For another life?

STEWART looks at her fondly and laughs.

STEWART

(stroking her hair)

For the fashion show.

Continued

DAPHNE  
(amused and exasperated)

Oh Dad.

EXT. HOUSE TERRACE AND STEPS NIGHT 152

LIONEL's fashion show is reaching its climax. Amongst the AUDIENCE is a group of fashion buyers who watch intently. LIONEL searches their faces, desperate for a clue to their reaction. They are stony. The family, LIONEL's father, JOHN, HAMILTON and MARCUS are also there.

The models, SHERYL, CHLOE and OLIVIA among them, are dressed in LIONEL's wild and eccentric clothes for the finale. They are all pressing forward in a worked-out formation. The SHIT is resplendent in top hat and tails. He is confident and commanding. Assisted by DAPHNE he engineers puffs of colored smoke from which each girl and each new costume appear.

A shower of silver sparks and a large puff of smoke reveal LIONEL.

The BUYERS applaud him enthusiastically.

LATER.

Everyone is partying and dancing under the Chinese lanterns that hang from the trees. LIONEL is surrounded by the admiring BUYERS.

JIMMY is dancing with SHERYL. He tries to hold her tightly in his arms, but she manages to keep him at a slight distance. STEWART and DAPHNE lean against a tree, watching.

STEWART  
Life's just a big game to that kid.

DAPHNE  
But he takes his games very seriously.

STEWART  
(teasing)  
Perhaps that's the answer, Daphne.

JIMMY moves his hand up and down SHERYL's back.

Continued

JIMMY

i'm crazy about you, Sheryl. All I think about is you. I can't even look at another girl.

Over SHERYL's shoulder he catches the model OLIVIA's eye. She smiles at him.

SHERYL

Jimmy, I'm very fond of you. You're funny, you're cute, but you're just so immature. I mean if you could just grow up, maybe I could learn to...

JIMMY has wandered off into the inviting arms of OLIVIA leaving SHERYL to finish her sentence alone.

JIMMY

I'm crazy about you, Olivia. All I think about is you. I can't even look at another girl.

OLIVIA

I love you too, Jimmy.

JIMMY

(astonished)

You do?

CHLOE and TOM dance past STEWART and DAPHNE.

STEWART

That boy's a bit of an asshole. He reminds me of myself at his age.

DAPHNE

On no, I don't think he'll be like you, when he's your age. I think he'll be really nice.

She clamps her hand to her mouth realizing her gaffe.

STEWART

(winces)

I'm making efforts in that direction.

TOM looks down into CHLOE's eyes.

Continued

TOM

Why do you think I'm doing all this? For my own ego?

CHLOE

I know, I know, you're doing it for me. And don't think I don't appreciate it...

TOM

Chloe, stop. I'm doing all this...everything...for Daphne.

TOM walks off. CHLOE stares after him.

CHLOE

(perplexed)

Daphne?

LIONEL breaking away from the congratulations of the buyers, comes over to CHLOE. They start to dance.

LIONEL

(melancholic)

Is that all there is? All that work and this is it?

CHLOE

Well, it's always more fun to get ready than to arrive.

LIONEL's father, JOHN, regards his son proudly.

They dance out of shot. STEWART and DAPHNE watch them go past.

DAPHNE

Pity Lionel's gay.

CHLOE and LIONEL dance back into shot.

LIONEL

Chloe, I'm not gay.

CHLOE

I know, you're miserable.

LIONEL

No, I mean I'm not a fag.

Continued

CHLOE

What are you then?

LIONEL

I'm a closet heterosexual. I was afraid no-one would take me seriously in the fashion world if I was straight. The fact is, I'm crazy about you.

They sweep past JOHN who hears this and punches the air joyously.

CHLOE

(surprised)

Oh God, Lionel? I'll have to adjust to that...I think I'm going to like it.

THE SHIT and JEAN whirl past STEWART.

JEAN

Will you have me?

THE SHIT

Of course I will.

JEAN

Are you sure?

THE SHIT

Sure I'm sure.

JEAN

I'm so happy.

STEWART bristles, strains to hear more, but they move out of earshot.

THE SHIT

We'll have to work at it. Four or five hours a day, doing the moves, and when we're not dancing you'll be sewing sequins.

JEAN

Oh Shitty, we'll win every over-forty-fives in the land.

They swirl out of shot.

STEWART is fuming. SHERYL comes up to DAPHNE, she smiles at STEWART.

Continued

SHERYL

A pity your brother's too young and your father's too old. Wait. Why do I have to choose? I like being with all of you, being part of a family.

DAPHNE

You can have the family. All I want is a boy of my own.

TOM comes up and grabs DAPHNE into his arms, swirling her off into the trees.

TOM

I love you.

DAPHNE,

Are you sure you're not making a mistake?

TOM

I've made a lot of those but this is not one of them.

They kiss.

STEWART still fumes and mutters. He lurches towards SHERYL. She shrinks back.

STEWART

I better grab a chair before the music stops.

SHERYL

You should get medical help, Mr. McBain. I know a very good...

But STEWART is not looking at her but past her at JEAN and THE SHIT. SHERYL is left talking to the air again.

As Stewart lurches across the dance floor, MARCUS passes him, approaching SHERYL.

MARCUS

How could I win your heart?

SHERYL

Easy, just promise not to walk off when I'm in the middle of a sentence.

Continued

STEWART steps up behind THE SHIT and taps him briskly on the shoulder.

STEWART  
(through his teeth)  
Do you mind?

THE SHIT  
Just keeping her warm for you, Sir.

THE SHIT graciously gives way to STEWART with a bow. STEWART takes his wife in his arms and dances with her stiffly, counting softly under his breath to keep in step.

STEWART  
One, two, three and one, two, three.

JEAN  
Darling, don't do it by numbers, do it from the heart.

STEWART  
I'm doing the best I can, Jean

JEAN  
(contentedly)  
Well, nobody can do better than that.

They dance better and better, and soon STEWART stops counting.

END TITLES come up over a succession of CHLOE's calendar paintings. Ending on "Dejeuner Sur L Herbe".