



A Dramatic Treatise
On the Craft of
Enticement and Charm
In Times of Rage
and Hysteria
in Three Acts

*"All classes are criminal today.
We live in an age of equality."*

Joe Orton,
from "*Funeral Games*"

*"Others by some more tender art
May think to reign upon your heart.
As for myself, I trust to fear."*

Charles Baudelaire,
from "*The Revenant*"

*Them that's got, shall get
Them that's not, shall lose
So the Bible says
And it still is news*

*Mama may have
And Papa may have
But God bless the child
That's got his own
That's got his own*

*And the strong seem to get more
While the weak ones fade
Empty pockets don't
Ever make the grade*

*Mama may have
And Papa may have
But God bless the child
That's got his own
That's got his own*

*Money, you've got lots of friends
Crowdin' round your door
When it's gone and all your spendin' ends
They won't come round no more*

*And the rich relations may give you
A crust of bread and such
You can help yourself
But don't take too much*

*Mama may have
And Papa may have
But God bless the child
That's got his own,
That's got his own.*

- God Bless the Child, by Billie Holiday

CHARACTERS

EDDIE D'RIP

a charmer of a revenant sans scruples –
could have been a wholesome angel of 19

GRETA LOVELA DE LA PASION

a society matron with outside interests –
well-preserved for “44”

HON. FAUSTO DE LA PASION (RET)

her celebrated yet haunted husband,
looks older than 70

With

THE VOICE OVER THE AIRWAVES

all-knowing, ever-present

Plus

A BOY

a sprightly and robust stand-in for all male
supports.

A GIRL

a sweet and saucy stand-in for all female supports.

SETTING

Manila in the Present
just before the Cataclysm

PROLOGUE

A stage, in darkness.

We hear a radio being tuned, in a frenzy, from station to station - until it builds up to an unrelenting barrage of voices, music and static hiss.

After a while it settles on a newscast.

A VOICE (*continuing*): “to expect a sustained period of peace, prosperity and progress,” the President was quoted to say in his State of the Nation address late this morning...(*grating radio static*)...a four-day siege, which is now becoming one of the longest and bloodiest demonstration of public violence in our history. The total casualty toll to this hour has passed the five-hundred mark...(*radio static*)...check-points throughout the city...(*radio static*)...despite the assurance of the Ministry of Energy and Light that there will be no further increase in fuel prices, long queues of angry motorists and vehicles have caused traffic build-ups around the city’s gas service station areas...(*radio static*)...the missile, according to its inventor, Nobel awardee Dr. Eberhart Hoss, is ecologically designed to exclude animal, plant and aquatic life from its devastating radioactive influ...(*radio static*)...following his abdication, the Pope was reported to say that his intention of marrying the woman he loves in no way reflects the state of the Roman Catholic Church and...(*static*)...blowing up the terrorists as well as the seven hostages...(*static*)...at the fifth National Food Center to be looted by...(*static*)...the devastating earthquake has now claimed a total...(*static*)...cocaine and heroin...(*static*)...winner of last year’s Best Actress Award apparently left no suicide note, though close...(*along with the static we hear the rising sound of explosion, gun-fire, thunder, hysterical cries, etc.*)...nuclear tests in the Pacific area...(*noise*)...the assassination attempt on the visiting Prime Minister...(*noise*)...has declared war on...(*static noise*)...there seems to be

no let-up on the weather, the rain continues to pour... (*noise*)
...the latest clash between the insurgents... (*noise*)...by selling
nine-year olds to tourists... (*noise*)...on the lighter side, seventy-
five year old, former Minister of the Exterior, Fausto Q. De La
Pasion was awarded the prestigious Presidential Medal of Honor
in a well-attended ceremony at the Liberty Hall of the...

The lights come up to an appreciable dim.

*In the half-light, we see the silhouette of a nude, young GIRL taking a
shower. Behind her, upstage, is a translucent shower curtain.*

*We hear her humming a tune—Billie Holiday’s “God Bless the Child” —
under the newscast. Station switch, noise*

Sweet Lord Jesus have mercy on us sinners... (*station switch*)
...tension builds up at the borders of the North... (*station
switch*)...the Hon. De La Pasion was cited by his colleagues
from the corps, for his exemplary work in the diplomatic,
political and military arenas... (*station switch*)

The lights begin to dim some more.

...believe in Him NOW, call out HIS NAME. Just clasp
your hands together and proclaim, “LORD JESUS, I
BELIEVE IN...” (*station switch*)...slapped a fifteen million
graft charge against the former Senator... (*station switch*)
...the President also hailed him as a true “global being,” the
harbinger of unity among... (*station switch*)

*Unnoticed by the GIRL, a dark figure appears from behind the shower
curtain.*

...CAST OUT YOUR SINS, LAY THEM AT HIS FEET!
(*station switch*)...scientists have yet to find a cure for this
new epidemic... (*switch*)...308 passengers, not a single
survivor in the crash... (*switch*)...De La Pasion accompanied
by his glamorous wife, former film star-cum-social worker,
Greta Lovela... (*station switch*)

The figure stands just beside the shower curtain. The GIRL continues to hum.

...OR YOU WILL FEEL HIS WRATH UPON YOU!
REPENT! (*station switch*)...a hundred percent rise in youth criminality, as punk armies batter their way...(*station switch*)...

A sharp knife slowly and quietly rips through the shower curtain.

...a fitting tribute to a man of honor, the Hon. Fausto Q. De La Pasion...(*station switch*)

The noise level reaches a peak.

Blackout.

We hear a loud, piercing scream.

Silence, except for the radio hiss.

ACT ONE: SHALL WE DANCE?

Scene 1

Once Upon A Time

Radio hiss fades into the lilting sound of a refreshing chamber piece. Lights come up on an alfresco café, one afternoon.

We find EDDIE D'RIP seated beside a small, round table—a glass of beer and a plate of sausages before him.

He is a highly attractive, young man of 19 who looks older because of his disheveled state. EDDIE wears a heavily torn white T-shirt held up by safety pins. He also has on a rugged pair of black leather pants and muddy rubber sneakers. His slicked-back hair is in three different colors.

Despite his dissipated appearance, he carries himself with an air of grace and agility —like a dangerous panther.

He is currently reading his morning tabloid—on the cover screams the headline “SEX SLAY VICTIM’S HEAD FOUND IN CABBAGE PATCH”, beside in smaller types “DE LA PASION AWARDED COUNTRY’S TOP HONOR” accompanied by a picture of an old, bespectacled man.

A WAITER with a blank look hovers over him.

EDDIE (*reading*): “...what seemed like a crushed and discolored old basketball among the rotten cabbages in the elementary school’s vegetable patch. Nine-year old Ma. Victoria Cruz, who found the gruesome object and unwittingly included it in her Home Economics class display, is still in a state of shock...” (*looks up from the paper, at the WAITER who has been reading over his shoulder*) What is this world coming to, eh Karl? (*the WAITER shrugs his head, continues cleaning tables*) According to Ms. Evita T. Santos, the girl’s homeroom teacher, the Grade 2 students were assigned to clean-up the patch in preparation for the coming school year’s “Self-Reliance Vegetable Planting Program”... (*pauses, shakes head*) It’s the damned educational system, Karl. Obvious, ain’t it? Millions of our Filipino school kids are slowly going the way of muck, I tell you... vegetables and mutilated heads. That’s the symbol of our times...the paradox of progress. Know what ‘paradox’ means, Karl? (*looks up, finds he’s talking to himself, continues to read*) “Grimey Gerry and the Gangrenes’ swan song at the Sunnyvale East football auditorium...hmm...a bloody holocaust...explosion caused by short-circuit sparked when Grimey Gerry played his electric guitar using his pe-...” (*laughs*) Look at what the punks are doing to music! (*WAITER comes in, waters plants*) You’re a real hard worker, Karl. Despite your being a part of the exploited, unenlightened majority of dummies in the whole world. (*WAITER nonchalantly picks up a old soft-drink crate,*

places it stagecenter) We're headed for a sorry end, right Karl? (*EDDIE gets up, goes to box and stands on it*) With all the violence and sex, sex and violence going around... (*bombastic*) No thanks to mindless folks like you, Karl. Ain't I right? Just as long as you get paid every fifteen days, even if it ain't worth a fart anymore... You're willing to spread your legs and get it in the ass from the sharks in the system... Right, Karl? You see the stuff in the papers... (*points to tabloid*) It's not enough you do your decent work nowadays... There'll always be somebody stepping on you to get to the top! It's not enough you get out of the next bugger's way, there'll always be someone who'll railroad you sooner or later... (*heating up*) You can barely keep your nose above the floodwaters of Life's septic tank... Karl, we're all drowning! (*screams suddenly*) THE WORLD'S A WAR!!! It's every man against the other... We are all criminals and victims... victims and vampires... suckers and suckees! (*catches himself*) Pardon me Karl... (*gets off box, goes back to his seat*)... It's just that it gets me all the time... (*settling down*) The world's getting smaller... everyone else's caught in the other's trap. (*takes a drink*) I'm tired of this trap. I'm tired of playing victim... (*buries himself in his tabloid again*)

Enter GRETA LOVELA DE LA PASION, a matron past her prime but yet manages to look younger than she is. She is in disguise—in a ridiculously black wig, thick make-up, dark glasses, large trench coat.

She vacillates between being a bundle of nerves and ice-cold steeliness.

She pretends to be looking around, keeping her distance from EDDIE's table. WAITER comes up to her, shows her a table. She waves him off.

(seeing her) Yes... uh, Madame... (*stops himself*) Over here, please.

GRETA eyes him suspiciously.

EDDIE gets up and pulls chair for her. She slowly walks up to his table and sits down. Silence, then...

GRETA: I did not expect...

EDDIE:...someone quite young. That's what they all say.

GRETA *eyes the WAITER*, EDDIE *notices*

What would you like to order, lady?

GRETA: Nothing.

EDDIE (*not paying any attention to her*): She'll have coffee with cream and sugar.

GRETA: Black.

WAITER *exits*.

(*after a pause*) Are you sure this place is discreet?

EDDIE: As you can see, we're the only ones around. (*reminisces*) Nobody comes here any more. Used to be a hit of a punk place in the early 80s. But it changed management. It was owned previously by a mad poetess who found salvation in Gurdjieff. Now it's run by the *Gentle Sisters of St. Catherine of Egypt*. That's what my friend, Karl, the waiter tells me. This spot we're in is called *Sta. Ludovico's Aviary*, and...

GRETA (*sarcasm*): A religious place. How *apropos*.

EDDIE (*getting up, James Dean*): Even before it became *Café Devotee*, I came here often. This is my sanctuary... (*emotional*) My sanctuary against the world! I come here to think! To meditate...

GRETA: I did not know crooks... (*stops herself*) I mean, your type of people, meditated.

EDDIE: We're all helpless victims of Fate, lady.

GRETA: How very deep. You're a thoughtful one, eh. Philosophers make the worst criminals. Their glibness lends purpose to perversion. (*a beat*) Well, shall we get down to business?

A rumble of distant thunder.

EDDIE (*changes mood*): Hmm...(*looks up*) It looks like rain, doesn't it?

GRETA (*businesslike*): I think we shouldn't beat around the...

EDDIE (*as if he hasn't heard, looking up*): Nimbus...dark and pendulous, delivering tension-releasing rain...a boon to farmers and their wicked landowners but a bane for the rest of us. Particularly secretaries in stilettos.

GRETA: I did not come here to chat, young man.

EDDIE: My! We are in a friendly mood.

GRETA: Nor fight with any two-bit rogue who thinks he can get anything from me because of his bizarre fantasies.

EDDIE (*annoyed*): Hey...

GRETA (*going on*): I came to personally warn you to desist from making any further aspersions on my honor, young man. (*a beat*) I presume you know who I am.

EDDIE: Yeah, you're the dame who's been letting her tushie be toyed by a bastard who's young enough to be her grandson, all under her hubby's nose.

GRETA (*appalled*): How...dare you. (*regains composure*) I could have your head for what you just said. My husband is a very powerful man and...

EDDIE (*puts up tabloid*): Yeah, he's the guy on the news beside the head and cabbages...

GRETA: He could have you...(*thinks*) mangled for what you accuse me.

EDDIE: Lady, I ain't accusing you of nothing. I'm no justice of the Supreme Court or something. I'm just stating a fact, that you've been on one hell of a sideshow...

GRETA: How can you say all these things?

EDDIE: Simple, I've seen you...

GRETA: Liar! You're making this all up. You've nothing on me.

EDDIE: Scout's honor.

GRETA (*controls herself*): Alright. I'll be civilized about this. Tell me your story...and give me all the sordid details. Spare me nothing. I can handle it.

EDDIE: It was in the elevator...

GRETA (*puzzled*): The elevator?

EDDIE: The elevator of the *Hotel Cote D'Azur*. You know, at the corner of Mabini and...

GRETA (*impatient*): I know where it is...go on.

EDDIE: 'Twas a month and a half ago...(*thinks*) No, it was forty-nine days, 17 hours and 8 minutes to be exact. A Thursday, like it is today. Ten-nish in the evening...(*thinks*) a little after 9:45 to be precise...(*rambles*) Later I was at the *Firehouse Bar* at ten P.M. sharp if I remember right...I only walked, you see, and...

GRETA *glares at him. He throws her a sweet smile and continues*

It was on the seventh floor...I pressed the elevator button... After a long wait—I remember getting pissed, but it finally opened. 'Twas empty and there was a Smiley on the rug which said "Have a Nice Day!"...Anyway, I pressed for the ground floor. I began to whistle...(*thinks*) I think it was a tune by the Police...

GRETA: Go on!

EDDIE: (*worked up*): Hey, I thought you wanted details!

GRETA: (*calming down*): Please...

EDDIE: Okay... "*Canary In a Coalmine*" the tune was. All of a sudden the elevator door opens. 5th floor. Two people get in. One, a woman wearing dark glasses, a printed yellow scarf on her head and a rich-looking black dress and...(*stops when he sees GRETA's pained expression*) The other was a young man, a lot younger than the woman. Around my age. A foreigner. Blônd, slim, round blue eyes...He pressed the ground floor button. She, the basement. Thought she looked a bit familiar...(*looks straight at her*) But I couldn't pin her looks down.(*pause*) On the ground floor, the young man...

GRETA: (*interrupting*): Did the two people talk while they were in the elevator?

EDDIE: No.

GRETA: Not a single word?

EDDIE: Not that I remember.

GRETA: Did they glance at one another? (*she doesn't wait for an answer*) Did they enter the elevator at the same time? Or was the woman ahead? Did they stand close to each other...well?

EDDIE: No, they didn't.

GRETA: Then maybe the two weren't together at all.

EDDIE: Perhaps.

GRETA: Then how could you surmise that I...that the woman had anything to do with that young man. Getting into an elevator with a stranger, as far as I know, is not adultery. People always see malice in pure coincidence.

EDDIE: That could be true.

GRETA: Then everything was just a figment of your sordid imagination.

EDDIE: Yes.

GRETA (*getting up*): Then we have nothing more to discuss. This has all been a stupid mistake. And an utter waste of my time. Please desist from making any sort of contact with me from now on. I shall be lenient for the meantime. But should you cross my path again, I shall be forced to take extreme measures... (*starts to leave*)

EDDIE (*nonchalantly*): To be honest with you, lady, I didn't even think you were that dame in the elevator.

GRETA (*turns to him*): Everybody makes mistakes.

EDDIE: But I was certain it was you after I met him again the following week...

GRETA (*piqued*): If you're trying to intrigue me, boy...

EDDIE (*almost to himself*): It was at the *Penguin Café*. One hell of a Saturday night. I was smashed shitless because of the booze, the downs, the ups, the cough syrup and the dope...My brain was a regular, combination pizza...Still, I continued guzzling Red Horse like it were water. (*a beat*) I think I was celebrating on account of I lost my fifth job in four weeks. It was pig work. You know, hauling bloody slabs of pink, piggy flesh and hanging 'em up hooks at Mick's slaughterhouse...

GRETA (*icily*): That's very colorful but...

EDDIE: Look lady, do I go on or not? (*GRETA keeps still*) I started getting really sick... (*carried away*) Boy, was that one hell of a ride! The world was starting to come apart...The wet pavement outside, the watch-your-car boys, the jeepneys blasting metal music, the kids selling sampaguitas, the one-eyed cigarette lady at the corner...They were all flying by me at such incredible speed! I rushed to the john. Inside, just before I puked my insides out, I saw him splattered on the

floor. A young punk was on top of him with a stinger. Another was going for his wallet. The two made a dash for the door, knocking me down...I made my mess right there, in the corridor...

GRETA: Please spare me...

EDDIE (*continues*): The blond kid didn't know what hit him. Said his name was Vittorio Vronsky and thanked me for saving his life.

GRETA: And...

EDDIE: I let him treat me to a beer...for which he had to hustle money from the doorman, Pedro. We got to talking. Said he was half-Sicilian, half-Russian. Later, I found out he grew up in Baliwag, Bulacan. But that was weeks after. Needless to say, we got roaring drunk again. But he was more bombed than me...Asked me to bring him home, and...I even stayed over...

GRETA: How sweet.

EDDIE: Anyway, next day we both woke up in the afternoon. We had a good laugh over the whole thing! Over some dope and coffee, that's when he spilled the beans...

GRETA: A heart to heart...

EDDIE: Told him about the elevator scene at the *Cote D'Azur*. Said the lady's name was Carlotta and that she liked being whipped.

GRETA: Lies!

EDDIE:...and that she's into some very big dough, which she supplies him as if she shit the stuff.

GRETA:...vicious lies!

EDDIE:...and that he met her at one of them charity show happenings. Vittorio, I found out after, was under the "sponsorship" of a certain *Señor* Paolo Arcangelo...He was a old fairy with big connections and a bigger wallet. The white-haired *señor* introduced him to this Carlotta as a tango instructor. She seemed interested to learn a few steps herself. They exchanged numbers. And in a few days they were making it like Fred Astaire and Ginger...

GRETA begins to get up.

GRETA: I'm not going to stay for any of this!

EDDIE: Sit down, lady. I ain't finished yet.

She does so hesitantly.

Anyway...I started hanging around Vito and learned a few tricks myself. I saw you pick him up at a dark alley off Adriatico once. You were at the wheel of this huge black car. Alone. When you let him in that was the first time I got a good view of you. And what did I see? Not just an old granny who's about to get her lollipop...(suddenly, she take a swing at him. He grabs her arm, ala Stanley and Blanche)...but a gold mine!

GRETA: Let go of me, you despicable baboon!

EDDIE (*hangs on to her arm*): Yes...the stupid fool Vittorio didn't know he had struck oil! He was dumb, all cock but nothing here (*taps head*)...A lesser worm would have recognized that face...(cups GRETA's chin forcedly) Doña Greta Lovela De La Pasion...Or should I say, the Honorable Mrs. Greta De La Pasion, retired-former-movie-star-turned-social-worker. Wife of a living national hero and business magnate.

GRETA: I did not come here to be reviled!

EDDIE: Fifty? Sixty-five? (*hangs on to her chin, comes closer*) Can't be less than three scores, that's a certainty...

She suddenly spits on his face. He lets go of her.

GRETA (*murderously*): How dare you touch me...

EDDIE laughs out, wipes the spit off his face. He comes up to her and grabs one of her arms.

You...son of a...

Enter WAITER, with their orders. He sets them on the table. EDDIE and GRETA relax and act casually.

EDDIE (*genteel*): Really, madam! Won't you at least have a bit of cake?

GRETA (*sitting down, dryly*): No, thank you.

WAITER *exits*.

(*after a pause*) You're a vile and vulgar piece of scum!

EDDIE: You should take something. After all, you're paying for it...

GRETA: Swine!

EDDIE (*eats*): Yes, you're right again there.

GRETA: Vermin!

EDDIE (*continues eating*): Hmmm, a bit on the dry side...

GRETA: Insect!

EDDIE: Yes, agreed on all counts. I'm all you say I am.

GRETA: Let's get straight to the point. I don't have all day.

EDDIE: Yes...Thursday...(*thinks*) Today's the *Legion of Mary*, or is it the *Good Ladies Associations for National Decency*... *G.L.A.N.D.* to you. Or is it...(*takes a small notepad from pocket*) No...Thursday's for...tango lessons.

GRETA: Don't be funny. You know I stopped seeing...Mr. Vronsky for quite some time now.

EDDIE: I know. Saw Vito with another dame last weekend. The wife of a bank president this time. I also know you've given the bugger a pretty little sum to stay away from you. He was getting a bit...sticky. Besides, it's that time of the year for Switzerland again, right? (*read notebook*) Your youth fix. A virus from goat's blood or something...

GRETA: How do you know all this?

EDDIE: I happen to know a lot about you, lady. I bet I know more about you than you do yourself. It's all here (*taps notebook, reads*) Your mother was a slow-witted German. A cabaret girl from Lower Eastside Berlin...Anastasia Krueger. And not some society dame you picture her as...

GRETA: Give me that! (*grabs at notepad, EDDIE keeps it from her*)

EDDIE: "Born in a Berlin alley. Exact year unknown. Rise of the Nazi era..." And not in a Viennese summer resort as the *Philippine Free Press*, October 1963 claims.

GRETA: Stop it!

EDDIE: "First film role, not the doomed gypsy Arabella in

Belladonna Pictures 1939 production of ‘*Song of the Night*’ under the screen name Ana Bonita...” Actually you debuted as a nude palace dancer in the silent short entitled “*Salome*,” by Lang.

GRETA: No more!

EDDIE: “Wed wealthy scion of sugar baron in 1950. Brigadier General Fausto De La Pasion, the then representative to the U.N. An upcoming political prodigy...” And, listen to this... “gave up her film career at the height of glory for marriage...” and so on...

GRETA: So, you’re a private investigator. Who do you work for?

EDDIE: Lady, I’m a true indie. I work for no one. In fact, I don’t work at all... I’m what you call a charity case. (*laughs*) Charity case, haha!

GRETA: I see absolutely nothing funny about blackmail.

EDDIE: Blackmail? Who said anything about blackmail?

GRETA (*taking out wallet from purse*): How much?

EDDIE (*philosophical*): The problem with our materialistic times is that we think too much in terms of money.

GRETA, in exasperation, grabs a small fork and lunges at EDDIE. He cries out in pain—his left hand bleeds. GRETA drops fork in shock.

EDDIE continues laughing.

GRETA: Oh, my God! I’ve killed you...

EDDIE: It’s alright (*still laughing*). Just a scratch. Ain’t dead yet... I may never play the piano again in my whole life. Not that I ever learned how.

GRETA (*disbelieving, sits limply*): Oh Lord, I’m going insane...

The WAITER comes out. Looks alarmed when he sees EDDIE’s bloodied hand.

EDDIE (*to WAITER*): A rat...the size of a dog! It’s a crime. This place should be shut down by the Sanitation Department! (*the WAITER moves towards him, EDDIE waves him off*) Oh, be gone with you! The rat never had a chance. It went that way. Gave it plenty to feel sorry about... You’re going to

lose your job because of this! (*WAITER looks terrified*) But since times are hard and you're only an accessory, I'm willing to be generous. (*a beat*) I don't have to report this incident to the Mother Superior...that is, unless you want me to... (*WAITER shakes his head nervously*) I won't tell, if you don't. Get on with your work. And let this be a lesson for you!

WAITER exits.

GRETA: Are you still bleeding?

EDDIE (*Errol Flynn*): No, I was a Boy Scout once. For three days. You press your finger here...and here (*indicates points in arm*) Now, if you'd be kind 'nuff, lady...

GRETA: What? (*weakly*)

EDDIE: There's a handkerchief in my left hip pocket. Bring it out... (*she does so cautiously*) That's perfect. Now wrap it around the arm... Yes, just like that... Good! Make a strong knot. Then another... You're a regular Nurse Nightingale... Thank you.

She goes back to her seat, sits nervously.

GRETA: I don't know what came over me. I've never done anything like that in my whole life.

EDDIE (*picks up notepad*): Yes, except for the time you sent a saucer flying at Picasso. Nice, the summer of 1935...

GRETA (*abstracted*): Yes, he had to have seven stitches.

Silence, EDDIE goes through notepad.

EDDIE: "Only child, Moritz Scott De La Pasion, born July 17, 1952. Now living in Italy, bachelor. A successful playwright with a record of seventeen wins in literary contests. Former executive, vice-president of Radar, Inc., the De La Pasion family conglomerate..." Because of a row between them, your son and your husband haven't exchanged a word for seven years now... "Champion polo player, archer and wrestler. Graduated summa cum laude, University of the Philippines. Masters in Economics, Harvard..."

A beat. All of a sudden GRETA takes out an envelope from her purse and puts in on the table. She gets up, as if in a daze.

GRETA: I have to be going...It was a pleasure. Dammit! (*changes her tone*) Don't ever bother me again. There's a lot of money in this envelope. I hope that's enough to satisfy your vile mind. Goodbye and may God forgive your black soul.

GRETA exits.

EDDIE: (*after her*) Hey, lady! I don't want your money. I don't want nothing!

He sighs to himself and picks up tabloid. As he reads, he whistles "God Bless The Child".

Blackout.

Scene 2

Un Bel Di Vedremo

Radio hiss dies down, we hear a heated aria from Puccini's opera build up, and under.

Lights reveal the cozy but baroque sitting room of the De La Pasions—the afternoon after.

We find the HON. FAUSTO Q. DE LA PASION at his study table amidst heaps of paper. In elegant pajamas, a lounging robe and slippers, he is a dignified-looking man in his mid-seventies. A huge starburst medal on a satin sash hangs incongruously round his neck.

DON FAUSTO (*to himself, writing*):...our reserves were very low, and half the camp was down with malaria. The few that were left—not wounded or sick, were assigned to forage around for root crops, mountain deer, other sources of nourishment. Despite the shrapnel gash down my right thigh, I went with the deployment...(*stops distracted by MAID who*

enters with a huge bouquet of pink flowers, she places them behind centerstage then exits)... The American troops were held back at the ford...(MAID enters again with larger bouquet of pink flowers, leaves them with the other batch, exits)... the pain throbbed through my temples as I clambered up the precipice with whatever God-given strength was left in me. I thought about Mother and...(MAID enters with another floral bouquet, leaves them with others, exits)... As I inched my way upward, I gazed half-dazed at the azure skies. Suddenly an eagle, the size of a B-52...(MAID enters with same routine, as she is about to exit) Confound it girl! I am trying my absolute best to concentrate on the construction of my memoirs and...

Enter Greta in a simple black mourning frock, her hair in a severe bun. Behind her dark glasses she wears no make-up.

GRETA (to DON FAUSTO): It was a simple yet beautiful service, Fuzzy darling (*plants a kiss on his cheek then sits down in an armchair near him*). I wish you could have been there. Reverend Brimstone's eulogy was absolutely touching...(quotes) "...halfway between the rooms of life, death is..." (*stops, sees expressions on DON FAUSTO's and MAID's faces*) What is it darling, you look flushed?

DON FAUSTO (*pointing to MAID*): It's that silly little girl again! She's...

GRETA (*quickly, appeasing*): Hush now my love...(brightly to MAID) Rosita, would you be kind enough to make me some cold lemonade, haha...(MAID exits) Now Fuzzy, you shouldn't be cross at our little Rosita. After all she's been with us barely a month.

DON FAUSTO: But that silly goose's been shuttling back and forth, back and forth...

GRETA: Well, she is young and has all that energy...

DON FAUSTO:...back and forth, while I try to recapture *Chapter Five: My Valorous War Years!*

GRETA (*coming over to him*): Oooh my little Fuzzy Wuzzy, I understand your obsession with your all-important, great work...whatever it is this time (*massaging his temples*) I know that all things great can not and will not wait, my love...whatever it is this time.

DON FAUSTO (*easing up*): My memoirs...

GRETA: But I thought you've already written your memoirs...six volumes in all.

DON FAUSTO: Yes, but that was from the historical point-of-view. This is from psychological perspective. I want now to delve into motivation and inner life. I remember what Jung said to me in Vienna over schnapps and beer, "what matters is not what goes on the surface but the tiny bolts and screws inside things..."

GRETA: Yes...(*remembering*) Carl...a genius, but always picking fights with his friends. That is very...(*thinks*) interesting and penetrating, if I may say so.(*goes back to her sofa*) But you should be a little more patient with our Rosita. After all, I and the ladies of our corps singled her out from the long list of applicants at the *St. Mary of Magdala's Correctional Institute For Wayward Women Waifs*.

DON FAUSTO: That was noble Greta my dear, but...

GRETA (*not listening, to herself*):...it was her teeth, small and pearly white and all in a neat row with not a single cavity. It didn't matter that she strangled her husband to death while he was asleep and set fire to their house. A young lass with excellent teeth can't be all that bad. (*warmly to DON FAUSTO*) Besides, the doctor said for you not to strain yourself too much.

DON FAUSTO: The doctor can sit on his thermometer!

GRETA: Now, now Fuzzy, let's not be mean. Doctor Morlock's just after your state of health.

DON FAUSTO: He can drown in his bedpan for all I care. I'm a perfectly robust seventy-two...

GRETA:...seventy-seven...

DON FAUSTO:...and I'll be perfect at ninety-nine...and a hundred and one, and...

GRETA: There you are again, my little Fuzzy Wuzzy, working yourself up over nothing.(*changes topic*) Where are you now in your precious memoirs that you even chose not to attend poor little Daisy's funeral?

DON FAUSTO:...WW2...up scaling that sheer mountain wall looking for food then a giant eagle appears in the blue sky...

GRETA: How...(*thinks*) epic!

DON FAUSTO (*carried away*):...I could feel the soil slipping from 'neath my grasp but the thought of the men down there, dying, suffering in pain, weak from disease, hunger, thirst—all for the glory and freedom of our beloved land—the thought of them all, mixed with in memories of Mama, egged me onwards. The pain in my right thigh was blinding...

GRETA:...left...

DON FAUSTO: What?

GRETA:...you were wounded in your left thigh, not your right.

DON FAUSTO: How would you know? I was there, you weren't!

GRETA (*sweetly*): But Fuzzy, the scar's on your left thigh.

DON FAUSTO: Really Greta, I can't let insignificant details like that get in the way of my narrative. (*continues*) Anyway, just as I was about to reach the peak of Mt. Apo...

GRETA:...Banahaw...

DON FAUSTO (*not paying any attention*):...the rock I was clinging to broke loose from the face of Mt...of the mountain and...

GRETA (*interrupting*):...this giant eagle swoops down and scoops you up in its claws, you feel yourself soaring through the air and then lose your consciousness. When you revive you're in a hospital bed in front of Gen. MacArthur and you save your own troops by giving the Americans directions to where the guerilla site is!

DON FAUSTO (*almost teary-eyed*): Yes it was because of that event I was made Corporal—after, of course, the psychiatric test results came out.

GRETA: And it was because of that lonely eagle that your legendary love for animals developed. Why you established the *Botanical and Zoological Research Center and Sanctuary* round our estate!

DON FAUSTO: Now you've got it...that is motivation!

GRETA: How lovely! And I'm certain that this book of yours will reap awards throughout the globe like your other works!

Enter the MAID with a pitcher of lemonade and two glasses on a silver tray. She keeps out of DON FAUSTO's way.

DON FAUSTO (*sees MAID*): That is why I cannot stand any sort of distraction, reformed or otherwise!

GRETA (*to MAID*): Thank you Rosita, that will be all (*MAID exits*) Now Fuzzy there you go again. Remember what happened to Don Tiburcio Moreno and his Catalonian wife Virginia. One night they scolded their maid and the next morning the authorities discovered their bloated bodies foaming at the mouth.

DON FAUSTO: Well, they were a particularly boring couple. Somebody would have slipped them some Arsenic sooner or later.

GRETA: Fuzzy, that is not at all a Christian thing to say!

DON FAUSTO: I doubt if that girl of yours has enough wits about her to do us in. She can't even boil an egg properly!

GRETA: Hush, she might hear you! After all, Rosita's not a cook. I'll never forgive Cook Pastor and the other pantry girls for walking out on us without notice! And for an utterly ridiculous reason! Ghosts! Burglars, more likely, like the one that did poor Daisy in. (*changes mood*) The monster! It's impossible to run a house like this with only eleven domestics and no cook among them!

DON FAUSTO: If I had my way. I'd fire the whole lot of them!

GRETA: Fuzzy, you don't know what you're saying! Who's going to... You can't expect me to... (*sighs*) Ooh let's not argue, I guess it's just the times and all that global stress that's getting to us. (*a beat*) Besides, poor little Daisy's not even two hours in that cold grave of hers...

DON FAUSTO: How do you know if it wasn't any of your loyal domestic help that did Daisy in...

GRETA: Really! Fuzzy! How could you even entertain such a thought. If it were true, the way you're treating them, we'd be right down there with poor Daisy... (*catches herself*) there you are, with your talk getting me all worked up. Besides, Rosita herself saw the crook with her own eyes. A young man, she said...rambling around the grounds at the two in the morning, just hours before they found...her mutilated body...I still wonder how the bloke got in, if he really did exist.

DON FAUSTO: This is such a huge and old estate, with a lot of underground secret passage ways leading to the Zoo and all. Well I've reprimanded security and got you a new Chief, that should make you happy...

GRETA: Happy! How can I ever be happy thinking about what happened to poor Daisy! I'll never be happy until justice is served, with her murderer being brought to light!

DON FAUSTO: You loved that hefty little girl, didn't you?

GRETA: Yes, Daisy was more than just a...pet. She was family!

DON FAUSTO: Now, why should one slaughter a poor innocent armadillo is utterly beyond me!

GRETA: It's the times, sick and corrupt they are...and increasing more so, by the day! That's why I refuse to read newspapers anymore. You just don't know what'll happen next.

Enter MAID with two armfuls of pink flowers in vases. She quietly arranges them near the other flowers.

Thank you Rosita, you're so kind. *(MAID exits)* I hope she doesn't get it in her mind to leave us - good help's impossible to come by... *(By this time the pink floral bouquets have accumulated to a ridiculous extent. Taking notice of them)* Dear Fuzzy...you are a heart! Sending me all these flowers to remember poor little Daisy by. *(DON FAUSTO looks up from his work, surprised)* Pink...my favorite blooms!

DON FAUSTO: I didn't get these nose-blighting abominations! I thought you did!

GRETA *(worried)*: But if you didn't, then who...

DON FAUSTO: Must be one of your twittering, brainless friends. The Garcias perhaps, or doddering Cruz or...

GRETA: It can't have been them! I've kept Daisy's untimely demise absolutely confidential. Wait a minute *(goes to one of the bouquets and checks its card)*...Oooh! *(inspects the other cards)*

DON FAUSTO: Well?

GRETA *(turns pale)*: Uuh...*(tries to compose herself)* It's all a mistake...a dreadful mistake...The florists probably sent these to the...*(bluffing)* wrong address.

DON FAUSTO *(interested)*: What does the card say? Perhaps we can have them delivered to the proper funeral...

GRETA *(nervously)*: Nothing...the card says nothing, no addresses. Absolutely nothing! I'll have Rosita dump these...

DON FAUSTO *(scrutinizing her)*: Are you coming up with

something? (*GRETA manages a gay smile*) You look a bit feverish. Can I see that card?

GRETA (*tense*): Why should you bother your little head over this matter my darling...I'll take care of getting rid of...

DON FAUSTO (*impatient*): You really should get an appointment to see Dr. Morlock, you're starting to turn different colors again. Hand over the card!

GRETA: But Fuzzy...

DON FAUSTO: Will you stop acting like a sublime idiot and do as I say! Think of the poor family that must be expecting to get these flowers! Who knows? Some bastard's funeral's probably being held up on account of these wreaths. The dead mustn't be kept hanging on the ledge.

GRETA (*handing him a card*): Here...I told you it was all a gross mistake!

DON FAUSTO (*reading*): "Dearest Carlotta...a memento of our brief encounter"...no signature? What's this? Show me the other cards, (*she does so without thinking*) "Carlotta my love...you will always be an affair to remember..." Also unsigned..."My sweet Carlotta...do not ask for whom the bell tolls..." "Carlotta *mon amour*...I died with my boots on *pour vous*..." What's all this?

GRETA: I don't know...

DON FAUSTO: Well...for sure this isn't for any damned armadillo.

GRETA (*bluffing*): I don't even know anyone named Carlotta...do you?

DON FAUSTO (*thinks*): I knew a Carlotta once...Zelda Fitzgerald introduced me to her in Nice. It was at a costume ball. She was a Spanish Flamenco dancer. She came as a turnip...Wonder what ever happened to her?

GRETA: So I guess I better have all of these cleared up! (*laughs artificially*) What a mistake, ha ha...An accident!

DON FAUSTO (*still looking at the cards*): Hmm, still I don't have a good feeling about this...I remember what Swami Parchatanandi once told me as we are fasting near the Bay of Bengal in '39...(*Hindu accent*) "There is no such thing as an accident in the universe. Everything is uniquely planned by Brahman our creator and Djandjaran his chief

programmer..." He was such a great man. Too bad he ended up as a hat clerk at the Flamingo in the forties.

GRETA: Yes...Rositaah!

DON FAUSTO (*continuing*): Look at the way these cards were written... using newspaper letters and glue...doesn't that seem suspicious?

GRETA (*frantic*): Really darling...who knows? The sender might have been enrolled at a creative card-making class...

DON FAUSTO: Still...it seems like the work of a film buff-cum-sex-offender or something.

GRETA: Oh, Fuzzy...you're a sweetie, but...

DON FAUSTO: It's just like something out of Dashell Hammet...where everybody's after a plastered bird...

GRETA (*mock-gay*): Fuzzy, why dwell on the dark side of things! Remember what the doctor said, (*singing*) "Keep Your Sunny Side Up! Up!..."

DON FAUSTO (*forbidding*): Still...

GRETA (*shrilly*): ROSITA AH! (*at the same time she continues to sing*)

Blackout.

Scene 3 Split Screen

Radio hiss goes under, the ghostly sounds of a fugue playing on a pipe organ along with the rumble of thunder and hard rain, builds up and under.

The sound of a telephone ringing.

Lights come up dark hallway in the mansion, that night - the telephone set on table, a chair beside it.

Enter GRETA in a long, flowing nightgown carrying a lighted candelabra - a scene straight from a gothic horror flick. She heads for the phone.

GRETA (*to herself*): And they said no more blackouts! (*reaches for the phone, about to pick it up, she hesitates*) No I can't! (*phone continues to ring*) No! (*she starts to turn back but stops in her tracks*) Oh Lord! (*rolls her eyes, argues with self*) Direct my Will. Please give me the strength. To do what I must. (*poses like a baroque madonna*) To the best of my ability. Through the intercession of the Virgin Most...(*grabs the phone*) (*hysterically*) HELLO!

Lighting illuminates another part of stage, EDDIE in the phone-booth.

EDDIE: Yeah...

GRETA *bangs phone, desperate look on her face. At the same time, lights black out EDDIE's spot.*

GRETA: Oooh! It's him! Any second now he's going to call again. (*she stares at the phone, waits a beat, then another, phone does not ring*) Will it? (*to phone*) I know you'll ring any minute now...in just a few moments you're going to start ringing...and start driving me crazy again...and make me feel dirty again...push me to the limits of my sanity, my spirit...(a beat, impatient) COME ON! If you're going to ring, RING! (*phone remains impassive*) How dare you...stare at me as if I was...Jezebel or something. How dare you look at me as if I were mud...unclean...slutty! (*melodramatic, Bette Davis*) Ring, you mad fool...RING!

Suddenly we hear the sound of a key in the lock, GRETA starts, panicky. She strikes several trapped movie heroine poses. Wind kills candle light. Sound of a creaky door opening. She ducks under the table. Enter DON FAUSTO in a trench coat and boots, soaking wet—he's been out.

DON FAUSTO (*to himself*): Damn power company! They said no more blackouts...(*fumbles in the dark, strikes a match, begins to hum "Keep Your Sunny Side Up," about to exit, the phone rings*)

Terror in GRETA's face as DON FAUSTO comes over the ringing phone.

Hello...*(no answer)* Helloo...*(bangs the phone)*...Damned upstarts...*(walks away then suddenly trips in the dark)*
Murderer! Murderer!

GRETA *(reveals self from hiding place)*: Fuzzy! Where? Where?

DON FAUSTO *(collects himself)*: Who's there?

GRETA: It's your little Greta darling! *(comes up from behind table)*

DON FAUSTO *(getting up)*: What in the name of Heaven are you doing here at this hour?

GRETA *(caught)*: I...I, uh, heard a little noise...and...thought...
(quicker) there was burglar. So I decided to run from the room so as not to be at the mercy of his brute strength, so as not to have to do as he desires, so as not to be defiled...*(comes up to him)*

DON FAUSTO: Where's the burglar?

GRETA: There wasn't any. Only you.

DON FAUSTO: I'm not a burglar.

GRETA: Yes, you're my husband and...*(thinks, changes tone)*
Where did you come from?

DON FAUSTO *(defensive)*: Well...the meditation portion of the
Thursday Club for Retired Civic Gentlemen got a bit out off hand. We were supposed to get out of our deep, stress-releasing trance after thirty minutes but the proctor fell asleep, and with him the rest of us...

GRETA: Enlightening, was it?

DON FAUSTO: Ooh, my precious *(yawns)*. It's been a long day, and another one's just on the horizon, ha ha...Best we retire.

GRETA: Yes.

The two begin to exit. The phone rings. They stop.

(distressed) Mother of God...

DON FAUSTO *(irritated)*: Son of a bitch! *(he goes to the phone, GRETA suddenly grabs his arm)* What...

GRETA *(cuddling up)*: Dear Fuzzy, it's such a cold night...
(Marilyn) Let's go upstairs, and...

DON FAUSTO: But the phone...

GRETA: What phone?

DON FAUSTO: The telephone, what else! Silly woman, have you taken leave of your senses?

GRETA (*blocks his way*): No! I'll do it. Just go up ahead...

DON FAUSTO: Okay. But don't keep me waiting too long, my pet... (*turns to leave*) Whoever it is, tell them it's not good manners to call at this hour. During my time all Catholic-bred boys... (*exits*)

GRETA (*after him*): Not too worry Fuzzy, I'm sure it's just a wrong number. (*looks to see whether he's truly gone, then makes a dash for the phone, picks up receiver*) Hello...you... (*a la Joan Crawford's Mildred Pearce*)

Spotlight picks out EDDIE in phone booth.

...I thought it would be you. Who else but a cheap ruffian would dare call up at this ungodly hour when the rest of humanity's slumbering and...

EDDIE (*interrupting*): Can't hear ya too well...speak louder, lady!

GRETA: Ooh...I can't! I'm not even supposed to entertain this call at all, and...

EDDIE: Are you doing fine?

GRETA (*pleasant*): Ye-es...thank you. *Et vous?*

EDDIE: Well, ain't quite the King of the World yet but neither am I dead.

GRETA: That's nice to hear. (*changes tone*) Now, look, I don't know what you want from me but I've had enough. Didn't I tell to stay away from...

EDDIE: Did you like them flowers?

GRETA: Well...yees, they were lovely.

EDDIE: Blew the money you left me on them. Those sissy things cost a fortune!

GRETA: Yes, they looked quite expensive. And pink, that's my favorite color!

EDDIE: I know.

GRETA: How did you know?

EDDIE: I'll tell you some other time, let's just say for now that I've got reliable sources.

GRETA (*changes tone again*): There will be no other time, young scoundrel. I warn you never to...

EDDIE: Them notes?

GRETA: What?

EDDIE: The cards...

GRETA: Ooh, yes. The movie themes were very creative. Made Fuzzy think about them the whole day...And the name, "Carlotta," now you probably think that was clever of you...

EDDIE: It's just some sort of code, you know. Like in them spy movies. Was that over a bit too much?

GRETA (*impatient*): What would you have me do?

EDDIE: Meet me at the same place, same time tomorrow.

GRETA: No!

EDDIE: At the state I'm in I might just jump off a bridge or shoot myself or take poison. I just need someone to talk to and you'll never see my shadow again forever!

GRETA: But...

EDDIE: I'm counting on your Christian spirit, lady. You might just save one crummy little life and turn it right! Tomorrow and that's it! Cross my heart...(*starts to sob*) Please...you're almost like my Mama...

GRETA: (*after a pause*) What time?

Blackout.

Scene 4

The Kindness Of Strangers

Radio hiss goes under, we hear the sounds of a young girl's laughter, then mumbling, and then remorseful cries—all indistinct but haunting.

Lights come up to a dim, revealing EDDIE's decrepit tenement flat, the next afternoon.

In the dark, enter GRETA—in her trench coat, wig and dark glasses disguise.

The girl's cries stop suddenly.

GRETA (*nervous*): Who's there... (*to EDDIE, off*) You didn't tell me there would be somebody else around.

Enter EDDIE, switches on light. Flickers for a second but lights up in a while, the room is a mess.

EDDIE: There isn't.

GRETA: But I just heard someone's voice. A girl...and she was crying.

EDDIE: Yeah, you did.

GRETA (*confused*): But you just said...

EDDIE: Yes, there was somebody living with me. My girl. But she's dead. A year in a couple of weeks.

GRETA (*looks around room*): There's a girl in this room, right now. I heard her crying...

EDDIE: That was my girl. She's dead. (*GRETA stops, EDDIE motions to her a beat-up sofa*) Make yourself comfy.

GRETA sits down very prim and proper, scans room.

GRETA: So this is where you live.

EDDIE: Yes, it may seem like a rat hole, and it is. But it's home to me. Still catching your breath?

GRETA: Yes

EDDIE: Not used to five flights of stairs, eh.

GRETA: No, I thought I saw an elevator door downstairs.

EDDIE: Ooh that's been condemned for quite sometime. Long before we...before I...moved here. The last couple who used it met their Maker when the thing crashed all the way down. Cables. The rats got at them. (*sees GRETA shudder*) Hate rats, do you? Well, this building's got more than its share of them rodents. You should see the basement! Had to board it.

GRETA (*switching topic*): This...edifice must have been built in the early fifties.

EDDIE: Yeah and it hasn't been cleaned up since then. One more earthquake and...kaput! Goodbye home and back to the streets.

GRETA: How much do you pay in rent?

EDDIE laughs out loud.

EDDIE: Lady, you must be blind or something. Nobody in his right mind...would pay for a hole like this. This is my paradise. The owner, Mr. Chinaman, allows me to bunk here for free, to keep the vandals out. It's for sale if you're interested.

GRETA: No, we have enough real estate.

EDDIE: Yes, I'm sure you do...*(a beat)* I'd like to offer your ladyship some tea but three months ago my stove went on the blink...I tap power from the next building. They don't know it, of course.

GRETA: What do you do for food?

EDDIE: Ohh, I eat out.

GRETA: You're very resourceful.

Silence.

You must be thinking what a fool I am for allowing myself to be...lured into your web. After what you did to...Daisy.

EDDIE: No, but you showed up at the Café. I'm honored, lady, you stuck to your word.

GRETA: Let's just say I was curious. About the plight of the oppressed.

EDDIE: You're a saint?

GRETA *(laughs)*: If the other members of the *League of Mary* saw me here, I assure you that would be the last thing on their minds. But my friends from the *Society for the Rehabilitation of Juveniles* would get a kick out of this.

EDDIE: You're like your husband. Popular.

GRETA: Not really, it's just all for appearance. When you reach our age and status, nothing is for real.

EDDIE: I'm gonna die young, just like James Dean.

GRETA: How young are you...twenty?

EDDIE: Close...nineteen, a week ago.

GRETA *(musing)*: Nineteen...I'd need an almanac to remember what happened when I turned nineteen. And what do you do?

EDDIE: What's that?

GRETA: What do you do for a living?

EDDIE: Oh, I go out every night and get other people to pay for my drinks. It's a living.

GRETA: Yes, living off other people.

EDDIE: Lady, I know nobody who ain't living off somebody else in this world.

GRETA: That's a fresh point-of-view. I agree without reservation.
(a pause) Who's taking care of you nowadays?

EDDIE (mad): Hey lady, I don't like nobody butting into my business.

GRETA: Is that why you poke your nose into other people's affairs.

EDDIE: Whenever I do, I've got a reason...

GRETA begins to walk around the room, taking in its contents a group at a time.

GRETA: Well, now that you've got me here, what is it that you wanted to discuss?

EDDIE: Nothing in particular, lady.

GRETA: Under the circumstances I think you should call me Greta.
You, what should I call you?

EDDIE: Eddie.

GRETA: Eddie what?

EDDIE: Eddie nothing...I ain't got a name.

GRETA: Everybody's got a family name. That much I know.

EDDIE: Society sucks, and I ain't got no family, never had. I grew up at a Home till I was seven. My friends call me Eddie D' Rip.

GRETA: The Rip? What kind of a name is that?

EDDIE: I get by with it. Ask anybody in the bars, they'll tell you who I am.

GRETA: Eddie the Rip, who lives off other people...

EDDIE: Don't knock it. With me they get their money's worth.
No one's ever complained.

GRETA: Why do they call you the Rip, or is that esoteric?

EDDIE: Don't use them words on me, lady...

GRETA: Greta...

EDDIE: Greta... (thoughtfully) They pinned that name on me last year... You see I had a girl... Bette Mae they said her name was, other people knew her as Marlene, others Kitten...I

called her Suzie K. A looker she was, could turn the heads of anybody, anytime she walked into a room. A beauty. She sells (*face darkens*)...she died...suddenly.

GRETA: You were in love with her?

EDDIE: Fuck love. But Suzie K., she was special, she took care of me fine. She was a couple of years older than I. She took me in as if it were nothing at all. (*abruptly*) I never took advantage of her...

GRETA: Go ahead.

EDDIE: She had beautiful long black hair that went up to here...and voice like a bird. She loved to sing. We once even thought of putting up a band. We were gonna call it "*The Repulse*"—I was going to play drums and she would sing. It never got off the ground. She started getting crazy about certain guys, guys with nothing between their ears but rocks...Guys who would use her, take her bread, then dump her just like that. Suzie K. wasn't that bright, you see. Still, I stuck by her, through her ups and downs...During one of her highs, she even got this big apartment and a car, the son of a Minister of Public Info he was. But it couldn't last...The lows came more often...This place...it didn't look as bad as this...even if we didn't have any money...Then it happened. About two weeks before she got it, she told me we'd be living on Easy street soon. Said she'd met somebody rich and powerful who was crazy about her. She didn't tell me who it was but I found out anyway. One night when I was out at the Penguin, a couple of guys who said they were cops picked me up. Told me Suzie K was dead. (*almost inaudible*) She had been cut-up real bad...There was blood all over the bathroom there...And here...(*points to floor*) She was in three pieces. Ripped up...explaining the name...

GRETA: Please, let's not talk of this any...

EDDIE: They wanted to pin it on me. But released me from lack of evidence. Anyway, I had an alibi, I was with a Swiss guy the whole time it happened. They never found out who did it. (*a beat*) She was in three bloody pieces, I still think about it all the time.

GRETA: I don't want to talk about it any longer. It's unwholesome. The past is best left buried.

EDDIE: Not here. This room is haunted.

GRETA (*scared, irritated*): Stop it please!

EDDIE: That's how I know all about you. She tells me everything I want to find out. She comes to me, all bloodied up, in my dreams and...

GRETA: Stop!

EDDIE (*obsessed*): I can't get over her.

GRETA: Is that why you asked me over, to talk about her?

EDDIE: I told you lady, I don't want to talk about anything in particular.

GRETA: Then I think it's best that I leave.

EDDIE: Not yet. We'll never see each other again, I want to make the most of this last meeting. Sit down please...Greta. (*she does so*)

GRETA: What shall we talk about?

EDDIE: How about you this time?

GRETA: What about me?

EDDIE thinks.

EDDIE: Your husband. Do you really love him?

GRETA: I'd die without him.

EDDIE: Then why did you...

GRETA:...commit that little indiscretion?

EDDIE: Whatever you say...

GRETA: I don't really...(*searches for words*) Sometimes...I just do things without thinking about it. (*a beat*) Maybe I was bored. (*then quickly*) No, it was out of fear, I think...

EDDIE: What are you afraid of?

GRETA (*gets up*): Everything! Everything terrifies me...getting old, ugly...Death...And worse, being left alone. There is no greater terror than loneliness when you're my age...Fuzzy, though he is a brilliant genius and a kind husband, well...he's been quite out of touch lately. I think it started last year, when he...RETIRED. Well, he didn't want to retire. Not at all. He always said God had made him strong and wise so that he could work and work and work...until that faraway day when he'd just lay down and die! No, he didn't want to stop until he breathed his last. Though he had come from

landed folk, Fuzzy started from the bottom. As a security agent in the all the way up to top brass. Then as ambassador...finally, as the chief advisor to the Man. He was excellent at whatever role he played! At home, five rooms contain his trophies and awards. Another contains everything that's ever been written about him. Yet another is where he keeps his own works and journals. The first thought I had when I met him was that he was such a strange man...But he swept me off my feet! I was a household name then, a big star! I left it all for him! So the legend goes...He was never handsome but there was something about him—a certain magic I can't describe...*(sighs)* But, like all things, magic fades...

During the above, EDDIE takes out a camera on a stand, assembles it, cleans lens, etc.

EDDIE: Don't pay any attention to me. Go on.

GRETA: That's a hobby?

EDDIE: You might say that.

GRETA *(continues)*: Yes. Fuzzy was never quite the same after he went into his retirement. He started getting those black, awful moods. He'd sulk for weeks on end, refusing to talk to anyone. He became quite untidy, not even bothering to take a bath or change his clothes. Sometimes, for no reason at all, he became violent. Even bruised me one night, on our anniversary!

EDDIE *(fixing)*: Yeah, sounds like one of my foster papas...

GRETA: You're adopted?

EDDIE: Several times. I've been shuffled from home to home... like an old rug. *(a beat)* You were saying?

EDDIE finally gets camera together, exits with it to bathroom.

GRETA *(continuing)*: Even then I stood by him, my mother begged me to leave him and accompany her on an expedition down the Nile. But I couldn't leave my little Fuzzy...Mother didn't it either. Killed by all those immunity shots. She was 109...

Off, in EDDIE's direction, we see a flash of light from a light bulb.

EDDIE (*off*): Could you stand up and move a bit to your left... (*surprised, she does it*) A little more to your left, that's it... perfect! Now, look in the direction of the broken mirror... that's it, smile... (*a flash of light*) Good.

GRETA: I say... that's a trick mirror, isn't it?

EDDIE comes out.

EDDIE: Yeah... (*goes over to the sofa and attempts to push it*) Could you give me a hand with this?

GRETA: Oh... (*she does so, they begin to push*) Where?

EDDIE: Over there... that's a good baby. That's it! Whew! (*they both sit on the sofa*) I'm glad that part's over...

GRETA: What's over?

EDDIE: We're going to have a little picture session.

GRETA: Ooh, what for?

EDDIE: For... the future. Who knows we may never meet again, and... you're my only friend.

GRETA: That's sweet. (*begins to pose*)

EDDIE: Not yet, a bit later... What were you saying about your beloved spouse?

GRETA: He became mean for a while... Then he joined a club... It meets Thursdays. I really don't know anything about it, it's all very secret you see... Fuzzy says it's highly exclusive. Only for retired government officials. (*absently goes through some things in a side table near her*) He was back to his old self. Yes... he's never been nasty again... (*shock*) Mother of God! What are these photographs? They're... they're obscene!

EDDIE (*grabs them*): A buddy of mine must have left them here. He's an artist and...

GRETA (*still shocked*): Those pictures weren't Art, they were pornography! No wonder your poor little brain's in such a twisted state. You've been keeping up with sinful company, imagine having those... (*crosses herself*) pictures, in the same room with you. An impressionable young boy. What kind of a friend...

EDDIE (*interrupting*): Actually, just an acquaintance...

GRETA sees one of the pictures on the floor, she picks it up.

GRETA: Here's another of the brazen lot...you really should burn these...(*glances at the picture, is appalled*) You! It's you in these pictures! (*throws the pictures at him*)...What?

EDDIE (*remorseful*): I was forced to do it.

GRETA (*indignant*): Forced? Who? What depraved devil coerced you to...to pose in such an unspeakable fashion!

EDDIE: No one in particular, just society as a whole. You see, I was starving, a Japanese tourist...Well, said he was from TOHO Pictures and...

GRETA: How dare these...criminals use a poor, defenseless...

EDDIE:...and starving...

GRETA:...innocent boy like you for their gross pleasures. How can people...monsters...exploit a nineteen year-old...

EDDIE: Sixteen...I was sixteen then, ma'am.

GRETA (*crosses herself*): Mother Most High! What is the world coming to? Sixteen, why barely weaned from your mother's bosom.

EDDIE: I never had a mother.

GRETA: The worse...the worse for such a sweet, vulnerable child! It's no wonder why young people like you turn to stealing and...

EDDIE:...pushing drugs...

GRETA:...and molesting decent citizens...

EDDIE: ...and selling skin...

GRETA: And other unmentionable travesties against God and Nature. My son...

EDDIE (*like a child*): Yes, Mama...(*he cuddles up to her*)

GRETA: Through no fault of your own, you have been damaged by this...(*irony*) humane society!

EDDIE (*crying*):...corrupted by this unfair world...

GRETA: Hush now my little child. Everything will be alright. Mama will take care of you.

EDDIE: Mama...

GRETA: I won't let them hurt you any longer (*as she gives him a lingering kiss*).

Blackout.

ACT TWO: WELCOME HOME!

Scene 1

The Third Man

Blackness.

Radio being tuned from one station to next, a newscast.

VOICE (*continuing*):...the Butcher claimed his fifth victim today, this time at the Rizal Park area. Following his bloody modus operandi, the badly mutilated body was identified by baffled police authorities as another prostitute. Various leads have all proven blind...

Station switches to the Kink's "You Really Got Me", then again to another VOICE.

(*bright*) Out with elegance! Why be stuck with dull, soft hair? Use FRIGHT Shampoo with seven de-conditioners... guaranteed to make your hair stand on end and let you look like a...

Hiss fades into sound of shower running with GIRL humming "God Bless The Child" – exactly as in Act One opening. Ends with ripping sound and piercing scream.

Radio static then silence.

Lights come up on a lonely street corner, one late evening—a week after.

We find DON FAUSTO on a street bench reading today's newspapers. He is in disguise: a trench coat and a pair of dark sunglasses. His Medal of Honor round his neck. He glances up from his paper to look around.

Close by is a lamp post.

Enter a heavily made-up and garishly dressed TRANSVESTITE. "She" is chewing gum and on the look-out. Sees DON FAUSTO and approaches bench. Peeks behind the papers, makes a face and walks to lamp post. She strikes a pose—from an Italian movie.

DON FAUSTO lowers his newspaper and leers at TRANSVESTITE. He squints, has a hard time seeing in half-light.

DON FAUSTO (to himself):...luscious little birdie...hmmm, a sweet little chickadee come to nest. (to TRANSVESTITE) All alone my pretty?

TRANSVESTITE gives him a bored glance. DON FAUSTO puts down his paper, walks over to her with a slobbering smile.

Charming little child. Alone...braving the cold dark night.

TRANSVESTITE blows a bubble, cracks gum.

Toothsome toy...(puts arm round "her" shoulder) would you like to take a wee ride with gentle little uncle? Uncle's car is just a few baby steps away. Maybe my dainty angel would like a little snack? (TRANSVESTITE looks at him blankly. DON FAUSTO casually lowers hand to her rump) Ooooh my! My, built like a sturdy little goddess. Proud Juno. Or Aphrodite rising from the foam. Or perhaps, brave Pallas, who sprang in full armor...(TRANSVESTITE pushes him away) Ooh, spirited nymph! Vixen wants to play games, does she? (he rests his head against her breasts, TRANSVESTITE gives him a slap) Passionate Amazon! (with open arms) come to Papa!

TRANSVESTITE pulls out small revolver from bag and jabs it at DON FAUSTO's stomach—the latter surprised.

What's...(he keeps his arms up, TRANSVESTITE casually goes through DON FAUSTO's pockets, take out his wallet and other contents, dump it inside her handbag. She then takes his watch and other jewelry over his protests.) This is an outrage! Here, here...I beg to protest, young woman! What

is the meaning of this? I shall report this matter to the *Society for the Preservation of Young and Chastened Virgins!* An institution, I would have you know, of which I am honorary chairman! I shall report this to the Mayor! To the Marines! To the Presi-...

TRANVESTITE thrusts revolver barrel into DON FAUSTO's mouth. He makes uncomfortable sounds.

TRANVESTITE gets his car keys, starts to remove Medal of Honor. DON FAUSTO makes louder noise. She looks quizzically at medal and is about to stuff it in her bag.

Simultaneous with above, EDDIE enters from behind, unnoticed by the other two. He is in a black leather jacket, half his face made-up. He takes stock of the situation, takes out a long switchblade and tiptoes behind TRANVESTITE.

With an armlock round her neck, EDDIE takes the TRANVESTITE by surprise, the switchblade against her Adam's apple.

EDDIE (to TRANVESTITE, *Bogart*): Listen Hercules, you wouldn't want to tickle that trigger unless you'd like to turn into a garden sprinkler! Now slowly put your arms up (*she does so, EDDIE grabs the revolver, jabs it against TRANVESTITE's back, stows his switchblade away*)

DON FAUSTO (*pleased*): Thank God, you came! Just in the nick of...

EDDIE: Yeah, that was a pretty touching scene I caught.

DON FAUSTO: Thank you! Thank you, my boy, for...

EDDIE: Don't mention it. (*EDDIE grabs bag from TRANVESTITE, to her*) Okay Superman, fly!

TRANVESTITE exits in haste.

DON FAUSTO: I don't know how to thank you, son (*pats EDDIE on the shoulder, the latter shrugs it off*) Why! You've just saved my life!

EDDIE (*John Wayne*): A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do.
(*walks over to bench and sits down, opens TRANS-VESTITE'S bag*)

DON FAUSTO (*sitting beside him*): What a hero, what a hero!

EDDIE: It's nothing...(*going through bag's contents*)

DON FAUSTO: In my day, you'd be given a medal for heroism...(*rambles*) Imagine taking on a...a...(*changes mind*) Who would have believed a lass like that could do such a thing! And did you notice that woman's size?

EDDIE (*busy*): Yeah...

DON FAUSTO: I shall recommend you to the President himself. He knows how to reward such deeds! If you didn't come on the scene, I would have been...(*shudders at the thought*) You're one in a million! Nowadays you'd expect everyone to be a crook, I'm glad there's still some valour left!

EDDIE takes out DON FAUSTO's wallet from bag. Looks over contents. Removes the bills and stuffs them in his own pockets. He then throws the wallet over his shoulder and looks again into the bag.

(*surprised*) That's my wallet!...(EDDIE takes the ring out the bag and holds it up in the light) That's my wedding ri-... (EDDIE puts ring inside his pockets and takes out gold watch) That watch belonged to my great-grandfather and! ... (EDDIE puts watch inside his pockets) was handed down to me by my father when I turned twenty-one...

EDDIE:...how considerate of him...(he brings out Medal of Honor, to DON FAUSTO) Is this stuff for real?

DON FAUSTO: I imagine so, the President himself gave it to me...

EDDIE (*goes back to bag*): That's no guarantee. Nowadays you can't trust even your own mother.

He puts medal in his pockets.

DON FAUSTO (*confused*): Wait a minute! I don't understand...

EDDIE takes out keys from bag, holds it up.

EDDIE: Yours?

DON FAUSTO: Yes, the car.

EDDIE: Where is it?

DON FAUSTO: In the parking lot, there (*points*)...

EDDIE: Let's go. (*stands up*)

DON FAUSTO: What is...

EDDIE: (*nuzzling up gun against DON FAUSTO's head*) Move!
(*he gets up*)

DON FAUSTO (*shocked*): I knew it! I knew it!

The two exit, EDDIE with gun against DON FAUSTO's side.

Blackout.

Scene 2

Pas De Deux

Radio hiss gives way to fast Fifties-style jazz—Miles Davis or music from Hitchcock's "Vertigo," and under.

In the darkness we hear the screech of car wheels, a sudden brake.

Lights reveal a deserted lot in the suburbs, a while later.

DON FAUSTO (*off*): Where are we?

Enter DON FAUSTO hands on head in surrender, with EDDIE behind him holding revolver.

(*worried*) Where are you taking me?

EDDIE: Okay, stop! This will be fine.

DON FAUSTO looks at the desolation round them.

DON FAUSTO: Where are we? (*EDDIE sits on a rock*) What are you going to do to me?

EDDIE (*piqued*): What's this, *Twenty Questions*?

DON FAUSTO: I demand to know why you brought me here!
You've already taken all my things!

EDDIE (*cool*): Listen, Mister, if you don't shut up, I'm going to plug you so hard, you're going to weigh a ton after.

DON FAUSTO (*hot*): You sniveling young punk... (*heatedly takes a step towards EDDIE. The latter fires a shot near DON FAUSTO's feet, who stops dead*).

EDDIE: One more step from you Grandpa and you'll be having tea with San Pedro.

DON FAUSTO (*tired but noble*): Can I at least put my hands down?

EDDIE: Alright but no funny biz, I get nervous easy.

Silence.

DON FAUSTO: You know you'll never get away with this, young man!

EDDIE: Get away with what?

DON FAUSTO: Kidnapping!

EDDIE (*aims revolver at his face*): You're calling me a kidnapper?

DON FAUSTO (*scared*): I... (*stops*) You may get your ransom money, boy...but your soul will burn in hell! I'm a very...

EDDIE (*relaxes revolver*): I know who you are. Who doesn't. How much are you worth Honorable Fausto De La Pasion, Ret.?

DON FAUSTO (*speculates*): A hundred thousand?... (*EDDIE aims revolver at him*) Five Hundred... (*EDDIE cocks gun, quickly*) A million, a million and a half! (*Scared*) Jesus, boy, I hope you know what you're doing!

Suddenly, EDDIE changes aim and pulls trigger. DON FAUSTO falls on his knees.

EDDIE (*with a laugh*): What makes you think I'm after money.
(*DON FAUSTO still shaken*) That's the trouble with the upper class, you always think people are only after your money. (*a beat*) What if I said that I'm only after...experience.

DON FAUSTO: What do you mean?

EDDIE: The thrill of a good clean kill.

DON FAUSTO (*soft but defiant*): Then you must be out of your head.

EDDIE: Aren't we all? I'm sure you've done some utterly insane things in your life, right? (*aims gun again*) Look back. Tell me, what's the craziest thing you've ever done in life?

DON FAUSTO (*after a pause*): I will not be played around with, young man! Go ahead! Shoot!

EDDIE (*laughs*): You're a tough old nut alright. Any last wishes?

A pause.

DON FAUSTO (*thinks, poses*): I'd like to be buried at sea. I'd like to double the number of scholars in my name. I'd like to build a new wing at the hospital. Open the Animal Sanctuary for everybody... a museum perhaps? (*starts to ramble*) Tell Greta, my wife, I love her. (*pause*)

EDDIE: Any other persons you'd like to send your love and kisses to? (*DON FAUSTO shakes head*) How about children?

DON FAUSTO: I do not have any children.

EDDIE: I remember having read about a certain son.

DON FAUSTO: I do not have a son.

EDDIE: Moritz Scott, I think his name is.

DON FAUSTO: Dead.

EDDIE: That's not what I remember.

DON FAUSTO (*exploding*): Damn it, boy! What are you waiting for... shoot!

EDDIE: What are you getting so touchy about? (*a beat*) Can't stand talking about your kid, right? Why d'ya hate him so much, you'd rather think him dead? (*DON FAUSTO keeps silent*) Look, old man, you'd better tell me a story before I lose my patience. (*the other man keeps still, EDDIE gets heated up*) Playing hard to get? (*EDDIE comes up to him and slugs him with gun butt, DON FAUSTO staggers to the ground*) Sorry about that. Now are you going to talk? (*DON FAUSTO does not answer, he gets another slug*) Tough cookie! Let's see how tough you are, grandpa... (*kicks him*) Cat got your tongue? (*a beat*) Hey, old man, get the choppers going! I don't want to finish you off this way...

DON FAUSTO (*weakly*): Kill me... (*EDDIE suddenly sits him up*)

EDDIE: You're a funny old man, do you know that? (*a beat, then points gun at his temple*) Say goodbye to all of this!

DON FAUSTO (*more to himself*): So this is it! So this is where it all ends. Everything I've slaved for the past seventy-five years. (*EDDIE relaxes grip, listens*) The army. Greta. The power. The cheating. The money. The glory. The medal... This is where the buck stops! At the hands of a common, low-life, good-for-nothing criminal...

EDDIE suddenly kicks him, again and again.

EDDIE (*rage*): I ain't no criminal!

DON FAUSTO (*weak but proud*):...the victim of a base hooligan...

EDDIE lifts him forcibly to his feet.

EDDIE: I AM THE VICTIM! (*shakes DON FAUSTO by the shoulders*) I am the victim! You are the criminal! You made me to be this way! I had no choice from the beginning! YOU had everything!

DON FAUSTO: I...feel...so...weak...Kill me, please...

EDDIE: STOP TELLING ME WHAT TO DO! All my life there's been somebody at my back telling me do this, do that! For Chrissake, give me a break...All you rich, powerful, well-educated, well-meaning shit-faced society-fucks! I am tired of being used! I'm tired of being abused...I'm tired of playing victim! (*starts to bawl*) I'm so fucking tired...

Blackout.

The sound of vultures crawling.

Lights come up, same scene - an hour later.

EDDIE is on his back staring blankly into space muttering to himself.

DON FAUSTO is sprawled, sleeping near him.

DON FAUSTO stirs. He lifts himself up by his elbows with great pain and effort. Looks around, sees EDDIE.

DON FAUSTO: Where...am I? (to EDDIE) Who are you?

EDDIE (to himself):...Tired...I'm tired...I'm tired...(again and again).

Dazed, DON FAUSTO manages to get on his knees. He sees the revolver on the ground, picks it up absentmindedly. EDDIE still catatonic.

DON FAUSTO: You...I know you from somewhere. I just can't remember...You...(taps him with butt of revolver)

EDDIE (faces him): I'm tired...(again and again)

DON FAUSTO (shakes EDDIE): Hey, young man...what's the matter with you? Hey...(shakes EDDIE harder, latter keeps on litany)

EDDIE: I'm tired...I'm...

DON FAUSTO: Hey boy, get out of it, boy...

DON FAUSTO shakes EDDIE harder, then slaps him hard, repeating the motion until EDDIE gets up.

EDDIE: Wha...what's going on...(sees DON FAUSTO, awakens from stupor) Huh!...what's happened?

DON FAUSTO: What am I doing here? Who are you boy?

EDDIE (fully aware): You don't remember?

DON FAUSTO: What? Did we have an accident? I'm hurting all over, young man. Can you help me up...(EDDIE does so, DON FAUSTO brings up revolver) Is this yours?

EDDIE: Uh, no...but let me hold it for you (DON FAUSTO hands him gun, EDDIE tucks it in his waist) Do you know who you are?

DON FAUSTO: Of course, I'm Don Fausto de la Pasion. And you?

EDDIE: I'm...(a beat) Scottie...

DON FAUSTO: Scottie, eh? What are we doing here? Did we have an accident?

EDDIE (quick): Yes...an accident.

DON FAUSTO: How did it happen?

EDDIE: All so quickly. I don't remember too much. Shock. I'm

still in shock.

DON FAUSTO: Poor lad...(*looks around*) Where's my car?
That's the last thing I remember, getting into my car and...

EDDIE: Yes, that's it! The car. The accident! I was crossing the hi-way over there...you came on very fast (*constructs it*) I was drunk and doped up...

DON FAUSTO: Drugged? Who did that to you...why, you're just a wee boy!

EDDIE: I have to take such things...If I didn't, I wouldn't be able to...do my work.

DON FAUSTO: Work? Not in school? What work do you do?

EDDIE (*drama*): I can't talk about it, sir...It's too embarrassing (*starts to cry*) That's...that's why I was crossing the hi-way. I was running away from *them*...

DON FAUSTO: Speak clearly, boy. You were running from whom?

EDDIE: The people who forced me to do stuff. (*mimes sex acts*) You know, so I could...survive.

DON FAUSTO: Terrible...that's a terrible story! (*EDDIE seems apprehensive*) Those criminals you work for should be hanged! How can some people stoop so low as to exploit children!

EDDIE: I want to change my life, sir. I want another chance...

DON FAUSTO: I'm glad you feel that way. That's the first step in the right direction. Come, help me find my car and then I'll take you home. I want to have a word with your parents!

EDDIE: I don't have any...I'm an orphan. My father died...on the electric chair—he was framed! My mother kicked the bucket soon after—from grief. She took her own life...(*mimes hanging self*)

DON FAUSTO (*shakes his head sadly*): What fate! But where's your house...with whom do you stay?

EDDIE (*quick*): I'm never going back there! (*inspired*) Where I'm treated like an animal. Forced to do those ungodly acts just to...make them money!

DON FAUSTO: But what shall I do with you, Scottie?

EDDIE: It's all right. Just leave me alone. Anyway, nobody cares. Nobody cares at all...I'll probably end up on the chair like poppa, roasted for some injustice...Or hanging from the beams like momma.

DON FAUSTO: Hush, young man! You should avoid such thoughts. Never, never, entertain negativity! (*a beat*) Maybe it's destiny that made me run over you. Accidentally, of course! You see, I have always been a champion against injustice in all of its forms!

EDDIE (*smiles shyly*): Maybe I wouldn't have turned out so twisted if I had a father like you...sir. But it's too late, I'm doomed by my circumstances. (*turns to go away*) Goodbye sir, thank you for running over me...

DON FAUSTO (*gets idea*): Despair not, young man! It's never too late...You have to be strong, you musn't give up so easily, boy. You've got to achieve a certain resilience of Spirit. You have to learn to rise above the forces of vice and inertia!

EDDIE (*weak*): Rise above the forces of vice...(then getting it) I will! Yes! yes! (*then*) But how?

DON FAUSTO: I shall adopt you! You'll be the symbol of everything I've worked for! My mission!

EDDIE: That would be wonderful, sir! It's everything I ever dreamed of!

DON FAUSTO: Come, my new-found fledgling! Greta will get the shock of her life when she sees you.

EDDIE: Who is Greta?

DON FAUSTO: She's your new momma, boy! And don't worry, I know she'll love you! Let's go and look for the car!

They start to go.

EDDIE: Ooh (*fishes something from his pocket*) Here are the keys...

DON FAUSTO (*stops*): How did you...

EDDIE (*fast*): Must have fallen out of your pockets...I found it on the ground beside you.

DON FAUSTO: Bravo, that's a good boy! Quick to decide, not afraid to act. (*a pause*) Forget the past, Scottie. I'll turn you into a God-fearing human being! A real man.

EDDIE: Can I call you Pop?

They exit.

Blackout.

Scene 3

Mama May Have

Radio static changes to the dramatic strains of the 3rd Movement of Rachmaninoff's "Concerto No. 2 in C Min for Piano and Orchestra" ("Full Moon and Empty Arms"), up and continues till next scene.

Lights come up to dim, we are in the projection room of the De la Pasion Mansion, a week after.

A screening is in progress, the projector light flickers at us. We find GRETA in one of the reclining armchairs watching a film in rapt attention. She is in a pink dressing-gown, powder puff slippers, ribbons and curlers in hair. Her face is buried underneath a thick layer of cold cream. She is eating popcorn.

GRETA (*in rapture*): Oooh, lovely...(sighs deeply) Oooh...how languid...(into film) go ahead! Follow me inside the desert tent...go on, slap me...more, more, MORE...(sighs again) delicious! Drag me, you...gorgeous hunk of a man...that's it! Hit me, more...more...now, now...(builds up) NOW! (*in ecstasy*) What a kiss! (*a beat, watching*) Ooooh...How brutal! Now drag me up the horse...

Unnoticed, DON FAUSTO enters, he is clearly in an excited state. He goes round to GRETA, watches the movie also.

GRETA (*continues*):...now ride off...off into the sunset! What a man!...what a body!...

DON FAUSTO: Who?

GRETA: Oh, Fuzzy darling...Where are you? I can't see you in the dark. When did you come in?

DON FAUSTO: Just now, Greta, My love...(starts to kiss her)

GRETA (*pushes him back*): No, sweetheart...I've cream all over me!

DON FAUSTO: You've what?

GRETA: My face...I've cold cream all over it...

DON FAUSTO (*sits near her*): Oh...

GRETA: Popcorn?

DON FAUSTO: No, thank you, my love (*a beat, looks for proper timing*) Greta angel, I've got a sur-...

GRETA *lets out an ecstatic sigh.*

GRETA (*still watching*): Oooh...isn't that divine! Oh, Fuzzy they don't make movies like this anymore!

DON FAUSTO (*distracted*): Uh, yes...this is my favorite film of yours—"Marietta of the Wilds".

GRETA: Darling, this is "*Aria of Passion*."

DON FAUSTO: That's what I said.

GRETA: Shame on you Fuzzy, you should remember this movie very well. After all this was my farewell film, my swansong from the world of "lights, camera, action!"...which I abandoned for you!

DON FAUSTO (*soothing*): I do, I do. Now as I was saying, I've brought somebody...

GRETA (*not listening*): Ramone...

DON FAUSTO: Who?

GRETA (*in reverie*): Ramone De Roman...my last leading man. Wasn't he...godlike! I remember him very well. We did ten movies together, the studio thought our love team wouldn't get off the ground. He was so tall, I was so demure. He was sooo big, I was so...so excited about working together with him again...It was tragic what happened to "Robust Ramone," as we you used to call him. Died under mysterious circumstances at a Y.M.C.A. pool handcuffed to a barbell...

DON FAUSTO (*impatient*): Greta! I've something important to tell you...

GRETA: This scene was all done with mirrors. Nothing in the movies are ever real! I remember what Hawks told me...

DON FAUSTO: Greta, he's here!

GRETA (*startled*): Who's here? Hawks? He's been dead for quite some time!

DON FAUSTO: No...the boy! Our new son!

GRETA (*frantic*): Finally! I'm going to meet my new baby!...but oh, I thought you were bringing him over for dinner!

DON FAUSTO: The retreat finished earlier than expected. Some boy fell off a cliff...

GRETA: A shame! (*a beat*)...But he's here and I look like an absolute fright!

DON FAUSTO: It doesn't matter, he's your son...not a casting director...

GRETA (*laughs at this*): Oh Fuzzy, you are in a splendid mood! (*a beat*) But I don't want him to see me like this...I want him to have a good first impression of me...(*delirious*) Where's Rosita?...

DON FAUSTO: It's alright, my precious...You'll sweep him off his feet.

GRETA: Are you sure?

DON FAUSTO: Certain!

GRETA: Oh, but I am nervous...(*a beat*) Did you pick him up from the retreat house?

DON FAUSTO: Yes, and according to the Reverend, he behaved perfectly. I knew a week there would do wonders to his tainted soul.

GRETA: Yes...what a sad little boy. Every time I think of what you told me about his past, I feel like crying my eyes out! When I consider the injustice he's been subjected to...

DON FAUSTO: That's why he's here! To prove that there is...Order in the Universe! And that there is God! A God of Love and Forgiveness.

GRETA: Oh Fuzzy, this is all very noble! I feel like crying again...

DON FAUSTO: No more tears, please. After all he's been through, he deserves your brightest smile.

GRETA: Yes, you're so wise Fuzzy. I can't let him see me all red-eyed and runny nosed...

DON FAUSTO (*getting up*): Should I call him in now?

GRETA: Yes! I mean, no! Oh, I'm absolutely on needles and pins...(*thinks*) Yes, now! So he can see the young me up there...(*points to screen*) and how talented his new mama is...

DON FAUSTO: And how beautiful (*kisses her hand*), and pure a soul you are!

GRETA (*flattered*): Oh Fuzzy, bring him in now! I'm dying to meet our little baby. We've kept him waiting far too long.

DON FAUSTO exits. Alone, tense, GRETA tries out several poses in her chair. She settles for a regal, queenly stance. Enter DON FAUSTO with EDDIE—they wear identical father-and-son outfits. EDDIE now looks neat, with his hair greased and parted.

DON FAUSTO (*to off*):...Yes, bring all the bags up to the blue room.

The two watch the picture from upstage.

EDDIE (*preppy*): Gee, a movie theater inside the house! This is neat!

DON FAUSTO: I'm glad you like it, my son. So...you like films.

EDDIE: Boy, do I!

They approach GRETA's chair.

DON FAUSTO (*pointing to screen*) Do you see that beautiful, heart-shaped face on the screen?

EDDIE: The one with moustache?

DON FAUSTO: No, the girl he's carrying off.

EDDIE: Yeah, she's nice also.

DON FAUSTO: That, my son, is the face of one of our country's beloved stars in the firmament of cinema.

EDDIE: She's not bad at all.

In the dark, GRETA looks tickled and delighted.

DON FAUSTO (*continuing*):...a celestial being, a sublime goddess...

EDDIE (*laughs*): Just look at the horse!

DON FAUSTO (*continuing*): She's your new mother my boy!

EDDIE looks surprised. DON FAUSTO brings him up to GRETA.

DON FAUSTO: Here she is *now*!

GRETA offers her hand, eyes squinting in dark.

GRETA (*sweetly*): Welcome...

DON FAUSTO: Well my boy, shake her hand.

EDDIE: I can't see her... (*to dark*) Good afternoon ma'am. My name is Scottie and I am honored that you have accepted me as a son...

DON FAUSTO: To your right, to your right...

EDDIE (*turns to right, mechanically*): Good afternoon ma'am. My name is Scottie and I am honored that you have...

GRETA (*sees his hand, shakes it*): It's a pleasure my...er, son.

EDDIE: Likewise. I'm sure...er, mother.

GRETA (*to DON FAUSTO*): Oh Fuzzy, he called me mother! (*to EDDIE*) please have a seat, my son. (*EDDIE does so*) Would you like some popcorn, son?

EDDIE: Yeah (*reaches for popcorn, grabs whole bag from GRETA, watches movie*) That's you, mother?

GRETA: Yes, Scottie...In the last film I made before I married...your new father.

EDDIE: What's it called...mother?

DON FAUSTO (*suddenly*): "Love In The River Yonder."

GRETA: Fuzzy no! It's "Aria of Passions," I just told you.

DON FAUSTO (*sits down, embarrassed*): That's what I said...

EDDIE (*points on screen*): Why are you in those pajamas?

GRETA (*laughs lightly*): Those aren't pajamas. I'm supposed to be a desert princess. (*remembering*) I made that movie at the height of my career. The critics said it was my best performance, ever. But then I met...Fuzzy, and the rest is history!

DON FAUSTO: She left all of that, Scottie, for love. It was a great sacrifice.

GRETA (*mushily*): It wasn't a sacrifice at all. I did it out of my own volition, out of my own true feelings for you, Fuzzy...

DON FAUSTO: I couldn't believe you could trade glory for me, my precious...

EDDIE: Sshh! It's getting interesting...

The two concentrate on the film.

GRETA (*a pause*) Do you watch movies a lot, Scottie?

EDDIE: Yeah, as much as I can... I even worked at a movie house.

GRETA: That's interesting. Doing what? A projectionist?

EDDIE: Nope.

GRETA: An usher? Or...

EDDIE (*simply*): I was a child hustler.

GRETA: What?

EDDIE: I used to sell it at the back rows.

GRETA (*shocked*): Ooh! That's awful...

EDDIE: Only during matinees.

DON FAUSTO: Greta, I don't think we should open up the past.

GRETA: I'm sorry Fuzzy, I didn't mean to pry. I just...

EDDIE: SSSHH! How can anyone watch a flick with all this racket?

GRETA and DON FAUSTO: Sorry, son...

A pause.

GRETA: Scottie, have you had the measles?

EDDIE: Nope.

GRETA: How 'bout mumps?

EDDIE: Yup.

GRETA: Do you catch a cold easily?

EDDIE: Only when it rains. You see, I once lived in a house with no roof.

GRETA: How tragic!

DON FAUSTO (*eating popcorn from EDDIE*): SSSHH! This is the last scene.

GRETA: My handkerchief, my handkerchief! I cry whenever I see how it ends...

The music wells up. The three begin to cry quietly. After a flourish the film ends...

EDDIE: Didn't turn out to be as corny as I thought (*wiping eyes*).

DON FAUSTO (*wiping his eyes also*): I hate tearjerkers, give me a war picture any day! (*signals to projectionist in the back*) Lights please!

The lights come up. The three continue to wipe away their tears.

GRETA: Crying's always a relief (*dabs eyes, turns to EDDIE*) Well my son... Aah!!! (*shock as she recognizes EDDIE*)

EDDIE (*with open arms*): Mummy!

GRETA *collapses into a faint.*

Blackout.

Scene 4

Frankly My Dear

Radio hiss fades to the sounds of the Litany of the Saints being recited, including the drone of the response, "Pray For Us."

Lights up in GRETA's bedroom, a little later.

GRETA lies unconscious on the bed. EDDIE looks innocently at her side DON FAUSTO is at the door.

DON FAUSTO (*to off*): Thank you doctor. Thank you very much,
I'll call you right away should anything come up...

DON FAUSTO comes back to room, joins EDDIE in contemplating GRETA. She starts to stir.

GRETA (*hallucinating*):...St. Peter, don't...St. Paul...St.
Andrew... the cross!...the cross!...

DON FAUSTO: She's still...dreaming!

EDDIE (*remorsefully*): It's all my fault.

DON FAUSTO: Don't blame yourself, my son. How could it be
your fault?

GRETA:...Sta. Maria Goretti, do drop by...

EDDIE: I could tell. Right away. She doesn't want me!

DON FAUSTO: Nonsense!

EDDIE (*wails*): Nobody wants me.

DON FAUSTO (*grips EDDIE's shoulder*): Get a grip on yourself!
You're my boy now and I won't have any son of mine talking
that way.

GRETA:...that was a lovely party, St. Claire...

EDDIE: But it's true. She doesn't like me.

DON FAUSTO: That's absurd! (*he goes to her, sits on the bed*) It was the excitement! She'd been on the edge since I broke the news to her. Greta was positively a-twitter when I told her we were going to have a new son!

EDDIE: Yes?

GRETA: ...tango...tango...tango...

DON FAUSTO: What I didn't tell you is that it was for her sake that I adopted you.

EDDIE: What do you mean, pop?

DON FAUSTO: We had a... (*with great difficulty*) son, once. (*then quickly*) But he's dead.

EDDIE (*innocently*): What did he die of?

DON FAUSTO (*suddenly piqued*): That's not important. What matters is that he's dead...

EDDIE: I'm sorry...

DON FAUSTO: It's alright. I just don't like speaking of him anymore.

EDDIE (*guilelessly*): What was your son's name?

DON FAUSTO: Moritz...Scott.

EDDIE: Like my own name, what a coincidence!

DON FAUSTO (*suddenly dreamy*): Not a coincidence, my son. But a sign from heaven. God is giving Greta and myself a second chance...

EDDIE: What?

DON FAUSTO (*snaps out of it*): Nothing...what matters is that you're here now. You're my son. And you're Greta's new baby.

GRETA: ...what's the whip for, St. Isidore...

EDDIE: But she doesn't care for me.

DON FAUSTO: She's just worked up anticipating your arrival. You can't imagine how desperately she's been looking for a son...for you, Scottie...

GRETA regains consciousness. She looks frantically around.

GRETA (*weakly*): Where...what happened... (*sees DON FAUSTO beside her*) Fuzzy...Fuzzy, I had the most awful dream...I dreamt... (*sees EDDIE, GRETA screams aloud*)

EDDIE (*to DON FAUSTO*): You, see! She hates me.

GRETA (*hysterical*): YOU! You...what are you doing here! What's the meaning of...

DON FAUSTO (*calming her down*): Greta, Greta...relax. I know this is just the excitement...

GRETA (*speechless, pointing at EDDIE*): What...

EDDIE (*to DON FAUSTO*): I told you.

DON FAUSTO (*to GRETA*):...you're scaring the poor child!

GRETA (*manages to speak*): But Fuzzy, you don't understand!

DON FAUSTO: Don't strain yourself too much, my dear. The doctor specifically said you should rest.

GRETA (*pointing to EDDIE*): He's...he's...

DON FAUSTO: He's your new baby now, Greta!

EDDIE flashes a charming, boyish smile.

EDDIE: Mum!

GRETA (*helpless*): Fuzzy... I must speak to you... alone...

EDDIE puts on a hurt face.

EDDIE: I've never been wanted.

DON FAUSTO (*puts arm around him*): Anything you want to say, you can say in front of our little Scottie...he is family now!

GRETA (*imploring*): Please, Fuzzy...for just a while, a few minutes...seconds...alone with you.

EDDIE (*mock-pain*): I want to die!

GRETA (*shrilly*): Fuzzy! I...I...

DON FAUSTO looks confused, first at EDDIE then GRETA, after a while he addresses EDDIE.

DON FAUSTO: It's alright, son! Mummy and I just have some... adult matters to discuss.

EDDIE: You're going to throw me out!

DON FAUSTO (*laughs*): Of course not, you belong to us now and nothing can change that.

EDDIE (*not hearing, acting*): Back to the streets again.

GRETA (*to EDDIE*): Will you just leave this room for a minute!

DON FAUSTO: Greta!

EDDIE starts to bawl.

GRETA (*in despair*): Oh Fuzzy! (*a beat, to EDDIE in a civil tone*)
Son...Scottie...Mama and Papa want to talk for a short while.
Why don't you go upstairs to your nice little room, fix your
things up...or (*suddenly screams*) BETTER YET, WHY
DON'T YOU...

DON FAUSTO: GRETA!

GRETA (*continues, sweetly*):...explore the rest of the house. We'll
call you back in a jiff.

EDDIE (*childish*): Say...please.

DON FAUSTO: Scottie!

*Reluctantly EDDIE exits. A beat. GRETA jumps out of bed, paces around
room. DON FAUSTO follows her around.*

GRETA (*furious*): I won't have that...boy inside this house!

DON FAUSTO: Greta, what's come over you. You were the one
who wanted to have a son...the patter of little feet around
the...

GRETA: Fuzzy, you don't understand!

DON FAUSTO: I do. Perfectly. You've just worked yourself up
too much over Scottie's arrival. In a few days, you'll be back
to normal...

GRETA: Fuzzy, we simply can't have him!

DON FAUSTO: Why not! He's perfectly pleasant young boy. I've
gotten to like him.

GRETA: Well I haven't...(*thinks*) I don't feel that he'll be right
for us!

DON FAUSTO: What do you mean?

GRETA (*helpless*): I can sense that he's...bad luck. That he's going
to...ruin us.

DON FAUSTO: Why do you say that?

GRETA: I...just...know it!

DON FAUSTO: In a few days you'll be more rational.

GRETA: No I won't! We can't have him! (*tries to sound collected*)

He has bad teeth. He looks like...he's malnourished.
He...hasn't received the Sacraments for ages...

DON FAUSTO: That's why he needs us. So he can change.

GRETA: Fuzzy Wuzzy, send him away. We'll find another...boy.
Someone who has good teeth, works out...

DON FAUSTO: I can't! I'm committed myself to developing the
moral backbone of that boy. I just can't send him off packing.
He'll die in that cruel world out there.

GRETA: But he just crawled in from nowhere!

DON FAUSTO: The more I feel responsible for him.

GRETA: He's only after money. One night he's going to garrote
us when we're sleeping, Fuzzy...

DON FAUSTO: I don't agree with you Greta. I can feel that there's
some ounce of good inside of him. And we're going to bring
it out...

GRETA: We don't need him! We have a son still! Moritz and he
still...

DON FAUSTO: I told you never to mention that name in this
house again! As far as I'm concerned he's six feet under the
ground. Worm's meat!

GRETA: I know we've discussed this still and argued over it a
million times...Can't you forgive him! Moritz was always a
sensitive child. He didn't mean to...

DON FAUSTO (*mad*): Stop it Greta, you promised not to open
the subject again...forever.

GRETA (*sits on her bed, almost to herself*): Moritz was such a
lovely child.

DON FAUSTO (*sits on other end, to himself*): He was a freak of
nature...

GRETA: So clever and witty...he had so many friends. I don't
remember a single weekend when he didn't have a friend
around...Those parties, the barbecues, those were glorious
days...

DON FAUSTO: He brought nothing but disgrace to my name...

GRETA:...was so handsome, especially when dressed up for those
costume parties in the pavilion...he became as resplendent
as the sun...

DON FAUSTO: I should have sent him to military school... those
frivolous ideas wouldn't have addled his brain.

GRETA: He was always at the top of his class at the *Feast of The Holy Innocents Academy*. A star athlete. The editor of the school paper. He left it for a liberal education at the University...

GRETA and DON FAUSTO:...that's when it stated...

DON FAUSTO (*continuing*):...the corruption...

GRETA:...he stopped bringing his delightful friends over...

DON FAUSTO:...actually hid those filthy creatures from us...

GRETA and DON FAUSTO:...until...

DON FAUSTO: Seven years ago...his 23rd...or 24th birthday...refused to hold the party here as he always did. Went out with those birds again. Then that call in the middle of the night.

GRETA:...The precinct.

FAUSTO:...A brawl at of those smut palaces. A raid. The shame was abysmal. The pain irreparable...(a pause) Caught in the act with a...

GRETA:...A twelve year-old boy!

Silence. GRETA solemnly gets up from her side, crosses over to DON FAUSTO. Sits next to him, wraps her arm around him like a baby. Instantly, DON FAUSTO begins to bawl shamelessly. GRETA pats him on the shoulder.

DON FAUSTO (*in tears*): I nearly killed him!

He regains his composure. Sits up, wipes his tears away. GRETA gets on her feet and continues.

GRETA: That boy will be my death!

DON FAUSTO (*back to self*): Greta, this is so unlike you. You're the one with the social causes...Besides, I know Scottie's different.

GRETA (*to herself*): I wish I could tell him...

DON FAUSTO: You should get to know him better first, before you pass judgment.

GRETA (*still to herself*): He will never understand...

DON FAUSTO: We owe it to our conscience. That boy's a victim of a society of which we are exemplars.

GRETA (*to herself*): Fuzzy will never forgive me, even beyond death...

DON FAUSTO: We shall heal his spirit! I'll call him in (*to door*) Scottie, Scottie! (*EDDIE suddenly jumps in*) Have you been just outside the door all this time? (*EDDIE nods gamely*) Naughty boy, haha... (*EDDIE sees GRETA, comes to her*)

EDDIE: I'm sorry if I've distressed you, mother... I mean, ma'am.

GRETA (*wanly*): Yes.

DON FAUSTO: I think I'd better leave the two of you alone so you can get to know each other better... (*he exits*).

EDDIE hurls himself into the bed. GRETA gets up icily.

EDDIE: Mummy!

GRETA: If this is your idea of a joke...

EDDIE: Mummy's still cross at me!

GRETA: Don't mummy me, you baboon! I don't know what game you intend to play but I'm warning you...

EDDIE (*comes up to her, close*): Now Mummy's really angry with her Scottie... Mummy's not in the mood to play with her little baby. Mummy should have seen her face when Scottie popped in a while ago! (*laughs like a loon, begins to embrace her*) Did Mummy miss her bittie-baby's...

GRETA (*tries to get out of his grip*): Let go of me... (*EDDIE looks at her malevolently*) I...can...kill...you!

She manages to push him away, EDDIE falls to the floor laughing.

EDDIE: Mummy wants to smother her Scottie! (*dances around GRETA*) Will she set little baby's crib on fire? Will she put a pinch of cyanide into baby's formula? Will Mummy drown baby in his bathwater?...

GRETA (*screams*): STOP IT! Tell me what you want. I'll give you, anything. Just leave us alone. Go away!

EDDIE advances towards her again.

EDDIE: The only thing I want is you! (*tongues her ear*)

Suddenly, she lunges at him with full force. both fall on the floor. She starts to claw and kick him. All the time EDDIE laughs, ducking the blows.

GRETA: Beast!

EDDIE breaks loose, holds up her arms.

EDDIE: Didn't you hear what Papa said, "We owe it to our conscience..." (*GRETA struggles*) "...to heal this victim of society..." (*she can't get away, she goes limp*) "...to uplift my spirit..."

GRETA (*weakly*): Please...go!

EDDIE lets go of her, walks around room

EDDIE: Just like that, eh? (*mimes it*) Open the door, walk down the stairs, and..."it's perfectly alright I can let myself out." Simple as that. You expect me to walk out the door into the streets and out of your life...just like that!

GRETA: Yes!

EDDIE: Now I ask you, lady. Why would I do such a thing. Why would I walk away from all of this! (*gestures at the surroundings*) My room upstairs! It's bigger than all the holes and sewers I've lived in put together! I even have my own johnnie. To scum like me, that's the height of civilization!

GRETA stares blankly ahead of her.

And where would I go, lady? Back to the streets? Where at every corner a punk lies in wait to slit your throat for the centavo in you pocket? It's a mess out there, lady! Do you know what's goes on out there? Seven year old kids are selling it...that's tourism for you! A taxi driver's gonna stick his ice-pick into you cause another guy stuck his in him last night! And you'd better not go running to a cop 'cause some hoodlum's got your index finger—unless you want to lose both hands! How many days do you think I can live on a hundred bucks? That's not enough for me even to crawl into a hole six-feet deep to die in...I ask you, why should I

leave all of this and go back to the WAR out there...simple as that! *(he advances towards GRETA again)* Answer me, lady!

GRETA *(weak)*: Because...it would be the right thing to do.

EDDIE: Fuck your right thing to do! Lady, I had a hard time getting here, and besides...*(becomes grim, to himself)*...there's couple of things I have to finish.

GRETA: Fuzzy...I'll tell him...

EDDIE *(laughs)*: Okay! Tell poor old Pop. Tell him everything. I'm sure he'd love to hear about Vito and his tango lessons. *(grabs her suddenly)* Or what baby Scottie did to Mummy...

GRETA: Stop...please...no...

EDDIE: Yeah, lady, tell him how I did this...*(pulls her hair back roughly)*...And this...*(twists her arm, kisses her neck)*...Or this...*(mashes her breast while kissing her)*...Or...*(she begins to respond freely and almost savagely to his efforts)*.

The two are in a passionate embrace.

GRETA: You...brute...*(sighs)* Devil...

EDDIE *(at it still)*: Mummy...Scott...*(GRETA quickly pushes him away, but EDDIE keeps his arm around her waist. Enter DON FAUSTO, sees the scene.)*

GRETA: Fuzzy...

EDDIE: I was teaching Mummy how to...tango.

DON FAUSTO *(pleased)*: Bravo! That's the spirit. *(to GRETA)* I knew you'd come around. *(to both)* Now we're one big happy family!

Blackout.

ACT THREE: THE FAMILY THAT PREYS TOGETHER...

Scene 1

Ecce Homo

Same as at the opening of the earlier Acts, we hear a radio being tuned from station to station. It settles on a newscast.

VOICE (*continuing*):...in another development, the Military has announced the capture of twelve suspected hit men in the employ of subversive...(*station switch*)...I would rather that my God-given gift to speak in tongues be transformed by the Almighty Lord into the power to be understood by all. So...(*station switch*) ...the most refreshing sarsaparilla soft drink in the na-...(*switches to The Cars' "Let The Good Times Roll," switches again*)...five retail outlets guilty of overpricing were padlocked by...(*strange static noise, then*)...the sightings were reported simultaneously in 8 areas throughout the country. The objects flashed in three different bright colors: red, green, and orange. The shape approximates that of a cigar...(*station switch*)

We hear the sound of a shower running, then the voice of the GIRL laughing.

Goes under the music of Strauss' Waltz 2 and party sounds: glasses clinking, light banter, etc.

Light reveals the sitting room, weeks after—one party evening.

We discover GRETA and EDDIE in an identical embrace as in the last scene—this time they are in elegant black formal dress.

After a beat, we see the pose is actually a struggle. Then, EDDIE pushes GRETA away. She falls momentarily to the floor.

EDDIE (*fixes himself before the mirror*): Enough! You'll get me all terribly mussed up again!

GRETA (*picks herself up, a wry smile*): Scottie, you don't have a heart at all.

EDDIE (*contemptuous*): I seem to have something that satisfies you enough.

GRETA crosses to him, slaps him. He slaps her back and goes casually back to fixing himself.

GRETA: How dare you lift your hand against me!

EDDIE: I'm sorry, I forgot you were my mother.

GRETA: You're repulsive.

EDDIE (*continues*): Can't blame me. You ain't exactly motherly.

GRETA peers into the mirror also.

GRETA: I shouldn't put up with any of this!

EDDIE: Hah, you are having a ball!

GRETA (*touches slapped cheek*): If I get black and blue again, I'll...

EDDIE (*menacing*): You'll...

GRETA (*stops, to herself*): You've ruined my make-up. Look!

EDDIE (*laughs*): You don't need make-up for that, you need a miracle from God.

GRETA (*under her breath*):...abominable scum...

EDDIE: You're the ancient cow who can't get enough of it.

GRETA grabs a vase nearby and hurls it at EDDIE, it misses him by inches. He advances in on her.

GRETA (*scared*): No, Eddie...

EDDIE: You need to be taught a lesson.

GRETA (*retreating*): If you come any closer...I'll...

EDDIE (*stops, laughs*): Call Fuzzy and tell him everything? Why don't you! (*a beat*) I'm sick of your threats! But you can't. 'Cause he's going to throw you out. Do you know what happens out there to useless, old hags? First they pluck out all their feathers. Then they get stuffed...then broiled...

GRETA: You're cruel!

EDDIE:...and you're very boring. (*preens*) How do I look?

(*GRETA keeps silent*) Admit it, I look good enough to eat.

(*he suddenly comes to her, grabs her arm and pulls her to him*) Would Mummy like a bite? (*grips her tighter*) Well?

GRETA: Eddie...Scottie, please you're hurt-...

Suddenly DON FAUSTO enters, he is contemplating a couple of letters in his hands.

EDDIE lets go of GRETA quickly, DON FAUSTO sees them.

DON FAUSTO: So this is where you're been keeping yourselves.

(*gaily*) So who's taking care of our guests?

GRETA (*star-like again*): Fuzzy, these people don't need taking care of...

DON FAUSTO: And you Scottie, are you enjoying yourself? After all, this party is for you...

EDDIE (*boyish*): Of course, father.

GRETA: He's lying. (*laughs*) He's utterly miserable (*puts her arm around EDDIE's*) as there isn't anybody his age. Right, son?

EDDIE (*mock shy*): Well...

DON FAUSTO (*laughs*): My fault. I thought it would be good for Scottie to mix with achievers, men of influence, people who shape the destiny of this land. Why, I'm sure the President would have come if...

GRETA: I'm glad he didn't. He and his wife always make everybody nervous. And those bodyguards, it's like feeding the guests at two parties at the same time...

DON FAUSTO: Well, don't you two think it's about time you joined the party again?

GRETA: Fuzzy darling, what are you reading?

DON FAUSTO: Oh these (*indicating letters*) just some appointments Gen. Batungbakal asked me to look over...

GRETA: Oh, that old man is such a prig! Trust him to bring his work to parties. At the *Vets' Summer Ball*, he did the same thing, and at...

EDDIE: Maybe a party's the only place he can get his business done.

DON FAUSTO: Bravo my boy, that's an insight! (*wistfully*) Can you imagine, it's been a month already. This party's for you on your first month with us and...

GRETA:...to meet all types of alligators, darling?

DON FAUSTO: To prove a point, my dear, that survival is the only rule. Whether you're on top or at the bottom of the pyramid.

EDDIE: That sounds...savage. (*innocently*) I thought as a person got up in the world, his compassion increases.

GRETA *raises her eyebrow ever so slightly.*

DON FAUSTO: Greta, what have you been teaching this poor, deluded, young boy.

GRETA (*all smiles*): Nothing he doesn't already know.

EDDIE: I do my best to...assimilate the best from the environment. Particularly from you my sweet mother and illustrious father.

DON FAUSTO: Scottie, my son, you impress me! All those words in just a month's time...

GRETA: He makes the most of all opportunities, right? (*tweaks EDDIE's nose*).

EDDIE: Yeah...I mean, yes mother.

DON FAUSTO (*puts his arm around EDDIE's shoulder*): Since you're such a bright young boy, isn't it about time we discussed your education? (*EDDIE begins to look panicky, GRETA takes cue*).

GRETA: Of course, that's the only thing Scottie lacks—an education.

EDDIE (*nervous*): No, ah...I don't think I'm ready for...such a big step.

GRETA (*the kill*): Don't be so self-effacing, lad. How many times you've told me in secret...that you want to go back to school.

EDDIE: I never...

GRETA (*continues*):...that when you were still a waif on the streets, you were envious of those other tots on their merry way to school, in uniforms, pulling bags on wheels behind them that were bigger than themselves.

EDDIE: But...

DON FAUSTO: Then you shall have what you wish! The best

education in the world. Tell me, son, when did you actually stop going to school?

EDDIE: At sixth grade.

DON FAUSTO (*muses*): Now that poses quite a problem...

EDDIE (*smiling*): Yeah.

GRETA: But darling, such great emotional yearning as we find in our dear Scottie, can break through any problem big or small.

DON FAUSTO: We could get him a private tutor so he can finish his basic and intermediate learning here at home!

EDDIE (*protests*): No! I'll only fumble it! I'm allergic to books!!

GRETA: Scottie darling, it'll be alright. We know you don't want to impose on us, but it's our responsibility to give you the best of everything!

EDDIE (*in a whisper*): I hate study-...ing.

DON FAUSTO: Then it's settled! You're going to get an education, my son. After all, I won't be here forever.

GRETA: Fuzzy, what are you saying?

DON FAUSTO: I'm turning 80 next month, that's not quite young anymore. Who knows?

GRETA: Now stop that. I won't have that kind of talk!

EDDIE: Why Pop? Think you'll bite the dust soon?

GRETA (*taps him on head*): Scottie, wash your mouth out with something! Your father will get to be a hundred and more.

DON FAUSTO: Greta, we have to be realistic. The point is (*pause*) when the inevitable happens, I want somebody to take good care of you and my sizeable estate... Somebody confident of himself and of his future!

EDDIE (*to himself*): I can lick anybody anytime!

DON FAUSTO (*continues*): Somebody who can make decisions quickly but wisely...

EDDIE (*to himself*): I knew immediately what tie to wear this morning!

DON FAUSTO:...somebody considerate...

EDDIE (*to himself*): Does anybody want shiatsu?

DON FAUSTO:...disciplined...

EDDIE (*to himself*): That settles it, no root beer for me any more.

DON FAUSTO:...and most of all, educated...

EDDIE (*to himself*): I...(stops).

GRETA: It just occurred to me that your great-grandnephew Zachariah would be perfect for that role.

DON FAUSTO: Bah! The pig's too timid.

GRETA: Or your second cousin, Anatole...

DON FAUSTO: Too profligate...

GRETA: How about Sammy, your godson...

DON FAUSTO: He's too short...

GRETA: Well that about takes care of everybody except for Mor...

DON FAUSTO: Greta, I warned you! Don't mention that name at all!

GRETA (*thinking*): Who then?

EDDIE almost does a song-and-dance.

GRETA (*noticing*): Yes dear, do you have to go to the looh?

EDDIE: No! I want to take care of you...And Pop. And continue his work when he writes 40...

GRETA and DON FAUSTO:...30...

DON FAUSTO: Well Scottie, you simply cannot underestimate the value of an education. (*EDDIE nods frantically*) We'll start as soon as we find an appropriate tutor.

GRETA: I have a great idea! (*EDDIE turns to her suspiciously*)

DON FAUSTO: What my love?

GRETA: I remember something you mentioned a few weeks ago. Concerning the virtues of a military education.

EDDIE: What...

GRETA (*fast*):...to prevent frivolous ideas from addling their brains!

DON FAUSTO (*lights up*): Yes! That's brilliant. A military education. To follow in my footsteps.

EDDIE (*protests*): No!

GRETA: We all have to make a sacrifice.

EDDIE: But I wasn't made to get up before sunrise, or parade in review, or peel potatoes, or be the target in war game target practice!

DON FAUSTO: You'll enjoy it tremendously, Scottie...You'll new friends, have good clean fun, adventure, see the world!

GRETA: Besides, dear, it won't be forever. You'll be back with us in no time.

EDDIE begins to sob quietly.

DON FAUSTO: Greta, we're really making a man out of him!

GRETA (*beaming magnificently*): Well, then, shall we all go back to the party?

Blackout.

Scene 2

You Ought To Be In Pictures

Radio hiss fades to "Bridge of the River Kwai" theme, up and under.

Lights reveal sitting room, one afternoon—a week after.

We find DON FAUSTO at his writing desk, with his memoirs. He is dressed in a house robe and pajamas. In the room are several objects covered with brown Manila paper, stacked standing against a wall.

DON FAUSTO (*writing*):...in the clearing of the forest, we lay there oblivious to the massacre going on outside the Fort. The morning sun glistened on her smooth, taut skin—the color of ripe *santol*. Her lips quivered tentatively as if in prayer. The curve of her...(*gets distracted as MAID enters with another package, she places it with the and exits*)...as her breathing welled so did her overly generous...

Enter GRETA in a tailored suit and dark glasses, she plops down on an armchair.

GRETA (*desperate*): Fuzzy, I can't stand this any longer!

DON FAUSTO: Eh?

GRETA: That's the fourth gardener we've lost in two weeks! And I don't blame them. We simply have to have that wall along the Animal Sanctuary repaired. The garden's a mess! Now we'll be forced to hold that *despedida* for Scottie in the pool area...and that means people will be jumping in and out of

the water again...Imagine the chaos! I wish I never had to give another party again in my whole life! (*a beat*) It's the wolves this time, they've dug holes up in my magnolia patch...poor little Daisy's remains would by now have all been finished up, had it not been for the warden's visit. (*a beat*) How are you doing with your memoirs?

DON FAUSTO:...the *Huk* rebellion and how my magic amulet protected me during the skirmishes...

GRETA: That's fab! We're at what part exactly?

DON FAUSTO:...where I meet the Guardian of the Forest, the Queen of the Fairies...

GRETA: How very mythical! (*looks around*) I wonder what's in those brown paper packages.

DON FAUSTO: I dunno. Ask Scottie. They're his.

GRETA: I did.

DON FAUSTO: And?...

GRETA: He wants it to be a surprise.

DON FAUSTO: He's a vivacious sort, isn't he?

GRETA: Too vivacious! It's going to be lonely here when he leaves for military school in two weeks.

DON FAUSTO: Yes, we've grown terribly fond of him, haven't we?

GRETA (*irony*):...terribly...I'm glad you were able to talk him into going to the *Ares Military Institute for Young Men*. I had the vaguest idea that he wasn't quite enthusiastic about the whole thing.

DON FAUSTO: I understand his initial hesitation. He couldn't bear the idea of white side walls and being separated from his new-found home and family.

GRETA: Yes...that new "will," bequeathing half of your estate to him, that gave him the final shove he needed, didn't it?

DON FAUSTO (*pleased with himself*): Just a wee bit.

GRETA: Scottie's the type who needs the right motivation. He's been out and about a lot lately. I wonder where he goes.

DON FAUSTO: The house does get to be a mite lonelier when he's not around.

GRETA: Yes. Does he ever get permission from you to go out?

DON FAUSTO: Always. Most of the time he says he'd like to pay a visit to his old haunts. To test himself, he tells me. He seems to be saying good-bye to his past, turning his back on

his previous hell of an existence.

GRETA: How very quaint.

Enter EDDIE, in neat preppy clothes but his hair is shaved. He carries a brown package much larger than the rest.

EDDIE: Hello dad (*kisses DON FAUSTO*)...mum (*busses GRETA*).

GRETA: Oh, we've just been talking about you.

EDDIE: It's nice to be remembered. (*sits, after putting package in with the rest*) What in particular have you been saying 'bout me?

GRETA: That we're both proud of you, and of your decision to go to that military academy, darling. You don't know how happy you've made us, especially your father.

DON FAUSTO: Truly, you are a man now, my son.

EDDIE: Oh yeah! I meant to have a word about that with both of you. I've thought a lot about it over these past few days. And I've decided (*pauses*) I'm not going to that school. Not to any school.

DON FAUSTO and GRETA: What!

DON FAUSTO: Impossible!

GRETA (*laughs*): You don't mean that, Scottie, do you? He's kidding us! Aren't you Scottie?

EDDIE: No.

GRETA (*serious*): You can't back out now! Arrangements have been made! You promised us!

EDDIE: My mind's made up. I've decided irrevocably.

DON FAUSTO: You musn't disappoint us, Scottie. I understand you can't bear to be separated from your Mum and myself, but you'll be home during holidays and all of summer!

EDDIE: I'm sorry. I'm simply not going.

DON FAUSTO (*exploding*): What do you mean you're just not going, young man! We've made a pact...I made special provisions for you in my "will" on the understanding that you were going to become a learned man!

EDDIE (*casually*): I don't want your fucking will!

GRETA and DON FAUSTO give out shocked exclamations.

DON FAUSTO: How dare you utter that word in front of your mother!

EDDIE: She's not my mother. (*matter-of-fact*) She's a hole like the rest of them.

DON FAUSTO: Hole?!

GRETA: Really, Scottie, I thought you'd changed!

EDDIE: I have. And I'm changing again. I'm sick and tired of all your *do this, do that, shit this, don't shit that...*

GRETA: Scottie!

EDDIE: I'm tired of you and your dried up udders.

DON FAUSTO: Why, you insolent...

EDDIE (*interrupting*): And pop, I'm sick and tired of the way you treat me.

GRETA: Eddie...I mean Scottie! Don't be unfair. Fuzzy's been extremely generous with you. He's given you food, clothes, your own room...

EDDIE: Yeah, the food he gave...I've shit it all away. As for my clothes? (*he starts to take his shirt off, throws it at DON FAUSTO*) Take it!

GRETA: Wha...this is an outrage!

EDDIE then takes off his shoes, his pants. He's left in his undies.

EDDIE (*continues*): You know what you could do with the room?...

DON FAUSTO: Scottie, what's the meaning of this?

EDDIE: The meaning of all this, old man, is that the moment of truth has arrived.

GRETA: Eddie...Scottie, don't do this! At least not to Fuzzy, who's loved you like a real son.

EDDIE: Listen lady, the old bugger never loved me. He used me to prove his points. About how noble he is. He made me the target of his eternal philanthropy. A specimen like the other animals in your private zoo. Yes, he's given me sanctuary, but by turning me into a chimp!

GRETA (*in a whisper*): Eddie, don't be foolish! You're ruining your future!

EDDIE: It's my future!

DON FAUSTO (*mad*): Greta, why are you whispering to this

ungrateful stranger?

GRETA (*screams, not minding husband*): And what are you going to do? Back there in the streets?

EDDIE (*smiles*): I haven't quite thought about it...(*looks at the packages*) But throughout this week I've been thinking—I want to become a photographer!

GRETA (*confused*): What?

DON FAUSTO: Why, the boy's a raving loon!

EDDIE: Not quite. (*points to packages*) I'm sure you've been dying to know what's in these packages. (*to GRETA*) You, take a guess! (*she does not answer, to DON FAUSTO*) How about you, would you like to take a shot at the pot?

DON FAUSTO: I don't find this the least bit amusing! If you're determined to make a fool of yourself and destroy your only real chance in life, the doors are wide open.

EDDIE: I will, but not until I'm done with my act. (*a beat*) As I was saying, I'm sure you two are dying to find out what's in Scottie's mystery packages...(*pause*) Simple. Just Art!

GRETA: Eddie, please...

DON FAUSTO: Who's "Eddie"?

EDDIE: Will soon be answered, pop. Like all your other questions. Now...I said those packages contain (*announcing*) lowbrow, vulgar Art! Art with no pretensions to being haute, whatever that fucking means. (*grabs the biggest package and holds it in front of the two, back to audience*)

GRETA (*getting up*): I don't think I want to stay...

EDDIE (*pulls out revolver*): STAY! I don't want either of you to move while I'm performing.

GRETA (*whisper*):...Insane...

EDDIE (*tucks gun in waist*): As I was saying...in front of you folks is a perfect of personal art. Art not meant to uplift one's soul, or win awards, or live forever. Vulgar art, if you will. *Artum vulgareum*. Now I'm sure both of you genteel society folks wouldn't know what vulgar art is if it pissed on you. That's the *raison d'être*—did I say that perfectly?—of this demonstration...I wanted to mount an exhibit of all my works on the theme, but time does not permit us the pleasure. Now, for the sake of my two dilettante, erstwhile parents, I have chosen a representative piece whose subject matter I'm

sure will be of singular interest to both of you. And now... straight from the bowels of hell... may I present... (*tears paper off picture*) "Voila!," the art of RAGE!

We do not see what is on the picture but shock registers on DON FAUSTO and GRETA's faces.

(*continues, darker*) Don't you just think I've captured the spirit of my vision? See the lines, the contours, the tones and textures... the play of light and shadow... it's redolence... it's juiciness, ready to jump out of the frame and devour your soul!

Silence. EDDIE takes his place between the two and sits contemplating the picture, after a while.

EDDIE (*in thought*):...how lifelike...

DON FAUSTO (*weakly*):...Greta, is that you?

GRETA (*tears*): Fuzzy, forgive me...

A few moments pass.

DON FAUSTO (*recovered, businesslike*): Greta, there are no words to describe how I feel. I'm sure you know this is the end of our... (*he stops in the middle of his sentence and clutches his chest, he collapses on the floor*).

GRETA (*screams*): Fuzzy! (*she kneels beside him crying*).

Blackout.

We hear the sound of a shower running, the GIRL humming the same song.

Lights come up upstage, we see the shower scene in the prologue, the whole tableaux—he dark figure, the knife ripping the curtain, black-out and the scream.

Lights come up again same scene.

EDDIE is now beside GRETA feeling DON FAUSTO's pulse. Let's go of the wrist.

EDDIE: He's still alive!

GRETA (*hysterical*): You're mad...mad! (*looks around then screams*) ROSITAAH! (*she screams the name again and again, EDDIE just sits comfortably in armchair humming "God Bless The Child", after a while*)

EDDIE: Lady, are you through? She ain't coming. Nobody's coming at all. You see, before I came up here, I dismissed them...all, with three months pay to splurge. (*GRETA looks at him nervously*) Yes, you're right. We're all alone in this big, sprawling house...(sweetly) Our house. Just pop and mom and little Scottie.

Suddenly, GRETA screams like a wild beast—it goes for a while, EDDIE comes up to her and shakes her shoulders, she persists, he slugs her. She slumps on the floor unconscious.

EDDIE then takes a peek at DON FAUSTO—who, though he can't move, opens his eyes alertly.

That's good...I want you awake. It's too bad, pop, you can't move. But this isn't my fault. Remember? It ain't nobody's fault, that's what you said. Yeah, blame it on society. Anyway you can still hear, right? Oh don't worry about Mummy she's just resting. (*a beat*) Yeah, I need you awake. I've got a story to tell that I'm sure you'll find interesting...

As EDDIE starts to reminisce, the lights dim except for a spot around the three.

Picture this...A young boy, 'round twelve or thirteen. He's got no home. Been in seven homes actually, but couldn't stand any of them...one was a family where, each night, drink turned everyone to thoughts of murder...another had a weird father who took off your clothes and tied you to the bathroom faucet each time he went to work...then there was the mother who made you pump water from the fire hydrant

three times daily, made you clean up after everyone, do the bathroom floor and truly dirty laundry... (to DON FAUSTO) Am I boring you?

Anyway... this kid. Of course, he runs away. And lives in the streets. Supping in hell's kitchen, in the company of all those penny-ante bums. The knifers, meat dealers, fairies, the whole gang of celebs... One night, at the park—though if you're lucky you get to sleep in someone's pad, though not for long, as somebody's mom or aunt is always bitching about the kid sleeping on the stairs —...

Hey, don't get me wrong. This kid's got some brains. With a street sense beyond his sixth grade learning. He ain't bad looking either. And that's not just the local beautician talking. But he wasn't selling. Instead, he pushed newspapers day in and out. But in the streets, nothing lasts. Somehow he lost the job and it was back to waiting for crumbs...

Then one night... this kid hadn't eaten for days so he was pretty sick... one night in the park... a rich guy comes up, and takes pity on the little bird. The kid gets to eat and is given new clothes, etc. I'm sure you know the rest of the program.

Well, one night the big guy brings the boy to a bar. They're boozed and doped to their ears. There's a raid and next thing you know, they're behind bars. The boy's only twelve. Rich guy gets bailed out by his big shot pop. Kid's left behind. You know what they do to little boys inside them joints? What's worse is that the little boy doesn't get out of there until days after. Count days. Count centuries. (*thinks*) I never saw Moritz again after that but...

GRETA regains consciousness, sits up.

...the bigshot who picked him up that night, I see him all the time... on television... the news... he's as big as Christ Himself... (to DON FAUSTO) Well it's an honor to see you in person, sir. It's a privilege to be able to fuck your wife.

And be buggered by your son. When you think about it, I really am part of the family. *(a beat)* Almost...I nearly got you once...last year...but you got ahead of me when...

Suddenly GRETA grabs the gun from EDDIE's waist, points it shakily at him. EDDIE just laughs. He sits, GRETA kneels before him.

Well Mummy...I'm glad you're back.

GRETA: I'm going to kill you!

EDDIE: Go right ahead, lady. I've been asking for it. All my life.

GRETA nervous, pulls the trigger slowly, the gun goes off. It misses EDDIE, who just shuts his eyes. GRETA drops gun, he picks it up.

You missed your turn. Now it's mine...

GRETA in shock just watches as he advances.

(to DON FAUSTO) I don't want you to miss this! *(to GRETA)* I'm going to do to you what they did to that poor little boy in jail...What Moritz did to...

GRETA: No...

Blackout, we hear GRETA scream.

Scene 3

Baby Makes Three

Radio hiss, fades to highly synthesized music, up and under.

Lights up, the gardens, one afternoon—a few days after.

GRETA, looking wan and pale, is talking to a neighbor (the audience) down stage. Up, we see EDDIE in a sporting outfit with a volleyball, with him is DON FAUSTO expressionless in a wheelchair.

GRETA (*to audience*): Yes, we're fortunate that nothing else happened (*thinks*)...the burglars didn't take anything too valuable. I think they got scared when Scottie brought out his gun. The worse thing, of course, is what they did to poor Fuzzy. The attack could have killed him, the doctor said. But Fuzzy seems determined...even possessed, to live...

EDDIE runs around DON FAUSTO, grabs the ball from the latter and runs back.

EDDIE (*to DON FAUSTO*): Catch...you mindless nincompoop!
(*throws the ball at him*).

EDDIE goes back to DON FAUSTO and repeats the ball-throwing scene.

GRETA (*to audience*):...yes, they've grown to be so attached to each other. Father and son. (*a beat*) Glad that Rosita came back a few days after. Said she felt something bad was coming. She takes care of Fuzzy's little needs. Scottie takes care of boosting his morale...

EDDIE (*throws ball at DON FAUSTO*): Look alive...fairy stepfather...shape up!

GRETA (*to audience*):...no, can't afford to send Scottie away to school anymore. Not after all of this. Fuzzy and I need him. (*a beat*) It's funny, I've never felt as old as I do now in my whole life. I feel ancient.

EDDIE (*same*): Damn you...old friggin' fool!

GRETA (*to audience*):...I've quit all of my posts. It's the only proper thing to do, Scottie said. Scottie also says that we should stop the parties. It would seem obscene with Fuzzy like a vegetable and all.

EDDIE (*to DON FAUSTO*):...turd-faced monkey...play!

GRETA (*to audience*):...Fuzzy always said that Scottie was heaven-sent. Actually I wouldn't know what to do if he wasn't around. (*starts to cry*)...I'm so desolate...

EDDIE (*to GRETA*): Mummy, mummy! We'd better go in! It looks like rain...(he wheels DON FAUSTO in).

GRETA (to EDDIE): Coming dear...*(to audience)* I have to be going. Scottie will be cross if I get wet and sick. I don't want to be a burden...*(exits running offstage)*.

The sound of thunder and rain falling.

Blackout.

Scene 4

My Cup Runneth Over

Radio hiss changes to Charles Gounod's "Funeral March for A Marionette," better known as Alfred Hitchcock's TV series theme.

Goes under the sound of heavy rainfall and thunder.

Lights go up sitting room. That night.

We see DON FAUSTO in his wheelchair, still catatonic. He is in elegant formal attire.

In her chair, we find GRETA—also in formal garb but somehow looking shabby and grotesque.

GRETA (to DON FAUSTO, in a trance): Fuzzy. Remember the time we were in Rome? We went to visit the Pope...what was his number? What fabulous stones. We were so happy then...*(a beat)* Fuzzy, do you know how much a kilo of pork now costs to buy? Meat is positively sinful...*(a beat)* Your mother never approved of me. Yes, she was always pleasant and concerned but I could always tell she hated my guts. She thought I was just another tramp actress out to hook a millionaire. Honestly, Fuzzy, I liked you for yourself before anything else. *(a beat)* Did I tell you the President called, asking how you were. I said you were fine but a little depressed. He sends his regards...*(a beat)* The only thing I

detest about you is the way you cold-bloodedly dismissed Moritz from your consciousness. I never suspected you could be that unfeeling. I must confess something, now that you can't bellow and harp...Moritz and I correspond regularly. He lives in his own flat in Venice. A two-storey affair with an excellent view of the canals. His friend's name is Fritz. Sounds like a fairly decent fellow, into agriculture...*(a beat)* Honestly I don't know why you went crazy last year. I wasn't quite sure if it really was because of your retirement. What caused those army folk to come barging in here at three in the morning looking for you. They said something about a summons from the President. You were never the same after that meeting. I wish you could tell me what that was all about...*(a beat)* You may hate me, Fuzzy, for everything that happened between Scottie and me...between you and me. But I couldn't help...myself. Believe me, I still love you. *(a beat)* The only thing I want now is for the world to leave us alone...to grow old together...peacefully...quietly...just like in the movies.

Enter EDDIE wearing a black tux along with the Medal of Honor round his neck, the golden ring in his finger and the pocket watch in his suit. He carries a bottle of champagne and three glasses.

EDDIE: Well, and how are my little wards?

GRETA *(deferentially)*: Good evening, son. *(after a pause)* Your father wishes you the same...

EDDIE *(puts champagne and glasses on table)*: Really! I'm sure you both wish me dead.

GRETA: Really, Scottie, let's not be unfair. We both love you dearly.

EDDIE: And what about this? *(EDDIE brings out a little sack out of his coat pocket, he opens it and throws out a dead scorpion)* Is this how much you care for your little Scottie?

GRETA: Gosh...I'm sure nobody had anything to do with that dreadful thing. Must have crawled through your window by accident.

EDDIE: I found it in my room. Inside an innocent-looking jar of orange marmalade, which you know to be my favorite, sweet mother.

GRETA (*innocent*): Fuzzy, you're not trying to imply that I had anything to do with...

EDDIE: You're the only one who knows about that particular secret of mine. Anyway, I'm getting used to your tricks. Such as the time I found a cobra between the sheets.

GRETA: You're becoming paranoid, my son. After all we are right beside the Animal Sanctuary of your father.

EDDIE: Never mind, let's not discuss it any longer. Topic closed. (*looks at DON FAUSTO*) And how is he today?

GRETA: Oh... (*bluffs*) He's agog with excitement over tonight. Tell me, Scottie, why did you make us dress in our Sunday best?

EDDIE: We're celebrating.

GRETA: Oh goodie, I love celebrations. Tell me, what are we celebrating?

EDDIE: A murder.

GRETA (*confused*): Scottie... (*laughs nervously*) you were always one for kidding around.

EDDIE (*pops bottle of champagne*): I'm not kidding.

He pours it into three glasses.

GRETA: Pink champagne, how delicious! (*to DON FAUSTO*) Look, Fuzzy, our boy's pouring us some bubbly!

EDDIE hands her a glass.

EDDIE (*approaching DON FAUSTO*): What shall we drink to?

GRETA: Why not...to Life?

EDDIE: No...to Death. That's more appropriate, I believe. (*raises glass*) Here's to...a slow and extended death (*EDDIE gulps his, GRETA warily drinks hers. He goes over to DON FAUSTO*) Drink up old man. (*he pours contents of glass over DON FAUSTO's head, GRETA starts to protest*)

GRETA: Scottie...

EDDIE: I just thought dad shouldn't be left out because he's a vegetable.

GRETA: That's a monstrous thing to say! (*comes up to DON FAUSTO and wipes him up*) If he were able, he'd...

EDDIE: Mummy, I'm getting sick and tired of your constant "if he were able to"s. It's a bore. Pop's getting his and that's that (*he pours the contents of his glass over DON FAUSTO again*).

GRETA: I hate you when you act like a child, Scottie. You've got no respect at all for the elderly.

EDDIE: Well, screw respect. In fact, all you elderly people do is respectfully screw me.

GRETA (*takes hold of DON FAUSTO's wheelchair*): If you're going to be mean again tonight, Fuzzy and I will be going to bed. (*to DON FAUSTO*) C'mon Fuzzy dear, it isn't turning out to be a nice party.

GRETA *begins to wheel him out.*

EDDIE: You're not going anywhere, until I tell you to do so.

GRETA: We're not going to...

EDDIE *brings out his switchblade, and brandishes it in the air.*

EDDIE: You wouldn't like me if I'm cross...

GRETA *halts, after a beat she goes back to her chair. A pause, then...*

GRETA: You said we were celebrating...

EDDIE: Yes, a murder.

GRETA (*matter-of-fact*): So you're finally going to kill Fuzzy and me.

EDDIE: I haven't decided really. I have this muscle ache in my left arm.

GRETA: You should have applied some *Balm of St. Vitus*. It always works wonders on my arthritis, especially in this weather.

A moment of silence.

EDDIE: Actually we're not celebrating a "murder to come." We're celebrating a "murder past." One year ago today, to be exact.

GRETA: Anyone we know?

EDDIE: My girl, Suzie...

GRETA: The bird with the flowing hair.

EDDIE: Yes, the one that ended up as a jigsaw puzzle.

GRETA: The one that told you those lies about me from the Great Beyond? (*lifts up her glass*) Well, here's to you girl, wherever you may be. (*she drinks*) Do you know who killed her?

EDDIE: Yes, quite well. (*stands up, walks around the room*) The murderer is in this room.

GRETA: How vérrry Agatha Christie. Right, Fuzzy? (*to EDDIE*) I love thrillers.

EDDIE: I'm sure you do.

GRETA: Before I die from suspense. Who among us is it?

EDDIE: By the process of deduction, Dr. Watson, it should be obvious. I know I didn't do my little Suzie in. That means...

GRETA: Hope it's not me. Then it wouldn't be fun at all.

EDDIE: Stop interrupting. You're always interrupting!

GRETA: Sorry!

EDDIE: The murderer is...

Slowly, EDDIE walks around room, creeps up behind DON FAUSTO. He dumps DON FAUSTO out of his wheelchair to the floor.

GRETA (*getting up*): Fuzzy? (*a beat*) That's a laugh!

She goes up to DON FAUSTO, starts to help him up but EDDIE pushes her away.

EDDIE: Don't touch him.

GRETA (*laughs hysterically*): Fuzzy...a killer?! Oh Scottie, you really are a boob! Why, Fuzzy wouldn't hurt a flea. Let alone section a pretty young tart. That's the silliest thing I've ever heard in my whole life! (*laughs so hard she falls to the floor*).

EDDIE rushes towards GRETA and slaps her. She continues laughing despite this.

EDDIE: Watch it Mum, your laugh lines are showing.

GRETA (*still laughing*): I can't help it. Scottie, you are sooo naïve! Tell me, why did you single out Fuzzy from among the millions of depraved men out there on the streets.

EDDIE (*grimly*): I know he did it. Suzie told me.

GRETA: Where? On this plane or in the astral? For someone who's dead, she's a tattletale.

She laughs hard, EDDIE slaps her again. GRETA, continues laughing.

EDDIE: You've no respect for the dead.

GRETA: Still, I can't picture dear Fuzzy murdering such an impeccable tramp.

EDDIE (*almost to himself*): She was his girl for a while.

GRETA (*stops laughing*): I could believe that. Fuzzy is a very powerful man. And power is an aphrodisiac. (*a beat*) I'm no fool. I've always known there'd be others. Such is the price for being wedded to power. Must have been legions of pretty little lassies wanting to get into my Fuzzy's skivvies. But I really wouldn't know. My excellent Catholic education's always told me to look the other way.

EDDIE (*continuing*):...At first, she was doing him for kicks. Suzie used to tell me about all the johns she fucked around with. So did I. You see, we were more than fuck mates, we were family.

GRETA: How lovely to find a soulmate in this day and age!

EDDIE (*not minding her*):...She said she finally bagged a biggie. Somebody from the top of the shit pile. Someone with enough ooze and moolah to keep us off the pavements for a while. Suzie was a Capricorn-Scorpio. A stinger with the face of an angel.

GRETA: Too bad she's dead. I would have liked to meet her. Sounds very liberated.

EDDIE: Yes. You'd adore her. She's got a hard-working tongue. (*sticks out his tongue and makes obscene licking gestures with it*).

GRETA (*under her breath*): Beast! (*then brightly*) So, your dear Suzie saw my little Fuzzy as her ticket out of hardluck land.

EDDIE: Yeah. But she honestly liked him too.

GRETA:...And who wouldn't? Fuzzy's such a generous heart. I'm sure they had a perfect arrangement.

EDDIE: ...he was crazy in love with Suzie. And she didn't mind his being into...strange stuff. You know, chains and all. One time she showed me a cigarette burn on her left nipple. I wanted to bash his head in. But Suzie just laughed and told me she gave him one in the balls too.

GRETA (*remembering*): So that wasn't jock itch...

EDDIE: But then the games got rougher. Had to rush her to the *Ospital Ng Maynila* once. Seems like Pop here got carried away one night and stuck a Golden Buddha into...

GRETA (*interrupting*): My Fuzzy? That's sacrilegious! I really doubt if...

EDDIE (*continuing*): ...soon was getting bored with the routine. Suzie's not one for long affairs. Excepting with me...

GRETA: Loyalty's a sterling quality.

EDDIE: She wanted out but he was getting sticky. (*a beat*) And dangerous.

GRETA: Interesting tale, but your little ghost must be in a psychic mix-up. Besides, Fuzzy's long retired from the temptations of the flesh. Why, I even have to...

EDDIE: When she told him it was over, he couldn't believe it. First, he blew his top and smacked her on the lips. But she just laughed. Then he started to bawl like a brat in an orphanage. She said it was a sick sight seeing her big Papa-oh sniveling at her feet.

GRETA: Are you sure you're talking about my Fuzzy?

EDDIE: She asked if he wanted her to tap-dance with her stiletto heels on his back as he crawled around the room on all fours.

GRETA (*continuing*): ...the man can barely climb up the landing without getting a fit of apoplexy.

EDDIE (*continues*): But no deal. You see, when Suzie made up her mind that was it.

GRETA: I can respect that.

EDDIE: She even handed back the apartment keys and all the rich, expensive stuff he piled on her. Everything.

GRETA: Noble.

EDDIE: He said he'd do anything for her. Even leave a loveless marriage with his witch of a wifey.

GRETA (*with arched brows*): Really?

EDDIE: But she was on her way out. And he saw it. Finally, he said

he'd rather see her dead than...

GRETA: Your tale's great for a soap. But...

EDDIE (*goes center*):...so one night, after packing the stuff she came with... as Suzie was taking her shower, humming her favorite song...Pop crept into the bathroom...

GRETA :...and...

EDDIE:...brought out this knife for carving up *lechon*...

GRETA:...and...

EDDIE:...ripped the shower curtain...

GRETA:...and...

Suddenly lights go out except for a red spot on EDDIE. The shrill, piercing music from Hitchcock's PSYCHO come up. He starts stabbing into air in a frenzy, face contorted with rage.

GRETA lets out a voiceless scream, Janet Leigh.

After a while, music dies down and the lights come up. The two go back to their positions.

EDDIE (*matter-of-fact*):...113 holes in her. After which, he cut off her head. Sawed her off at her tiny waist and...

GRETA: Stop it!

EDDIE :...wrapped her up in a black garbage bag. And dumped her into a can. (*a beat*) The Honorable Fausto Dela Pasion Ret., a man who had everything, stole my only treasure. (*without a word, he walks towards DON FAUSTO and coldly kicks him. Still passionless*)...my angel...(kicks him again, DON FAUSTO groans)...the only person who made me feel like I was a human being and not an animal...(kicks him a third time. After a beat EDDIE goes center) That man murdered me!

EDDIE kneels beside him and plants him a kiss. GRETA crawls over to them and then hugs EDDIE, Pieta.

GRETA: Hush now, little one. Mummy's here...

They hold the pose for a while. EDDIE stares blankly into space.

Baby shouldn't fret. What does Mummy's little angel want?

EDDIE (*a kid, points to DON FAUSTO*): Bad boy. Can I... (*mimes slashing throat*) him?

DON FAUSTO *groans*.

GRETA (*beams sweetly*): But he's dead, little one. (*a beat*) Been dead a long time ago.

She kisses him on the forehead. Then the cheeks, then on the mouth. Gently at first, then with increasing passion.

EDDIE (*weakly*):...long time ago...

GRETA: I have a better idea. Why don't little Scottie and Mummy pack their bags and fly!

EDDIE: Where to?...

GRETA *points to off*.

GRETA: As far as your heart can see.

EDDIE (*weakly*): Disneyland.

GRETA: Yes, Disneyland! (*she tries to push him up*) Go on, that's a strong boy. That's my baby. (*kisses him sweetly*) Get your things ready. We leave everything tonight.

EDDIE: What about Dada? (*points to DON FAUSTO, who stirs*)

GRETA (*puts her finger near her lips, whispers*): The dead can't hear. Go!

EDDIE *exits*.

After a pause, we hear the sounds of a shower running.

GRETA *gracefully gets up. Stares at the audience, Swanson in "Sunset Boulevard"*.

Fuzzy, our little Scottie's a grown man now. (*a beat*) I'm afraid...the time has come for goodbyes.

Blackout.

In the dark we hear EDDIE's careless, youthful voice humming "God Bless The Child".

Lights come down to an appreciable dim, we see EDDIE taking a shower—as in the first tableaux.

We see GRETA, a dark figure approach the shower curtain from behind.

In her hand is a shiny sharp blade. She cuts slowly through the curtain.

Suddenly the lights go off, we hear the PSYCHO music and ripping sounds.

Then EDDIE's agonizing scream.

Total silence.

After a while, the hiss of radio static.

EPILOGUE

Radio hiss, gives way to the soothing passages of either the First Movement of Grieg's "Peer Gynt Suite" or Rossini's "William Tell Overture".

Lights up, the garden—one fine day.

We discover GRETA admiring the view and DON FAUSTO in his wheelchair—wasted, but serene. She looks radiant.

GRETA (*continuing*):...Fuzzy, our masterpiece is finally *fini*. Now our garden truly rivals any other in the world. One look and you know that God has kissed this land! See how our roses bloom. (*a pause, she goes up to a mound beside a riot of roses*) Scottie... (*sighs, then to DON FAUSTO*) At least, our Daisy will never be alone again. (*the slight murmur of distant*

thunder) Fuzzy, my dear. It looks like rain. Dark and ponderous nimbus...We should be getting in. (*takes an expansive breath*) This is Paradise! (*before they exit, she stops again*) One last look before we go in. It's nice to feel we have one safe spot away from the bustle of the world. Where we can grow old together, in peace. A sanctuary.

Blackout.

C U R T A I N