

POSITIVELY SHAMBOLIC

Written by

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Registered with WGAw

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TITLE OVER BLACK:

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FADE IN:

WIDE ANGLE - LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND - NIGHT

The city's skyline stretches along the bank of the River Mersey; the Royal Liver Building, Cunard Building, and Port of Liverpool Building dominating the scene. In the distance, we can hear the SONG "Night and Day" by Frank Sinatra (1942 version) begin to play on a radio somewhere, very low.

TITLE:

Liverpool, England

EXT. STREET - SAME

A deserted commercial street in an inner city neighborhood, lined with SHOPS and BUSINESSES which are all closed.

TITLE:

The Dingle
Thursday, 1:30 AM

EXT. ALLEY

behind several of the shops and businesses. There are several TRASH BINS along its length, and the run-down brick buildings on either side cast eerie shadows in the moonlight. The SONG continues playing in the distance, farther away.

ONE OF THE TRASH BINS

A couple of RATS are roaming around the bin, hunting for food.

ANOTHER TRASH BIN

A FIGURE is crouching in the shadows behind it, and we cannot see who it is. It watches the rats, then growls like a cat.

THE RATS

stop and look around nervously.

THE FIGURE

growls again, louder and more threateningly.

THE RATS

immediately scurry away in fright.

THE FIGURE

watches them leave, then emerges into the moonlight -- and it's a 7-year-old DARLA CHANDLER. It's been four months since she was orphaned and has been roaming the streets, and her face, hair, and clothes are filthy.

WIDER ANGLE

Darla steps out into the alley, carrying a big WOODEN STICK she uses for protection. She looks around carefully, then quickly goes to the bin she scared the rats away from. She lifts up the lid and rummages through the contents, then brings out some SCRAPS OF DISCARDED MEAT. She starts to eat hungrily when a man's VOICE suddenly speaks from somewhere behind her.

MAN (O.S.)

Sly, that.

At the sound of the voice, Darla swirls around to see a man standing in the shadows several feet behind her. He is FINNEGAN, a middle-aged homeless man. His clothes are even filthier and shabbier than hers, his hair is disheveled, and his face is craggy and wizened from years of leading a harsh and meager existence.

FINNEGAN

(continuing)

But it won't do much good 'gainst a fox if ya happen to run into one. I've seen 'em round these parts. 'Specially at this hour.

Darla holds up her stick threateningly and shouts at him.

DARLA

Stay away!

FINNEGAN

Oh, don't get yerself all in a tizzy. It's all yers, lassie. I've already dined for the evenin' and I'm fit to burst. So muck in, yer at yer granny's.

Finnegan makes no move toward her, and Darla watches him warily, still holding the stick high in the air.

FINNEGAN

Well, what are ya waitin' for? That grub in yer mitts ain't gettin' any fresher.

Finnegan removes a CIGARETTE from deep within one of his pockets and some MATCHES from deep within another pocket, and Darla watches as he lights the cigarette and takes a puff.

DARLA

I'm not afraid of ya.

FINNEGAN

Well, bless yer little cotton socks.
Yer a feisty one. Not afraid, are ya?
Maybe ya should be.

DARLA

Why?

FINNEGAN

Why? Have ya not heard?

DARLA

Heard what?

FINNEGAN

Folks been gabbin' 'bout it all day.
A wee little lass just like you was
eaten alive last night just up the
jigger from here.

Darla's eyes open wide, shocked by the story.

DARLA

Eaten alive?

FINNEGAN

Coppers think it might've been one of
'em foxes that did it... but I've got
me own theories 'bout that.

Finnegan offers nothing more, puffing on his cigarette, and
Darla watches him in disbelief.

DARLA

Straight up?

FINNEGAN

That's what I heard.

Darla considers the story for a moment, lowering her stick
slowly, then she starts to have doubts.

DARLA

How'd they find her if she was eaten
alive?

FINNEGAN

Found her eyeballs, they did. All
that was left of her, sorry to say.

Darla considers this too, and she grows even more doubtful.

DARLA

How do they know she was a girl if
that's all that was left of her?

FINNEGAN

They got their ways of sussing out
things, them coppers. Crafty buggers,
them.

Darla watches him skeptically, not convinced at all, and Finnegan starts to sing to himself, enjoying the brisk night air and letting her wonder.

FINNEGAN

My Bonnie lies over the ocean
My Bonnie lies over the sea
My Bonnie lies over the ocean
Oh, bring back my Bonnie to me.

DARLA

I don't believe ya.

FINNEGAN

Ya don't believe me?

DARLA

No.

FINNEGAN

'Bout what?

DARLA

'Bout the girl.

FINNEGAN

Oh, that.

(looks straight
at her)

Accusin' us of fibbin', are ya? Have
ya no respect for yer elders? How old
are ya, anyroad?

DARLA

I'm seven.

(defensively)

Almost seven and a half.

FINNEGAN

Almost seven and a half! Rather sure
of yerself for such a young 'un. That's
the trouble with nippers these days.
Think they know everythin'.

DARLA

Who are you?

FINNEGAN

Who are you?

DARLA

I asked ya first.

FINNEGAN

Aye, ya did, didn't ya? Well, seein'
as there ain't nobody 'ere 'cept you
and me, you can call me Finnegan if
ya like.

DARLA
That's yer name?

FINNEGAN
Ya got cloth ears or somethin'? That's what I said to call me, ain't it? Now why would I do that if it ain't my name? Answer me that, Little Miss Smarty Pants.

Darla doesn't reply, a bit chastised, and Finnegan goes on.

FINNEGAN
So what's yer name, if it ain't too nose-y of me to ask?

DARLA
Darla.

FINNEGAN
Darla, eh?
(eyes her critically)
Look right scrawny for yer age. Seen more meat in a priest's house on Good Friday. And ya won't get much bigger scroungin' for scran in them bins.

DARLA
So where do you eat?

FINNEGAN
Y'ever been to the docks along the Mersey?

DARLA
Yeh. Lots of times.

FINNEGAN
Well, that's not where I eat.

Darla opens her mouth to retort, but Finnegan immediately starts singing another song.

FINNEGAN
Oh you are a mucky kid
Dirty as a dustbin lid
When he hears the things that ya did
You'll get a belt from yer da.

DARLA
(interrupts him)
Me mummy used to sing me that.

FINNEGAN
(looks at her,
annoyed)
Do I look like I care? Do I look like I give a rat's arse 'bout that? Do I strike ya as bein' the least bit interested?

Darla says nothing, taken aback by his sudden cruelty, and Finnegan goes on to the next verse.

FINNEGAN

Oh, ya have yer father's nose
 So crimson in the dark it glows.
 If yer not asleep when the boozers close
 You'll get a belt from yer da.
 (stops; another puff)
 What's her name, yer mum?

DARLA

Caitlin.

FINNEGAN

Good Irish name, that. Bonnie lass she
 is, I'd wager.

DARLA

(sadly)
 She's dead.
 (a beat)
 So's me da.

Darla stares at the ground, downcast. Finnegan glances at her with a flicker of sympathy, then resumes his act.

FINNEGAN

Best keep outa sight then, lassie, or
 they'll make ya a ward of the state.

DARLA

(looks at him)
 What's that?

FINNEGAN

When they put ya in a dreadful hellhole
 with other miserable tykes who ain't
 got no folks and nobody wants.

DARLA

You mean like Strawberry Field?

FINNEGAN

Them places ain't fit for a jigger
 rabbit, much less a human bein'. Ya
 think the Queen would do somethin',
 but she's too busy takin' her tea.

DARLA

I was there but I escaped.

FINNEGAN

Well, yer not such a ninny after all.
 Did the right thing, ya did. Yer better
 off out 'ere on yer tod, like me.
 Better off fer sure.

(grins meanly)

As long as ya don't get yerself eaten
 and all that's left of yer earthly
 passage is yer eyeballs.

(MORE)

FINNEGAN (CONT'D)
 (recites children's
 rhyme)

"Yellow matter custard,
 Green snot pie,
 All mixed together
 With a dead dog's eye."

Finnegan puffs on his cigarette and gazes at the moon, and Darla decides that he's nuts.

DARLA
 You're potty.

FINNEGAN
 What was that again?

DARLA
 I said yer potty!

FINNEGAN
 Now why would ya say a thing like that?

DARLA
 'Cause ya are.

FINNEGAN
 (considers a moment)
 Maybe yer right. Never thought 'bout
 it before, but now that ya mention it,
 maybe I am potty. Never did bat on a
 full wicket.
 (stares at her)
 Maybe I'm mad as a bag of ferrets and
 I eat little girls for dinner. Except
 for their eyeballs. Too hard to digest.

DARLA
 Oh, stop it.

FINNEGAN
 Or maybe yer the potty one. Now there's
 a thought. Distinct possibility, I'd
 say. Y'ever think of that?

DARLA
 I'm not potty.

FINNEGAN
 Maybe it's you who's potty, eh? You'd
have to be, sittin' here an' chewin'
 the fat with an old nutter like me.
 Most folks behave like I'm not even
 'ere. Maybe that's 'cause I ain't.
 Maybe ya just think I am.

DARLA
 Yer here.

FINNEGAN

How do ya know?

DARLA

'Cause I'm talkin' to ya.

FINNEGAN

That doesn't prove a thing. Maybe yer just imaginin' me. Maybe I'm in yer head. Maybe I'm just a voice in yer head.

DARLA

I'm not imagining you!

FINNEGAN

(another children's rhyme)

"I saw a man who was not there. He was not there again today. I wish that man would go away."

DARLA

I'm not imagining you!

FINNEGAN

Oh, stop yer whinging. Yer as potty as I am. Nothin' to be ashamed of, lassie. Everybody's potty. Even the Queen. I'm potty, yer potty, we're all potty.

DARLA

You sound like the Cheshire Cat.

FINNEGAN

Cheshire who?

DARLA

Cat. He talks to Alice.

FINNEGAN

He does, does he? And who might this Alice be, may I ask? She from round these parts?

DARLA

(getting more exasperated)

From the story. You know.

FINNEGAN

No, I don't know. Can't say that I do. Never heard of this Alice or Cheshire Rat.

DARLA

CAT!

FINNEGAN

Him too. Never heard of any of 'em. Knew a fox from Sheffield once, back when Noah was a lad, but no Alice or rat or cat. And I happen to know for a fact that cats don't talk, and I'm fairly certain rats don't either. So I'm not entirely sure these folks yer blabberin' 'bout exist at all. Might they be more of them voices in yer head?

DARLA

(clutches her head)
Would ya stop?? Yer doing me head in!

FINNEGAN

'Tis not me, lassie. 'Tis them voices in yer head that are doin' it in.

Darla opens her mouth to shout at him in utter frustration, but she stops as she sees the twin beams of HEADLIGHTS illuminate the mouth of the alley as a POLICE CAR patrolling the area passes by along the street.

DARLA

It's the bizzies! We've gotta scarper!
Let's --

Darla stops again as she turns back to Finnegan only to find that he's no longer there. She looks around in all directions, but he's gone, and we wonder if she did imagine him after all. But then the headlights illuminate the alley again as the police car comes back around, and she scurries off and disappears into the night, just like the rats.

FADE TO BLACK

TITLE OVER BLACK:

June, 1966

FADE UP:

WIDE ANGLE - MARSEILLES, FRANCE - NIGHT

The city and its port stretch out before us, thousands of glinting lights reflected in the black waters of the bay.

TITLE:

Marseilles, France

EXT. MANSION - SAME

A structure built high up on a hilltop overlooking the city below. In the distance, we can hear the SONG "Strangers in the Night" by Frank Sinatra begin to play, very low.

TITLE:

Roucas Blanc
7th Arrondissement
8:30 PM

CLOSER ANGLE

The SONG is a bit louder now as we see a FIGURE dressed all in black and wearing a ski mask stand at the foot of one of the walls that encloses the mansion's grounds. The figure tosses a ROPE with a HOOK over the top of the wall, secures it, then starts to climb up.

EXT. MANSION GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

A REVERSE ANGLE on the wall as the figure comes over the top and drops to the ground, landing behind some bushes. The figure hesitates, crouching low and looking around, then quickly moves off, staying close to the ground.

The figure scurries through the bushes and gets closer and closer to the rear of the mansion, pausing behind one tree before moving on to the next, advancing carefully but steadily. All the while, the SONG continues to play somewhere.

The figure reaches another tree and stops there. There is a guard house nearby, a small structure adjacent to the rear of the mansion, and the figure watches it.

INT. GUARD HOUSE

A GUARD sits at his post, quite relaxed, his feet up on the desk in front of him. In his hands is a copy of the latest issue of PARIS MATCH MAGAZINE, which he is reading to pass the time. Cradled in his lap is a MAT-49 SUBMACHINE GUN. And on the desk, next to his feet, is a small AM TRANSISTOR RADIO, and it's what's playing Sinatra.

THE FIGURE

watches the guard house from behind the tree, then moves off.

INT. GUARD HOUSE

The guard hears a noise and lowers his magazine a bit. He listens for a moment, then decides he imagined it and goes back to reading.

THE FIGURE

ducks and hides behind yet another tree, even closer to the mansion and the guard house.

INT. GUARD HOUSE

Once again, the guard hears something, and this time he's more certain of it. He puts down the magazine and turns off the radio, then listens carefully. Then he grabs his submachine gun and gets up and goes outside.

EXT. GUARD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The guard steps outside and stops, his weapon held ready. He listens again and looks around, peering into the darkness. Suddenly, a DART strikes him in the neck and he falls to the ground, out like a light. The figure comes up to him and confirms he's unconscious, then drags him back into the guard house.

INT. GUARD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The figure deposits the guard inside, then pulls off its ski mask -- and it's 26-year-old DARLA CHANDLER. She takes the guard's submachine gun and removes the clip, then looks at him.

DARLA
Sleep well, sweet prince.

EXT. GUARD HOUSE

Darla steps outside and tosses the clip into the bushes, then crouches down beside the structure and looks around impatiently.

DARLA
(muttering)
Blast it, Wilkins, where the bloody hell are you?

Suddenly, NIGEL WILKINS, appears right behind her, also dressed all in black and carrying two DUFFEL BAGS.

NIGEL
Right here, luv. Sorry to keep you waiting. Am I just in time for all the fun?

DARLA
A smart-arse as always.

NIGEL
Wouldn't want to disappoint you. It's what you've come to expect of me. How's our friend?

DARLA
He'll be out for hours.

NIGEL
This place is a bloody fortress. No other way to get in after all.

DARLA
I suppose you brought along the
equipment.

NIGEL
You needn't worry. Here's yours.

He hands her one of the duffel bags and they start to open
them.

NIGEL
Now to make like quick-change artists.

INT. MANSION - GREAT ROOM - SAME

A casino has been set up here, and there are tables for
roulette, baccarat, and the like. It is a high-end
establishment, and trying their luck at the various games is
a clientele of RICH AND ATTRACTIVE EUROPEANS, all dressed in
formal evening attire. The SONG "Goin' Out of My Head" by
Sergio Mendes & Brasil '66 is playing softly on the casino's
sound system.

INT. MANSION - HALLWAY - SAME

A door leading to the cellar opens and Darla and Nigel
emerge -- and they look nothing like they did a few moments
ago. Darla is fully made up and dressed in an elegant
cocktail dress, and Nigel wears a tuxedo. They make sure the
coast is clear, then start to move in the direction of the
VOICES and MUSIC coming from the casino.

INT. MANSION - CASINO

Darla and Nigel enter from the hallway and stop to take in
the room.

DARLA
The idle rich.

NIGEL
Becoming poorer by the minute, I
would think.

They move further into the room, looking around at the
people gambling about them and trying to fit right in with
the crowd.

NIGEL
Think I'll try my luck at the roulette
table.

DARLA
And I shall go powder my nose.

NIGEL
Take all the time you need.

Darla moves off toward another hallway that leads to the restrooms while Nigel steps up to a roulette table. There are several PEOPLE sitting around the table, but only one is gambling at the moment -- a beautiful young Italian fashion model named GINA who immediately catches Nigel's eye. He stops beside her to watch as the CROUPIER calls for bets.

CROUPIER
Faites vos jeux. Place your bets,
 please.

GINA
 (places chips
 on table)
 Twenty-two black.

CROUPIER
Les jeux sont faits.

Nigel watches with interest as the croupier spins the wheel, but Gina watches with apprehension, and we get the impression the night has not been kind to her.

INT. MANSION - HALLWAY

As Darla moves down the hallway, a WOMAN exits the ladies room and Darla stops and pretends to look for something in her PURSE. After the woman is out of range, Darla continues past the restrooms and starts ascending a flight of stairs at the end of the hallway.

INT. MANSION - CASINO

The wheel and the ball continue to spin as everyone at the roulette table watches. Gina watches intently, and Nigel observes her carefully.

NIGEL
 I've seen you before. The cover of
 Vogue, perhaps?

GINA
 I am a model, *signore*.

NIGEL
 Yes, I assumed as much.

Gina doesn't really want any conversation, her attention focused entirely on the game. The ball finally loses momentum and lands in a pocket.

CROUPIER
Quatorze rouge. Fourteen red.

GINA
Maledizione! Perdinci!

Nigel cocks an eyebrow at her exclamations.

INT. MANSION - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

Darla comes off the stairs, looks behind her to make sure she isn't being followed, then starts to move down the hallway. After a moment, she hears FOOTSTEPS and ducks into a nearby doorway.

A MAN comes down the hallway in the opposite direction, wearing a shoulder holster with a PISTOL in it. He passes right by where Darla is hiding, reaches the stairs and starts to descend. Darla watches him go, then starts to head in the direction he came from.

INT. MANSION - CASINO

The people around the roulette table watch as the wheel and ball spin again.

CROUPIER

Rien ne va plus. Rien ne va plus.

Gina bites her knuckles as she watches intently, but this time, Nigel is observing the croupier. As the ball loses momentum, he notices the croupier surreptitiously do something under the table with one hand.

GINA

(under her breath)

Twelve red... twelve red...

Nigel watches the croupier and nods to himself, almost imperceptibly. The ball finally falls into a pocket.

CROUPIER

Vingt-neuf noir. Twenty-nine black.

Gina gestures with her fist in disgust, then throws up her hands as the croupier sweeps away the chips she bet.

GINA

Porca puttana! This isn't my night tonight!

INT. MANSION - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

Darla reaches the end of the hallway, where it turns off to the right, and peeks around the corner.

INSERT - DARLA'S P.O.V.

There's an office at the end of the dogleg. The door is half open and we can see a man inside sitting at a desk. He is ANTOINE LEBEQUE, mid-50's, the owner of both the casino and a container-shipping company, and at the moment, he is counting MONEY which is piled on the desk.

DARLA

frowns, then opens her purse and brings out her COMPACT. She opens the compact and speaks into it quietly.

DARLA
 "Squirrel" calling "Moose". Bit of a
 hold up here. LeBeque is in his office.

INT. MANSION - CASINO

Nigel has a finger to his ear, having heard Darla's message in an EARPIECE. He nonchalantly puts his hand to his mouth and speaks quietly into his CUFFLINK.

NIGEL
 Right. I shall remedy that in a moment.
 Stand by.

As Gina tries to decide whether to cut her losses, Nigel steps up to the croupier and whispers something in his ear. The croupier looks at him, hesitates, then looks at someone on the other side of the room and signals him to come over.

GINA
Che fortuna terribile! I cannot
 believe this! Usually my luck is so
 much better! Even in Monte Carlo!
 I do not understand!

LeBeque's right-hand man arrives. He is ÉTIENNE, a strongly built French Algerian whose imposing bulk and gruff demeanor would intimidate anyone but Nigel.

ÉTIENNE
 Is there a problem here?

NIGEL
 Yes, there most certainly is a problem.
 This roulette table is fixed.

GINA
 (shocked)
Mamma mia!

ÉTIENNE
 I beg your pardon, but you are very
 much mistaken, Monsieur --

NIGEL
 The name is Thorpe. Sebastian Thorpe.

ÉTIENNE
 I assure you, Monsieur Thorpe, there
 is nothing wrong whatsoever with this
 wheel.

NIGEL
 Then you'll care to explain why this
 young lady has consistently lost every
 wager she's made.

ÉTIENNE
 Perhaps the young lady has, how do you
 say, rotten luck.

NIGEL
Or perhaps she's being bilked out of
her money by a less-than-honest
establishment.

GINA
Is this true?

ÉTIENNE
(eyes Nigel coldly)
I don't recall seeing your name on the
guest list, Monsieur Thorpe.

NIGEL
Terrible oversight. I'm sure someone
around here will be reprimanded for
that. For the moment, however, I wish
to speak with the owner of this
establishment.

ÉTIENNE
I'm afraid that is impossible. He is
a very busy man.

NIGEL
I don't think you appreciate the
gravity of the situation, *mon ami*.
Would you like me to announce to
everyone here that their money
would be better gambled elsewhere?

GINA
(to Étienne, under
her breath)
*Ladro sporco... Che ti possono
inculare...*

Étienne hesitates as both Nigel and Gina watch him, and he
certainly doesn't want anyone else to catch wind of what's
going on.

ÉTIENNE
Wait here.

NIGEL
There's a good fellow.

Étienne goes to a nearby TELEPHONE and picks it up and
dials.

INT. MANSION - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

Darla has ducked into a closet, and she continues to peek at
LeBeque's office from behind the almost closed door.

LeBeque's phone RINGS and he answers it. He listens, then
hangs up. He doesn't look very pleased, and he gets up,
throws on his jacket and leaves the office. He walks down
the hallway and right past the closet, and Darla watches as
he disappears around the corner. Then she emerges and
quickly heads toward the office.

INT. MANSION - LEBEQUE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Darla comes in and immediately goes to a WALL SAFE behind the desk. She opens her purse and removes a small DEVICE, then attaches the device to the safe door and activates it.

INT. MANSION - CASINO

LeBeque arrives at the roulette table and immediately addresses Nigel.

LEBEQUE

I am the owner of this place. What is the problem?

NIGEL

Before we waste each other's time, let's have an understanding, shall we? Both you and I know this table is fixed.

ÉTIENNE

I've already told him that --

NIGEL

(continues,
ignoring him)

Now, as I see it, there are two courses of action. I can reveal this jiggery-pokery to the other patrons in this casino... or you can allow the young lady to win back her losses -- with interest.

LEBEQUE

Actually, there are three. I can have my men escort you outside. What they do after that, who can say?

GINA

(under her breath,
eyeing LeBeque)

Che uomo brutto e maleducato...

NIGEL

Yes, I suppose that's true. But everyone will hear my announcement regarding your little scam before I reach the door. What they do after that, who can say?

LeBeque watches him silently, weighing the options, and comes to a decision. If looks could kill, Nigel would be dead.

LEBEQUE

I am feeling generous tonight. Perhaps I can accommodate you. This time.

NIGEL
That's dashed decent of you.
(to Gina)
Go ahead.

Gina hesitates, but Nigel reassures her.

NIGEL
Go ahead.

Gina decides to trust him and puts several chips on number seventeen.

NIGEL
(to LeBeque)
Number seventeen. To the maximum.

Gina is shocked, but Nigel reassures her again.

NIGEL
Don't worry.

Nigel keeps his eyes on LeBeque, never wavering, and LeBeque stares back at him coldly. Then LeBeque glances at the croupier and nods slightly. The croupier spins the wheel and the ball.

INT. MANSION - LEBEQUE'S OFFICE

Darla unlocks the safe and opens the door, then quickly starts to rifle through the contents. After a moment, someone OFF-SCREEN behind her puts a GUN to the back of her neck, and she freezes as she hears him cock the hammer.

MAN (O.S.)
Put your hands up.

INT. MANSION - CASINO

Everyone around the roulette table watches as the ball loses momentum and falls into a pocket.

CROUPIER
Dix-sept noir. Seventeen black.

GINA
(in disbelief)
Non ci posso credere! I won! I won!!

NIGEL
Of course you did, my dear.
(to LeBeque)
There, you see? Disagreements like this can always be settled amicably.

LeBeque stares at him coldly, but before he can say anything, another MAN comes up to him and whispers something in his ear. LeBeque looks at the man and doesn't appear to like what he has heard, then he looks back at Nigel.

LEBEQUE

I hope you are still here when I return, Mr. Thorpe. I find you most amusing.

Nigel smiles at him, then watches as LeBeque and the man move off and disappear down the hallway to the restrooms. His smile fades quickly as his instincts tell him something's up, and he worries whether Darla has gotten out of the office by now.

GINA

I cannot believe that I won. After a night like tonight. How did you do it? Were they really cheating? How can I thank you?

NIGEL

Excuse me, my dear. Enjoy your winnings, and don't spend them all in one place. And don't restrain that delightful vocabulary.

Nigel moves off toward the hallway, and Gina watches him go with admiration.

GINA

Che uomo delizioso.

INT. MANSION - HALLWAY

Nigel moves down the hallway toward the restrooms. The man who whispered in LeBeque's ear stands at the foot of the stairs, blocking the way. Nigel pretends to look for the men's room, then approaches the man and stops in front of him.

NIGEL

Pardon me, my good man, but I can't seem to locate the toilet.

The man says nothing, simply points toward the men's room.

NIGEL

Thank you very much. Always get lost in this place. Silly me.

Nigel turns to go, then immediately turns right back to the man and strikes him across the face with his PISTOL. The man falls to the floor, knocked out. Nigel removes a SILENCER from his tuxedo and puts it on his pistol, then starts to ascend the stairs.

INT. MANSION - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

In the distance, we can hear LeBeque's VOICE, angry, but we cannot make out the words. Nigel comes up to the second floor, listening, and proceeds down the hallway.

Nigel peeks around the corner toward LeBeque's office and sees the man with the shoulder holster standing outside the door. The man's back is to Nigel as he watches LeBeque interrogate Darla inside the office.

LEBEQUE (O.S.)
Who are you? Who sent you? I will
not ask you again.

We hear no response from Darla, and Nigel quickly and silently comes up behind the man at the door, puts his pistol to the back of his head and kills him with one shot. As the man falls, Nigel pivots and steps into the doorway, aiming his pistol at LeBeque as LeBeque reacts to his henchman's death by grabbing Darla and putting his own GUN to her temple.

INT. MANSION - LEBEQUE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

For a moment, no one moves. Nigel remains just inside the door, pointing his gun at LeBeque's face. LeBeque stands behind his desk, holding Darla tightly in front of him and keeping his gun pressed against her head.

NIGEL
Do choose your next move wisely, or
events may take a nasty turn for one
of us, I'm afraid. And I assure you
it won't be me.

LEBEQUE
Hah. You are threatening me?

NIGEL
That's the general gist of it.

LEBEQUE
I'm afraid I no longer find you very
amusing, Mr. Thorpe.

NIGEL
It's Wilkins, actually. And usually I
manage to keep people entertained for
more than a tick.

LEBEQUE
I'm sure you do.

NIGEL
(kicks door shut
behind him)
But I'll tell you what I don't find
amusing. A double agent who passes on
information to the Soviets. Very poor
taste.

LEBEQUE
Ah, but it has made me very rich.

NIGEL

What should have been said a long time ago, my dear, but I've been too much of a gentleman.

LEBEQUE

You -- you want me to shoot her...?

NIGEL

Isn't that the point I've been trying to get across? Well, what are you waiting for?

LEBEQUE

I --

NIGEL

You can't imagine what I've had to contend with. Always doing things her own way; never listens to reason; forcing me to go along with her impulsive whims. I've had half a mind to get rid of her myself, but the right opportunity hasn't come along.

LeBeque looks utterly confused, unable to come up with a response, but Darla's attitude quickly changes from surprise to anger.

DARLA

Hasn't it, now? Well, working with you hasn't exactly been my cup of tea either!

NIGEL

Really? And why is that?

DARLA

Why is that?
(to LeBeque)
Tell him why!

LEBEQUE

Huh?

DARLA

(back to Nigel)

I'll tell you why! Because I'm sick to the back teeth of being hampered by a pernicky prat who gets in my way all the time!

NIGEL

Pernicky prat?

DARLA

A partner is supposed to be a help, not a hindrance, but I may as well be a dog on a lead when I'm on a mission with you! Always restraining me and cramping my style. You're so bloody cautious it drives me round the twist!

NIGEL

Being prudent is a virtue, but of course you wouldn't know that, would you? You're always too busy charging in where angels fear to tread!

DARLA

And if that weren't enough, there's the women! Boatloads of them, all swooning and fawning! You'd think he was bloody James Bond, for God's sake!

NIGEL

Can I help it if the ladies appreciate charm and wit when they see it? Something you obviously are incapable of.

DARLA

Charm and wit? More like a nitwit who bloody thinks he's God's gift to women everywhere! Well, I'm tired of it, simply tired of it!

NIGEL

And I'm tired of putting up with a reckless, impetuous upstart who thinks she's God's gift to the entire field of espionage. Well, you're not! And whilst we're clearing the air, you're not very much of a singer either.

DARLA

At least I'm not a snotty, fastidious bossyboots, Lord Muck! Why Hawthorne chose to pair me with such a ridiculous character I'll never know!

NIGEL

Perhaps it was to rein in that bloody hotheaded streak of yours! If not for me you'd probably be dead already!

As Darla and Nigel yell back and forth at each other as if he weren't even in the room, LeBeque gets more and more flustered.

LEBEQUE

Listen, you two --

DARLA

He could've chosen anyone in the department but he saddled me with this nincompoop!

NIGEL

Nincompoop? I'll have you know I graduated Oxford with Distinction and Top of Class!

DARLA

Did you, now? Well, it certainly doesn't show!

NIGEL

You think Hawthorne did you wrong?
I'm the one who got the rough end of
the stick! The very notion of someone
of my intellect and breeding being
paired with this -- this Northerner!

DARLA
(insulted)
Northerner?

LEBEQUE
Listen!

NIGEL

My great-great-great-great-grandfather,
rest his kindly soul, must be turning
in his grave at the thought of his
descendant fraternizing with a lowly
Scouser!

DARLA

How dare you??

NIGEL

The truth hurts, doesn't it? Never
mind that you were adopted and raised
by a peer of the realm and sent to
the finest finishing school in Europe.
You can't escape your sordid, working
class roots, can you? No matter how
much of a pretense you try to put on!

DARLA
You complete and utter
bastard!!

LEBEQUE
Both of you shut up!

NIGEL

Despite appearances, beneath that
costume you're little more than a
slapper.

DARLA

(aghast)
A slapper???

NIGEL

Yes, that's right, you heard me.
Nothing but a slapper. And a scallywag
and a scamp.

DARLA

And you're nothing but a knobhead!
Did you hear that? Knobhead!!

NIGEL

See? Push her buttons and all that
sophisticated veneer sloughs right off.
And the polished lady is embarrassingly
revealed as a common potty mouth.

Darla is absolutely incensed, her eyes wide with rage, and she spits her words out like daggers.

DARLA
 You pompous, effete, supercilious
 popinjay!! I'll smash your bloody
 face in!!!

And with that, Darla swings her free arm as if to strike at Nigel, but she hits LeBeque square in the face instead.

Three things happen simultaneously. Stunned by the sudden blow, LeBeque is knocked off balance and releases his grip on her. Darla dives to the floor, getting out of the way. And with the utmost of calm, Nigel puts a bullet right between LeBeque's eyes. LeBeque drops to the floor like a marionette whose strings have been cut, and Nigel lowers his pistol as Darla gets up.

NIGEL
 Pity. I was rather enjoying that
 befuddled look on his face.

Nigel locks the door as Darla goes back to the safe and resumes rifling through it, then joins her.

NIGEL
 (amused)
 "Pompous, effete, supercilious
 popinjay"? Really, don't you think
 you just might have overdone it a
 wee bit there?

DARLA
 Oh, belt up.

NIGEL
 Belting up.

Darla finds a FOLDER inside the safe and pulls it out, then quickly flips through the PAPERS in it.

NIGEL
 Is that it?

DARLA
 Seems to be.

Just then, someone outside starts banging on the door.

ÉTIENNE (O.S.)
 Open up in there! Open up!

NIGEL
 Then let's shoot off. We've got
 company.

Darla takes the folder as Nigel quickly opens the window. Étienne continues pounding on the locked door as Darla goes out the window, then smashes it in as Nigel starts to go out too. Étienne bursts into the office, followed by the man Nigel knocked out earlier, and shoots at Nigel just as Nigel disappears from view.

EXT. MANSION GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

Darla has already dropped down into the bushes beneath the window, and she waits as Nigel does so as well.

INT. MANSION - LEBEQUE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Étienne reaches the window and shoots as Darla and Nigel start running across the grounds, but he misses. He turns and starts running out the door.

ÉTIENNE

Downstairs! Downstairs!

EXT. MANSION GROUNDS

As Nigel and Darla race toward the front gate, another MAN employed by LeBeque runs out into their path brandishing a MAT-49 SUBMACHINE GUN.

MAN

Arrêtez! Arrêtez!

NIGEL

(shoots him as
he runs)

Sorry, my French is a bit rusty! I'm
afraid I don't know what that means!

The man falls dead as Nigel and Darla keep running without slowing down. They dash out the gate and out into the street just as Étienne and his partner burst out of the mansion's main entrance.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Nigel and Darla race toward the car they left parked down the block, a British Racing Green 1966 LOTUS ELAN S3 2-DOOR COUPE.

NIGEL

I know you typically like to drive,
but I think it's only fair I do the
honors on this occasion!

Darla was about to run to the driver's side, but she changes course and heads for the passenger side as Nigel heads for the driver's door.

At the front gate, Étienne and his partner race out into the street and stop, look around, then see Nigel and Darla getting into the car and start shooting at them.

INT. LOTUS

Nigel and Darla slam the doors shut as bullets whiz past and Nigel quickly starts the car.

EXT. STREET

As the Lotus pulls away with a screech, the SONG "All Day and All of the Night" by The Kinks begins on the soundtrack and continues throughout the ensuing chase on the streets of Marseilles:

THE FRONT GATE

Étienne and his partner shoot at the quickly departing car, then turn and run back into the driveway.

EXT. STREET

The Lotus turns at the corner and disappears from view, tires screeching.

THE FRONT GATE

A silver gray 1964 MASERATI 3500 GT 2-DOOR COUPE tears out into the street with Étienne at the wheel and his partner beside him.

EXT. STREET

The Maserati turns at the corner in hot pursuit of the Lotus.

INT. LOTUS - MOVING

As Nigel drives, Darla looks back to see if they're being pursued.

INT. MASERATI - MOVING

Étienne drives intently, determined to catch up.

EXT. STREET

The Lotus screeches around another corner as it navigates the narrow, winding streets descending from the hills and leading toward the Vieux-Port. A moment later, the Maserati makes the same turn, closing the distance.

INT. LOTUS - MOVING

Darla continues to look back as Nigel drives.

INSERT - THE VIEW BEHIND

The Maserati comes into view around a bend, getting closer.

BACK TO SCENE

DARLA

Give it some welly, they're catching up!

NIGEL

Alright, keep your hair on!

EXT. STREET

The Lotus accelerates and swerves around another corner, and the Maserati does the same.

INT. LOTUS - MOVING

Darla watches the Maserati hot on their tail.

DARLA
When I drive, I'm usually the one giving chase!

NIGEL
Then it's a good thing I'm behind the wheel this time, isn't it?

AERIAL SHOT

Down below, both cars continue speeding along the narrow, winding streets, rapidly approaching the Old Port.

EXT. QUAI DE RIVE NEUVE

The Lotus turns onto the street, cutting off a CAR with the right-of-way that swerves and honks its horn.

INT. LOTUS - MOVING

Nigel shouts at the driver of the other car.

NIGEL
Give way, you imbecile! Give way!

EXT. QUAI DE RIVE NEUVE

As the Lotus continues along the south side of the marina, the Maserati turns onto the street and follows.

FURTHER AHEAD

Both cars continue to speed east along Quai de Rive Neuve, cutting off and passing slower moving cars.

INT. LOTUS - MOVING

His adrenalin pumping, Nigel is enjoying the chase.

NIGEL
Bet I could have beaten Graham Hill in the Grand Prix last year!

DARLA
Just mind the road!

EXT. QUAI DES BELGES

The Lotus turns left onto Quai des Belges at the end of the marina, and the Maserati does the same not far behind.

FURTHER AHEAD

The Lotus turns left again onto Quai du Port, and the Maserati sticks to it like glue.

EXT. QUAI DU PORT

Both cars speed west along the north side of the marina, and the Maserati catches up to the Lotus and starts pulling up alongside.

INT. LOTUS - MOVING

Darla watches as the Maserati starts pulling up alongside.

DARLA
Try putting your foot down, will you?
He's starting to overtake!

INT. MASERATI - MOVING

Étienne sticks a hand out of his window, holding his pistol.

INT. LOTUS - MOVING

Darla ducks just as Étienne shoots at her and her window shatters.

DARLA
Blimey!

Nigel glances at her to see if she's alright, then returns his attention to the road.

NIGEL
Not very sporting of them, eh? Look
in the glove box and see if there's
anything fitting the occasion, would
you?

Darla opens the glove compartment and takes out what appears to be a small GRENADE. She holds it up for Nigel to see, and he nods. Then she tosses the grenade at the Maserati's windshield.

THE MASERATI

The grenade impacts the windshield and detonates. It doesn't explode; it covers the entire windshield with black oil.

INT. MASERATI - MOVING

His visibility suddenly reduced, Étienne curses and starts to swerve.

EXT. STREET - QUAI DU PORT

The Maserati falls back behind the Lotus as Étienne has difficulty seeing.

INT. LOTUS - MOVING

Nigel chuckles at their pursuers' plight.

NIGEL
Spiffing shot, old girl! That should
queer their pitch.

INT. MASERATI - MOVING

Étienne turns on his windshield wipers.

THE MASERATI

The wipers clear up enough of the oil for Étienne to see
sufficiently.

INT. LOTUS - MOVING

Nigel glances in the rearview mirror and sees Étienne is not
to be deterred.

NIGEL
Fiddlesticks.

DARLA
"Fiddlesticks"? Who says that anymore?

NIGEL
I do.

EXT. STREET

The Lotus turns north and heads into the Joliette basin and
the Port of Marseilles, and the Maserati stays hot on its
tail.

FURTHER AHEAD

Both cars speed along by the docks and parking lots filled
with trucks and cargo containers.

INT. LOTUS - MOVING

Nigel glances in the rearview mirror again and sees their
pursuers are still on their tail.

NIGEL
Those buggers are starting to hack
me off.

DARLA
Watch the juggernaut!!

INSERT - THE VIEW AHEAD

A large SEMI-TRAILER TRUCK is starting to pull out onto the
street from a parking lot, directly into their path.

BACK TO SCENE

Darla is certain they're going to crash, but Nigel saw the truck even before she did and is perfectly calm.

EXT. STREET

The Lotus deftly maneuvers around the front of the truck, swerving just enough to pass it, and keeps going.

INT. LOTUS - MOVING

Nigel continues driving calmly, the truck a mere annoyance.

NIGEL
No need to shout. I was perfectly
aware of it.

EXT. STREET

The Maserati bears down on the truck, which is now completely blocking the street as it continues to pull out.

INT. MASERATI - MOVING

Étienne's eyes bulge as he sees the truck, and he swerves wildly to avoid the collision.

EXT. STREET

The Maserati veers off and misses the truck, but Étienne loses control and crashes head-on into a building.

INT. LOTUS - MOVING

Nigel glances in the rearview mirror and witnesses the crash.

NIGEL
He wasn't, though.

Darla turns to look back at their pursuers.

INSERT - THE VIEW BEHIND

Only the truck can be seen, now fully on the street.

BACK TO SCENE

A smirk on his face, Nigel looks in the rearview mirror again and allows himself the opportunity to gloat.

NIGEL
That's what typically happens when one
drives without due care and attention.

Nigel takes his eyes off the road just long enough to miss the new danger ahead, but Darla sees it and shouts.

DARLA
Look out -- !!

Nigel looks forward again, and this time it's his eyes that bulge.

INSERT - THE VIEW AHEAD

Another SEMI-TRAILER TRUCK is crossing the street directly in front of them.

BACK TO SCENE

Panicking, Nigel slams on the brakes.

EXT. STREET

The Lotus skids, but it's too close to the truck to avoid a collision.

INT. LOTUS - MOVING

Nigel and Darla quickly duck down.

EXT. STREET

The Lotus skids right under the slowly moving truck, gets its roof completely sheared off, emerges on the other side, and comes to a stop as the SONG comes to its resounding end.

THE LOTUS

Nigel and Darla are still ducked down in the now topless Lotus, covered with a confetti of broken glass from the destroyed windshield. After a moment, they slowly rouse and sit up, and take in what just happened. Then they start to pick the glass off themselves and toss it outside.

NIGEL

Alright?

DARLA

Still in one piece... No thanks to you.

NIGEL

I'll take that as a yes.

DARLA

(looks at him;
dead serious)
Next time -- I'll drive.

NIGEL

(sighs)
If you insist.
(starts to drive)
Seems rather chauvinistic of you,
however.

And as the car slowly drives away, Darla just stares at him...

DISSOLVE TO:

MAIN TITLES SEQUENCE

accompanied by the SONG "Tell Her No" by The Zombies. The titles are SUPERIMPOSED against a background of slowly moving colored globules, as if we are staring very closely into a lava lamp.

TITLES and SONG end, and as the echo of the last note fades, we

WIPE TO:

WIDE ANGLE - LONDON, ENGLAND - MORNING

The Thames and Tower Bridge dominate the scene on a clear, sunny morning.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Nigel's car drives along, a red 1963 JAGUAR E-TYPE ROADSTER. Nigel is at the wheel, Darla rides beside him. The SONG "Day Tripper" by The Beatles plays on the car's RADIO, the volume low.

NIGEL

Good to be back in London. Always nice to be riding with the hood off on such a beautiful morning -- before the clouds roll in and it starts bucketing down.

INT. NIGEL'S JAG - MOVING

NIGEL

(continuing)

Each time I return from such a mission, I'm inclined to drop to my knees and kiss the ground -- but I never do.

DARLA

Why not?

NIGEL

Because to do so would give the impression I'm a superstitious man, and that I ascribe the successful completion of yet another mission to either good fortune or random chance, rather than my formidable abilities and skill.

DARLA

You're certainly not a modest man, I'll say that much.

NIGEL

What about you? You can't tell me you rely on luck to see you through. You like to be in complete control of every detail, and even when circumstances throw you a curve, you adapt brilliantly and defeat them.

DARLA

Perhaps so... but one must always consider the possibility of finding oneself in a situation one could never anticipate. A situation where one has no control.

NIGEL

Well, it hasn't happened yet.

The SONG on the radio ends, and Nigel glances at the radio.

NIGEL

Not a bad little ditty.

DARLA

Don't reveal this to anyone, and I'm sure John wouldn't tell you himself, but I was the inspiration for that one.

Nigel starts to chuckle, then catches himself and stops as it sinks in. He looks at her, but Darla says nothing more. Nigel glances back and forth between her and the road, wondering if she's pulling his leg. Darla sits there watching the scenery and smiling nonchalantly, letting him wonder.

EXT. SEX SHOP - MORNING

The street-level facade for S.M.A.S.H.'s underground headquarters in Soho. Nigel's Jaguar drives by the front, then turns and goes into the alley beside the building. We hear a JINGLE for Radio London on the car's radio, then the SONG "Wonderful World" by Herman's Hermits begins to play.

EXT. ALLEY - SAME

The Jaguar goes down the alley and stops in front of a garage door. The door opens, then the car proceeds into the garage.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Nigel drives the car onto an elevator and stops, but keeps the engine running and the radio playing. The elevator begins to slowly descend to the parking level.

INT. NIGEL'S JAG - CONTINUOUS

Darla and Nigel sit there silently as they descend, both looking straight ahead, but Nigel is still thinking about what she said about the song and can't keep quiet for long.

NIGEL

You're pulling my plonker, aren't you?

DARLA

What ever do you mean?

NIGEL
What you said before. About the song.

DARLA
(all innocence)
Did I say something?

Nigel frowns, and he sighs sharply as he realizes Darla is going to continue her little game and keep him guessing.

INT. S.M.A.S.H. HQ - CORRIDOR

The doors from the parking level open and Darla and Nigel step out and approach FIONA'S desk. S.M.A.S.H. has had a budget increase during the year that's elapsed since "Absolutely Smashing", and the office level has been upgraded. But on the wall is still the same large INSIGNIA, and the large letters beside it read:

S.M.A.S.H.
Strategic Measures Against Soviet Hegemony

Darla and Nigel arrive at the desk, and they check their PISTOLS and add their names to a sign-in sheet during the following conversation:

NIGEL
Good morning, Fiona.

FIONA
Good morning, Nigel. Agent Chandler.

NIGEL
After a whole year, I've finally managed to get you to call me by my Christian name without needing to remind you. I consider that as gratifying an accomplishment as any mission I've returned from.

Fiona smiles and blushes, and it's obvious she's still smitten with him.

NIGEL
How's the head-honcho this morning?

Fiona glances quickly in the direction of Hawthorne's office, then looks back at them. She says nothing and looks down, her expression ominous. Nigel and Darla exchange glances.

NIGEL
I suppose we'll find out.

INT. S.M.A.S.H. HQ - HAWTHORNE'S OFFICE

PERCIVAL HAWTHORNE is sitting on the edge of his desk, and he is not in a very good mood at all. Darla and Nigel are sitting in chairs in front of the desk like two chastised students, listening as he chews them out.

HAWTHORNE

Your orders were to retrieve the information LeBeque was going to pass on to the Soviets and bring him in. Was that too difficult a task to accomplish?

NIGEL

Well, sir, we --

HAWTHORNE

(cuts him off)

Can you not do anything precisely as you were told? No improvising, no embellishments, just straightforward adherence to the mission as outlined?

DARLA

With all due respect, sir, events demanded that we... improvise.

HAWTHORNE

And why is that?

NIGEL

We found ourselves in the midst of a hostage situation.

HAWTHORNE

And who might the hostage have been?

DARLA

Me, sir.

Hawthorne looks from Nigel to Darla and back and pauses for a moment, and it seems what he's just heard has reaffirmed something that's been weighing heavily on his mind lately.

HAWTHORNE

I see.

NIGEL

I'm afraid there was no other way to terminate the situation but to... terminate LeBeque.

Hawthorne watches them for a moment, but he doesn't reveal what he's thinking about. He sighs.

HAWTHORNE

Well, at least you put the kibosh on his little charade. He'll not be compromising any more intel or operatives any longer.

NIGEL

(under his breath)

Or cheating any more hot-blooded Italian models...

HAWTHORNE

What's that?

NIGEL

Nothing, sir. Just ruminating.

HAWTHORNE

Do it on your own time.

NIGEL

Yes, sir.

HAWTHORNE

I shall have to explain to the minister that we'll not be able to interrogate LeBeque and uncover the full extent of the damage he'd been doing. That damage may reveal itself in due time, and perhaps in a most unexpected and unfortunate manner.

Darla and Nigel remain silent. Hawthorne thinks for a moment, then stands.

HAWTHORNE

Right. For now, the two of you are off-duty for a week. Get some rest, then be prepared to come back and re-familiarize yourselves with the manual on field procedures. I expect you both to pay particular attention to the chapter on standoffs. Dismissed.

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Nigel and Darla exit Hawthorne's office and walk and talk.

NIGEL

He's in a foul mood, isn't he?

DARLA

No worse than usual.

NIGEL

Honestly, do you recall a time when you have ever seen him smile?

DARLA

Well...

NIGEL

(stops walking)

Think hard. I know you won't, because he never has.

DARLA

(stops too; a beat)

He has a heavy weight of responsibility on his shoulders. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown".

NIGEL

All the more reason to lighten up and have a bit of fun every now and again. Rumor has it he lives in a dark cave somewhere and just sits there growling.

DARLA

(rolls eyes, starts walking again)

Oh, come now.

NIGEL

I pity his wife. Unless, come to think of it, she's as dour and sullen as he.

(follows her)

I can picture them at the dinner table, just glaring at each other silently.

INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR

They come around the corner and stop again.

NIGEL

Well, Agent Chandler. I suppose I'll see you again in a week's time.

DARLA

It would appear so.

NIGEL

Very well, then. Carry on.

Darla starts to move off, but Nigel suddenly grabs her arm and pulls her with him back around the corner.

INT. FIRST CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Nigel puts Darla up against the wall and starts kissing her neck.

NIGEL

You're bloody bonkers if you think I can stay away from you for a whole week.

DARLA

(giggling)

Nigel, please!

NIGEL

Please what?

DARLA

What if someone sees us?

NIGEL

Am I exceeding the bounds of professional decorum in some manner?

DARLA

Yes, you are!

NIGEL
 (stops kissing her)
 Oh. Well, let them see. Perhaps they'll
 learn something.

He immediately starts kissing her again, and Darla starts laughing.

DARLA
 For God's sake, Nigel, not here!

NIGEL
 (stops and sighs)
 Oh, very well. Wouldn't want Fiona
 to see us, after all. She's such a
 fragile creature. It would break her
 heart. And I suppose I can wait till
 we find ourselves in more appropriate
 surroundings.

DARLA
 Good.
 (straightens her
 clothes)
 Now, what sort of surroundings would
 you have in mind?

NIGEL
 How does a weekend getaway grab you?

DARLA
 Not the Caribbean again.

NIGEL
 I thought you liked that. Frolicking
 in the surf in Antigua, sipping
 cocktails in St. Kitts, scuba diving
 off Dominica...

DARLA
 I like it fine, but there are other
 places, you know.

NIGEL
 Oh, I suppose there are.
 (has an idea)
 Right, then. I know just the spot.
And closer to home.

EXT. ORLY AIRPORT - PARIS, FRANCE - LATE AFTERNOON

The SONG "Call Me" by Petula Clark begins on the soundtrack
 as an AIR FRANCE BOEING 707 touches down on the runway.

WIDE ANGLE - PARIS - SAME

The Eiffel Tower dominates the scene as the City of Lights
 stretches out before us.

EXT. PLACE DE L'ÉTOILE - SAME

Evening traffic moves around the Arc de Triomphe.

EXT. HOTEL - SAME

A TAXI pulls up in front and stops. It's the same hotel Darla checked into in "Absolutely Smashing" a year ago.

INT. TAXI - SAME

Darla and Nigel are sitting in the back seat, and Darla watches the front of the hotel in surprise.

DARLA
You must be joking.

NIGEL
By my calendar, we were here precisely one year, two months, and five days ago.

DARLA
The night we stumbled upon that M.U.S.H. plot.

NIGEL
And we blew up that warehouse the next day.

DARLA
And I thought you'd been killed in the explosion.

NIGEL
Yes, reports of my demise were rather premature, weren't they?

INT. HOTEL - LOBBY - SAME

Nigel and Darla step up to the reception desk with their OVERNIGHT BAGS, and a CONCIERGE greets them.

CONCIERGE
Bonsoir. Bienvenue à l'Hôtel Saint-Jacques.

NIGEL
Mr. Wilkins. Universal Exports. I have a booking.

CONCIERGE
Oui, Monsieur Wilkins. Your suite is ready. If you would care to sign the register, please?

As Nigel signs the register, the concierge signals to a BELLHOP, who immediately comes over, and gives him the KEY.

CONCIERGE
Deux quarante-deux.

BELLHOP
 (takes their bags)
 Follow me, please.

The bellhop carries their bags and leads them toward the elevator, and Darla whispers to Nigel as they follow him.

DARLA
 Universal Exports...?

NIGEL
 I always love saying that.

Nigel grins, but Darla rolls her eyes.

INT. HOTEL - ROOM - SAME

A very nice suite with a separate bedroom. The door opens and the bellhop steps into the room and sets their bags on the carpet, then steps aside as Nigel and Darla come in.

BELLHOP
 Your room, Monsieur.

NIGEL
 (glances around)
 Capital.
 (tips him)
 Here you are.

BELLHOP
Merci beaucoup. Enjoy your stay in Paris.

NIGEL
 That we will.

The bellhop leaves and closes the door. Nigel crosses over to the balcony and looks at the view, which is dominated by the Eiffel Tower a few blocks away.

NIGEL
 Yes, this should do quite nicely, I would think.

He returns to their bags and picks them up and carries them into the bedroom, and Darla follows him.

DARLA
 Shall we ring for room service? It's nearly dinner.

INT. HOTEL - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nigel puts the bags on the bed as Darla comes in behind him.

NIGEL
 Perhaps later.
 (turns to her)
 I've other things in mind for the moment.

DARLA
(flirting)
Oh? What sort of things?

NIGEL
Well, for one thing, we should unpack.

Nigel turns away from her again and opens his bag and starts to unpack.

DARLA
(a beat)
Oh.

Disappointed, Darla opens her bag and starts to unpack too, then notices as Nigel brings a PISTOL out of his.

DARLA
You brought that along? On a weekend getaway?

NIGEL
I always make it a point to be prepared for anything.

DARLA
Expecting trouble?

NIGEL
(turns back to her)
Depends what kind of trouble you mean. There are all sorts, you know.

DARLA
Are there, now?

NIGEL
(puts arms around her waist)
Take me, for instance. I can be trouble. You never know what to expect from me. I can be boyishly charming one moment, then ruthlessly dangerous the next. And I'm equally good at both -- or so I've been told.

They kiss. After it's over:

DARLA
Well, I certainly hope it's lubricated. Your pistol, that is.

NIGEL
I always keep my pistol well lubricated. One never knows when one might need it.

And on that double-entendre, they kiss again, longer... and we FADE the song and slowly

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL - BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Darla and Nigel are lying in bed, under the covers, each staring up at the ceiling. Darla is basking in the afterglow, but Nigel is deep in thought.

NIGEL

You know, I don't wish to seem paranoid, but I've a sneaking suspicion Hawthorne may be on to us.

DARLA

What makes you say that?

NIGEL

Oh, nothing, really. Just a certain look in his eyes... a hint in the tone of his voice.

DARLA

You're imagining things.

NIGEL

Perhaps I am. Forget I ever mentioned it.

Nigel says nothing more, but Darla's curiosity has been piqued and she looks at him.

DARLA

You're serious, aren't you.

NIGEL

Have you ever known me not to be?

DARLA

Do you really think he'd say nothing if he suspected us?

NIGEL

Perhaps he's biding his time to confirm his suspicions.

DARLA

You are being paranoid.

NIGEL

It's served me well in the past. Kept me alive on more than one occasion, if I recall correctly.

DARLA

Even if he does, what of it? It's our own personal business, and there are no rules in S.M.A.S.H. against it. Not that I'm aware of, anyroad.

NIGEL

Perhaps there should be.

DARLA

What are you on about?

NIGEL

Need I draw you a picture? Consider this. You and I go on a delicate mission. One of us happens to be captured. Doesn't matter whom. But the villain of the day knows of our involvement and doesn't fall for our routine, and decides to use it as leverage. I trust you can deduce where things go from there.

DARLA

Yes. I'll still deny everything and say you mean nothing to me. After they kill you, I'll complete the mission on my own.

NIGEL

I must say your devotion to duty is positively inspiring. What would England ever do without you?

DARLA

I shudder to think.

NIGEL

Well, since it seems my time on this earth may turn out to be somewhat less than I expected, perhaps I should seize the day, take the old bull by the horns, as they say, and attend to something that's been on my mind of late before I run out of time.

DARLA

And that is?

NIGEL

How would you feel about tying the knot?

The question takes Darla completely by surprise, especially after the concern he's just expressed about how their relationship might endanger their missions. It's the very last thing she ever expected to hear from his lips, and she is stunned into silence.

NIGEL

Darla? Did you hear me?

Darla says nothing, and Nigel snaps his fingers in her face.

NIGEL

Hello? Calling Agent Chandler. Come in, Chandler.

Darla still says nothing, just stares at him.

NIGEL

I could have sworn I just asked you to marry me, but perhaps I imagined the whole thing.

DARLA

(finally finds
her voice)

Are you serious??

NIGEL

You keep asking me that.

DARLA

Because I never know whether you are or not!

NIGEL

And I always answer the same way.

DARLA

And I still don't know!

NIGEL

My fault, probably. I've always made it a top priority to be difficult to read.

DARLA

And you do a bang-up job of it too!

NIGEL

But on this occasion I am being completely forthright. Hard to imagine, isn't it? But nonetheless true. No games, no pretenses. Just good old Nigel, asking a simple question.

Once again, Darla says nothing. She has no idea what to say.

NIGEL

Well, I was rather expecting an answer of some sort, but if you need more time, or wish me to grovel, I --

Darla suddenly gets up off the bed and quickly exits the room. Nigel watches her go, then he sighs and follows.

EXT. HOTEL - ROOM BALCONY - SAME

Darla stands out on the balcony, staring at the lights of the city and dealing with the range of conflicting emotions that Nigel's proposal has ignited in her. She is at once flattered, upset, angry, and scared. She can barely contain the brewing volcano of emotions, and she crosses her arms tightly to keep from shaking as Nigel comes up and stops behind her.

NIGEL

You've no idea how difficult it was for me to say the words.

DARLA

Oh, I'm sure it was.

NIGEL

Darla, I've spent the better part of my adulthood trying to be as cavalier about things as possible.

DARLA

Really? You hide it very well.

NIGEL

The only thing I've taken seriously is my job -- and even that I've tried to inject with a bit of fun whenever possible.

DARLA

I'd never have noticed.

NIGEL

But the last few months have shown me that approach to life works only up to a certain point; then the time comes to grow up. In our line of work, I could be dead tomorrow, next week, next year. One slip, one botched mission, one well-placed bullet from the gun of an adversary, and the curtain could fall on the story of Nigel Wilkins in a most impromptu manner.

(tries to joke)

I've yet to figure out whether that story is a tragedy or a comedy, but it would all come to a resounding end.

(serious again)

If that is to happen, then so be it, I knew the risks when I signed up. But it would be terribly tragic were it to happen before I face up to certain things and do something about them whilst I still have the chance. And at the top of my list of such things... is how I feel about you.

DARLA

(turns to him,
explodes)

How do you feel about me??

NIGEL

Are you deliberately trying to make this as difficult for me as possible?

DARLA

Yes!

NIGEL

I probably deserve it.

DARLA

You do!

NIGEL

Then I shall try to give you an honest answer.

DARLA

If you can manage that!!

NIGEL

I'll confess that at first, it was the thrill of the chase. Every woman I've ever pursued has given in almost too easily, and there never really was very much of a challenge.

DARLA

Until me.

NIGEL

To be perfectly honest, yes.

DARLA

Because I've more self-respect than that endless parade of slappers.

NIGEL

They weren't all slappers. One was a countess, actually. Another a duchess.

DARLA

Your memoirs will be most engrossing, I'm sure.

NIGEL

But the chase is over -- and I'm still here.

DARLA

Are you?

NIGEL

And I'm not going anywhere.

DARLA

Why not? The parade needn't end yet. Don't let me rain on it.

NIGEL

Because after years of fooling myself, I've finally found what I want.

DARLA

One always wants what one can't have.
Or what one thinks one wants.

NIGEL

I don't think. I know. I've never been more certain of anything in my entire life, and I know that when I wake up tomorrow, I'll still feel the same way. If that means nothing to you, I can't help that, but I suddenly had this naive notion of owning up to it and getting it off my chest. Forgive me.

Nigel turns and heads back into the room, miffed. Darla realizes she hurt him and calls after him.

DARLA

Nigel!

Nigel stops and turns back to her, but he remains silent. Darla struggles to go on.

DARLA

It does mean something to me.

NIGEL

Does it?

Darla says nothing for a moment, then she turns away so he doesn't see the tears starting to form in her eyes.

DARLA

Everyone I've ever loved is gone. My parents... the adoptive parents who raised me... the adoptive sister I was closest to than anyone --
(chokes up; a pause)
I am alone.

She says nothing more, and for a moment, Nigel is at a loss for words, moved by the realization of her deep loneliness. He tries to joke.

NIGEL

You're not alone. There's Hawthorne, for one thing. Sort of an unofficial uncle?

(a beat; serious)

And there's me.

Darla turns back to him, almost beseechingly, and Nigel sees the tears now streaming openly.

DARLA

I need to know I can count on you!

NIGEL

Have I ever let you down on a mission?

DARLA

That's not what I mean!

Nigel knows what she means, but he remains silent, and she goes on.

DARLA

At any time, you could change your mind and go back to your former ways. I'll not invest myself in something with a dubious future. I cannot bear another loss.

Nigel goes to her and takes both her hands in his, and holds them tightly. He looks right into her eyes, and he is as serious as he has ever been or could be.

NIGEL

If I ever leave you, it won't be my doing. It will take a well-placed bullet from a most determined adversary. And even then, I'll fight my damndest to stick around. I can be most stubborn, you know.

DARLA

(a beat; smiles)

I know.

NIGEL

Then we have an understanding?

DARLA

We do.

NIGEL

And we shall discuss this further when we return to London.

DARLA

We shall.

A moment, as they search each other's eyes. Then:

NIGEL

Can't wait to see the look on Hawthorne's face when I ask him to be my best man.

His quip punctures the serious emotion of the moment, and Darla snaps out of it and slaps him on the chest. Then they both start laughing and embrace each other.

VIEW THROUGH BINOCULARS

Suddenly, we are looking at Darla and Nigel from some distance away through a pair of binoculars. They finish hugging, then move off back into the bedroom and OUT OF VIEW.

A MAN

lowers the BINOCULARS slowly. He is standing at a window across the street from the hotel, and his face is completely in shadow, silhouetted against the light of the room behind him. So we cannot see who it is.... but we know he's been observing Darla and Nigel.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOTEL - MORNING

The next day.

INT. HOTEL - BEDROOM - SAME

Sunlight filters in through the curtains as Darla wakes up in bed. She sits up and stretches, then notices that Nigel isn't there.

DARLA
Nigel...?

Just then, Nigel comes in carrying a TRAY with breakfast.

NIGEL
Brekkie is served.

DARLA
Oh, my.

NIGEL
(sets tray on bed)
We have *pain au chocolat*, croissants with strawberry jam, fresh fruit, yogurt, and *café au lait*. I didn't bother with tea because the French never get it right.

DARLA
(looks over tray)
No chip butties?

NIGEL
For breakfast? Is that what you eat back home?

Darla smiles sheepishly and shrugs.

NIGEL
I prefer bangers and black pudding, myself. No chip butties, I'm afraid. You can bring them along next time.

As Darla starts to eat, Nigel goes to the closet.

NIGEL
Well, eat up. No dawdling. We've things to do and places to go.

DARLA

Such as?

Nigel opens the closet and starts going through the clothes he brought for the trip.

NIGEL

First, we'll do a little shopping on the Champs-Élysées, have lunch at a quaint little café, then spend the afternoon pootling about the streets of Montmartre. In the evening, we'll go club hopping in Place Pigalle, then dinner and a show at the Moulin Rouge.

DARLA

And after that?

NIGEL

(selects what to wear,
closes closet)

After that, we retire to this bedroom for another epic night of delirious lovemaking.

Darla chuckles as Nigel goes back to the bed and sits on the edge.

NIGEL

Tomorrow, we sleep until noon to regain our strength, have lunch at a charming little bistro in the Latin Quarter, take in a film at the cinema, then return to pack our things and be at the airport by evening. We'll be back in Blighty in time for dinner.

DARLA

Quite the activities director, you are.

NIGEL

Wilkins Travel Office at your service. We do our utmost to make sure our customers are completely satisfied.

DARLA

Well, this punter has no complaints... so far.

NIGEL

(moves in for
a kiss)

And we'll do everything possible to keep it that way.

They kiss, getting strawberry jam on both their chins, and start laughing.

WIDE ANGLE - CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES - MORNING

The SONG "I'm Alive" by The Hollies begins on the soundtrack and continues throughout the following:

EXT. BOUTIQUE - CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES

Darla and Nigel go in.

INT. BOUTIQUE

A SEQUENCE OF SHOTS as Darla tries on various outfits and accessories:

DARLA

tries on a beret in front of a mirror.

DARLA

tries on a newsboy cap in front of the mirror.

DARLA

tries on a pair of mod sunglasses in front of the mirror.

WIDER ANGLE

Darla models a velvet minidress with lace collar in front of a full-length mirror as Nigel looks on.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Darla models a Twiggy-style boho dress in front of the full-length mirror as Nigel looks on.

A THIRD ANGLE

Darla models a shapeless tent dress in front of the full-length mirror as Nigel looks on. She turns to him and asks him for his opinion, but he says nothing, not thrilled by the dress. Darla presses him, and he shrugs noncommittally. She presses him a third time, and he finally relents and gestures as if to say, "Oh, alright, go ahead".

EXT. BOUTIQUE

Darla and Nigel exit, and Darla carries a SHOPPING BAG with her purchases. As they head down the street, we see a MAN leaning against a lamp post, watching them. We see him only from behind, so we cannot see who it might be.

INT. MEN'S CLOTHING SHOP

A SEQUENCE OF SHOTS as Nigel tries on various outfits and accessories:

NIGEL

tries on a dress shirt in front of a mirror.

NIGEL

tries on a tie along with the shirt in front of the mirror.

NIGEL

tries on a blazer along with the shirt and tie in front of the mirror.

WIDER ANGLE

As Nigel tries on a Nehru jacket in front of the mirror, Darla brings over an Edwardian double-breasted suit with striped patterns and shows it to him. He glances at her and shakes his head, the suit not his style at all. Darla insists he try it on, and he objects again, even more strongly. Darla gives up, waving her hand at him as if to say, "You're hopeless", and walks off to return the suit to the rack.

EXT. MEN'S CLOTHING SHOP

Darla and Nigel exit, and now Nigel carries a SHOPPING BAG as well. As they head down the street, we see the same man standing at the corner in the foreground, watching them. This time, we see him only from the waist down.

EXT. WOMEN'S SHOE STORE

Darla and Nigel go in, and the man steps INTO FRAME to watch them. As before, we see him only from the waist down.

EXT. MEN'S SHOE STORE

Darla and Nigel exit, carrying more SHOPPING BAGS, and the man is leaning against a lamp post and watching them. And again, we see him only from the waist down.

EXT. CAFÉ

Darla and Nigel are sitting at an outdoor table, having lunch *al fresco*. While Darla is having *Salade Niçoise*, Nigel is having *Moules-frites*. Darla watches with distaste as Nigel eats the mussels, wrinkling her nose. He notices her expression and holds up a mussel and offers it to her, but she quickly shakes her head and waves him off.

Nigel shrugs and eats it himself, making a show of how delicious he considers it, and Darla watches with both revulsion and amazement as he savors it. He sees her watching him, then picks up another mussel and holds it right up to her face. She turns her face away and covers it with both hands, laughing, and he continues to insist like a parent trying to convince a child to take their medicine.

And as the SONG ends, we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CAFÉ - CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES - AFTERNOON

Nigel and Darla exit after lunch, carrying their shopping bags and talking.

DARLA
I really don't know how you can possibly eat those.

NIGEL
It's an acquired taste. You really should try it.

DARLA
I detest slimy things.

NIGEL
I thought you were more adventurous than that. Certainly gave that impression last night.

As they start to head down the street, a MAN walking quickly in the opposite direction bumps into Nigel as he passes them... and though we cannot see his face, we can tell from his clothes that it's the same man who has been tailing them all day.

NIGEL
Pardon me --

The man doesn't acknowledge him at all, just keeps walking as if nothing happened. Nigel watches him go.

NIGEL
Friendly fellow.

DARLA
Look, he dropped something.

Nigel looks down at the sidewalk and sees the man's WALLET, then picks it up.

NIGEL
Wait here.

He leaves his bags with Darla and moves off in pursuit of the man, and Darla watches him go.

THE INTERSECTION

Nigel arrives at the corner and looks around for the man, but the man is nowhere to be seen. He scans the crowd, searching for him, but the man has disappeared. He frowns, then starts to go back to Darla.

BACK TO SCENE

Darla watches as Nigel returns.

DARLA
Did you find him?

NIGEL
No. It's the strangest thing. I looked everywhere but he was gone. Just vanished into thin air.

Nigel opens the wallet and pulls out a DRIVER'S LICENSE and some other DOCUMENTS, all bearing the man's photo, name, and signature.

NIGEL
Simon Hopkins. Sounds British.

DARLA
An expat?

NIGEL
Perhaps.
(reads address)
134 Rue Germaine. 18th Arrondissement.

DARLA
Perhaps we should go and return it to him.

NIGEL
(closes wallet)
Why not? We'll be in that area later on anyway.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON

A small, rather dilapidated building in a run-down area of the city. Nigel and Darla arrive in their rental car, a 1966 RENAULT CARAVELLE 1100S CABRIOLET, and stop in front.

INT. RENAULT - SAME

Nigel turns off the engine and they watch the building.

DARLA
Are you sure this is the place?

NIGEL
One thirty-four.

DARLA
Looks a proper hellhole. What would an expat be doing here?

NIGEL
Getting plastered on Kronenbourg rather than Guinness, I imagine. Let's see if he's in.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - SAME

The interior is just as dilapidated as the exterior. There is some trash on the floor and peeling paint on the walls, and Nigel and Darla take it all in as they enter and walk toward the stairs.

NIGEL

Not exactly the cat's whiskers...

As they approach the stairs, a RAT suddenly races out from behind a trash can and scurries across the floor and disappears around a corner, startling Darla.

DARLA

Ugh... I'm not very keen on rodents.
Or any scavengers, for that matter.

They start to go up the stairs.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Darla continues speaking as they ascend to the second floor.

DARLA

Had some rather nasty encounters with their sort back in the jiggers of Liverpool. Always had to fight them off whilst scrounging. Wasn't about to share what little food there was with any of them.

INT. SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

They arrive on the landing, and as Nigel walks down the hallway searching for Hopkins' apartment, Darla follows along and continues her tale, getting comically angrier as she remembers hunting for food after she was orphaned.

DARLA

Filthy creatures... with the audacity to think they'd get their filthy little mitts on my dinner... Had to clobber a fox once several times before he finally gave up.

NIGEL

Remind me to ask you to tell me stories of your delightful childhood.

(stops at a door)

This is it.

(knocks)

Hello? Anyone there?

(no response,
knocks again)

Hello?

DARLA

Seems no one's home.

The door to a nearby apartment opens and the building's CARETAKER looks out. He is an elderly man with a very thick French accent and a comically suspicious air.

CARETAKER
Alors, can I help you?

NIGEL
Pardonnez-moi, monsieur. We're looking for Simon Hopkins?

At the mention of the name, the caretaker looks alarmed, and he glances up and down the hallway to make sure no one else is around before he replies.

CARETAKER
 The Englishman? Are you certain?

NIGEL
 Yes. I believe this is where he lives?

The caretaker looks around again, then closes his door and approaches them slowly. He stops in front of them and speaks in a hushed, mysterious tone, and both Darla and Nigel are puzzled by his attitude and behavior.

CARETAKER
 Then you have heard.

NIGEL
 (a beat)
 Heard what?

CARETAKER
 Surely you must know. Is that not why you have come?

NIGEL
 (another beat)
 Um...

CARETAKER
 You have come to claim his things, no?

NIGEL
 I'm afraid I don't quite follow you.

CARETAKER
 You are testing me? Because I assure you I did not take any of his things.
 (annoyed)
 Not that there is very much to take.

NIGEL
 Look, I really don't know what you're talking about.

CARETAKER
 You don't?

NIGEL

We'd just like to see if Mr. Hopkins is available, is all.

CARETAKER

Mon dieu! Monsieur Hopkins was killed last night!

DARLA

Killed last night?

CARETAKER

Mais oui! He was hit by a car. Right outside in the street.

Darla and Nigel exchange glances, growing more and more perplexed.

CARETAKER

I heard a big bump but there are always noises around here at night so I went back to sleep. They found him this morning. You did not know?

NIGEL

Er, no, we'd no idea.

CARETAKER

I am sorry. You are his friends?

NIGEL

Just passing acquaintances, actually. Met on a junket out of Southampton.

CARETAKER

Does not surprise me. I do not think he knew anyone in Paris. He rented this room two weeks ago and I never saw him with anyone. Never went outside and no one visited. Except for last night -- and look what happened. Very strange man, if you ask me.

NIGEL

Why is that?

CARETAKER

I just told you. He never went out. Never spoke. If he worked I do not know what he did. Paid me twice what I asked for the room so I gave it to him. He could have paid for a better room in a better district, but who am I to complain?

Darla and Nigel exchange glances again, then Nigel tries to continue.

NIGEL

Well, he was supposed to give us a...

DARLA
(chimes in)
Pamphlet.

NIGEL
Yes, pamphlet. Do you mind if we have
a look inside and see if it's there?

CARETAKER
Not at all.

The caretaker brings out his KEYS and unlocks and opens
Hopkins' door.

CARETAKER
I will be downstairs if you need me.

NIGEL
Merci beaucoup.

Darla and Nigel watch as the caretaker goes downstairs, then
slowly enter the apartment.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Nigel and Darla come in and leave the door open, glancing at
the surroundings. The room is rather small, very dirty and
sparsely furnished. There's a small stove, a small icebox, a
table with a single chair, and a cot. There are no
decorations of any kind whatsoever, and what few objects
there are include a THERMOS and a pair of BINOCULARS on a
windowsill. There's no television set, no radio.

As Darla opens the icebox and looks in, Nigel goes to the
window and looks at the binoculars, then opens the thermos
and takes a sniff.

NIGEL
Ugh. Looks like week-old coffee from
the smell of it.

DARLA
You might not wish to look in the
fridge. Doesn't smell much better in
there either.

NIGEL
I can detect the stench from here.

They look around a bit more, wondering how someone could
live under these conditions.

DARLA
Can't imagine someone living this way,
even if alone.

NIGEL
Even harder to imagine that chap I
bumped into earlier was a ghost.

DARLA

The logical assumption is that man was not Hopkins, and came into possession of his billfold somehow.

NIGEL

Someone who encountered his body before daylight and rifled it.

DARLA

Probably.

NIGEL

Or perhaps... the person who murdered him.

Darla stops and looks at him, surprised.

DARLA

Murdered? Are you implying he was struck deliberately?

NIGEL

Look about this room, at how decidedly spartan it is, and take into account what we know of this geezer. Rents a room in a God-awful neighborhood but pays twice what it's worth, sees no one and goes nowhere, and has few possessions to speak of -- two of which are a vacuum flask and binoculars by the window. If I were to allow my imagination to run wild, I'd suspect he was reconnoitering and didn't plan to stick around long.

DARLA

A spy...?

NIGEL

What do you think? I've spent many a stake-out in flea pits like this. And some a good deal grottier.

DARLA

I suppose it's possible. Anything's possible.

NIGEL

Yes it is. Especially in 1960s Paris, where spies from more nations than I care to count are peeking out of every sixth or seventh window. Sometimes every fifth.

DARLA

(humors him)

If a spy, working for whom? On what?

NIGEL

Who can say? He certainly didn't leave much in the way of clues.

Nigel feels around underneath the table and finds something taped to the underside. He detaches it and brings out a MANILA ENVELOPE.

NIGEL

Except for this.

He opens the envelope and spills its contents out on the table. There is a small metal KEY and some PAPERS.

DARLA

What is it?

NIGEL

(picks up key)

Seems to be a key to a safe deposit box.

(reads one of

the papers)

Aha. Yes, indeed. Banque Le Monde, Rue St-Michel 4, Geneva, Switzerland.

Darla picks up another piece of paper and reads it.

DARLA

And look here. Railway ticket to Geneva. Monday morning departure.

NIGEL

Day after tomorrow. Poor bugger never made it.

DARLA

Perhaps he intended to withdraw whatever's in the box.

NIGEL

And perhaps he was prevented from doing so.

DARLA

You are letting your imagination run wild.

NIGEL

Well, your other vocation is being a pop singer, isn't it? Perhaps I should add another string to my bow and become a novelist. I've several intriguing scenarios swirling round inside my head already, based just on what we've seen so far.

DARLA

I'm sure it will be a brilliant page-turner.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Nigel and Darla walk back to their rental car, and Nigel carries the envelope with him.

NIGEL

You do realize this is all supposition, of course, and that the real story is probably something with a totally innocent and reasonable explanation.

DARLA

Of course. But I see that look in your eyes...

They start to get into the car.

INT. RENAULT - CONTINUOUS

They get in and shut the doors.

NIGEL

I must confess my curiosity has been rather piqued by all this. I know we planned to fly back tomorrow night... but I think I'd like to look into this. We do have five more days to kill. Might make for an interesting little diversion.

DARLA

Shall we contact Hawthorne?

NIGEL

And tell him what, precisely? That we're in Paris on a dirty weekend and that we've stumbled upon something curious whilst attempting to return a man's billfold? As far as he knows, we're both still in London, waiting to report back to duty as ordered. We're not on a mission so there's no need to inform him. We're simply two private citizens, pursuing this on our own time.

Darla thinks about what he's said, and Nigel can see she's uncertain about it.

NIGEL

If you wish, you can return to London as scheduled and I'll join you after I see where this leads. Shouldn't take very long to sort it all out if it's indeed innocent.

DARLA

No. If I go back alone I'll do little more than climb the walls wondering what havoc you've got yourself into. Someone needs to keep an eye on you.

NIGEL

I appreciate your concern -- as well as the vote of confidence.

(studies key)

So, we have five days to investigate this little mystery.

DARLA

Where do we start?

NIGEL

Elementary, my dear Chandler.

(holds up railway

ticket, smiles)

We go on a little train ride.

EXT. GARE DE LYON RAILWAY TERMINUS - MORNING

Monday morning, and an abbreviated version of the SONG "A Five O'Clock World" by The Vogues begins playing on the soundtrack and accompanies the following:

A TRAIN

sits on the tracks, about to depart.

INT. STATION - WIDE ANGLE

The train begins to pull out of the station.

INT. STATION - REVERSE ANGLE

as the train continues to pull out.

EXT. STATION - LOW ANGLE

The train starts to pick up speed as it passes by.

EXT. STATION - REVERSE ANGLE

The train continues to pick up speed as it moves away.

OUTSKIRTS OF PARIS

The train begins to head out into the French countryside.

INT. TRAIN - SLEEPER CAR - MOVING

Darla and Nigel move along the corridor, carrying TRAVEL BAGS and looking for their compartment. They find it and slide open the door.

INT. COMPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

They enter and slide the door shut, then put their bags on the bunk bed and look around.

DARLA

A bit cramped, don't you think?

NIGEL

Well, not exactly a posh Paris suite,
I suppose, but it should do for the
duration.

Nigel looks out the window at the passing scenery, then
glances at his watch.

NIGEL

And barring any unforeseen problems,
we should be in Geneva by tonight.

DARLA

What do we do until then?

NIGEL

(smiles, put his arms
around her waist)

Oh, I think we'll come up with something.

SEVERAL SHOTS

of the train as it continues on its journey, the last of
which is a WIDE ANGLE as it moves off into the distance and
disappears from view. The SONG ends and fades as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRAIN - DINING CAR - AFTERNOON

Darla and Nigel are sitting in a booth and taking tea.

NIGEL

Do you regret humoring me and going off
at half-cock on this lark?

DARLA

Oh, my curiosity was just as piqued as
yours was. I didn't need all that much
convincing.

NIGEL

We're more alike than either of us knows.

DARLA

And a nice little trip across the French
countryside never hurt anyone.

Darla watches the passing scenery outside the window, then
stirs her tea thoughtfully.

DARLA

Perhaps I'm being ridiculous, but I
can't help feeling as if we're two
truants skiving off school.

NIGEL

And Headmaster Hawthorne has absolutely
no idea where we are. Or what we're up
to.

DARLA

I wonder what he's doing this very moment.

NIGEL

Making the other agents' lives miserable in our absence. Or terrorizing poor Fiona. She's in absolute dread of him each time he merely opens the intercom. She sits there staring at it waiting for it to buzz, and she still jumps when it does.

DARLA

Every leader must affect the appearance of severity to maintain discipline and order.

NIGEL

Perhaps so, but in his case I don't believe it's an affectation.

DARLA

I certainly hope he doesn't try to contact us before Friday. I'd hate to explain this little excursion to him.

NIGEL

Or how we both happen to be on the Continent together going on it.

(sips tea)

No need to worry. He was so cheesed off with us I sincerely doubt he'd wish to see either of our faces for the remainder of the week.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. S.M.A.S.H. HQ - HAWTHORNE'S OFFICE

Sitting at his desk, Hawthorne hits the intercom button.

HAWTHORNE

Miss Desmond, try ringing Agent Chandler for me again, would you?

FIONA (V.O.)

Yes, Director.

A moment passes as Hawthorne waits.

FIONA (V.O.)

I'm sorry, sir, there's no answer. Like before.

HAWTHORNE

And what about Agent Wilkins? Have you managed to locate him?

Another moment passes, and Hawthorne waits again, growing increasingly annoyed.

FIONA (V.O.)
I'm afraid not, sir. There's no answer from him either.

HAWTHORNE
Very well, thank you.
(sighs; to himself)
Well, I did give them a week off, didn't I? No need for any concern. They'll return Friday. They always do.
(beat)
Where could those two possibly be...?
(another beat;
louder)
And what could they possibly be up to??

WIDE ANGLE - GENEVA, SWITZERLAND - EVENING

Jet d'Eau rises into the darkening sky as the lake reflects the lights of the city.

TITLE:

Geneva, Switzerland

EXT. HOTEL - SAME

A TAXI arrives and stops in front, and Nigel and Darla get out with their travel bags. Nigel glances around.

NIGEL
Do you smell it?

DARLA
What?

NIGEL
The smell of currency. It's noticeably in the air.

They start walking toward the hotel entrance.

NIGEL
I wonder if Mr. Hopkins was investigating some sort of money laundering operation.

DARLA
Or involved in one.

INT. HOTEL - LOBBY

They enter and cross toward the reception desk.

NIGEL
That's right, we've no idea which side of things he was on, do we?

DARLA
Good spy or bad spy?

NIGEL
Or both, like our friend LeBeque.

DARLA
Oh, don't remind me of that wanker.

They reach the desk and are greeted by a CONCIERGE.

CONCIERGE
Bonjour.

NIGEL
Mr. Wilkins. Universal Exports. I have
a booking.

CONCIERGE
*Oui, Monsieur Wilkins. One moment,
please.*

As the concierge goes to get the room key, Darla rolls her eyes again at Nigel's little game of imitating James Bond.

INT. HOTEL - ROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The door opens and Nigel and Darla come in with their bags.

DARLA
So have you decided how we're actually
going to gain access to this box?
Unless you plan to break into the
vault overnight.

NIGEL
(closes door)
No need for that. All I need do is
sign in Hopkins' place.
(brings out Hopkins'
wallet)
And I've a good sample of his signature
right here. Should be a doddle to
imitate it.

DARLA
Or so you hope.

NIGEL
Worry not, ye of little faith. In the
morning, we'll go to the bank, open
this box, and find out just what sort
of devilry is afoot.

EXT. BANK - MORNING

INT. BANK VAULT - SAME

Darla and Nigel stand around a desk and watch as a BANK OFFICER removes the SAFE DEPOSIT BOX from the vault and places it on the desk.

BANK OFFICER

If you need any further assistance,
please do not hesitate to ask.

NIGEL

Merci beaucoup.

The bank officer nods and leaves, closing the door behind him. Once he's gone, Darla and Nigel talk.

DARLA

You certainly managed to forge Hopkins'
signature adequately.

NIGEL

One of my many talents. Now let's see
what's waiting for him in here, shall
we?

Without any further ado, Nigel opens the box. Inside it is another BOX.

NIGEL

Hmm...

He brings out the smaller box and finds a handwritten NOTE on the bottom of the safe deposit box. He brings it out too and reads it.

NIGEL

"Do not open at the bank".

DARLA

Why not?

NIGEL

I don't know...

(beat)

But what say we do as we're told, eh?

INT. RENTAL CAR - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Darla and Nigel get in and shut the doors, and Nigel places the box on his lap.

NIGEL

Alright, this should be more than
enough privacy.

DARLA

I hope it's not booby-trapped...

NIGEL

Now why would you go and say a thing
like that? Isn't this suspenseful
enough as it is?

DARLA

Perhaps I should wait outside.

Darla doesn't get out, but she slides away in her seat and leans back against the passenger door. Nigel shakes his head ruefully, then prepares to open the box. He hesitates, looks at Darla and wonders if she has a point, then decides the hell with it and opens it. Darla winces, but nothing happens, and Nigel sits there staring into the box.

DARLA
What's in it?

NIGEL
Another box.

DARLA
You must be joking!

Darla leans closer and looks into the box. There is indeed another even smaller BOX inside.

DARLA
What kind of game is this?

NIGEL
I haven't a clue.

DARLA
Well, don't just sit there. Open it.

NIGEL
Shouldn't you wait outside? After all, this one might be the one that's rigged.

DARLA
Just open it.

Nigel shrugs and opens the smaller box. He reaches inside and pulls out a small PHOTOGRAPH.

NIGEL
A photo.

DARLA
Anything else?

Nigel reaches inside again and brings out a SLIP OF PAPER.

NIGEL
And a slip of paper.

DARLA
Why all the mystery for that?

Nigel shrugs again. He studies the photo, and Darla leans closer to look at it as well.

INSERT - PHOTOGRAPH

A black-and-white photo of a man in his 40's with a thin moustache, wearing a trench coat and a fedora.

BACK TO SCENE

DARLA

Looks a bit dodgy, doesn't he? Any clues as to who he is? What's on the paper?

NIGEL

Just a date and time and a location.

(reads)

"Wednesday, 15 June. 3 PM".

DARLA

That's tomorrow.

NIGEL

(continuing)

"Ristorante Alfredo, Calle San Giacomo, Venice, Italy".

DARLA

Venice? Quite a ways from here.

NIGEL

If I were to hazard a guess, I'd say these are instructions for a rendezvous.

DARLA

A rendezvous?

NIGEL

It would appear our dearly departed Mr. Hopkins was supposed to meet with this fellow. A meeting arranged by a third party, apparently.

DARLA

Why not simply post this to Hopkins directly, or send it by courier? Why put it in a box in a bank vault and have him come to Geneva? Seems like a rather roundabout route to take without the need.

NIGEL

Dead drop? A test? Your guess is as good as mine.

INT. HOTEL - ROOM - A HALF HOUR LATER

The door opens and Darla and Nigel come in.

NIGEL

I was hoping we'd find the answers to our little mystery, but we seem to have raised more questions instead.

DARLA

The plot thickens.

NIGEL
 (closes door)
 And there seems to be only one way to
 proceed from this point.

Darla looks at him, then realizes what he means.

DARLA
 Going to the meeting and passing
 yourself off as Hopkins?

NIGEL
 Can you think of another?

DARLA
 Need I point out you don't look a
 thing like him at all.

Nigel tosses the photo and paper on the desk.

NIGEL
 Perhaps not, but the inclusion of this
 photo would seem to indicate this man
 and Hopkins have never met before.
 Stands to reason he doesn't know what
 Hopkins looks like.

DARLA
 Unless he has a photo of Hopkins.

NIGEL
 Always a possibility.

DARLA
 In which case your little charade would
 be rather short-lived.

NIGEL
 Life is full of risks.

DARLA
 We'd be stepping into a situation we
 know very little about, at a distinct
 disadvantage.

NIGEL
 Wouldn't be the first time. And I never
 shy away from a challenge.
 (beat)
 So, what do you think?

DARLA
 Oh, you're putting this on me, are you?

NIGEL
 We can't go forward unless we're both
 on the same page. If you're not
 comfortable with this, we can go back
 to London right now, forget the whole
 thing. I leave it to you.

Darla hesitates, then picks up the photo and studies it again, thinking. Nigel watches her, waiting. Finally:

DARLA

I know this all started as a lark, but perhaps your instincts were on to something after all. Hopkins' death is seeming less and less like a random accident. Something is definitely afoot. I've no idea what it could be, mind you, but this gets curiouser and curiouser every step.

NIGEL

Then you agree we should follow this new lead... see where it takes us.

DARLA

Why not? In for a penny, in for a pound.

NIGEL

In other words, since we've already come this far, we may as well go the full monty.

DARLA

And not stop till we uncover the whole kit and caboodle.

NIGEL

(nods; a beat)

I'm trying to come up with yet another clever and suitable colloquialism to follow that with, but I can't think of one offhand.

Darla smiles and shrugs.

NIGEL

On to Venice, then. I hear it's lovely this time of year.

WIDE ANGLE - BLUE SKY

The intro to the SONG "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me" by Dusty Springfield begins on the soundtrack, and we slowly TILT DOWN to:

WIDE ANGLE - VENICE, ITALY - DAY

The many islands of the archipelago glint in the sunlight like jewels in the middle of the Venetian Lagoon.

CLOSER ANGLE

of the city as seen from the Giudecca Canal and the Saint Mark's Basin. As the first verse of the SONG begins, we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ST. MARK'S SQUARE - DAY

Typical CROWDS mill about with the Basilica and Campanile in the background.

DISSOLVE TO:

VARIOUS SHOTS of the view along the Grand Canal, including the Rialto Bridge, each DISSOLVING into the next.

DISSOLVE TO:

VARIOUS SHOTS of a GONDOLA as it slowly floats along the Grand Canal, each DISSOLVING into the next. Aboard the gondola is a GONDOLIER and a COUPLE, but we cannot see who the couple is until the last shot, when we can make out that it's Darla and Nigel.

DISSOLVE TO:

ON THE GONDOLA - MOVING

As the gondolier paddles along a smaller canal, Darla and Nigel look like any romantic couple on a honeymoon, and Darla is feeling quite dreamy.

DARLA

Quite lovely this time of year.

NIGEL

Indeed it is.

DARLA

I'd forgotten how much I love this city. Haven't been here since the summer of '58. I was matriculating at Institut Château Picard in Switzerland that autumn, and Lord Taylor took us on a trip through France and Italy before I started. I thought it was the most beautiful, romantic place on earth.

NIGEL

Difficult to argue with that. Perfect spot for a honeymoon, wouldn't you say?

DARLA

(looks at him;
a beat)

I thought we agreed not to discuss that till after we returned to London.

NIGEL

Yes we did, but need I point out that if not for this little excursion, we'd be back in London already.

DARLA

And who is it that put us on this little excursion?

NIGEL
Who is it that agreed to come along?

DARLA
What do you mean?

NIGEL
You're not trying to put off that discussion, are you?

DARLA
Are you?

NIGEL
Are you insinuating I'm getting cold feet, after all I said to you that night?

DARLA
I don't know. Taking us on this journey would be a good way to postpone something you were no longer sure about.

NIGEL
And agreeing to come along would be a rather good way as well.

DARLA
Look, if you --

GONDOLIER
(interrupts)
Ristorante Alfredo, *signore*.

The gondola slows to a stop as the gondolier brings it alongside the pavement landing.

NIGEL
We'll continue this later.
(gets up; to gondolier)
Grazie, Giuseppe.

Nigel gets out of the gondola and helps Darla get out too, then tips the gondolier.

GONDOLIER
Grazie mille, signore.

Nigel and Darla move off toward the restaurant as we FADE OUT the song.

EXT. RESTAURANT

Nigel and Darla arrive and stop outside. Nigel looks in through a window, then glances at his watch.

NIGEL
Five minutes early. Good.
(turns to Darla)
Wait out here. If you hear me scream, come in with guns blazing.

Darla smirks and watches as Nigel goes into the restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Nigel enters and looks around. The place is empty except for two COUPLES sitting at separate tables. He goes over to a small table in the back and sits down to wait.

EXT. RESTAURANT

Darla stands near the entrance. After a moment, a man comes around the corner and approaches. He is FERARRE, an Italian in his 40's with a thin moustache, and he wears a trench coat and a fedora. Darla sees him, brings out the photo they found in Geneva and looks at it, then looks at Ferarre and confirms it's the same man.

Darla puts the photo away and watches surreptitiously as Ferarre walks up to the entrance and stops. Ferarre looks both ways as if worried he is being followed, then opens the door.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Nigel watches as Ferarre comes in and stops just inside the door, recognizing him from the photo. Ferarre appears to take no notice of him, then goes over to the bar and sits on a stool. A BARTENDER goes to him, but he waves him off. Ferarre sits there for a while, glancing at Nigel from the corner of his eye and acting comically mysterious, and Nigel waits for him to do something.

After a while, Ferarre stands and walks toward Nigel, but he passes right by his table and continues on toward the restrooms. Nigel continues to wait, trying to go along with it. After a moment, Ferarre returns and stops at the table and speaks in a hushed tone.

FERARRE
Signor Hopkins?

NIGEL
Yes?

FERARRE
(sits down)
Buon giorno. I am Ferarre. I am so
very happy we could meet at last.

NIGEL
Likewise.

Ferarre looks around to make sure no one is watching them, then continues secretively.

FERARRE
No one knows you are here?

NIGEL
Just the two of us.

FERARRE
No one followed you?

NIGEL
Not that I'm aware of.

FERARRE
You are certain?

NIGEL
I was very careful.

FERARRE
Good.
(beat)
How did things go in Paris?

NIGEL
As well as could be expected.

FERARRE
Meno male. That is as much as any of
us can hope for.

Ferarre says nothing more, just stares at the table, and Nigel tries to prompt him.

NIGEL
Look, would you care for a pint before
we get down to business?

FERARRE
No. I never drink during the day.

Again, Ferarre looks around cautiously, then he brings out an ENVELOPE from inside his trench coat.

FERARRE
I was told to give you this.

Ferarre starts to hand the envelope to Nigel, but just as Nigel is about to take it, Ferarre holds it back and again looks around. Then he lets Nigel take it. Nigel starts to open it, but Ferarre stops him with great alarm.

FERARRE
No! Do not open it until I am gone!

NIGEL
Yes, of course. Sorry.

FERARRE
Mamma mia! I do not wish to violate
orders in any way. The consequences
could be most grave.

NIGEL
Yes, I'm sure they would be.

FERARRE

This is a very serious situation we find ourselves in. Very serious.

NIGEL

Right. I understand.

Nigel tries not to let on that he has absolutely no idea what's going on. Ferarre relaxes visibly, as if he's just averted a disaster, then continues.

FERARRE

You are to go to the location I have given you. There you will be given your next instructions. That is all I can say.

NIGEL

Well, I was meaning to ask you about --

FERARRE

(cuts him off)

No! *Basta!* I can say no more! I have done my part. Now it is up to you.

NIGEL

Yes, well, I thank you for all your efforts. I'm sure everyone involved is most grateful.

FERARRE

Hah, that would be the first time. No one ever appreciates all that I do. No one.

NIGEL

How disrespectful of them.

FERARRE

You are telling me. Twenty years I have risked everything, and what do I get? Even my wife left me. *Cagna ingrata*.

NIGEL

Sorry to hear that.

FERARRE

Of course, that could have been because of my medical condition, but who can say?

Nigel has absolutely no response to that.

FERARRE

Well, I must go. I pray you are successful, Signor Hopkins. The fate of all of Europe could depend on it.

NIGEL

I see.

FERARRE

As far as others are concerned, we never met here today. Say nothing to no one.

NIGEL

Oh, mum's the word.

FERARRE

(looks around again)

And be careful. There are eyes everywhere.

NIGEL

There most certainly are.

FERARRE

(stands up)

Buona fortuna, my friend. You will need it.

NIGEL

Grazie.

FERARRE

(crosses himself quickly)

And may God have mercy on us all.

And with that, Ferarre heads quickly toward the entrance. After he's gone, Nigel just sits there, and he doesn't know what to make of anything that has just happened.

EXT. RESTAURANT

Ferarre exits and stops just outside the door, looks both ways fearfully, then hurriedly walks down the street. Darla watches him go, then looks in through the window.

INT. RESTAURANT

Nigel opens the envelope and brings out a SLIP OF PAPER. He expected there to be more, but that's all there is. He unfolds the paper and reads it, then sighs. Then he puts the paper back in the envelope, gets up, and starts walking toward the entrance.

EXT. RESTAURANT

Darla watches as Nigel comes out and joins her.

NIGEL

(sarcastic)

Well, that went down like a bomb.

DARLA

So what happened? What did he say?

NIGEL

Whatever this bloke Hopkins was into, it seems to be a good deal more than either of us imagined. The fate of all Europe could hang in the balance.

DARLA

Really?

NIGEL

That's what the man said.

DARLA

Then how fortunate for all of us that you are here to take his place.

NIGEL

Even though I've not the foggiest what any of this is all about.

(holds up envelope)

Perhaps whatever waits at our next destination will yield further clues and shed some light on the matter.

DARLA

And what is our next destination?

WIDE ANGLE - ROME, ITALY - DAY

The Eternal City lies spread out before us under the summer sun, and the INSTRUMENTAL TRACK "Spanish Flea" by Herb Alpert & The Tijuana Brass begins on the soundtrack.

TITLE:

Rome, Italy

WIDE ANGLE - ST. PETER'S SQUARE - SAME

RESIDENTS, TOURISTS, and PIGEONS alike fill the piazza, with St. Peter's Basilica in the background.

EXT. COLOSSEUM - SAME

Flocks of TOURISTS gather around it, dwarfed by the immense and ancient structure.

EXT. TREVI FOUNTAIN - SAME

TOURISTS toss coins into the water.

EXT. STREET - SAME

A small street far from the hubbub of all the tourist activity. A LAMBRETTA SX200 SCOOTER goes by with two people riding on it; Nigel drives, Darla sits behind him.

ON THE SCOOTER - MOVING

DARLA

Curiously enough, our work for S.M.A.S.H. has never brought us to Rome. Last time I was here was for a concert two years ago, and I didn't have the chance to see the sights. I basically went from my hotel room to the venue and back.

NIGEL

Why didn't you sneak off on your own like Audrey Hepburn in "Roman Holiday"? I'm sure you could have managed it.

DARLA

I was here for barely a day. The girls and I were a last-minute replacement to open a show for The Beatles. John's idea, naturally.

NIGEL

You know, that reminds me. There's something I've been meaning to ask you about...

DARLA

Perhaps if we manage to get to the bottom of all this and bring it to a proper conclusion, we could go on a little tour. I've always wanted to see the Sistine Chapel.

NIGEL

Yes, but first I'd like to clear something up about a certain song.

DARLA

Although I must say this whole situation has me a bit apprehensive. Have you not entertained the possibility we may be getting in over our heads?

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING

The scooter arrives and comes to a stop as they continue the conversation.

NIGEL

(turns off engine)

I'll admit I don't much like operating in the dark, but I don't think they've invented a situation yet that you and I can't handle.

DARLA

(gets off scooter)

We do make a smashing duo... both on and off the job.

NIGEL

(gets off scooter too)

Yes we do. But getting back to what I was asking. Were you really the --

DARLA

(cuts him off)

What? What? You keep blithering on about something. What is it?

NIGEL

I just want to know if what you said
in the car that morning about --

DARLA

(cuts him off again)

Look, we've more important things to
do than waste time on nonsense. You did
say the fate of Europe relies on it?

NIGEL

That I did.

DARLA

Then perhaps we should both keep our
minds fully focused on the matter at
hand and be distracted by nothing else,
don't you think?

Nigel frowns, then turns and goes into the building. Darla
watches him go, smiling to herself as she once again keeps
him guessing about whether she really inspired Lennon to
write "Day Tripper", then follows him. And the MUSIC ends.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

Nigel and Darla are standing outside an apartment door, and
Nigel knocks on it.

NIGEL

If one more shifty, beady-eyed fellow
speaking in mysterious, hushed tones
opens this door...

DARLA

Or a Fish-Footman with yet another note
telling us to go to yet another city...

NIGEL

Fish-Footman?

DARLA

"Alice in Wonderland". You never read
it?

NIGEL

The works of Arthur Conan Doyle were
more to my taste growing up.

DARLA

Each to their own. But whoever answers,
I do hope they can clue us in at last
to whatever this is all about. This is
becoming one baffling, never-ending
journey.

NIGEL

I suspect we're nearly at the end of
the trail, my dear Chandler, and on the
cusp of a most illuminating discovery.

DARLA
I certainly hope you're right.

NIGEL
I'm always right.

DARLA
Would that were true.

There's been no response to Nigel's knock, and Darla realizes it.

DARLA
Did you knock?

NIGEL
Didn't you see me?

DARLA
There's no answer.
(beat)
Knock louder.

Nigel knocks again, harder, but there's still no response. Darla proceeds to knock herself, pounding on the door, and Nigel rolls his eyes.

NIGEL
Well, if that doesn't wake up the
dead, nothing could.

DARLA
I don't believe there's anyone here.
Are you sure this is the right place?

Nigel tests the doorknob and discovers the door is unlocked. He and Darla exchange glances, then he slowly starts to open the door.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Nigel opens the door and peeks inside, then he and Darla step in. The apartment is a quite luxurious studio, very beautifully furnished and appointed, and they move further into the room and look around at the PAINTINGS on the walls and the OBJETS D'ART prominently displayed.

DARLA
Certainly worlds apart from Hopkins'
little Paris flat.

NIGEL
I should say.
(sees something)
Hello, what's this?

Nigel goes to the kitchen and detaches a small ENVELOPE taped to the refrigerator door, and Darla watches as he opens it and removes a NOTE.

NIGEL
 (reads note aloud)
 "Look in the refrigerator."

He looks over at Darla, but she shrugs. He pauses, then carefully opens the door and looks inside. He brings out another small ENVELOPE, opens it, and reads the NOTE inside.

NIGEL
 "Look under the coffee table."

Starting to get annoyed, he crosses back to the living area, and Darla watches as he feels under the coffee table and detaches yet another ENVELOPE. Nigel shakes his head in bemusement, then opens the envelope and brings out a third NOTE. He reads it.

NIGEL
 "Look inside the desk, second drawer
 on the right."

Sighing sharply, he goes to the desk and opens the drawer, and Darla watches as he reaches inside and brings out a small REEL-TO-REEL TAPE MACHINE.

NIGEL
 Well, perhaps now we'll get somewhere.

He takes the tape machine to the coffee table, sets it down and switches it on. It begins to play a message recorded in a very serious male VOICE with an unidentifiable accent.

TAPE
 Good day, Mr. Hopkins. If you are listening to this, then I assume you have made it successfully to Rome after meeting with your contact in Venice. I must congratulate you on managing to get this far. As we both know, this is a very serious situation we find ourselves in.

NIGEL
 (under his breath)
 Yes, that's what Ferarre said.

DARLA
 Sssh!

TAPE
 (continuing)
 Until now, we have chosen to share with you only as much information as was deemed absolutely necessary to permit you to complete each step of the operation, but you have reached a point where more can be revealed to you. Now that you are here listening to this, it is time to reveal to you precisely what is involved and what is expected of you.

NIGEL

Please do.

TAPE

(continuing)

But before I do, let me express on behalf of all of us our deepest and most sincere gratitude for your willingness to assume this risk and undertake such a delicate assignment. It is not every day that we are able to find someone with a sense of duty sufficient to make such a serious commitment and personal sacrifice, but you have shown by your unwavering loyalty and dedication that we made the correct choice in selecting you -- and for that, we thank you.

NIGEL

(growing impatient)

You're quite welcome. Now please get on with it.

TAPE

(continuing)

In fact, we have such confidence in you and your absolute determination to see this assignment through to a successful conclusion that we feel it unnecessary to revisit what we have already discussed in the past and delay you from continuing on your way. The instructions we provided you at your initial briefing are really all you need to proceed forth from here, so we will refrain from burdening you with further details and taking up any more of your valuable time. You already know what to do.

NIGEL

No, I don't!

TAPE

(continuing)

In closing, we wish you good luck, Mr. Hopkins, and our thoughts and fervent prayers are with you. Goodbye.

The tape ends. For a moment, Nigel and Darla just stand there, staring at the tape machine. Then he turns to her.

NIGEL

Is any of this any clearer to you after listening to that?

Darla shrugs and throws up her hands. Nigel looks back at the tape machine, then switches it off angrily.

NIGEL

Dash it all! I thought I'd indulge my inner Holmes for a bit and unravel this puzzle rather quickly, but all we find at each turn are more pieces -- and the more we find, the less I can discern what the completed puzzle should look like!

Just then, someone fires a shot at them. Startled, they instantly dive for cover behind the sofa, and Nigel brings out his pistol.

NIGEL

What in bloody --

He pokes his head out, trying to see where the shooter is located, but another shot rings out and he ducks back behind the sofa.

DARLA

Where is he?

NIGEL

In the loo, I think.

DARLA

Who is he?

Nigel tries to peek again, but another shot immediately forces him back.

NIGEL

Care to ask him? Why should that information be any more forthcoming?

The MAN shooting at them peeks out from within the bathroom, and he is fully dressed in black and wearing a ski mask. Nigel peeks again and shoots at him, and the man ducks. Then the man shoots back, forcing Nigel to hide again, and the bullet strikes a SCULPTURE on a small table behind Nigel and shatters it.

NIGEL

Whoever he is, he has absolutely no appreciation whatsoever for the finer things.

(calls out)

I say! Be a good man and surrender yourself, won't you?

Darla stares at him, and Nigel shrugs.

NIGEL

Sometimes it confuses them.

He starts to peek again, and this time he's met by a barrage of fire that forces him to duck just in the nick of time.

DARLA

And sometimes it just makes them angry.

The man lays down some more fire and dashes out of the bathroom and across the living area. Nigel peeks again just in time to see him run out the door.

NIGEL

After him! If anyone knows what this is about, he does!

He gets up and runs toward the door, and Darla follows him.

DARLA

And what if he doesn't?

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nigel and Darla race out the door and toward the stairs.

DARLA

(continuing)

What if he's looking for the same answers we are?

NIGEL

I'll make it a point to ask him and clear that up when I get my fingers round his neck!

They start descending the stairs.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING

The man jumps onto a VESPA 150 GL SCOOTER parked in the alley, starts the engine and tears out onto the street. Nigel and Darla race out of the lobby and stop as they see him take off.

DARLA

He's going to get a good start on that thing!

NIGEL

Not on your Nellie!

The SONG "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" by The Rolling Stones begins on the soundtrack as Nigel and Darla race to the Lambretta and jump on, and Nigel starts the engine and takes off in pursuit of the fleeing Vespa.

EXT. STREET

The Vespa speeds down the street, and the Lambretta follows a good distance behind.

FURTHER AHEAD

The Vespa continues speeding down the street, and the Lambretta is starting to catch up.

EVEN FURTHER AHEAD

The Vespa speeds by, and a few moments later the Lambretta does as well, getting closer.

ON THE LAMBRETTA - MOVING

Darla clings to Nigel as Nigel drives like a bat out of hell.

ON THE VESPA - MOVING

The man glances back at them.

ON THE LAMBRETTA - MOVING

Nigel drives determinedly as he closes the gap.

NIGEL

That bugger is not getting away!

DARLA

We don't even know which side he's on!
Maybe he's one of the good guys!

ON THE VESPA - MOVING

The man looks back again just long enough to raise his pistol and shoot at them.

ON THE LAMBRETTA - MOVING

Nigel ducks instinctively as the bullet whizzes by.

NIGEL

Then why is he shooting at us?

DARLA

Maybe he thinks we're the bad guys!

ON THE VESPA - MOVING

The man shoots at them again.

ON THE LAMBRETTA - MOVING

Again, Nigel ducks as the bullet whizzes by.

NIGEL

Care to straighten him out on that?

DARLA

I will if you catch up to him!

EXT. INTERSECTION

The Vespa crosses the intersection and skids to a stop, then changes direction and starts going down the intersecting street.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

Caught off-guard, Nigel skids to a stop as well and struggles to change direction and stay in pursuit.

NIGEL

Blast!

EXT. INTERSECTION

The Lambretta heads down the intersecting street, far behind the Vespa.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

Nigel accelerates and tries to catch up again, and Darla hangs on for dear life.

EXT. STREET

The Vespa whizzes by, and the Lambretta whizzes by a few moments later.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

Nigel continues to accelerate, determined to close the gap.

EXT. ANOTHER INTERSECTION

The Vespa shoots through just before a small, slow-moving TRUCK starts to enter the intersection from the side street. Closing the distance, Nigel comes up on the truck fast.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

Darla anticipates the impending collision.

DARLA

Look out -- !

EXT. INTERSECTION

The truck is in the middle of the intersection as the Lambretta arrives, and the scooter turns left onto the side street the truck just came out of, barely missing its rear. Then it skids, does a quick about-face, and continues down the main street in its original direction of travel.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

Nigel is unfazed as he accelerates away from the intersection, but Darla is stunned by their narrow escape.

NIGEL

Alright?

DARLA

Barely!

EXT. STREET

The Lambretta shoots by as Nigel tries to make up for the delay and catch up yet again.

EXT. ANOTHER INTERSECTION

Nigel and Darla arrive and screech to a stop and look around, seeing no sign of the Vespa. For a moment, it looks like they've lost it. Then Nigel spots it some distance away down the intersecting street. The man is idling there, waiting for them. He waves at them, then continues down the street. Incensed, Nigel tears off after him.

FURTHER DOWN THE STREET

The Vespa shoots by, then the Lambretta does as well.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

Nigel accelerates as he tries once again to catch up.

EXT. SMALL TRAFFIC CIRCLE

The Vespa enters the traffic circle and starts to go around it, and the Lambretta enters a moment later in pursuit. But instead of continuing down the street at the other end of the circle, the Vespa remains on the circle and starts coming back around the other side.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

Nigel follows the Vespa as it goes around the circle.

EXT. SMALL TRAFFIC CIRCLE

The Vespa and Lambretta start to go around a second time.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

Nigel continues to follow the Vespa around the circle.

EXT. SMALL TRAFFIC CIRCLE

Both scooters go around for a third time, each at opposite sides of the circle from the other.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

Nigel is getting angry, but Darla is getting dizzy.

DARLA

I can't tell whether he's in front of
us or behind!

EXT. SMALL TRAFFIC CIRCLE

The Vespa suddenly veers off and heads down the intersecting street, and Nigel almost overshoots the turn.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

Nigel skids to change direction.

NIGEL
Bloody hell!

EXT. SMALL TRAFFIC CIRCLE

Nigel makes the turn and continues to pursue the Vespa.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

Nigel is really angry now as the man keeps toying with them.

NIGEL
Still think he's one of the good guys??

EXT. STREET - VIA DEI FORI IMPERIALI

The Vespa and the Lambretta speed past Forum Romanum and other ruins on Capitoline Hill.

EXT. STREET - VIA CELIO VIBENNA

The Vespa and the Lambretta speed past the Colloseum and the Arch of Constantine.

EXT. STREET - VIA DEI CHERCHI

The Vespa and the Lambretta speed past the site of Circus Maximus and the ruins on Palatine Hill.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

As he chases the Vespa past all these places, Nigel remembers how Darla wanted to go sightseeing.

NIGEL
Are you keeping track of all the
landmarks we've passed?

DARLA
Just mind the road!

NIGEL
I thought you said you wanted a tour!

EXT. PIAZZA DELLA BOCCA DELLA VERITA

The Vespa comes off Via Dei Cherchi and speeds through the plaza past the Temple of Hercules, followed by the Lambretta. But as it reaches the intersection with Via di Ponte Rotto, the Vespa suddenly turns left and goes down the street the wrong way, toward the Tiber River, and Nigel misses the turn.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

DARLA
He's down by the river!

EXT. NEXT INTERSECTION

Nigel reaches the intersection and turns left onto Via del Foro Olitorio and heads toward the river.

EXT. STREET - LUNGOTEVERE DEI PIERLEONI

The Vespa shoots past the intersection with Via del Foro Olitorio and continues along the bank of the Tiber River. A moment later, the Lambretta comes off Via del Foro Olitorio and continues in the same direction.

FURTHER AHEAD

The Vespa continues along Lungotevere de' Cenci by the river with the Lambretta trailing behind.

EVEN FURTHER AHEAD

Both scooters speed along Lungotevere dei Tebaldi, continuing north along the river.

THE VESPA

speeds along the straight and empty stretch of road, accelerating.

THE LAMBRETТА

accelerates as well as Nigel desperately tries to catch up.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF LGT. DEI SANGALLO AND VIA ACCIAIOLI

The Vespa nimbly shoots through light TRAFFIC crossing the intersection from Ponte Principe Amedeo Savoia Aosta, but as the Lambretta approaches, a BUS comes off the bridge and starts blocking the street.

ON THE LAMBRETТА

Nigel skids to a stop, angered by yet another delay.

NIGEL

For God's sake! Get a bloomin' move on!

EXT. INTERSECTION OF LGT. DEI SANGALLO AND VIA ACCIAIOLI

As soon as the bus is sufficiently clear from his path, Nigel goes through the intersection and continues north on Lungotevere dei Fiorentini.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

Nigel can't see the Vespa ahead of them anymore.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF LGT. DEI FIORENTINI AND CORSO VITTORIO EMANUELE II

The Lambretta skids to a stop at the intersection.

ON THE LAMBRETТА

Nigel and Darla look around quickly, but it looks like they've really lost the Vespa this time. Then Nigel looks left down Ponte Vittorio Emanuele II.

INSERT - NIGEL'S P.O.V.

Looking down the length of the bridge, we can see the Vespa disappear from view as it turns left onto Via della Conciliazione in the distance.

ON THE LAMBRETТА

Nigel instantly starts to turn left.

EXT. PONTE VITTORIO EMANUELE II

The Lambretta turns onto the bridge and speeds across it to the other side.

INTERSECTION OF VIA SAN PIO X AND VIA DELLA CONCILIAZIONE

The Lambretta turns left from Via San Pio X and heads down Via della Conciliazione toward St. Peter's Square.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

Nigel tries to spot the Vespa among the traffic up ahead.

INSERT - NIGEL'S P.O.V.

Further ahead, the Vespa gets in front of a TOUR BUS and goes OUT OF VIEW.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

Nigel frowns but keeps going.

EXT. STREET - VIA DELLA CONCILIAZIONE

The Lambretta drives past several TOUR BUSES, going slower.

ON THE LAMBRETТА - MOVING

Nigel looks around, unable to see the Vespa.

EXT. PIAZZA PIO XII

The Lambretta comes to a stop in front of St. Peter's Square. Nigel and Darla look this way and that, but there's no sign whatsoever of the Vespa, and the SONG ends.

NIGEL

Where has he got to? Where did he go?

DARLA

He seems to have simply vanished.

NIGEL
Just like that bloke outside the café
in Paris!

Nigel has had enough, and he cries out in exasperation.

NIGEL
This is positively shambolic! Each
time I think we're finally getting
a handle on this, it just gets more
convoluted! We don't know who that
blighter is, we don't know where he
went! We don't even know what we're
looking for!! In fact, we don't know
what the bloody hell is going on!!!

DARLA
We know one thing. Whatever's going
on... it's something someone somewhere
thinks is worth killing for.

Nigel looks at her, then he calms down and nods slowly.

INT. APARTMENT - AN HOUR LATER

Nigel and Darla come in, returning after the fruitless chase
to the place where it began.

NIGEL
I still say that blaggard knows
precisely what's going on. Wish we
hadn't spooked him. We might have
resolved this entire thing today.

DARLA
That assumes he'd have been willing
to share the particulars with us.

NIGEL
Oh, he would. After all this jaunt
across Europe, I'd make bloody sure
that he'd talk.

DARLA
Now who's the headstrong, impulsive
one? That almost sounded like me.

Nigel looks at her, then he smiles, realizing she's right.

NIGEL
I told you we're more alike than we know.

He pauses, then sits down on the sofa and sighs.

NIGEL
Who knows what the dickens this is
all about? It's starting to take more
turns than an Agatha Christie novel.
Seems we're back to square one, without
a clue as to how to proceed.

DARLA

Perhaps not.

Nigel looks at her, and he watches as she picks something up from the floor just outside the bathroom.

DARLA

Seems our friend left something behind.

NIGEL

Must have dropped it in his rush to escape.

Darla goes to the coffee table and places what she picked up on it. It's a MAP, and she unfolds it and spreads it out.

DARLA

A map...

Nigel leans forward to take a closer look.

DARLA

...and a tiny island in the Aegean circled. In red.

Nigel turns the map around and examines it, then he taps the circled spot several times with his finger and looks up at her with a smile.

NIGEL

The game's still afoot.

EXT. DARLA'S FLAT - LONDON - SAME

The terraced house where Darla lives in Chelsea. Hawthorne stands at the front door, fiddling with the lock with a little GADGET. He succeeds in unlocking the door, looks both ways to make sure no one's watching, then starts to go in.

INT. DARLA'S FLAT - LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Hawthorne enters and closes the door behind him, then calls out.

HAWTHORNE

Chandler?

(no response;
suspicious)

Wilkins...?

(still no response;
annoyed)

Anyone here?

Hawthorne steps further into the room, looking around at Darla's decor and not very appreciative of it. There's a LAVA LAMP on a table, and he watches the hypnotic blobs for a moment, then quickly turns it off. Then he notices an artist's EASEL standing in one corner of the room and goes to it. He lifts the cloth that covers the canvas and reveals an incomplete psychedelic POP ART PAINTING, and he shudders.

HAWTHORNE

Good heavens... Is this what she does
in her spare time?

He covers the painting again, then looks toward the closed
bedroom door and starts walking to it.

HAWTHORNE

Alright, Chandler, let's have you.

He arrives at the door and knocks, but there's no response,
and he opens the door slowly and peeks in.

INT. DARLA'S FLAT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The bed is perfectly made and there's a big TEDDY BEAR on
the pillow. Hawthorne opens the door fully and enters. He
stands there for a moment, then goes to the mirrored wall-
to-wall closet and opens it quickly, half-expecting Darla to
be hiding there. But there's no one in the closet, and he
stands there staring at Darla's wardrobe in amazement. There
are many MOD OUTFITS and MINISKIRTS, accessories such as
BELTS and NEWSBOY CAPS, and on the floor are multiple pairs
of GO-GO BOOTS in every color of the rainbow.

HAWTHORNE

Why so many boots...?

He shakes his head, unable to fathom Darla's fashion sense.

INT. DARLA'S LOUNGE

Hawthorne comes out and closes the bedroom door behind him.

HAWTHORNE

I don't suppose they've absconded to
the Isle of Wight, have they? A little
sailing at a quaint fishing village,
perhaps... romantic dinners at a
seaside resort... God knows what else.

(beat; peeved)

Well, I certainly hope they're enjoying
themselves on their time off.

EXT. FISHING VILLAGE - GREECE - LATE MORNING

A small village on the Aegean coast.

TITLE:

A quaint fishing village... in Greece

EXT. HOTEL - SAME

A small hotel near the water. A TAXI arrives and stops in
front, and Nigel and Darla get out.

INT. HOTEL - ROOM - SAME

The door opens and Darla and Nigel enter with their bags.

NIGEL
 France, Switzerland, Italy, now Greece.
 (puts bags on bed)
 If this keeps up, we'll soon be round
 the world in less than eighty days.

DARLA
 Wilkins Travel Office strikes again.

NIGEL
 Yes, you've got more on this trip than
 you bargained for, haven't you.

DARLA
 Still not complaining. So, when do you
 wish to go out to the island?

NIGEL
 I think it's best if we wait till after
 dark. Round midnight, thereabouts.

DARLA
 We've got the whole day to fill, then.
 Any suggestions?

NIGEL
 Beyond the obvious? Lunch, then an
 early dinner -- after which we should
 both get some sleep before we go. A
 three or four hour kip should suffice.

DARLA
 (glances at watch)
 It's still an hour yet till lunch.

NIGEL
 Let me go see about hiring a powerboat
 in the meantime, get that out of the way.

DARLA
 Think I'll stop by a little shop we
 passed, then, and see if I can find an
 authentic fisherman's cap.

NIGEL
 Alright, we'll meet back here in an hour.

DARLA
 (continuing)
You know -- the kind John wore in
 "Help!"; He gave me one, but I seem to
 have lost it. Should be just brill with
 one of the outfits I got in Paris.

Reminded of it again, Nigel turns around and opens his mouth
 to ask her about "Day Tripper" -- but Darla is already out
 the door. Once again, she's teased him about it; and once
 again, he's just as much in the dark as he was before.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Later that night.

INT. HOTEL - ROOM - SAME

Nigel and Darla are in bed; but while Darla is asleep, Nigel is wide awake. He lies there staring up at the ceiling, worried that this situation may be more complicated than he ever could have imagined and that he's brought Darla along for something that may turn out to be very dangerous.

He lies there contemplating the circumstances, then looks at her. She is sound asleep, and he slowly swings his legs over the side of the bed and sits on the edge. He makes sure she's still asleep, then stands and goes to the closet to get his clothes. He starts to get dressed quietly, watching her to make sure she doesn't wake up, but he drops something and it makes a noise. Darla immediately rouses and looks around, blinking in the darkness.

DARLA

Is it time already...?

For a moment, Nigel considers making some excuse, such as he got up to go to the bathroom, but Darla looks over at him and sees that he's almost fully dressed.

NIGEL

I woke a bit early... but we might as well go.

Darla sits up and stretches, then gets off the bed and goes to the closet to get her own clothes. Nigel watches as she starts to get dressed, trying not to show how angry he is at himself.

EXT. AEGEAN SEA - OFF THE GREEK COAST - NIGHT

A small POWERBOAT with two people on it heads out across the calm black water in the moonlight.

ON THE BOAT - MOVING

Nigel stands at the wheel as he drives the boat, Darla sits behind him. It's a rather chilly night and Darla shivers a little, and Nigel glances at her and sees that she's cold.

NIGEL

Alright?

DARLA

It's getting a bit parky. I should have worn a jumper.

NIGEL

Here.

Nigel takes off his windbreaker and gives it to her, and she puts it on. Another moment passes, then Nigel speaks.

NIGEL

You know... I was going to leave you behind tonight... sneak out whilst you were sleeping.

DARLA

Why on earth?

NIGEL

This isn't a game anymore. We've absolutely no idea what we're stepping into, what we're going to find out there. For all we know, this could be that theoretical situation you mentioned that one could never anticipate, where one has no control. I'd rather you weren't involved if that's the case.

DARLA

(teasing)

Why, cor love a duck! He really does care after all.

NIGEL

Oh, stop. Don't make light of it. You're the one who warned me about getting in over our heads, remember? But I was too cocky to listen. Maybe I should have.

DARLA

You're serious, aren't you? I thought you said there wasn't a situation we couldn't handle.

NIGEL

Just thought I'd voice my concern, is all. Back in Paris I resolved not to be so cavalier about things anymore. Especially when it comes to your life.

Nigel says nothing more and continues to drive the boat. Darla remains silent as well, realizing how deeply worried he is about something happening to her.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BEACH - AN ISLAND IN THE AEGEAN - NIGHT

Gentle waves lap at the shore as the boat approaches and comes to a stop on the sand. Nigel cuts the engine and he and Darla jump out, then they move quickly toward a line of trees beyond the beach and disappear into them.

FURTHER AHEAD

Nigel brings out a pair of BINOCULARS and starts scanning the clearing beyond the trees. Darla wanders around a bit, looking around, and eventually crosses in front of Nigel, blocking his view.

NIGEL
 Ahem. Let the dog see the rabbit.

DARLA
 Oh. Sorry.

Darla gets out of his way and continues to look around. Except for the sound of the surf behind them, it's completely quiet.

DARLA
 Do you hear that?

NIGEL
 What?

DARLA
 That's just it. There's nothing. I don't hear a thing. Maybe there's not another soul on this entire island.

NIGEL
 I doubt that.

DARLA
 Maybe this whole bloody thing has been someone's idea of a practical joke. "The fate of all Europe could hang in the balance"... What could possibly be here to make that possible?

NIGEL
 Sssh. Take a look.

Darla goes to him and he hands her the binoculars. Skeptical, she looks through them at whatever he was observing.

INSERT - VIEW THROUGH BINOCULARS

In the distance, we can see a vehicle stopped on the crest of a small hill. It's a 1965 LAND ROVER SERIES IIA 2-DOOR, and there are two MEN standing beside it. Both are wearing shoulder holsters and appear to be on patrol.

BACK TO SCENE

Darla is not impressed.

DARLA
 I see two blokes hanging about by a Land Rover. Armed with pistols, from the looks of it.
 (hands binocs
 back to Nigel)
 Not exactly an army about to conquer Europe.

Nigel takes the binoculars and continues looking through them at the men.

NIGEL
I've got a bad feeling about this...

DARLA
About those two gits?

NIGEL
There must be more than just them.
Otherwise, Ferarre wouldn't have been
so ominous.

DARLA
Maybe he was misinformed. Or exaggerating.

NIGEL
Not bloody likely. The man was terrified.
(beat; lowers binocs)
Perhaps we should have contacted
Hawthorne all along.

DARLA
A bit late for that. Calling him now
is impossible at this point. Not
without my transmitter.

Nigel knows this is true, and he considers their options.

NIGEL
One of us should go back to the
mainland and get in touch with the
local authorities. Tell them something's
up and bring them out here.

DARLA
One of us?

NIGEL
One of us must stay and keep eyes on
those buggers. If we both go and they
move off somewhere, we may never find
them again.

DARLA
You're not suggesting I go and leave
you here?

NIGEL
That's precisely what I'm saying. Go
and try to recruit some help. I'll
lie low until you get back.

Nigel raises the binoculars again and continues to look
through them, but the issue is far from settled for Darla.

DARLA
I'm not going anywhere.

NIGEL
That's not a request, Darla, that's
an order.

DARLA

An order?

NIGEL

I know we're supposed to be equal partners now but I've got more years at S.M.A.S.H. than you and tonight I'm pulling rank.

DARLA

If this is as dangerous as you think, what if something happens to you after I've gone? What if I return and you're nowhere to be found?

NIGEL

If something happens, I'd rather it happen to me than to both of us.

DARLA

I don't know whether or not I appreciate this chivalrous side of you.

NIGEL

We can debate it later. Now stop faffing about and get out of here. I mean it.

Nigel continues to observe the men in the distance, and Darla knows he's dead serious and won't relent on this.

DARLA

Yes, sir.

She turns and moves off back into the trees.

THE BEACH

Darla turns the boat around and pushes it further into the water, hops aboard and starts the engine.

BACK TO NIGEL

Nigel lowers the binoculars and listens to the sound of the boat's engine. As it starts to recede into the distance, he's satisfied Darla is on her way. Then he goes back to observing the men.

INSERT - VIEW THROUGH BINOCULARS

In the distance, the two men get into the Land Rover and start to drive off.

NIGEL

watches as they move away, frowning.

NIGEL

Blast...

As he watches, someone OFF-SCREEN suddenly hits him over the head from behind with a GUN, and the screen instantly goes BLACK.

FADE UP:

INT. ISLAND HIDEOUT - CELL - NIGHT

A small cell with nowhere to sit or lie down, and Nigel is sprawled out on the cold concrete floor, unconscious. After a moment, he slowly rouses and gets up on his knees, then feels the painful bump on the back of his head where he was hit.

NIGEL

Someone has a rather nasty disposition...
(looks around)
Where in blithering heck am I...?

He slowly stands up and observes his surroundings. The front of the cell consists of bars and a door, outside of which is a long, narrow corridor. Directly across from him is another, identical cell, currently empty. He goes up to the bars and tests them, then looks down the corridor. There is nothing but silence and there seems to be no one else around.

NIGEL

(mutters to
himself)

Well... at least Darla got away. Perhaps she'll return with reinforcements. If she can ever find me.

Suddenly, we can hear the sound of FOOTSTEPS coming down the corridor, and Nigel watches as GOON #1 approaches his cell. Goon #1 wears a fedora and a shoulder holster, carries a PISTOL in his hand, has a scar down one side of his face, and looks like a Cockney gangster. He arrives at the cell and unlocks the door.

NIGEL

Oh. For a minute there I thought I was all alone. Good to see I've some company.

Goon #1 says nothing. He opens the door and motions with his gun for Nigel to step outside, and Nigel has had enough of these games.

NIGEL

You know, I'm getting awfully peeved at all these shenanigans. I've been halfway across Europe chasing my own tail. I don't suppose you'd care to tell me what's going on?

Goon #1 still says nothing, just motions again for Nigel to move. Nigel sighs and steps out of the cell.

Goon #1 shuts the cell door, then motions to Nigel to start walking down the corridor. Nigel chooses to obey, biding his time for now, and Goon #1 follows closely with the gun at his back.

INT. ISLAND HIDEOUT - ROOM - SAME

A large room used primarily for meetings. There are two rows of chairs at the back, and at the front of the room is a large, freestanding CORKBOARD, covered with a large sheet. Next to it is a desk, and next to the desk stands DEREK HENDRY -- British, sinister, and the same age as Nigel. He is reading something and his back is to us, and for the moment we cannot see his face.

Goon #1 brings Nigel in after a moment and stops him in the center of the room. Derek is facing away from them, but he knows they've arrived.

DEREK

You've no idea all I had to arrange to lure you here, the people I paid off, but it was all worth it... Mr. Hopkins.

(chuckles)

How amusing for you to assume the identity of a man who doesn't even exist.

Nigel is shocked as he recognizes the voice, but despite the recognition, he simply cannot believe it. For a moment, he is unable to speak, and when he finally does, we can hear the depth of his surprise and disbelief.

NIGEL

Derek...?

Derek slowly turns around and his face comes into the light... and even though it's been ten years since the last time they saw each other, Nigel recognizes him immediately.

DEREK

You remember. After all these years. I must say I'm touched.

Derek watches him with amusement, and Nigel begins to feel a gnawing sense of dread as he wonders what Derek has up his sleeve.

NIGEL

What the bloody hell is going on? What's this all about?

DEREK

Revenge, that's what it's all about, old boy. Or have you forgotten just how much you owe me?

Nigel remains silent. He knows exactly what Derek is referring to, but he is still too shocked by this entire situation to respond.

DEREK

Oh my, you have forgotten. I suppose I'll need to jog your memory, then. Do you recall that little incident whilst we were at Oxford, when you stumbled upon that black market scheme I was running? I asked you not to say anything, but even though we were mates, you went to the dean and ratted me out. You had a choice between friendship and conscience, and you chose to betray your friend. Does any of that ring a bell?

Again, Nigel doesn't respond, and Derek continues.

DEREK

Afterwards, I was promptly booted from uni and nicked like a common thief. You went on to graduate with top honors, and I went on to waste three years of my life in the clink -- all thanks to you.

Nigel stares at him, unable to believe the trail he and Darla have been following the past few days has led to this. And he feels like the biggest fool ever for allowing himself to be so completely deceived and manipulated.

NIGEL

Why did you lead me here? If you wanted revenge you could have got it anytime, anywhere. Why all this convoluted charade?

DEREK

Perhaps because I've a bit more in mind than killing you, which was my first impulse. You see, that would have been too easy. Boring, even. I'm an artist, and if I'm to do something it must be with a little flourish. So just killing you would have been so... ordinary. Not very satisfying at all, like a casual affair that afterwards leaves one feeling empty.

NIGEL

Enough with the pretentious rubbish. Just spill it.

DEREK

Alright, then. Let me fill you in on what has transpired after I got out of Dartmoor. I returned to London and got back in touch with some of my old contacts in the criminal underworld. There was really nowhere else for me to go, so I put my experience to good

(MORE)

DEREK (CONT'D)

use and formed a new outfit. I've done rather well over the years and built that outfit into an international network, and I've managed to stay ten steps ahead of the nitwits at Scotland Yard and Interpol, who aren't aware of even half my activities.

NIGEL

Congratulations.

DEREK

But now I've set my sights on something bigger, more ambitious, something that will eclipse all those piddling earlier efforts. Something that will allow me to retire from this rather risky life with all that I need to see me through the rest of my days. And you're going to help me.

NIGEL

The hell I am.

DEREK

You owe it to me, old boy. How do we know how I might have turned out if not for that fateful day when you chose to betray me? Perhaps I'd be completely different. Perhaps you made me what I am today.

NIGEL

I tried to stop you from pursuing this path. More than once. What you are today you made yourself.

DEREK

Perhaps it was fate, then. Sins of the father? At any rate, I've been watching you for quite some time, waiting for just the right moment and the right manner in which to pay you back. You've no idea how entertaining it's been to witness the mundane goings-on of your daily life -- and the not so mundane as well. I feel almost ashamed at my eavesdropping. But it's been an absolute pleasure to toy with you these last few days and watch you take the bait every step of the way. And now that you're precisely where I want you, the time has come to unveil my plan.

Derek goes to the large corkboard and pulls the sheet off it, revealing several MAPS and DIAGRAMS of the Louvre in Paris. Then he turns back to Nigel and waves at the board like an artist unveiling his masterpiece.

DEREK

The Louvre. Current home of the Mona Lisa, Venus de Milo, and countless other works of art and historic antiquities. One of the largest and most celebrated collections on earth. But why should the French be the privileged caretakers of all that treasure, eh? After all, quite a bit of it isn't even theirs, is it? I intend to part them from some of it. But of course, there's all that nasty security, you know, alarm systems and such. Quite a bother to get around. But you've got the gadgets in your little kit bag to make pulling this job a cinch... Mr. Spy.

Derek watches Nigel knowingly, and Nigel is stunned by how long and how thoroughly Derek has watched him and how he knows he's a secret agent.

NIGEL

You're mad...

DEREK

So once again you're faced with a choice, old boy, just as you were ten years ago. Only then, all you needed to do was look the other way. Now you can either assist me in my little endeavor, or you can refuse. But if you choose the latter, it'll cost you this time.

Derek gets a WALKIE-TALKIE from the desk and speaks into it.

DEREK

Alright, Croker, bring her in.
(back to Nigel)
Choose to betray me again, and it will cost you her.

The door opens and GOON #2 drags Darla into the room. Darla doesn't come along willingly, and her disheveled hair and clothes show that she didn't get captured without a great deal of resistance, but she immediately stops when she sees Nigel, and the two of them stare at each other.

DEREK

Give me what I want, and girly here lives. Otherwise, her death is the price for following your conscience again.

Derek watches Nigel, relishing his control over him. But Nigel continues to stare at Darla, and for the first time in his life, he finds himself totally at a disadvantage, at the mercy of a personal adversary who knows more than enough about him to hold a very potent threat over his head.

DEREK

Difficult choice, is it? If it were me, I'd say dollybird's life is worth sacrificing my conscience.

NIGEL

You've never had one. I should have seen it then... but I most clearly do so now.

DEREK

Careful, old boy. I might get ahead of myself and not wait for you to decide.

Nigel keeps quiet, trying to figure out what to do. Derek waits for a response, his patience starting to wear thin.

DEREK

Well...?

NIGEL

(a beat)

No.

DEREK

Then she dies.

Nigel glances at Darla and their eyes meet. She shakes her head ever so slightly, and in her eyes he can see that she gives him permission to do whatever is necessary to thwart Derek. But Nigel has no clue what to do. Back in Marseilles, it was easy to run a scam on LeBeque, but their regular routine won't work here. Derek knows too much and holds all the aces. Nevertheless, he tries to put on the act.

NIGEL

So be it, then. She knew the risks just as I did.

DEREK

(doesn't buy
it at all)

You'll let her die after all she means to you?

NIGEL

You proceed from a false assumption, old boy. She doesn't mean all that much.

DEREK

You expect me to believe that?

NIGEL

I don't give a kipper's dick what you believe.

DEREK

After all that mush that dripped from your lips in Paris? "And I know when I wake up tomorrow, I'll still feel

(MORE)

DEREK (CONT'D)
 the same way." Or how about: "If I
 ever leave you, it won't be my doing."
 Shall I go on? There are plenty more
 gems on the tape. Wonderful things,
 these bugs. It's really all rather
 touching. Nearly brought a tear to
 me eye.

Again, Nigel is completely at a loss, stunned by how thoroughly Derek has planned everything and controlled this entire situation from the very beginning. He says nothing, and Derek has had enough of his procrastination.

DEREK
 So what's it to be, Wilkins? Do your
 duty like an obedient little puppy,
 or spare her life? You can't have both.
 You should have done as I asked years
 ago out of simple loyalty, but I
 suppose that was too much to expect.
 Now you'll have to submit to my will
 out of love for a woman. Who'd have
 thought it, eh old chum? The great
 Nigel Wilkins brought to his knees by
 the love for a woman.

(to Darla)
 Back at Oxford, he was quite the ladies
 man even then. A veritable parade of
 conquests, each very much disposable.
 Made me rather jealous, in fact.

(back to Nigel)
 Perhaps you should have stuck to your
 old ways. Now she is your Achilles heel,
 and your downfall.

Nigel finally finds his voice and stands firm in the only conviction that gives him strength in this horrible situation.

NIGEL
 She's the best thing that ever happened
 to me. And you... are the worst.

He starts to step toward Derek to throttle him, but Goon #1 quickly bashes him over the head with his gun and Nigel drops to the floor. Darla tries to break free from Goon #2, but he holds her even tighter. Derek stares at Nigel's unconscious form, disappointed in him.

DEREK
 As I said, old boy. Your downfall.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ISLAND HIDEOUT - CELL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Nigel is lying on the floor, unconscious. After a moment, he slowly comes to and feels the bump on the back of his head.

NIGEL

Ohhh... Coshed twice in one evening.
I feel just as I did the very first
time I went on a bender... only this
time it wasn't preceded by any fun.

He shakes his head to clear it, then looks toward the cell
across the corridor and sees that Darla's in it.

NIGEL

Darla! By Jove, are you alright?

WIDER ANGLE

Darla is sitting on the floor in the other cell with her
back against the wall, and she appears unharmed.

DARLA

For the moment. Until you make your
decision, it seems.

NIGEL

How long was I out...?

DARLA

Long enough. And don't worry, you didn't
mumble anything whilst you were dozing.

Nigel is relieved she's alright and still wisecracking, and
he sits down and leans back against the wall of his cell and
sighs.

NIGEL

I certainly made a dog's breakfast out
of our weekend getaway, didn't I?

DARLA

Who is he?

NIGEL

Derek Hendry. An old mate from Oxford.
I was his only friend, actually. Everyone
else gave him the cold shoulder.

DARLA

For an old mate, he certainly doesn't
seem very pally or appreciative.

NIGEL

We had a bit of a falling out ten years
ago. Never thought it would come back
to haunt me.

(looks at her)

I thought I told you to get back to
the mainland.

DARLA

I tried, but your mate had other ideas.
Two boats intercepted me not a mile
away.

Darla stops talking as Goon #1 returns from the bathroom to resume his post at the end of the corridor. He sits down in a chair, turns on a small TRANSISTOR RADIO, and starts reading a NEWSPAPER. Darla and Nigel watch him, then Nigel speaks in a lower voice.

NIGEL

Nothing about this seemed kosher from the start. I should have cottoned on to it. Instead, I allowed my curiosity and my hubris to get the better of me and followed a trail of bread crumbs straight into a trap like a blithering idiot.

(beat)

I'm sorry I got you involved in all this.

DARLA

You didn't exactly rope me into it, you know. Now we need to figure out how to get out of it.

NIGEL

Any suggestions? As I see it, we've bog all chance of escaping the old-fashioned way, and I'm all strapped for ideas at the moment.

DARLA

I'm afraid I must agree. So it appears a little improvisation is in order, once again.

NIGEL

I defer to your expertise in that department.

Nigel watches as Darla gets up, wondering what she has in mind. Darla steps up to the bars and grabs them with both hands and looks down the corridor at Goon #1. Goon #1 continues to read his newspaper, and his radio begins to play the SONG "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'" by Nancy Sinatra, the volume low.

Darla watches him, and she sizes him up quickly and determines exactly how to play him. She puts on her best Liverpool streetwalker act and suddenly calls out in a thick Scouse accent, so suddenly that it catches Nigel by surprise.

DARLA

Ay up, thingy! What's a bird gotta do to get some attention round here?

Goon #1 doesn't react at all and continues to read his paper.

DARLA

'Ellooooo? Can't ya hear I'm talkin' to ya, mate?

GOON #1
(behind the paper)
Pipe down.

DARLA
It's gettin' a right drag sittin' here
waitin'. Can I have a ciggy and a bevvy
to pass the time?

GOON #1
I said put a sock in it.

DARLA
Come 'ed, give us a ciggy, will ya?
Please? I'll trade ya for it.

GOON #1
(lowers paper,
looks at her)
What are ya blabbering about?

DARLA
I'll trade ya. A kiss for a ciggy?

Goon #1 watches her for a moment, then he puts down the newspaper and gets up. He walks over to Darla's cell and stops in front of it, and Nigel watches silently, letting Darla do her thing.

GOON #1
A kiss?

DARLA
And maybe a bit more if I happen to
like it.

GOON #1
(eyes her; a beat)
Yer off yer nut.

Goon #1 turns and starts to head back to his chair, and Darla pretends to be offended.

DARLA
Turn your back, will ya. What's the
matter, luv? Ya bat for the other team
or somethin'?

GOON #1
(stops, turns back)
Hey, now!

DARLA
Is that it? A batty boy here, have we?

If anything can provoke Goon #1, it's having his masculinity questioned. He goes right back to Darla's cell to confront her, and Nigel continues to watch, amused.

GOON #1
Shut yer gob!

DARLA

Bent as a bottle of chips, I'll bet!

GOON #1

Shut yer cakehole or I'll shut it
for ya!

DARLA

Why, I'd wager ya wouldn't know what
to do with a judy anyroad, would ya?

GOON #1

Stop giving me lip, ya slag, or I'll --

DARLA

(cuts him off)

Or you'll what? Have a hissy fit? Oh,
yer nothin' but a big girl's blouse,
aren't ya?

GOON #1

That's it!

DARLA

Oooo, what're ya gonna do now, nancy?
Get all narky on me?

Goon #1 takes out a KEY and quickly unlocks the cell door,
and Darla backs away with mock fear.

DARLA

Uh-oh, I think nancy-boy's got a cob
on! Ev'rybody look out!

Goon #1 opens the cell door and takes a step inside. He
stares at Darla, blood in his eye, but Darla returns his
stare with open ridicule. In his cell, Nigel tenses up and
stands, afraid that Goon #1 will get violent.

A moment passes, then Goon #1 suddenly grabs Darla by the
arm and yanks her to him and plants a big, sloppy kiss right
on her lips. No longer worried about violence, Nigel
relaxes, but he still wishes he could kill the man.

After the kiss, Goon #1 stares at her smugly, certain that
he's put her in her place, but Darla looks right in his eyes
with a smirk on her face, unfazed.

DARLA

Did that put lead in yer pencil? Or
do ya need more? I'm up for a knee
trembler if you are.

Goon #1 hesitates for a moment, both amazed and turned on by
her attitude, then suddenly moves to tear off her clothes.
But the instant he does, Darla suddenly grabs his crotch and
squeezes as hard as she can. Goon #1 cries out in pain, then
begins to slowly sag, gurgling, as she keeps the pressure
on.

Darla calmly pulls Goon #1's gun from its holster with her other hand, waits for him to sink low enough, then bashes him over the head with it. Goon #1 goes down for the count, and she stands over his unconscious body and watches him with disdain.

DARLA

Seems I was right after all. A wuss.
Not very much in the plums department
either.

Nigel has watched the entire thing, and he waits as Darla takes Goon #1's key and locks him in the cell. Then Darla goes to Nigel's cell and unlocks the door.

NIGEL

You certainly like to live dangerously,
don't you?

Darla says nothing, all business, and Nigel steps out of the cell as she checks to see how many bullets the clip in Goon #1's gun has.

NIGEL

I must say that was a real eye-opener.
Provided glimpses into aspects of your
character I was hitherto unaware of.

DARLA

I'm chock full of surprises.

NIGEL

I can see. Did Lennon really write
"Day Tripper" about you?

Darla looks at him and smirks, then turns and starts to head down the corridor toward a stairwell, gun in hand. Nigel follows, resigning himself to the reality that he'll probably never know the truth.

INT. ISLAND HIDEOUT - FIRST FLOOR CORRIDOR

The door to the stairwell opens and Darla and Nigel peek out to make sure the coast is clear. There's no one around, but Darla looks both ways and is uncertain in which direction to proceed. Nigel remembers the way he came before and points to the right, and they start to move in that direction.

FURTHER DOWN THE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Darla and Nigel advance down the corridor and stop at a half open door. They peek in, and it's the large room they were in earlier. In fact, Derek is there, alone, his back to the door as he studies some of the diagrams on the corkboard. Darla and Nigel watch him quietly, then Nigel whispers.

NIGEL

So what's the plan?

DARLA

Who needs a plan? You go in there and clobber him. Simple enough.

Nigel is about to respond, but he stops and looks back at something over his shoulder. Darla continues to watch Derek in the room.

DARLA

Well? Go on. Give him a right thumping. Just leave some for me.

NIGEL

Not that I'm averse to fisticuffs, and I do enjoy the occasional punch-up, but I really don't think those tactics would work in this situation.

DARLA

And why not?

NIGEL

Ask him.

Darla looks at him, and now we see what Nigel means. Goon #2 is standing right behind Nigel and pointing his GUN at both of them. He grabs Goon #1's gun right out of Darla's hand with one quick move, then motions for them to go into the room. Darla sighs.

DARLA

Never fails, does it?

Nigel just shakes his head ruefully, and they start to go into the room.

INT. ISLAND HIDEOUT - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Goon #2 marches Darla and Nigel to the center of the room, at which point Derek turns to them. He doesn't seem at all surprised, almost bored in fact.

DEREK

Oh, you tried to escape. That's not cricket, old boy, not cricket at all. Tediously predictable, though. Can't tell you how disappointed I am.

NIGEL

Oh, I'm really gutted about that.

DEREK

I'm sure you are. But not as gutted as you'll be when you see what I've in store for dollybird here.

Derek picks up his walkie-talkie and speaks into it.

DEREK

Philips, I need you in the main room.

He puts down the walkie-talkie again and looks at Nigel.

DEREK

Remember, what fate befalls her now
is your fault, not mine.

NIGEL

Touch a hair on her head and you're
a dead man.

DEREK

Really. And how do you intend to
carry that off? Seems to me you're in
no position to make any threats.

NIGEL

That's not a threat. It's a promise.

DEREK

(laughs)

You really are quite the impudent
bugger, aren't you? I suppose it's
all for dollybird's benefit, though,
putting up a brave front for her sake.
But it won't make up for your having
dragged her into this predicament,
will it? That just eats you up alive,
doesn't it, knowing that you've got
her involved in all this and have
brought it down upon her.

GOON #3 now enters the room, and Derek points at Darla. Goon #3 goes directly to her and drags her over to Derek's side of the room, then takes out a SWITCHBLADE and holds it to her throat. Nigel's first instinct is to do something, anything, but Goon #2 holds his arm tightly and digs the barrel of his gun into his back.

NIGEL

And it just eats you up alive that
there are people who actually care
about more than just themselves, who
are willing to give up their lives
for another person or a higher cause.
All that must be foreign to you. Tell
me, Derek, did you spend all that time
in prison just nursing your wounds like
a petulant little boy and plotting how
to get back at a world that did you
wrong, instead of owning up to your
mistake and resolving to be a better
man?

DEREK

Not at the world, old boy. Just you.

NIGEL

Then have at it. Let her go and you
can do anything you want with me.

DARLA

Nigel --

NIGEL

(continues)

Anything you want, Derek. I won't resist.
You can indulge your fondest fantasies
of revenge at no cost at all.

DARLA

Nigel, no...

NIGEL

What do you say? Have we got a bargain?
Seems too good to me to pass up.

Derek watches Nigel, and he can see that Nigel isn't bluffing, that he means it. And it actually irritates him.

DEREK

You've no idea how tempting your offer
is. But I know nothing I do to you will
ever hurt you as much as what I plan
to do to her.

NIGEL

You sadistic, selfish little bastard...

DEREK

But there's nothing that says I can't
have my cake and eat it too, is there?

Derek snaps his fingers at Goon #3 and then points at Nigel. Goon #3 hands Darla over to Derek, who takes her in a choke hold, then goes to Nigel and suddenly stabs him in the upper arm. Darla screams and Nigel tries not to cry out.

DEREK

So I'm selfish, am I? Perhaps you
taught me how to be selfish, eh? Maybe
I learnt it watching you! All those
birds whose hearts you broke without
a second thought... Pretending to
befriend me when no one else would
and all the time looking down your
nose at me... Betraying me in the end.
And you never paid a price for any of
it. You showed me how an upper class
gentleman could get away with murder,
as long as he did it with charm, wit,
and aplomb.

NIGEL

I did stop them from putting you in
Mercury that time. How ungrateful.

Goon #3 hits Nigel's arm, right on the stab wound, and Nigel flinches in pain. But he goes on.

NIGEL

Tell me, Derek... how did you manage to get into Christ Church anyway? The son of a mobster. Did your father offer a donation in exchange for a place... or just bribe or threaten the admissions tutor?

Goon #3 hits him on the injured arm again, and this time it hurts even worse, forcing Nigel to cry out.

DEREK

No one let me forget that, did they? Where I came from. I wore it like a scarlet letter. I never fit in no matter how I tried. So in the end, I stopped fighting it. Your betrayal was the final insult.

NIGEL

Self-pitying prat... too immature to realize I ratted you out to scare you from following in your father's footsteps when you wouldn't listen to me. If I'd known how it would all turn out, I wouldn't have bothered!

Derek's eyes go wide as, in an instant, he realizes something he'd never realized until this moment, the true reason Nigel blew the whistle on him. If only he'd known, the last seven years might have been completely different. And it wasn't Nigel's fault, it was his own. The truth is just too much to bear, and he explodes.

DEREK

You're too clever for your own good, Wilkins! And I've had my fill of your smugness!!

As he loses his cool, Darla seizes upon the moment and bites down on his arm, hard. Derek cries out and she manages to break free. Nigel grabs Goon #3 by his knife-wielding arm and spins him around, pulling him close and turning toward Goon #2 as Goon #2 shoots at Nigel. The bullet hits Goon #3 and kills him.

Meanwhile, Darla turns on Derek before he can recover and smacks him across the face. As he falls backward, Derek pulls out his own GUN, but Darla grabs his arm before he can aim it and forces it up into the air.

As Darla and Derek struggle, Nigel pushes Goon #3's body at Goon #2 and knocks him off-balance, and Goon #2's gun goes flying. Goon #2 tries to retrieve it, but Nigel tackles him to the floor and both men begin to struggle as well.

Darla and Derek continue to struggle, then Derek manages to cut Darla's legs out from under her. As she stumbles, he hits her over the head with his gun and knocks her out, and Darla sags to the floor.

Goon #2 manages to push Nigel aside and scrambles on his knees to get his fallen gun, but Nigel finds Goon #3's knife on the floor and picks it up and tackles him again. With one quick move, Nigel jerks Goon #2's head up by the hair and cuts his throat, then slams his face down into the floor with a savage gesture. His adrenalin still pumping, he catches his breath, then looks around quickly.

NIGEL

Darla? Darla!

Neither Darla nor Derek are still in the room. Alarmed, Nigel grabs Goon #2's gun and races out the door.

EXT. ISLAND HIDEOUT - NIGHT

It's a moonlit night, but a dense fog makes visibility rather difficult. There are two LAND ROVERS parked outside, and Derek is shoving the unconscious Darla into the passenger seat of one of them. Nigel bursts out of the building just in time to see it and takes a shot at Derek. He misses, and Derek returns fire as he runs over to the driver's side and jumps in. Nigel dives to the ground and rolls, then shoots again just as Derek starts the engine and pulls away with a screech.

Nigel watches Derek drive off with Darla, then he runs to the remaining Land Rover and jumps in. The key is in the ignition, and he starts the engine and tears off in pursuit as the SONG "Happenings Ten Years Time Ago" by The Yardbirds begins on the soundtrack.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

A narrow road surrounded on both sides by forest and covered with a dense fog. Derek's Land Rover speeds by.

INT. DEREK'S LAND ROVER - MOVING

Derek drives quickly despite the fog. Beside him, Darla lies in a heap on the passenger seat, unconscious.

EXT. ROAD

Nigel's Land Rover speeds by.

INT. NIGEL'S LAND ROVER - MOVING

Nigel drives intently, trying to see through the thick fog.

INSERT - THE VIEW AHEAD

Derek is far enough ahead that his tail lights are not visible.

BACK TO SCENE

Nigel continues to drive, determined to catch up despite Derek's head start.

EXT. ROAD

Derek's Land Rover speeds by.

INT. DEREK'S LAND ROVER - MOVING

Derek looks in the rearview mirror.

INSERT - VIEW IN MIRROR

There's no sign of Nigel's headlights back there.

BACK TO SCENE

Derek slows down as he navigates a curve.

EXT. ROAD

Derek's Land Rover goes around the curve.

INT. DEREK'S LAND ROVER - MOVING

Derek comes out of the curve, but he doesn't accelerate and maintains his slower speed. He looks in the rearview mirror again.

INSERT - VIEW IN MIRROR

Through the fog, a pair of headlights appear around the curve, quite far back.

BACK TO SCENE

Derek smiles as he looks forward again, and it's obvious that he wants Nigel to chase him.

EXT. ROAD

Nigel's Land Rover speeds by.

INT. NIGEL'S LAND ROVER - MOVING

Nigel drives intently, seeing Derek's tail lights up ahead.

INSERT - THE VIEW AHEAD

Through the fog, Derek's tail lights can be seen some distance ahead.

BACK TO SCENE

Nigel accelerates to close the gap.

INT. DEREK'S LAND ROVER - MOVING

Derek looks in the rearview mirror, then smiles again and accelerates as well.

EXT. ROAD

Derek's Land Rover screeches around a turn.

INT. NIGEL'S LAND ROVER - MOVING

Nigel sees the tail lights disappear from view, and despite the horrible visibility, he accelerates even more, desperate to catch up.

EXT. ROAD

Nigel's Land Rover screeches around the same turn.

INT. DEREK'S LAND ROVER - MOVING

As Derek continues to glance in the rearview mirror to make sure Nigel is still back there, Darla starts to slowly rouse back to consciousness. She opens her eyes and looks around, and she realizes where she is and what's going on. She looks over at Derek, then suddenly reaches for the steering wheel and grabs it with one hand. She tries to pull the car off course, and as Derek struggles to maintain control, the Land Rover starts to swerve wildly.

INT. NIGEL'S LAND ROVER - MOVING

Nigel can see Derek's Land Rover swerving on the road.

INSERT - THE VIEW AHEAD

Derek's tail lights swerve all over the road in the distance.

BACK TO SCENE

Nigel keeps driving, afraid they're going to crash.

EXT. ROAD

Derek's Land Rover continues to swerve back and forth.

INT. DEREK'S LAND ROVER - MOVING

Derek and Darla continue to struggle for control.

EXT. ROAD

Derek's Land Rover goes off the road and careens into a ditch.

INT. DEREK'S LAND ROVER

As the vehicle comes to a violent stop, Darla is thrown back away from the wheel, and we stop the SONG abruptly. Darla tries to get up, but Derek whacks her over the head again with his gun and knocks her out. Then he scrambles out of the Land Rover and comes around to the passenger side.

INT. NIGEL'S LAND ROVER - MOVING

Nigel continues driving intently, then spots the tail lights on the side of the road and hits the brakes.

EXT. ROAD

Nigel's Land Rover skids to a stop near the spot where Derek's Land Rover went off the road. Nigel leaps out, gun in hand, just in time to see Derek quickly carry Darla off toward the trees along the side of the road.

Nigel shoots at Derek, but Derek disappears into the trees and he misses. Nigel curses, then runs across the road and into the trees as well as the SONG "Still I'm Sad" by The Yardbirds begins on the soundtrack.

EXT. FOREST

Nigel enters the forest running, then comes to a stop when he can't see Derek anywhere up ahead. He looks around.

THE FOREST - NIGEL'S P.O.V.

All around him are trees, shrouded in fog and looking ghostly in the moonlight. Visibility is getting worse.

NIGEL

looks around, peering into the darkness. Derek could be anywhere, hiding behind any tree, lying in wait. He hesitates, then starts to proceed slowly.

EXT. FOREST

Nigel moves deeper into the forest, gun held ready, looking around in all directions and alert for any sound or movement.

FURTHER AHEAD

Nigel continues to move slowly and cautiously as the fog gets even thicker. He peers into the darkness, then hears a sound and stops. Derek emerges from behind a nearby boulder, still carrying Darla, and starts to run away. Nigel raises his gun to shoot him, but nothing happens when he pulls the trigger. The gun is out of bullets, and Derek disappears into the fog.

Angry, Nigel throws the gun away to the side, and the sudden movement hurts his stabbed arm. He winces in pain, then kneels on the ground and rips off his sleeve and quickly fashions a tourniquet. He tightens it, then gets up and runs in the direction Derek disappeared.

EXT. FOREST - ON DEREK

He runs through the trees as best he can carrying the unconscious Darla.

EXT. FOREST - ON NIGEL

He moves steadily through the trees, but Derek has a head start on him and he can't see him at all up ahead through the fog.

EXT. FOREST - ON DEREK

He continues to run, carrying Darla's limp form. He knows exactly where he's going; he just wants to get there far enough ahead of Nigel.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

It stands at the edge of a cliff overlooking the ocean a couple of hundred feet below. Derek emerges from the trees into the clearing and carries Darla directly toward the lighthouse tower.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE TOWER

It's fairly dark inside, the only illumination provided by the moonlight. Derek carries Darla in and sets her down on the floor for a moment to catch his breath, then picks her up again and starts carrying her up the stairs.

EXT. FOREST - ON NIGEL

Nigel continues to move steadily through the trees.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE STAIRS

Derek carries Darla up the stairs, which spiral along the wall toward the top of the lighthouse.

EXT. FOREST - ON NIGEL

Nigel continues to proceed through the trees, quickening his pace.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE STAIRS

Derek continues to carry Darla up the stairs, nearing the top.

EXT. FOREST - ON NIGEL

Nigel starts running now as he sees the clearing up ahead.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE

Nigel emerges from the forest and stops to look around. Seeing no sign of Derek or Darla, he crosses quickly toward the tower.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE TOWER

Nigel stops just outside the entrance and peeks in, then enters slowly. He pauses to let his eyes adjust to the darkness, then listens carefully for any sounds. His arm starts to hurt again and he leans back against the wall and pulls the tourniquet tighter, then he moves to the foot of the stairs. He looks upward, then starts to ascend them slowly.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Nigel slowly and carefully walks up the stairs, hugging the wall and looking upward.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE WATCH ROOM

Nigel reaches the top of the stairs and peeks in. There's no sign of Derek or Darla here either, and he enters. There's only one other place they can be, outside on the gallery's deck. He approaches the exit, steels himself, then steps out onto the deck.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

Nigel steps outside and very slowly inches his way around the curving wall, then stops. Derek is standing at the railing up ahead, propping up the still unconscious Darla against it, waiting for Nigel... and it's clear his intention is to push her over it in front of Nigel's eyes. The SONG ends and fades.

DEREK

Took you long enough. But once again
you're right where I want you.

Nigel takes a step toward them and stops, his heart pounding.

NIGEL

Let her go and we'll talk this out.
You've been making one mistake after
another for the past ten years, but
it can stop now. Tonight.

Unbeknown to Derek as he watches Nigel, Darla starts to rouse at the sound of Nigel's voice, fluttering her eyes.

DEREK

Not likely, old boy. I've other plans.
I always do things with a little
flourish. First, you watch dollybird
here plummet to the ocean below. Then
you join her. I'm sure you'll spend
eternity together.

Suddenly, Darla wakes up fully and slams her foot down on Derek's, then elbows him in the gut with her free arm. Momentarily stunned, Derek releases his grip on her and she breaks free and starts to run. But before Nigel can do anything, Derek recovers quickly and aims his gun right at the retreating Darla's back.

NIGEL

No!!!

And with that shout, Nigel leaps at Derek and tackles him just as Derek pulls the trigger. The shot goes wild, and both men go right over the railing and disappear from view. Darla screams.

DARLA

Nigel -- !

Darla rushes to the railing just in time to see the splash in the ocean two hundred feet below.

DARLA

Nigel!!

She stares at the ocean below, unable to believe what has happened, then starts to mumble to herself in horror.

DARLA

Oh, God... oh, God...

She slowly backs away from the railing, in shock.

DARLA

Dear God...

Her eyes glazed, she backs into the wall and stops, then slowly drops to a sitting position. She sits there for a moment, then starts to sob as the horrible reality sinks in.

DARLA

Oh, Nigel... You said you would never leave me...

Consumed with grief, she buries her face in her hands and weeps disconsolately.

After a while, we hear a voice, weak and tired. Darla's sobs almost drown it out, but we hear it. Nigel's voice.

NIGEL (O.S.)

Give me a hand here, would you, luv...?

Darla suddenly stops weeping and lifts up her head.

DARLA

Nigel...?

She listens, wondering if she imagined it.

DARLA

Nigel?

She looks around, then sees a pair of hands gripping the edge of the deck.

DARLA

Nigel!

She scrambles over to the hands on her knees and looks over the side. Nigel is hanging onto the edge and dangling just above a smaller platform below him, looking up at her.

NIGEL

Your hand, luv... It's getting a trifle difficult to hold on...

Darla is so excited she's beside herself.

DARLA
Nigel, you're alive! You're alive!

NIGEL
Don't wish to put a damper on your
exuberance, but, the hand...?

Darla snaps out of it and grabs his hands and helps pull him up. Nigel comes over the railing and drops onto the deck, and Darla puts her arms around his neck and starts kissing him all over his face as he sits down.

DARLA
Oh, Nigel, you're alive!

NIGEL
Well, I should bloody well hope so.
After the hero saves the princess,
they're both supposed to live happily
ever after. Anything less would be
unsatisfactory, to say the least.

Darla stops kissing him and stares at him, still unable to believe that he's really there.

DARLA
That's the second time I've thought
you were dead.

NIGEL
I'd better stop pushing it, then.
Third time might be the charm.

Darla resumes kissing and hugging him, and we slowly

DISSOLVE TO:

AERIAL SHOT - THE LIGHTHOUSE

taken from a helicopter, and in the background, the sun is starting to rise over the ocean as a new day dawns.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHURCH - LONDON - DAY

We can hear the "Bridal Chorus" being played inside.

INT. CHURCH - SAME

As the "Bridal Chorus" continues, Hawthorne accompanies Darla, in her wedding dress, to where Nigel stands waiting at the altar with a MINISTER. The CONGREGATION consists of a few members of S.M.A.S.H., among them Fiona, who looks about to weep as she witnesses Nigel marry another woman.

Darla takes her place beside Nigel, the music ends, and the minister begins the ceremony.

MINISTER

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the sight of God and in the face of this congregation, to join together this man and this woman in Holy Matrimony.

(looks at Nigel)

Nigel Aloysius Wilkins --

DARLA

(glances at Nigel
and mouths the name)

Aloysius...?

MINISTER

(continuing)

-- wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor, and keep her, in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?

NIGEL

I will.

MINISTER

(looks at Darla)

Darla Persephone Chandler --

NIGEL

(glances at Darla
and mouths the name)

Persephone...?

MINISTER

(continuing)

-- wilt thou have this man to thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony? Wilt thou obey him, and serve him, love, honor, and keep him in sickness and in health, and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?

DARLA

I will.

MINISTER

Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?

HAWTHORNE

I do.

Hawthorne releases Darla's right hand and Nigel takes it in his own.

MINISTER

If any man can show any just cause why this man and this woman may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace.

Hawthorne looks about to say something, then he holds back and tries to look nonchalant. A brief moment passes, then he remembers and brings out the WEDDING RING and gives it to Nigel. Nigel puts it on Darla's finger.

NIGEL

With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee honor, and all my worldly goods with thee I share. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

MINISTER

Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Then by the power vested in me by the Church of England, I pronounce that they be man and wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. You may now kiss the --

Nigel and Darla start to kiss.

MINISTER

(a beat; finishes)

-- bride.

As Nigel and Darla continue a long kiss and the recessional "Wedding March" begins to play, Hawthorne stands beside them looking a bit uncomfortable, then finally rolls his eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BALLROOM - AN HOUR LATER

The reception after the wedding is in full swing. The new bride and groom waltz on the dance floor as an ORCHESTRA plays a slow, romantic song.

DARLA

Aloysius?

NIGEL

My great-great-great-great-grandfather's name.

DARLA

The one who must be turning in his grave?

NIGEL

None other. But I do believe on this day he would be well chuffed. I heard he rather fancied plucky women.

DARLA
Really? Sounds like he was ahead of
his time.

NIGEL
Just a rumor. Haven't been able to
confirm it.
(cocks an eyebrow)
Persephone?

DARLA
My mother was quite the fan of Greek
classic myths.

NIGEL
I see. Queen of the underworld, eh?
I'd better be on my best behavior,
then.

DARLA
You've been duly warned.

They chuckle, and Darla looks positively radiant.

NIGEL
Happy?

DARLA
Deliriously.

NIGEL
It won't last, you know.

DARLA
Why not?

NIGEL
Well, by my reckoning, there's probably
at least one villain out there somewhere
plotting our untimely demise at this
very moment -- not to mention at least
two or three rather nasty threats to
the civilized world taking shape even
as we speak.

DARLA
Tell them to wait until after the
honeymoon. It's the very least they
can do.

NIGEL
I shall do my best to impress it upon
them.

The song ends and people applaud the orchestra, then the
orchestra begins to play Perez Prado's "Mambo #5".

NIGEL
Seriously, though, you didn't have to
do it, you know.

DARLA

What?

NIGEL

Make an honest man out of me.

DARLA

Well, someone had to do it. And I never shy away from a challenge.

NIGEL

Hmm. Seems I'm rather familiar with that philosophy.

DARLA

Whom do you think I learnt it from?

NIGEL

Then perhaps there's something you can teach me.

DARLA

And that is?

NIGEL

Perhaps you can show me the proper steps to go with this music they're playing now. That's something I never learnt at Oxford, I'm afraid. The waltz is more my style.

DARLA

A man of such experience and sophistication as you?

NIGEL

Never had the occasion.

DARLA

Amazing. Well, alright, if you --

Just then, Hawthorne and his wife ELEANOR appear next to them. Like her husband, Eleanor is stout and in her 50's.

HAWTHORNE

Chandler, Wilkins, I don't believe you've ever met my wife Eleanor.

NIGEL

Um, no, sir. Never had the pleasure.
(nods at Eleanor)

Ma'am.

DARLA

(to Eleanor)

Hello.

ELEANOR

You two make an absolutely smashing couple. Percy's told me so much about you. I wish you my best.

DARLA

Thank you.

HAWTHORNE

(to Eleanor)

Well, let's not dawdle, dear. They're playing our song.

ELEANOR

Oh yes, that's right.

(waves at Darla
and Nigel)

Toodles!

Hawthorne and Eleanor step a few feet away and begin to dance the mambo like a couple half their age, and it's all Nigel and Darla can do but to watch them with their mouths hanging open in complete astonishment.

NIGEL

Director! I had no idea you knew how to mambo!

HAWTHORNE

(looks at them)

Didn't you, now? Well, there are things about me neither one of you knows. And I shall take them to my grave, thank you very much.

And with that, Hawthorne winks at them and continues to dance with his wife. Nigel and Darla watch them, absolutely amazed, then look at each other, remembering what they said earlier about Hawthorne being so serious all the time.

DARLA

"Dour and sullen"...?

They both start laughing, tears coming to their eyes, then put their foreheads together and continue to chuckle.

FADE OUT

and the SONG "A Groovy Kind of Love" by The Mindbenders begins...

TITLE:

THE END? NOT ON YOUR NELLY!
DARLA AND NIGEL WILL RETURN IN
"ABSOLUTELY FABTASTIC"

END CREDITS ROLL

accompanied by the rest of the song, which SEGUES into the SONG "I Got You, Babe" by Sonny and Cher.

FINAL FADE OUT

THE END