

Something in Common

By

Robert Cox

Robert Cox
4980 Vista Pl.
San Diego, CA 92116
(619)867-1610
robcoxtwo@aol.com

FADE IN:

EXT. CONDO COMPLEX - DAY

A nice, modern, well-manicured complex, located near the heart of West Hollywood. Good sized grassy areas and a lot of flowers.

The SOUND of an alarm buzzing is heard O.S.

INT. MARK'S CONDO

BEDROOM

The clock alarm on the side of the bed is BUZZING. The time reads 6:30.

A hand reaches out of the covers and shuts it off. The covers come down, revealing MARK, a 30ish man, of average looks with dark, scraggly hair, very nerdish. When he speaks, he has a distinct stutter.

He blinks at the light and reaches over and grabs his glasses, dark horn rim types. Dressed in a t-shirt and sweat pants he gets out of bed and makes his way to the bathroom, stretching as he goes.

BATHROOM

Mark is taking a shower and shaving at the same time.

Dressed in his sweat pants, he is brushing his teeth in front of the mirror over the sink. The only difference is that there is a towel that covers the mirror so that he can't see himself.

KITCHEN/DINING ROOM

Mark pours a cup of coffee for himself from the coffeemaker. Cleaned up, he still looks scruffy. He goes into the dining room. There is a small table with only two chairs around it in one corner. On the table is a vase of fresh roses.

The bulk of the dining room space is taken up by a large L shaped desk, that contains a desktop computer, printer on one one side and a music keyboard on the other.

Mark, sipping his coffee, turns on his computer and prepares to sit down when the DOORBELL RINGS. He looks up at the direction of the sound and moves towards the living room.

LIVING ROOM

Mark comes into the living room, coffee in hand. The living room is sparsely but tastefully decorated with modern furniture. On one of the end tables is another vase of roses. The DOORBELL RINGS again.

He goes to the door and opens it.

Standing in the doorway is FRAN JEFFRIES, a late 20's woman, dressed in a smart stylish power suit.

FRAN
(smiles)
Hi Mark...I need a favor...

MARK
Sure Fran... c..come in.

He stands aside and she comes in, giving him a kiss on the cheek as she goes by.

FRAN
Am I keeping you from work?

MARK
I haven't s..started yet.

FRAN
God, I wish I could work from home like you do... I would give anything not to have to battle traffic every day...Do I smell coffee..?

MARK
Help yourself...

FRAN
Thanks...you're a doll.

Fran heads into the kitchen, with Mark not far behind.

KITCHEN

Fran comes into the kitchen from the dining room and over to the coffee maker. Mark, following behind her, stands at the entrance to the kitchen watching her.

Fran reaches into the cabinet and pulls out a travel mug, opens it up and pours coffee into it, closes the lid and takes a drink out of it. Closes her eyes and sighs, satisfied.

FRAN
God, I needed that...

She looks at the mug then points to it.

FRAN
This mine..?

MARK
You left it here last w..week....

FRAN

I wondered where it was...

She takes another sip.

FRAN

Ahhhh...

MARK

You said you needed a f..favor....?

FRAN

Oh right... Could I get some roses out of your garden?

MARK

Uh oh, did you have another f..fight with Julie?

FRAN

Fight is such an ugly word...Let's just say that Julie and I had a difference of opinion and leave it at that.

MARK

Oh, I s..see...

FRAN

Well, I'm taking her out to dinner tonight to apologize. I just thought that flowers would be a nice touch...
(mock pleading)
Please...

MARK

I'm not even going t..too ask what t..the f..fight was about... but...

Smiling, Mark opens a drawer and pulls out a pair of clippers.

MARK

Let's t..try and get you out of the d..doghouse...

EXT. CONDO COMPLEX

ROSE GARDEN

Located on the grounds of the condo complex, there are about 30 or so roses planted around a central cemented area, just large enough for a pool-side chaise in the middle of it. The roses are in full, glorious bloom.

Mark and Fran come over to the garden, stop and look at it for a moment. Fran is still drinking from her cup.

FRAN

You grow some of the most gorgeous roses I've ever seen...

Mark, uncomfortable with the compliment, lowers his head, looking at his feet, something that Fran notices.

FRAN

It's a compliment, Mark...It's a good thing...

MARK

(looks up)

Sorry...How many d..do you want?

FRAN

A couple dozen, if that's alright...?

MARK

Sure...must have b..been some fight...

FRAN

(correcting him)

Difference of opinion....

Chuckling, Mark moves in to the center of the garden and starts to clip roses of different colors.

FRAN

You know, Julie and I are going to Haven after dinner...Why don't you join up with us later?

Mark stops and looks over at Fran. Frowns.

MARK

I c..can't...

FRAN

You're aren't busy tonight are you...?

MARK

No, b..but...

FRAN

C'mon Mark, it could be fun... You need to get out more... You're a gay man living in West Hollywood and you never go out...

MARK

I k..know, but you know how I am in crowds. I'll either g..get t..tongue tied or sit in a corner and not t..talk to anyone. B..besides that, I'm t..too old..

FRAN

You're thirty-four...

MARK

T..this is West Hollywood...you have to add seven years f..for every year over t..twenty-nine...which makes me almost s..seventy... Anyway, it d..doesn't matter. Most of the t..time, people d..don't even notice I'm t..there...

At that moment, DAVID SCOTT comes up the walkway. Early to mid 20's, he typifies the West Hollywood man; blond, buff and cocky. Fran turns to look at him. Mark watches him as well from his vantage point.

FRAN

Morning David....

DAVID

Fran...

Mark, in his shyness, trying to be as inconspicuous as possible, goes back to cutting roses, and he's amassing a good pile of them that he places on the chaise. David stops to converse with Fran. Mark is listening.

FRAN

You're up early...

DAVID

Just getting home...met this hot guy at the bar last night... two of us hooked up after my shift and went back to his place...Oh man, what a blast... I'm gonna catch a few zees and then hit the gym before I go back to work...Later...

David starts walking again towards his condo, but as he does he looks directly at Mark and does not even acknowledge his presence and then continues on his way. Mark stops what he is doing.

FRAN

What a slut...

MARK

T..try living in the condo under his for t..the last year and a half. Guys going in and out of his p..place almost every night. B..banging and thumping...moaning...Sometimes, he k..keeps me awake half the night...

FRAN

Jealous...?

MARK

(smiles, blushing)
Of D..David, and his unending
p..parade of men?...No...well,
sometimes...

FRAN

Then meet us at Haven...who knows,
you may find a way to keep him awake.

MARK

No... b..but t..thanks anyway.

Mark looks down at the roses he's gathered.

MARK

I t..think I may have g..gone a little
overboard on the roses...

Fran peers over the bushes and sees the pile.

FRAN

I don't think I have a vase big
enough.

MARK

T..tell you what, you go on to work,
I'll let myself into your p..place
and p..put an arrangement in t..there
for Julie.

FRAN

Would you...?

MARK

Sure...

FRAN

That would be great...

Looks at her watch.

FRAN

If I'm going to miss traffic, I better
get going... See you later, and thanks
again.

Fran starts walking down the sidewalk, walking backwards.

FRAN

...and if you change your mind about
meeting up with us later...

MARK

I'll let you k..know...

Fran turns back around and down the sidewalk, heading for
the parking lot.

Mark turns and going over to his large pile of roses begins to pick them up.

EXT. THE HAVEN - EARLY AFTERNOON

A rather nondescript piano bar in West Hollywood. Older, and showing a little wear around the edges, it appears to be a comfortable place to hang out. A sign in front, above the door says "THE HAVEN"

O.S. is heard the SOUND of a PIANO PLAYING and a MAN'S VOICE SINGING a soft dreamy ballad.

INT. BAR

The large bar dominates the back of the room, opposite a small stage with a small grand piano and a microphone on it. There is A tip jar on the piano. Between are a number of table and chair set-ups with booths against the two walls.

Seated at the piano singing and playing the piano is PAUL GELLER, a man in his 30's.

Seated at one of the tables is TOMMY PIERCE, the owner of the Haven, a man in his 50's. Seated next to him is KIRK, the Bar Manager, late 20's. Both of them are listening to Paul.

Paul brings the song to an end. Both Tommy and Kirk clap, Paul acknowledges them with a smile.

TOMMY

Very good Mr. Geller...very good...Just wait there a moment, would you?

Tommy leans over to Kirk, and the two of them confer.

TOMMY

What do you think, Kirk?

KIRK

He's good... I'd say better than good.

TOMMY

Then, should I hire him?

KIRK

He plays and sings well, and is good looking enough for the boys to drool over... don't see how he'd miss...

TOMMY

He is hot, I'll say that for him... So you agree...?

KIRK

It's your call Tommy, you're the boss...but I'd hire him.

TOMMY

Alright... you get back to your duties and I'll give Mr. Paul Geller the good news...

Tommy and Kirk look over at Paul. Kirk stands and moves in the direction of the bar. Tommy gets up and makes his way to the stage. Paul gets up and comes down to meet him. Tommy smiles.

TOMMY

Congratulations Mr. Geller, you're hired...When can you start?

Paul is overjoyed. He shakes Tommy's hand vigorously.

PAUL

Thank you Mr. Pierce... thank you. I can start anytime...

TOMMY

Tomorrow night too soon?

PAUL

(excited)

No problem...I can have my songbook and some of my own pieces ready to go by then...

TOMMY

Good...we can finish up the paperwork in my office...If you'll follow me....

Tommy heads to his office with Paul following behind.

INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE

The office is small and a little seedy with a desk in the middle of the room, with one chair in front of the desk and one behind it. Behind the desk are four file cabinets. Against the walls are stacks of liquor cases.

There is a mess of papers on the desk and on top of the file cabinets, and a computer on the desk as well.

The door opens Tommy enters, followed by Paul.

TOMMY

(indicates chair)

Have a seat Mr. Geller...I'll get the contracts for you to sign... I also might suggest that you come in tonight, just to scope the place

TOMMY (CONT'D)

out... see what type of crowd you're going to be playing for.

Tommy closes the door to the office and then goes around to one of the file cabinets and opens it while he's talking. Paul sits down at the desk.

PAUL

Sounds like a good idea...I'll take you up on that.

He searches for a moment until he finds what he looking for and pulls it out of the cabinet.

TOMMY

Ah, here we are.

He pulls out some papers and comes around in back of Paul and places the papers in front of him, making sure he makes body contact with Paul. Paul looks up at him, curious.

TOMMY

Excuse me....

Tommy leans over and shows points to an area in the papers.

TOMMY

As you can see here, the pay is eighty dollars a night plus your tips...five nights a week...Monday and Tuesday off. Two weeks of vacation a year and a health plan after ninety days.

While Tommy is talking, his hand drifts to Paul's shoulder and starts massaging it. His hand strays down Paul's back and back up to the shoulder. Paul is uncomfortable with Tommy's closeness.

PAUL

Would you please not do that...

TOMMY

I'm just being friendly... There's nothing wrong with that, is there...? And you are so hot...

PAUL

Mr. Pierce...?

TOMMY

Tommy...

Tommy continues to run his hand over Paul's back and shoulder until Paul grabs Tommy's hand, removes it from his shoulder and stands up.

PAUL

Mr. Pierce, you're hiring me to play piano and sing...and I'll do that.... but that's all I'll do... I came out to California to further my career and my working here is strictly a business arrangement. Now, if you can't respect that, I'm sorry... I need a job, but not that bad...When you decide what you're looking for, you let me know...

Paul moves towards the door and puts his hand on the doorknob, turning it. Tommy calls out after him.

TOMMY

Mr. Geller..?

Paul stops.

TOMMY

(sighs)

Okay... strictly business...I need a piano player, and you're too good to risk losing...

PAUL

I have your word on that...?

TOMMY

Yeah... You got my word...

PAUL

Okay then...Now that we understand each other, I'll take a look at that paperwork...

Paul turns and goes back to the chair, sits, picks up the pen and starts examining the papers.

INT. BAR

Kirk is at the bar, placing glasses in the rack above. The door to Tommy's office opens and Paul comes out of it, and crosses over in front of the bar.

KIRK

(calling after him)

Hey...Mr. Geller.

Paul stops and then comes up to the bar.

KIRK

You were really good...

PAUL

Thanks.... but call me Paul.

KIRK
Paul...I'm Kirk...the bar
manager...Nice to meet you.

Kirk puts his hand out. They shake.

KIRK
Tommy didn't give you too bad a time
did he?

PAUL
He promised it would be strictly
business while I'm working here...Of
course, that was after I threatened
to walk out if he didn't take his
hands off me.

KIRK
Don't mind him too much...He's pretty
harmless...

PAUL
I'll try and remember that.

KIRK
When do you start...?

PAUL
Tomorrow... So I better get my butt
in gear and get my song book in
order...Mr. Pierce suggested that I
come in tonight to see what the
customers are like, so I'll probably
see you later.

Paul moves out and towards the entrance and out. Tommy is coming out of his office about the same time. He comes over to Kirk as he watches Paul leave.

TOMMY
(to Kirk)
What do you think of him...?

KIRK
Seems nice...Handled you pretty well
from what I heard...

TOMMY
Oh, that's what I let him think...He
doesn't know it yet, but I'm gonna
make him my next boyfriend...

KIRK
He might have something to say about
that...

TOMMY
 (dismissing the thought)
 Yeah... but I grow on people after
 they get to know me...And with a
 little persuasion, he'll come
 around...

Tommy moves off and back towards his office. Kirk shakes his head, watching Tommy go.

EXT. MARKET - DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT of the front of the neighborhood market.

INT. MARKET

Typical produce area set-up. Vegetables and fruits are in neat stacks. There are a number of SHOPPERS, doing their daily or weekly routine.

Mark is pushing his mostly empty cart amongst the produce, stopping and looking them over. He's put in a few groceries. He has his head lowered, avoiding eye contact with those around him. This is torture for him.

Mark pushes his cart over near some melons and starts to reach over to one of them.

Flouncing down the aisle comes EYE CANDY GUY, a bleached blonde youngish man of about 20, wearing a tight muscle shirt, short running shorts, and tennis shoes without socks. More than a few heads swivel in his direction, including Mark's.

He's still reaching for the melon while his focus is on eye candy guy, and his hand gets to the melon but there is already a hand on it, belonging to Paul, who has pulled his cart up next to Mark's.

Paul too is looking at Eye Candy Guy and not watching where his hand is either. Paul's cart at this point does not have any groceries in it, but does have two large bunches of roses.

When Mark touches Paul's hand, he looks up at Paul and immediately pulls his hand away, embarrassed, looking down at the floor. Paul too, is surprised and pulls his hand away as well.

MARK
 (mumbling)
 S..sorry... I wasn't p..paying
 attention.....

PAUL
 No harm done...I was a little
 distracted myself.

Indicates Eye Candy Guy.

PAUL

In this neighborhood, that one could cause an accident just walking down the street...

(beat)

I'm Paul by the way...

He puts out his hand to shake. Mark shakes his hand shyly, but doesn't quite look at him directly.

MARK

M..Mark...

PAUL

Nice to meet you... You live around here?

Mark nods shyly.

PAUL

(a little embarrassed)

Sorry, that sounded like a really bad pick up line, didn't it?...I mean, I've seen you here a few times before...So I figured you were a local. I was hoping we'd finally got a chance to meet...

Mark doesn't know what to say, so there is a moment of panic and then he looks over at the roses in Paul's cart.

MARK

N..nice roses...

PAUL

Yeah, they're one of my weaknesses...

MARK

M..mine too...

PAUL

Really? My mother had a huge rose garden where I grew up.....Our house was filled with them all spring and summer...

MARK

Where was t..that?

PAUL

Just outside Chicago...How 'bout you. Where are you from?

MARK

I'm a native...P..Pasadena...you know, Rose P..parade, Huntington Library...I've b..been around roses since I can remember...

PAUL

I've only been in California for a month...I don't really know my way around yet. I've watched the Rose Parade on TV since I was a kid sure, but I've never heard of the Huntington Library...

MARK

It's not far from P..Pasadena...
It's a b..beautiful place. Huge rose garden.
(beat. indicates roses)
For someone special?

Mark stiffens after he has said this, thinking it a bit personal. Paul appears to take it in stride.

PAUL

No, they're for me. I always buy myself roses when I'm either homesick or celebrating something...

MARK

(Quickly)
Which one is it?

Mark realizes to his horror what he has just said. It doesn't seem to have bothered Paul at all. Mark looks down at his feet.

MARK

Sorry, I d..didn't mean to p..pry...

PAUL

You weren't... Actually, I'm celebrating...I just got a job...starting tomorrow...

MARK

(smiles)
C..congratulations...

PAUL

Thanks... I'm rather pleased myself.
(changing subject)
Mark, would you like to go out for a cup of coffee sometime...?

Mark is floored by that. He doesn't know what to do.

MARK

(struggling)
I...uh... yeah, t..that would b..be n..nice...

PAUL

Are you free this afternoon?

Mark is at a total loss for words.

MARK

(nervous)

I... I've g..got an appointment I
have t..to go to...Maybe another
t..time?

PAUL

Great...Now, that I have a job, I'll
be able to buy food...I'm sure we'll
see each other in here again.

There is an awkward pause. Mark is not sure of what to say.

MARK

I have t..to go. It was nice t..to
meet you...

PAUL

Same here... Bye...

Mark takes his cart and pushes it away from where Paul is and is soon about to turn around the corner, but not before he gives a shy glance to Paul, who waves. This unnerves Mark and he goes around the corner and OUT OF SCENE.

Paul chuckles, picks up the melon that the two of them were reaching for and puts it in his basket.

EXT. NICHOLS AND COMPANY BUILDING - MID AFTERNOON

One of those big glass and steel structures. A sign on the front reads "Nichols and Company". Underneath it reads in smaller letters, "Artist Representation"

INT. FRAN'S OFFICE

Fran's office is sleek and modern. Large desk, two chairs in front of it and a big overstuffed chair behind the desk. Behind the desk is a large picture window, flanked on either side by bookcases.

Seated in the chair behind the desk is Fran, diligently working on the laptop on her desk. The door to the office opens and JULIE, Fran's girlfriend sticks her head in the door. She is in her late 20's.

JULIE

Fran...?

Fran looks up from her computer screen and smiles.

FRAN

(pleased)

Julie...

JULIE

Busy...?

FRAN

Not too busy for you...

Julie comes into the room, shuts the door and crosses over to the desk. Fran comes around from the back of the desk and the two of them hug and then kiss.

FRAN

You're early.

JULIE

Court took a recess...

FRAN

You forgive me?

JULIE

Of course....

FRAN

Does this mean I don't have to take you out to dinner?

JULIE

Don't press your luck... But I have a surprise for you...Remember that little bed and breakfast up in Santa Barbara we stayed at last year?

FRAN

Sure I do...

JULIE

Well, I made reservations for tomorrow night.... I thought we'd drive up in the morning and come back on Sunday... What do you think?

FRAN

What do I think?....Come here...

The two of them kiss again.

Without a knock, the door to the office opens and JOHN NICHOLS comes in. Fran's boss, he's in his mid 50's or so. He holds a open folder in his hand that he is looking at as he comes in the door and doesn't see them at first.

NICHOLS

Fran, I need...

He looks up at the two women and stops in his tracks. Nichols's entrance startles Fran and Julie and they stop kissing and break apart from each other. Fran and Julie, however, do not look apprehensive.

NICHOLS

(mock sarcasm)

Oh, this is great...Back to the psychiatrist for me... after seeing this, I'm going to be emotionally scarred for life.

Fran crosses her arms and stares at him in mock disapproval. Julie leans up against the desk, faintly amused.

FRAN

Trust me, you were that way before you came in here....as your three ex wives can attest to.

NICHOLS

I'm just going to ignore that remark...

(to Julie)

Good afternoon counselor... Are you here to whisk my assistant away for a night of debauchery?

JULIE

(amused)

I really hadn't thought that far ahead Mr. Nichols...but I will take the idea under advisement.

NICHOLS

Good...I hope she takes you someplace nice tonight to make up for that argument she started...

FRAN

Excuse me...difference of opinion...

Julie and Nichols look at each other and then turn back to Fran and stare at her. Fran throws up her hands.

FRAN

Oh, all right, I know when I'm outnumbered...

(beat)

There was something you needed from me, Mr. Nichols...?

NICHOLS

(remembering)

Oh yes...The re-negotiated contract for Dennis Wills.

FRAN

I e-mailed it to you about ten minutes ago...It should be in your inbox.

NICHOLS

And the new headshots of Miranda Peterson...?

FRAN

Terrence is looking them over...He'll pick out the top five and put them on your desk...You should get them in the morning..

NICHOLS

And the time of the next showcase concert....?

FRAN

Booked for three weeks from tomorrow.

NICHOLS

And the invitations...?

FRAN

Representatives from every paper, and studio have been contacted, as per your instructions.

NICHOLS

My trip to London...?

FRAN

Window seat, first class...Dorchester Hotel, four nights, Oliver Messel Suite as requested...

NICHOLS

How much do I pay you?

FRAN

(smiles)
Not enough...

NICHOLS

(to Julie)
Counselor, would you please take her home...Too much efficiency in this business makes me very nervous...

JULIE

(amused)
I'll try to pry her away from her laptop...

NICHOLS

You do that...

Nichols goes to the door and opens it. Turns back to Julie and Fran.

NICHOLS

Good night ladies...be good.

FRAN

(smiles at Nichols)

Not likely...

Nichols chuckles, goes out the door, and closes it behind him. Julie turns to Fran.

JULIE

Okay, you heard the man...time to close up shop.

FRAN

If I refuse, will you beat me...?

JULIE

Only if you ask nicely...

The two of them burst out laughing.

INT. MARK'S CONDO - LATE AFTERNOON

The SOUND of a KEY In a Lock is heard. The door opens and Mark, carrying a couple bags of groceries comes into the entry, closing the door behind him. He carries the groceries through the living room and into

KITCHEN

Mark sets the groceries down on the counter. He takes a carton of milk out of a bag and puts it into his refrigerator. The rest he leaves on the counter.

Smiling and humming a tune, He crosses into the dining room and sits down at his keyboard. Running his fingers across the keyboard, he begins to play a series of chords and melody, arpeggios working out his thoughts.

He closes his eyes, getting lost in the music. The music is slow and melodic.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

The bar is busy, a lot of people crowd into the bar. ROCK MUSIC plays in the background, but not overly loud.

Seated at The bar is Paul, watching the patrons. Behind the bar are Kirk and David, mixing drinks.

Kirk comes up to Paul.

KIRK

So, what do you think of the crowd...?

PAUL
It's sure lively...I hope I can play
over them...

KIRK
Don't worry...When the piano starts,
it quiets down...

PAUL
I hope you're right...

At that moment, Fran and Julie appear, coming up to the bar.
They stand close to Paul. Kirk looks over at the two of
them.

KIRK
Good evening ladies...

He points to Fran.

KIRK
Cosmo..

Fran nods and then Kirk points to Julie.

KIRK
Lemon Drop...

JULIE
(impressed)
You're good...

KIRK
I try to remember what my repeat
customers have. It's part of the
expert service. I'll be right back
with your drinks.
(beat)
Oh, I want you to meet Paul Geller.
Tommy hired him this morning to be
the new entertainment...

Kirk moves down the bar and begins to prepare the drinks.
The women turn their attention to Paul.

FRAN
Hi, I'm Fran.

JULIE
Julie...Nice to meet you.

PAUL
Thanks...Nice to meet both of you...

Each one in turn shakes Paul's hand.

FRAN
So, are you starting tonight?

PAUL

Tomorrow night... Mr. Pierce thought it would be a good idea to come here during business hours to see what the place was like.

FRAN

That's our Tommy, always thinking.

(beat)

I've got an idea... Why don't you come join us at our table...We can fill you in what to expect...

(calls down to Kirk)

Kirk,..?

Kirk looks up from his mixing.

FRAN

Could you send the drinks to our table...?

KIRK

No problem...

PAUL

(to Fran)

I don't want to impose...

JULIE

You're not, and by the time Fran's through, you'll know the bar's every deep dark secret.

FRAN

(mock indignation)

You make me sound like such a gossip...Come on Paul.

Fran leads Paul towards the table, Paul grabbing his drink and taking it with him. Julie leans in to Kirk.

JULIE

Well, if the shoe fits...

Kirk chuckles. Julie follows Paul and Fran to the table. Kirk goes back to mixing the drinks.

David and Tommy move INTO VIEW coming up to the edge of the bar and looking out to where Paul has gone.

TOMMY

(indicates Paul)

That's him...

DAVID

Cute...Single?

TOMMY

Not for long. This one's mine,
David...

DAVID

Don't see a ring on his finger.
That makes him fair game.

TOMMY

You won't get anywhere with him.

DAVID

(incredulous)
Oh?...and how do you know that?

TOMMY

He's only interested in his
career...he's made that clear enough.

DAVID

(indicates himself)
With this package? I could get him
into bed in no time...

TOMMY

If your ego were any bigger, you
couldn't fit behind this bar...

DAVID

Anyone ever say no to me?

TOMMY

He will...

DAVID

Bet you're wrong...

TOMMY

(interested)
Oh, do you?...How much?

DAVID

(thinks for a moment)
Two thousand bucks...

TOMMY

Hefty bet...What happens when you
lose?

DAVID

I won't...

Tommy thinks for a moment, then smiles.

TOMMY

Tell you what David...I'll be generous
and give you three weeks to get Paul

TOMMY (CONT'D)
 into your bed...and if you fail, no
 pay except for tips for one month...

David mulls that over for a few moments.

DAVID
 Done...

The two of them shake.

TOMMY
 I'm gonna need proof.

DAVID
 You'll get it you old lecher. When
 I win, I get two grand and you get a
 nice recording of the whole seduction.

Tommy's eyes light up on hearing this.

TOMMY
 You got a deal...

DAVID
 Starting now.

In the b.g., Kirk has stopped making the drinks and has been listening to the exchange, not liking what he is hearing.

EXT. CONDO COMPLEX - LATE NIGHT

FRONT OF MARK'S CONDO

It's late night, but the lights are on in Mark's condo.

Fran comes up the walk and over to Mark's front door, ringing the bell.

INT. MARK'S CONDO

DINING ROOM

Mark, with his earphones on his head is playing on the keyboard. The notes he is playing is being transferred to the computer and show up on the screen. He is intently playing, but no sound can be heard.

The SOUND of the DOORBELL RINGING can be heard, causing Mark to look up. He takes off his earphones and presses a key on the computer, pausing the program.

Mark unplugs the earphones and gets up, with the earphones around his neck and goes over to the door, opening it, revealing Fran standing there.

FRAN

You're up late...I was going to leave
a note but I saw your lights on...

MARK

I've b..been working on some music.
I guess I lost t..track of time...Come
in.

Fran comes in and Mark closes the door behind him.

FRAN

Julie loved the roses...but I need
another favor....

MARK

You d..didn't have another fight,
did you...?

FRAN

(mock indignant)

No, we did not...As a matter of fact
the two of us are going up to Santa
Barbara for the weekend. I was
wondering if you could pick up my
newspapers and mail...

MARK

B..be glad to...

FRAN

I'm not interrupting any weekend
plans am I?

MARK

No...I'm volunteering at t..the
Huntington library tomorrow...b..but
that's the only p..plans I've made.
B..besides, I want to do more work
on this p..piece of music.

FRAN

It's been a long time since I've
heard you talk about your songs.
You get inspired?

MARK

(smiles)

You could say t..that....

FRAN

(curious)

Is your inspiration a what or a whom?

Mark just smiles.

FRAN
 (after a moment)
 You're not going to tell me, are
 you?

Smiling, Mark shakes his head. He's enjoying this.

FRAN
 Not even a hint?

MARK
 G..good night Fran...

Mark steers Fran towards the door.

FRAN
 Oh, C'mon Mark, just a little one....

MARK
 Good night...

The two of them get to the door. Mark opens it and Fran goes through it and stands facing Mark.

FRAN
 Mark, you are a cruel man...

MARK
 I know...Enjoy your
 weekend...P..pleasant d..dreams...

Mark closes the door, and smiles, shakes his head and heads back to the dining room.

EXT. WEST HOLLYWOOD STREET - LATE NIGHT

Outside of the Haven. It's dark and the street is deserted, about 2 AM. The door opens and Paul comes out. He starts to walk down the sidewalk. The door opens again and David comes out, obviously rushed. He looks over and sees Paul.

DAVID
 (calls out)
 Hey Paul!

Paul stops and turns.

DAVID
 Wait up...

David quickly catches up to where Paul is standing.

DAVID
 Well, what'cha think of the place?

PAUL
 I like it... I'll enjoy working here.

DAVID
Where you going now...?

PAUL
Home...

DAVID
(surprised)
Home?...It's only two... Still early yet. I thought maybe the two of us could go out and have a few drinks... get to know each other...

PAUL
Thanks, but it's late and I'm tired. Besides, I've got some music to finish up, while it's still fresh in my mind. I want everything to be perfect for my first day. So, I'll see you tonight...

Paul turns and starts walking down the sidewalk. David walks alongside him.

DAVID
Can't it wait?

PAUL
No, it can't... I start at Haven tonight, but I've got an appointment with a record producer Monday. I want to make sure that everything's perfect. All it takes is one good song to make me famous...

DAVID
Just one drink...

Paul stops, as does David.

PAUL
David, you're probably a nice guy, but right now I have to think of my career. I appreciate you wanting to be friendly... Maybe some other time....Good night.

That being said, Paul continues on his way, leaving David standing there, watching him go.

DAVID
Damn....

EXT. HUNTINGTON LIBRARY GARDENS - DAY

ROSE GARDEN

The Huntington Library rose garden is in full, beautiful bloom. There are a number of VISITORS walking around the grounds.

Carrying around a bucket is Mark, clippers in hand, cutting off the dead roses from the bushes. Nearby, are two women doing the same, ELEANOR and SHARON, two close friends of Mark's, both in their 60's.

Mark bends down to the base of one of the rosebushes, clipping off the suckers. He is concentrating on his work, so much so that he doesn't hear someone come up behind him.

WOMAN

Excuse me..?

Mark is startled. He looks up and sees a WOMAN of about 30 looking down at him.

MARK

Y..y..yes?

Eleanor and Sharon look over at Mark and know that he's in trouble. Sharon begins to come over towards Mark.

Mark stands up, but he is very nervous. The woman points to a particular rosebush full of yellow flowers.

WOMAN

Do you know what type of rose that one is?

MARK

I..uh..It's..c..called...

By this time, Sharon has come up to the two of them. The Woman is beginning to get a bit irked at Mark.

SHARON

Can I help you?

WOMAN

Yes, I was asking this gentleman for the name of this rose...

She indicates the rosebush as before.

WOMAN

But I don't think he knows...

Mark is embarrassed, and without a word, he moves away from the others and towards the rose arbor. Sharon watches him go, and then turns back to the woman.

SHARON

The rose is named Gina Lollobrigida, after the Italian actress...

Mark disappears in the arbor. Eleanor stops what she is doing and also heads to the arbor.

ROSE ARBOR

Eleanor comes into the arbor and looks around for a moment until she spots Mark sitting on one of the benches, head in his hands. She moves over to where he is sitting and sits down beside him.

ELEANOR
(softly)
Mark, are you okay?

MARK
I hate b..being t..this way. I
f..feel so stupid...!

Mark raises his head.

MARK
She p..probably thinks I'm some kind
of idiot...

ELEANOR
I'm sure she doesn't...

MARK
If I were in her p..place, I
would...She startled me, and all I
could d..do was stammer.

ELEANOR
You're being way too hard on
yourself...Tell you what, why don't
you just sit here for awhile, just
relax...

Mark, looking miserable, nods his head. Eleanor looks up and sees someone who is out of view. She gets a curious look on her face and moves her head closer to Mark's.

ELEANOR
(whispering)
Don't look now but I think we're
being watched...

She points and Mark follows the direction with his eyes and sees Paul standing there. He smiles and waves to Mark then he comes over. Mark stands up, surprised.

MARK
P..Paul...?

PAUL
Hi...
(beat)
Am I interrupting?

MARK

No... I...

Eleanor stands up.

ELEANOR

No, not at all.
 (to Paul)
 Hi, I'm Eleanor...

PAUL

Nice to meet you.

He reaches over and shakes her hand. Eleanor turns to Mark.

ELEANOR

(smiles)
 You know Mark, Sharon and I can handle
 the garden if you want to talk to
 your friend for awhile...

MARK

T..thanks....

ELEANOR

Nice meeting you Paul...
 (to Mark)
 Take your time...

Eleanor moves off and OUT of SCENE. Paul indicates the bench.

PAUL

Can I sit down?

MARK

S..sure.

Paul comes over and sits down, Mark sits as well. There is an awkward moment of silence.

PAUL

You made the garden sound so nice, I
 thought that I'd come out to see it
 for myself. I didn't expect to find
 you here, but I'm glad you are...

MARK

P..Paul...There's something you should
 k..know...about yesterday...

PAUL

You mean, that you didn't have an
 appointment you had to go to...?

MARK

(embarrassed)
 No, I d..didn't...

PAUL
 Came on a little strong, huh....?

MARK
 (smiles)
 Well, m..maybe a little...

PAUL
 Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you off, but I've been trying to find a way to meet you, and I wasn't sure how go about it... So much for the direct approach...

Mark stands and moves away from the bench while Paul is speaking. Turns to him.

MARK
 Why?

PAUL
 Why what?

MARK
 Why d..did you want t..to meet me?

PAUL
 Is there a reason why I shouldn't?

MARK
 Isn't it obvious...? Look, I stutter, I get nervous around p..people. I get t..tongue-tied and either d..don't say anything or I s...say something stupid...

PAUL
 I figured some of that out yesterday... and to be honest, I don't care.

Paul gets up and comes over to Mark.

PAUL
 Mark, I'd like a chance to get to know you better...Do you mind...?

Mark shakes his head.

PAUL
 Okay then. Look, you like roses, so do I. That's something we both have in common. We can at least build a friendship on.
 (beat)
 And we can start by having you show me around the gardens...I take it you know this place pretty well...

MARK

I almost g..grew up here.

PAUL

Good... Then how 'bout a guided
tour...and I'll bet we can find other
things we have in common.

MARK

(smiles)

Okay... I'd like t..that.

PAUL

I like it when you smile... you should
do more of it...

The two of them start walking down the length of the arbor,
and into the garden. Mark points in a direction and the two
of them move that way.

Eleanor and Sharon watch the two of them walk away. The two
of them, smile and nod to each other Eleanor giving Sharon
the thumbs up.

EXT. HUNTINGTON LIBRARY GARDENS - DAY

A wooded area on the grounds. Tall trees shade the paths
under it. It is a peaceful spot.

It's down this path that Mark and Paul are walking, exchanging
conversation.

PAUL

How often do you volunteer?

MARK

One S..Saturday a month...

PAUL

How long have you been doing this?

MARK

Since I was s..six.

PAUL

Six?

MARK

Actually, my mother used to b..bring
me when I was little when she
volunteered...t..then after awhile I
s..started helping out too.

PAUL

The woman you were sitting
with...Eleanor...Is that your...?

MARK

Mother? No...my mother d..died last year. Eleanor was her b..best friend. The two of them used to put on the Rose show here every year...Actually, it's next weekend.

PAUL

Then maybe we should make a date of it, don't you think...?

MARK

I'd like t..that. It's g..going to be t..tough coming to it without my mother here.

PAUL

What about the rest of your family?

MARK

There isn't anyone else. My mother and I were all each other had. How about you?

PAUL

Me? I come from a big family. There's nine of us, eleven if you count my parents... six boys and three girls. I'm one of the middle three. We all got along pretty well growing up, but it was pretty crazy sometimes.

MARK

Sounds wonderful...

Mark stops next to a bench. Paul stops also, and looks around. The area that they are in is deep in the woods, with tall trees above and around them.

PAUL

Where are we?

MARK

One of my favorite p..places. I come here to t..think sometimes. It's quiet... not many p..people come this way.

Paul and Mark sit down on the bench. Paul looks around again.

PAUL

It's beautiful...

MARK

(after a pause)
Do you miss t..them? Your f..family...?

PAUL

Yeah, especially my brother Eric. He's about two years younger than me. We were inseparable growing up. You'd like him. He stutters too.

MARK

He d..does?

PAUL

(nods)

I guess in a way, you doing it kinda reminds me of home.

(beat)

Anyway, all the kids are grown and moved away, but they're all less than fifty miles away from my parents... and with all of them married and having kids of their own, family get-togethers can get really crowded, but a lot of fun.

MARK

Then w..what are you d..doing way out here?

PAUL

I wasn't getting anywhere with my career back in Chicago. So I packed up my bags and headed for California...and here I am.

MARK

Actor?

PAUL

Musician... You like music...?

MARK

(nods)

I p..play p..piano a little.

PAUL

See, I told you we'd find other things in common. I taught music for eight years, but it wasn't for me. Came to L.A. to be discovered. So far the only thing I've got is a gig playing piano and singing in a bar, but I have to start somewhere... and hey, it's a job.

Paul looks at his watch.

PAUL

And speaking of that, do you mind if we head towards the entrance..?

PAUL (CONT'D)

It's my first night and I don't want to be late...

MARK

(nods)

Sure...It's not f..far...

The two of them stand and begin moving down the path.

PAUL

What type of work do you do?

MARK

Systems analyst...c..computers.

PAUL

Downtown..?

MARK

The office is d..downtown. I work from home most of the t..time...

PAUL

It must be nice not having to fight traffic every day.

MARK

I have a good f..friend that says the same t..thing.

Mark smiles at Paul, and Paul smiles back as they continue to walk down the path.

INT. MARK'S CONDO - MORNING

Mark, carrying a cup of coffee, sits down at his computer and after pressing a few buttons, Music comes out of the speakers, filling the apartment with sound.

Mark picks up a number of sheets of music off of the printer and looks at them, following along in the music. He puts down the cup of coffee on the desk and gets up and paces the room, nose in the music, humming the melody.

INT. DAVID'S CONDO

LIVING ROOM

The living room is pretty much the same layout as Mark's. Couch, chairs, and coffee table though a little unkempt with food boxes and coffee cups scattered around.

David, fully dressed, is laying in couch, deep in thought. Through the floor, he can hear the SOUND of MUSIC, actually the song that Mark has been working on.

The music catches David's attention and he listens to it for a few moments. He smiles as an idea comes into his head. He gets off the couch, moves to the front door, and opens it.

INT. MARK'S CONDO

Mark is still listening to the music and following the melody on the sheets. The SOUND of the DOORBELL RINGING interrupts what he's doing. He moves over to the computer and turns off the music.

Mark moves over and opens the door and is surprised to find David standing there.

MARK
(at a loss for words)
Uh, H..hello..

DAVID
I heard the music...

MARK
Oh... was I p..playing it t..too
loud....? I'm s..sorry...

DAVID
No, that's not it...Can I come in...?

MARK
In...? Oh... S..sure.

Mark opens the door completely and David comes in and looks around.

DAVID
Nice place...The music I heard...

MARK
W..what about it...?

DAVID
It was pretty cool... I don't think
I've ever heard it before...

Mark lowers his eyes to the floor.

MARK
It's n..new...

DAVID
Who wrote it...?

MARK
(looks up)
I...I d..did.

DAVID
You...? you write music...?

MARK
A little...

DAVID
Oh yeah, that's right... Fran told me you wrote songs. When did you do this one?

MARK
I f..finished it last night.....

A smile crosses David's face.

DAVID
You know, I think somebody in the music business should hear it.

David looks down and sees the music sheets that Mark holds in his hands.

DAVID
(indicates music)
Is that the music?

Mark nods.

DAVID
I got this friend... a musician, and he writes a lot of his own stuff... I can take this and show it to him and see what he thinks...

MARK
(suspicious)
W..why would you d..do that for me?

DAVID
Hey, I hear music all night long at my job...so I know what people like... I think you could have a hit here.
(beat)
I'll show your song to my friend and bring it back to you tomorrow. How does that sound?

MARK
I..I'm not sure... It's not g..good enough f..for anyone t..to see.

DAVID
All he's gonna do is look it over, give you his opinion... maybe give you a few ideas how to make it better. Can't hurt to know what someone else thinks.

MARK

I g..guess it would b..be good to know.

(thinks a moment)

Okay... T..thank you....

Mark holds out the music to David, who takes it from him.

DAVID

Great...I'll show it to him tonight.

(beat)

Well, I gotta get to work...Thanks for this...uh, what was your name again?

MARK

Mark...

DAVID

Mark...Don't worry, I'll take good care of it...

David heads for the door, Mark holds it open for him and he goes out..

MARK

T..thank you...

DAVID

No...thank you...

David takes off down the walkway, smiling to himself. Mark closes the door.

EXT. PRINT SHOP - DAY

A Kinko's type print shop selling supplies, mailing packages etc. A sign on the door simply states 'Copies'. David comes up to the door of the shop, carrying the music in his hand, opens it and walks through.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

The bar is empty, since the place is closed. Kirk and David are cleaning up the bar from the night's revelry. Paul is sitting on the bar counting his money from the large bowl on his piano.

Kirk comes over to Paul.

KIRK

How was your second night...?

PAUL

Made about two hundred dollars in tips...Made almost three hundred last night...Not a bad weekend.

KIRK
Not bad at all...

PAUL
Is it always this busy on a Sunday
night?

KIRK
Pretty much....

David comes over to Kirk and Paul.

DAVID
(to Kirk)
Hey Kirk, Tommy needs you in the
office...He can't balance the
receipts..

KIRK
What else is new....
(to Paul)
Duty calls...Later...

PAUL
Later...

Kirk moves off and OUT of SCENE. David turns his attention
to Paul.

DAVID
How you holding up?

PAUL
A little tired...

DAVID
I'm going next door for some coffee.
You want somethin'?

PAUL
No thanks...I'm fine.

DAVID
Paul, about Friday night...sorry if
I pissed you off. I'm really a pretty
nice guy once you get to know me.

PAUL
I'm sure you are. I've just got a
lot on my mind right now. I've got
that appointment tomorrow, and I
want to be ready to show off my
music...

DAVID
Oh yeah, speaking of music, I've got
something for you to look at.

David moves over to the back counter and grabs the copy of Mark's music and brings it over to Paul, handing it to him. Paul looks at it curiously.

PAUL
Where'd you get this?

DAVID
It's mine...

PAUL
Yours..? You mean you wrote it?

DAVID
Yeah... That surprise you?

PAUL
Actually, yes...I wouldn't have taken you for a musician much less a songwriter...

DAVID
Hey, there's a lot of talented people working as bartenders in this town...actors, writers...and musicians. Just because I tend bar, doesn't mean that I don't do other things...

PAUL
(embarrassed)
I'm sorry, I didn't mean it the way it sounded.

DAVID
I'm more than just some guy that pours you drinks...
(beat)
Do me a favor, take this home and just look at it...let me know what you honestly think...After you look it over, maybe we can hook up and talk about it. My phone number's on the first page. Call me anytime.

PAUL
Sure...be glad to...Thanks.
(beat)
Well, I'll see you Wednesday then...

Paul holds up the music.

PAUL
Thanks for the music...I'll take a look at it, I promise...Good night.

Paul takes the wad of bills from his tip jar and stuffs them in his pocket, and moves away from from the bar and heads towards the door.

Tommy appears from down the bar and over to David, looking smug.

TOMMY

Struck out?

DAVID

Wouldn't say that...

TOMMY

Well, he's leaving and you're not with him.

DAVID

Soon...

TOMMY

What are you planning?

DAVID

Me...? Doing some fishing...just threw out my first baited hook...

He watches Paul leave, with a smile on his face.

EXT. CONDO COMPLEX - LATE NIGHT

ROSE GARDEN

Mark is out laying on the chaise lounge in the middle of the rose garden, looking up at the stars. He's smiling, and humming the melody from the song he has written.

Fran comes down the walkway and comes over to the rose garden. She appears to be looking for something or someone. She comes over to the entrance to the center of the garden.

FRAN

There you are..! I thought I heard someone humming...

MARK

(still looking up)
Hi Fran...How was your t..trip?

FRAN

(curious)
Fine...Mark, it's after two...What are you doing out here so late...?

MARK

Looking at t..the stars... and thinking.

MARK (CONT'D)
 (pats the chaise)
 Have a seat...

Fran comes over and sits down on the chaise lounge.

FRAN
 (suspicious)
 Okay, what's wrong?

MARK
 Nothing's wrong...maybe, for a change,
 s..something's right...
 (beat)
 I met someone...

FRAN
 (interested)
 You did?... When...? Where? Spill
 it Mark, and I want details...

MARK
 (smiles)
 His name is Paul...we met the at
 t..the market on Friday... We were
 b..both reaching for t..the same
 melon and our hands t..touched...

FRAN
 Okay, that sounds promising. And...?

MARK
 We started t..talking...He said
 t..that he had seen me in the market
 b..before and was trying to f..find
 an excuse to meet me... then he asked
 me out for coffee...

FRAN
 And you did what...?

MARK
 I c..chickened out...I t..told him I
 had an appointment...and t..then I
 left...

FRAN
 (deflated)
 Oh, Mark....

MARK
 T..there's more...He came t..to the
 Huntington library yesterday, while
 I was working in t..the rose garden.
 I had t..told him about the place
 the day before and he t..thought he
 would check it out...We walked around
 the garden for a while, just...

MARK (CONT'D)

talking, until he had t..to leave
for work.

FRAN

Was he the.. reason for your
inspiration Friday night?

Mark nods

FRAN

Well, what did you find out about
him?

MARK

He's single, t..thirty-three. We
talked about our families...he has a
large one...

Fran smiles mischievously. Mark gives a mock exasperated
sigh with the hint of a smile.

MARK

Large f..family... But mostly we
just t..talked about the g..garden.

FRAN

Are you going to see him again..?

MARK

The Huntington Rose show is next
Weekend. We're g..going to meet
t..there Saturday at t..ten. Did I
t..tell you he likes roses?

FRAN

You left that part out...

Mark gets off the chaise and goes over to one of the rose
bushes and runs his fingers over an open blossom while he
talks.

MARK

He says he wants t..to get to know
me better. He has a b..brother that
stutters, so doesn't care t..that I
do, or t..that I'm shy.

Fran gets up and comes over to Mark.

FRAN

Sounds like keeper to me...and how
do you feel about him?

MARK

I d..don't know... I enjoyed b..being
with him yesterday, I really d..did,
and I want t..to see him again...

FRAN

But...

MARK

I've n..never been in a
r..relationship. I've never even
dated... I was too n..nervous to
even try. Now t..there's someone
t..that I think I can feel something
for, but I have no idea what to d..do
next.

Fran comes over to him and hugs him from behind.

FRAN

What do you do?... just go with it...
Let it happen, and if it's right,
you'll know.

(beat)

It's a big step Mark...Are you sure
you're ready for this?

MARK

(nods)

I t..think so. Is it okay t..to be
s..scared?

Fran gives Mark an affectionate squeeze.

FRAN

I've got news for you, it's
required....

She smiles, and so does he.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - EARLY MORNING

ESTABLISHING SHOT of the front of Paul's apartment. A little
seedier than the condos belonging to Mark and Fran, but
nonetheless not bad. It's early morning.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT

LIVING ROOM

Paul's apartment looks like any starving musician's place.
It's cozy, but a little second hand. Furniture doesn't
exactly match.

A small upright piano with music on the stand, and on the
top is up against one wall. The copies of the music given
to him by David are in front of the piano.

Paul is sitting at the piano, reading through the music and
playing it, humming the melody. He stops for a moment,
obviously moved by what he is playing. He nods his head,
impressed.

Paul gets up from the piano, taking the first page of the music with him and sits down on the couch, next to the phone on the end table.

Reading David's phone number off of the page, he presses the buttons on the phone and holds the receiver to his ear.

INT. DAVID'S CONDO

BEDROOM

David's bedroom is furnished simply, having a queen-sized bed, two nightstands, a dresser and a couple of tall bookcases. A closed door that leads to the bathroom is next to the door that leads to the living room.

David is asleep in his bed, but not alone. Eye Candy Guy is sleeping next to him, without his tight tank top. The two of them are sleeping facing in opposite directions.

The PHONE on David's nightstand RINGS, which startles David out of a sound sleep. Sleepily, he looks at his clock, to discover that it is about seven thirty.

The PHONE RINGS again, and this time, David picks it up.

DAVID
 (into phone, groggy)
 Yeah....
 (beat)
 Who?...Oh...

Suddenly more alert, he sits up.

DAVID
 Yeah sure....What about it?....You did? Great....Meet you?...Now...?

David looks over at a still sleeping Eye Candy Guy.

DAVID
 No, nothing important...Okay...say in about an hour over at the Coffee lounge next to the club...Fine, I'll see you there...bye..

David hangs up the phone, and turns back to Eye Candy Guy and gives him a swat on the rear. Eye Candy Guy just groans.

DAVID
 Hey, get up... I gotta get going.

EYE CANDY GUY
 (Groggily)
 Go where...?

DAVID

I got to meet a guy about a song...and
win two thousand bucks...

David gets out of bed and heads off to his bathroom and the shower. Eye Candy Guy just groans again and pulls the pillow over his head.

INT. MARK'S CONDO - DAY

Mark, dressed in rather shapeless pants and a dress shirt, with tennis shoes is sipping coffee out of his travel mug, about ready to leave.

Mark grabs his briefcase and opens the door to find David about ready to ring the doorbell. Mark is startled. David is holding the music he got from Mark.

MARK

(startled)
Oh...H..hello...

DAVID

Brought your music back...

David holds up the music to Mark. Mark puts down his briefcase and takes the music from David's hand.

MARK

D..did your friend like it?

DAVID

Well, not really, but he said to keep trying. I guess he's not into that kind of music. Personally, I think the piece is great.

MARK

(disappointed)
Oh...Well, t..thank you for t..trying.

DAVID

No problem...

David moves off and OUT of SCENE. Mark takes the music and places it on the table in the entry, turns, and still looking disappointed, picks up his briefcase and goes out the door, shutting it behind him.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A Starbucks's or Starbuck's like coffee house.

Through the window, Paul with two cups of coffee in hand offering one of the cups of coffee to David can be seen through the window.

INT. COFFEE SHOP

The coffee Shop is crowded with PEOPLE, drinking coffee and chatting among themselves. David accepts the cup of coffee from Paul.

DAVID

Thanks...

Paul sits down in a chair opposite him.

DAVID

You wanted to talk about the song...?

PAUL

(nods)

First thing,... David, the song's beautiful...The music, the lyrics... it's just perfect... everything you'd want in a love song.

DAVID

Wow. Thanks.... glad you liked it. It means a lot...

PAUL

Now, the question is...what do you want to do with it?

DAVID

What do you mean?

PAUL

I'd like you use your song in my show.

DAVID

Oh.... I don't know... I'm not sure I want that.

PAUL

David, this song is just too good to hide away... I think should seriously consider letting me play it.

DAVID

You liked it that much?

PAUL

Yeah, I did...

David sits back and thinks for a moment.

DAVID

Okay, go ahead, but don't tell anyone that I wrote it.

PAUL

You're kidding... If I wrote a song this good, I'd be shouting it from the rooftops. Why don't you want anyone to know?

DAVID

I don't want people making a fuss over me about it...Okay...?

PAUL

If that's what you want.

DAVID

(changes the subject)
When's your meeting with the record guy?

PAUL

Two...

DAVID

Ready...?

PAUL

(nods)
The music's ready. I hope I am....

David lifts up his cup.

DAVID

Well, here's hoping you knock 'em dead.

Paul raises his cup and taps David's.

PAUL

I'll drink to that.

Both men take a hit off their coffees. David smiles slyly.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

The bar is packed with customers. The bar area is full, the tables are full and the booths are full, plus there are a lot of people just standing around watching. There is a murmur of conversation going on underneath the music.

On stage is Paul, playing and singing a ballad at the piano. A large brandy snifter half full of money is on the piano. Seated at a table close by are Fran and Julie, listening intently.

The song ends and the audience begins clapping. Paul smiles and acknowledges the clapping with a bow from his seated position. He leans into the microphone as the clapping dies off and the murmur of conversation starts up again.

PAUL

(into microphone)

Thank you ladies and gentlemen. For my last piece, I want to play a brand new song for you. This will be the first time that it's been played in public. It's called 'Standing here'. I hope you enjoy it...

Paul turns back to the piano and begins to play the song. As he sings it, the murmur ceases and there is no sound as he continues. The patrons are transfixed at the music.

From their table, Fran and Julie are also listening to the music. Fran looks around and sees the effect that the piece is having on the crowd. Listening to the song, Fran frowns as though something is not right with it.

At the bar, David is watching and listening to the music. He smiles at seeing the effect the song is having on everyone. Kirk has also stopped what he is doing and is listening as well. Tommy comes out of his office and stops to listen.

As Paul comes to the end of the song, there are several members in the audience with tears in their eyes, moved by the music.

When the song is done, the audience erupts into thunderous applause, many people who were sitting down, now are standing. Paul is taken off guard by this. He stands and takes a bow.

Julie and Fran are both standing, clapping enthusiastically along with the others. Fran turns to Julie.

FRAN

(over the crowd)

Listen to this place...They loved it.

Paul takes another bow. He turns and grabs the microphone.

PAUL

(into microphone)

Thank you... Thank you...

The clapping dies off, and people begin to sit back down. Paul moves off the stage and onto the floor. Some Customers come up and put money into the snifter.

Paul heads over to the table with Fran and Julie, stopping to shake hands with people on the way.

Fran gets up as Paul comes over and gives him a hug. The two of them sit down.

PAUL

How did you like the set?

FRAN

Wonderful...

JULIE

It was great, Paul...Especially that last song.

PAUL

Went over well with the audience, didn't it...?

FRAN

Well...? There was hardly a dry eye in the house. I think it went over better than just "well". Is it one of yours?

PAUL

I wish I could take the credit, but someone else wrote it. I swear, I practically had to twist his arm to let me play it tonight...He wasn't sure he wanted it performed in front of an audience.

JULIE

That would have been such a waste...

PAUL

That's what I told him.

(beat)

Would you two excuse me for a minute? A little too much coffee before the performance.

Paul gets up and moves off into the crowd. Julie turns to Fran.

JULIE

Do you think that Mr. Nichols should hear Paul play?

FRAN

I was just thinking the same thing... Paul's definitely got something special and I think Mr. N should know about it, before some other agency snaps him up.

JULIE

Maybe he's already represented..

FRAN

Possible, but the agent game is pretty incestuous. If he were signed anywhere in this city, Mr. N. would know.

JULIE

You think he'd come down here?

FRAN

Mr N. would go anywhere if he smelled talent. I'll ask him tomorrow. I'm sure I can talk him into it. After all, I'm only thinking of the welfare of the company...

JULIE

Are you actually going to use that line?

FRAN

Only if I have to...
(beat, wistful)
Funny thing about that last song though...

JULIE

What?

FRAN

I'm not sure, but I get the feeling I've heard it before... Must be my imagination, or too many cosmos.

Fran picks up her drink and takes a sip of it, but the doubt is there.

EXT. NICHOLS AND COMPANY BUILDING - MORNING

The Office building of Nichols and Company. It's mid-morning and there are a lot of people going in and out the front doors.

INT. NICHOLS'S OFFICE

A grand, spacious, and richly furnished office. A huge desk dominates the room. The walls are wood paneled in dark wood with several bookcases against the walls. A number of pictures of Nichols' clients are scattered on the walls.

There are two overstuffed chairs across from the front of the desk. Nearby is a sleek leather couch and a couple chairs across from the couch with a coffee table between.

Seated at the desk, typing on his computer, is Mr. Nichols. He looks up from his typing when he hears a KNOCK on the DOOR.

NICHOLS

Come in...

The door opens and Fran sticks her head into the room.

FRAN

You busy boss?

NICHOLS

Just going over some contacts coming up for renewal...and since you called me boss instead of Mr. N, that must mean that you want something...Come on in, let's hear it.

FRAN

(smiles)

Thanks.

Fran comes into the room, over to one of the chairs across from him and sits.

NICHOLS

And don't come in here and ask me for a raise. If I paid you what you're worth, I'll go bankrupt...

FRAN

You're in a good mood.

NICHOLS

Why shouldn't I be? Business is up...Two of my clients are up for Emmys, Michael Morris' latest CD just went platinum...I'm feeling strangely cheerful.

(beat)

Now, what brings you here?

FRAN

Julie and I went to one of the clubs down in West Hollywood last night. They just hired a new guy that plays the piano and sings...

NICHOLS

And...?

FRAN

He's good...no, he's great. His playing and voice... very impressive. So, I was wondering...

NICHOLS

Is this the part when you ask me to go and catch is act?

FRAN

In a word, yes...

NICHOLS

What's his name..?

FRAN

Geller, Paul Geller. He's been in
L.A. about a month.

Mr. Nichols turns his attention to the computer and with a few keystrokes comes up with a large list on the screen. Mr. Nichols looks the list over for a moment.

NICHOLS

There's no Paul Geller in this
database, so we can assume that he's
not represented, at least here in
L.A.

(beat)

Is he that good?

Fran nods.

NICHOLS

If I had a nickel for every time
someone asked me to hear an act they
thought was great...

FRAN

(interrupting)

You'd be richer than you are already.
Seriously, I think he warrants a
look. I think he could hold his own
against any of our clients in the
talent department.

NICHOLS

(thinks for a moment)

Well, you've never steered me wrong
before. Okay, I'll go and give him
a listen. When does he perform?

FRAN

Wednesday through Sunday.

NICHOLS

What's my schedule like?

FRAN

You've got a dinner meeting with
Broadmoor tonight, but you're clear
tomorrow night.

NICHOLS

Friday then...You'll e-mail me the
address?

FRAN

Of course... Thank you Mr. N. You
won't regret this.

Fran gets up and moves to the door and opens it.

NICHOLS

And Fran...

Fran stops and turns.

NICHOLS

If he's as good as you say, I may have to give you a finder's fee.

FRAN

(teasing)
A raise might be nice...

NICHOLS

(teasing)
Get out of my office...

FRAN

Can't blame a girl for trying...

Fran smiles, goes out the door and closes it behind her. Chuckling, Mr. Nichols goes back to his computer.

EXT. CONDO COMPLEX - DAY

ROSE GARDEN

Mark is in his garden with a pair of clippers and some florist tubes. He is sitting on the chaise writing on a small card. He picks up a rose in a tube and, with a rubber band attaches the card to the florist tube.

On the end of the lounge are about six other roses with the tubes and cards.

Fran comes up the walkway, obviously looking for Mark.

FRAN

Mark...?

MARK

In here...

Mark stands. Fran comes over to him in the middle of the garden. She looks over at the roses in the tubes.

FRAN

(curious)
What are you doing?

MARK

Rose show tomorrow...I'm entering some of my roses for j..udging. What's up?

FRAN

I was going to invite you to join Julie and me down at Haven tonight.

MARK

(thinks for a moment)
I wish I c..could... It might be
f..fun.

FRAN

(in disbelief)
Excuse me...?
(beat)
Okay, who are you and what have you
done with Mark?

Mark laughs.

FRAN

Why the change of attitude?

MARK

Well, I've been d..doing a lot of
t..thinking about things lately,
about me, I mean...t..the way I am
around p..people. I know I say
s..stupid t..things sometimes, I
s..stutter, I'm shy, but maybe it's
wrong to be afraid of being with
people.

FRAN

I've been telling you the same thing
since I've known you.
(beat)
This Paul wouldn't have anything to
do with this, would he?

MARK

He might...Yeah, he d..does.

FRAN

(smiles)
Mark Robert Cyrano, are you falling
in love with this guy?

MARK

(embarrassed)
I t..think so...Maybe... I've never
b..been in love... I d..don't know
what it feels like.

Fran comes over and gives Mark a big hug. Disengaging, she
steps back.

FRAN

It's about time you found out...
Alright, this is what we do...First,
you need to call Paul and invite him
to join us tonight...

MARK

(tries to interrupt)

Fran...

FRAN

(talks right over him)

That gives me a chance to finally meet him...

MARK

(a little louder)

Fran...

FRAN

And find out what his intentions are...

MARK

(louder yet)

Fran!

FRAN

(stops mid-word)

What?

MARK

I can't d..do that...

FRAN

Why not?

MARK

I don't have his p..phone number...I forgot to ask him...We were t..too busy t..talking.

FRAN

(a little deflated)

Oh...Hell...

MARK

And anyway, I p..promised Eleanor that I'd stop by t..tonight and help her set up for t..the show tomorrow. T..that's why I can't go with you tonight. Could I get a rain-check?

FRAN

No problem...and I expect that the next time I see you, you will have his phone number. After all, he has to pass my inspection.

MARK

(smiles)

Okay, I p..promise...

FRAN

All right then, I'll see you
later...Good luck tomorrow...Win
ribbons... Remember, Phone number...

MARK

I'll remember, t..thanks...

Fran turns and moves off to her own condo. Mark picks up his clippers, looks over another rose before he cuts it.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

The front of Haven. The last chords of 'Standing Here' fade out and clapping can be heard O.S.

INT. BAR

The Bar is crowded, the tables and booths full of people. The bar area is also jumping. David and Kirk are mixing drinks under the watchful eye of Tommy.

The audience is applauding Paul and he acknowledges their applause. Most everyone is giving him a standing ovation.

Seated in one of the booths is Fran, Julie and Mr. Nichols. Mr. Nichols is watching the audience and Paul intently. He is clapping along with Fran and Julie, but he's not missing what the audience is doing.

Mr. Nichols leans over and whispers something to Fran. She nods and moves out of the booth. Paul gets up from the piano and moves towards the bar, Fran in pursuit.

Fran catches up to him. CANNED MUSIC comes over the speakers.

Fran taps Paul on the shoulder. He turns, and smiles at her. She leans over and whispers something in his ear. He nods and Fran leads him over to the booth where Julie and Mr. Nichols are seated.

Paul slides into the booth next to Julie and Fran slides beside him. Paul looks over at Mr. Nichols.

PAUL

Fran said you wanted to meet me...

NICHOLS

Yes, Mr. Geller... My name is John Nichols.

PAUL

(shakes his hand)

Nice to meet you Mr. Nichols. What can I do for you?

NICHOLS

(to Fran)

You didn't tell him I was coming?

Fran shakes her head.

NICHOLS

Then I'll get right to the point.
Do you have representation?

PAUL

(taken aback)

No... I've had meetings with a couple
of agencies, but nothing's come of
them.

NICHOLS

Good. Well, I'm the owner of Nichols
and Company. We do artistic
representation. My assistant here...

(indicates Fran)

After hearing you perform a few days
ago asked me to come down and hear
for myself. She thought that the
company might be interested in taking
you on as a client.

(looks at Fran)

And she was quite correct.

Paul smiles, as does Fran and Julie.

PAUL

You're kidding, right..?

NICHOLS

When it comes to business, Mr. Geller,
I never kid. I was very impressed
by both your playing and your singing
ability. I've been in this business
for twenty five years. I know talent,
that's my job, and you have talent.

(beat)

Are you interested?

PAUL

(quickly)

Yes...

NICHOLS

Excellent.... I do have one more
person that will need to hear you
and I'd like to do this as soon as
possible. Could you to be at my
office tomorrow at ten AM?

PAUL

Tomorrow...? I...

NICHOLS
Is there a conflict?

PAUL
(torn)
It's just that...I was... No sir, no
conflict. I'll be there.

NICHOLS
Fran, would you bring him to the
office?

FRAN
Be happy to....

NICHOLS
Good, that's all settled.
(beat)
Now, tell me a little about your
musical experience...

Watching from the bar, Tommy is focused in on the party of
Fran, Julie, Mr. Nichols and Paul. David moves over to Tommy.

DAVID
What's going on?

TOMMY
See that man in the booth with Paul?

David nods

TOMMY
That's John Nichols, he owns a talent
agency, one of the biggest.

DAVID
What's he want?

TOMMY
Unless I miss my guess, he's trying
to take Paul on as a client.

DAVID
You think so?

TOMMY
With Paul's talent... yeah, I can
see an agency trying to sign him up.

DAVID
What does that mean for us?

TOMMY
It means that you may have to work
faster if you want to win that bet.
Paul may not be with us much longer.

The two of them watch as Paul and the rest of them as they converse unheard amongst themselves.

EXT. HUNTINGTON LIBRARY GARDENS - DAY

A beautiful day and the Rose Show is in full force. There are rows of tables set out on the lawn, decked out with cut roses in vases.

PEOPLE, and a lot of them, are milling around the tables looking over the roses. Wearing badges that identify them as volunteers are both Sharon and Eleanor, chattering with people and being inundated with questions.

Eleanor looks over and sees Mark sitting on a bench near the entrance to the library. Eleanor works her way out of the crowd and over to Mark, who is looking at the program. He looks up and smiles at her as she sits down beside him.

ELEANOR

Your friend's not here yet?

MARK

It's only j..just ten. He could have b..been caught in t..traffic.

ELEANOR

That wouldn't surprise me. Why don't you go over and take a look at the judging results. I can wait here for him in case he shows up. You got some ribbons...

MARK

I know... Sharon was here about ten minutes ago... T..three firsts, t..two seconds and a t..third. I appreciate t..the offer, b..but I don't want to miss him in the c..crowd. I'm fine waiting here.

Eleanor, wistful, looks over at the show in progress.

ELEANOR

It's a nice show... Remember the shows your mother and I put on...?

Mark nods.

ELEANOR

I miss her...

MARK

(quietly)
Me t..too.

ELEANOR

I'm glad you're here though.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

It's almost like she's still around,
looking over everyone's shoulder,
like she used to...

MARK

(nods)

With me watching f..from t..this
bench, like n..now.

ELEANOR

Well, at least let me get you some
water or something from the bake
sale while you're waiting.

MARK

I'll b..be fine... You go and help
Sharon. She's p..probably swamped
with questions.

ELEANOR

You're right...I should give her a
hand.

Eleanor stands, leans over and gives him a kiss on the cheek.

ELEANOR

I'll see you later...Both of you.

Eleanor straightens up and goes back over to the show, with
Mark going back to his reading.

EXT. NICHOLS AND COMPANY BUILDING

It's actually not all that busy on a Saturday. It's a
beautiful day in L.A.

Fran and Paul head toward the entrance to the building.
Fran is leading the way and Paul is looking around at the
buildings, rather in awe of the whole thing.

They get to the door and Fran brings out her keys and opens
the door to the building, motioning Paul to enter first,
which he does. Fran follows and locks the door behind her.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM

A large rehearsal hall. Wood floors suitable for dancing,
with a large set of windows to give plenty of light to the
room. One of the walls is covered with mirrors with Balance
bars for the dancers.

Off to the side of the mirrors is an upright piano and bench.
In front of the piano are three folding chairs. A closed
door leading to another office is behind the piano.

For a moment, the room is empty, and then the door opens and
Fran, followed by Paul, come in.

Paul looks around the room, taking it all in.

PAUL

Impressive...

FRAN

We like it. Terrence's office is right through that door over there, but I suspect he's up in Mr. N's office being briefed on your performance last night.

Fran indicates the door leading to the office.

PAUL

And Terrence is the man I'm auditioning for?

FRAN

This isn't an audition. Mr. N thinks you have the talent. That's why you're here. He makes those decisions personally. Terrence's job is to listen, critique, and then polish up those areas he thinks necessary.

The door opens and Mr. Nichols comes in followed by TERRENCE JONES, a man in his 50's. He is the vocal coach, dance instructor and talent manager for Nichols and Company.

Mr. Nichols smiles when he sees Paul and comes over to him, stretching out his hand to shake. Paul comes over and shakes his hand.

NICHOLS

Mr. Geller, thank you for coming.

PAUL

Thank you Mr. Nichols... I appreciate you taking an interest in me.

NICHOLS

(indicates Terrence)

I'd like to introduce you to Terrence Jones, our talent manager as we like to call him.

Paul reaches over and shakes Terrence's hand.

PAUL

It's very nice to meet you Mr. Jones.

TERRENCE

Same here Mr. Geller, but please call me Terrence. I've never been one to stand on formality, and besides, we'll be working together a lot over the next few months.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)

(to Nichols)

He has a neutral accent, so we won't need to enroll him in a diction class.

(to Paul)

Mr. Geller...

PAUL

(interrupting)

Paul...

TERRENCE

(smiles)

Paul. What is your musical background?

PAUL

I've taken piano since I was five...been singing since I was eight or so. I have a Music degree from the University of Chicago. Taught music in public schools for eight years...

TERRENCE

Vocal or instrumental?

PAUL

Both...

TERRENCE

Musical styles?

PAUL

A little bit of everything. Pop, rock, musicals, Jazz, classical.

TERRENCE

Performance experience?

PAUL

I've played and sung at Weddings and birthdays since I was fifteen. I put myself through college playing in clubs and bars. I've also done some stage work.

TERRENCE

Do you write your own material...?

PAUL

Some...but not as much as I would like to.

TERRENCE

Mr. Nichols mentioned a song called 'Standing Here'...

PAUL

That one I didn't write...The friend who did gave me permission to use it.

TERRENCE

(to Fran)

Fran, we're going to need to give Paul a release form for his friend to sign before he leaves this afternoon.

FRAN

You got it...

TERRENCE

(To Paul)

Now Paul, would you sit down and begin playing...Start with 'Standing Here'

Paul goes around to the piano and sits on the bench. Putting his fingers on the keys, he begins to play the introduction.

EXT. HUNTINGTON LIBRARY GARDENS - LATE AFTERNOON

The crowd has thinned out considerably. Eleanor and Sharon are still among the tables. Sharon looks over at Mark, who is still sitting on the bench, looking miserable. Sharon moves over to where Eleanor is standing.

SHARON

Any sign of Mark's young man..?

ELEANOR

No...nothing.

SHARON

When did you talk to him last?

ELEANOR

About twenty minutes ago. He refuses to believe that he isn't coming.

SHARON

He's been sitting there a awfully long time.

ELEANOR

Six hours...I finally got him to eat something about an hour ago.

SHARON

I've never seen him like this, have you...?

Eleanor shakes her head.

SHARON

Should we go over and talk to him?

ELEANOR

No, better to leave him alone right now... What a shame, I really thought that Mark had found someone...

EXT. NICHOLS AND COMPANY BUILDING

TERRENCE (O.S.)

I feel badly putting Mr. Geller through so much the last seven hours....

INT. NICHOLS'S OFFICE - DAY

The interior of Nichols' office. Terrence is sitting in one of the chairs across from Nichols' desk, while Fran is seated on the edge of the desk, her briefcase next to her. Nichols is seated on his chair behind his desk.

TERRENCE

(continuing)

But you wanted my opinion.

NICHOLS

And that is...?

TERRENCE

He's comfortable in a wide range of musical styles. His voice is strong, clear and conveys emotion easily. On top of that, he's an excellent sight reader. Oh, there are a few areas that we can work on but he'll be ready in no time. In my opinion you'd be a fool not to sign him...

Fran lets out a sigh of relief. Nichols sits back in his chair. Terrence looks over at Fran.

TERRENCE

I congratulate you on your find, Fran. He's one of the best I've seen come through these doors in a long time.

NICHOLS

Well then, it's looks like we're unanimous. Fran, would you bring him in?

FRAN

Certainly...

Fran gets up and goes to the door, opens it and goes through for a moment. She comes back and Paul comes with her.

Fran shuts the door, then returns to her spot. Nichols indicates the chair next to Terrence. Paul sits.

NICHOLS
How do you feel?

PAUL
Honestly, a little nervous.

NICHOLS
I know it's been a rough day for you, and I appreciate all the work you've done. So, that being said, after lengthy consideration, we have decided....that we would like to sign you on as one of our clients.

PAUL
(Happy and excited)
Really...?

Mr. Nichols stands and offers his hand. Paul gets up and shakes it. Terrence also gets up and shakes his hand. Fran comes over and gives him a big hug.

NICHOLS
Congratulations..

PAUL
Thank you Mr. Nichols... Thank you very much.

TERRENCE
(to Paul)
Now, Monday morning... we'll start working on a few things we need to improve on, say around nine.

PAUL
I'll be there...

TERRENCE
(to Fran)
Fran, do you have that release form?

FRAN
Right here...

She opens her briefcase and pulls out a sheet of paper.

FRAN
Paul, we'll need this signed by the songwriter who wrote 'Standing Here'... just to keep everyone covered. Everything's filled out except for the name.
(to Paul)
What's the writer's name?

PAUL
David,..David Scott...

Fran looks at Paul curiously.

FRAN
David Scott...? The bartender at
the Haven?

PAUL
Yeah,... Brought the music in about
a week ago for me to look at. I
convinced him that it was good enough
to perform.

NICHOLS
Do you know this man, Fran?

FRAN
He lives in the the same condo complex
as I do. Never thought he had any
musical talent. I guess I didn't
know him as well as I thought.

Fran writes down the name on the sheet of paper.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Paul is at the bar, counting tips from the tip jar. David
is nearby, cleaning the bar. Tommy walks by Paul and looks
at the collection of bills that he has piled up. The tip
jar is sitting on top of the release form.

TOMMY
Mr. Geller...?

Paul turns and smiles.

PAUL
Mr. Pierce...

TOMMY
Have a good night?

PAUL
Three hundred and twenty-seven
dollars.

TOMMY
Very good, but from what I've seen
and heard, it's nothing compared to
what you'll be getting soon...

PAUL
(curious)
What do you mean?

TOMMY

I saw you talking to John Nichols last night. Did he offer you a contract?

PAUL

Yeah... but I'm a long way from being ready to record a CD... so I'm not going to become famous overnight, if at all.

TOMMY

Kid, you have talent...and that new song, I don't see how you can miss...

PAUL

Thanks for the vote of confidence.

TOMMY

You deserve it... Well, good night.

Tommy moves off towards his office. David, who has been listening in on the whole conversation, moves over to Paul.

DAVID

Is it true, they signed you?

PAUL

(nods)

I want to thank you for letting me use the song. The agency was really impressed with it... They gave me something for you to sign...

Paul pulls out the paper from under the tip jar and hands it to David.

DAVID

What's this...?

PAUL

It's a release form... so that I can use your song.

DAVID

You told them that I wrote it?

PAUL

I didn't think you'd mind.

DAVID

I already said you could use it...

PAUL

I know, but they want it in writing. Something about legal protection for both of us and them...

David mulls this over for a moment.

DAVID
Okay, but I've got one condition
before I sign...

PAUL
Condition?

David nods.

PAUL
Anything... I owe a lot of my success
to you and that song of yours...

David puts his hand on Paul's.

DAVID
Come home with me tonight....

Paul realizes what he has said. Pulls his hand away.

PAUL
David, you're a nice guy and the
song you wrote is great, but I don't
have any feelings for you...

DAVID
You married? Have a boyfriend?

PAUL
No, not exactly....

DAVID
So then, what's the problem? And
you did say anything...

PAUL
I know... I just didn't expect...

DAVID
(interrupts)
I'm not that bad looking, am I...?

PAUL
No, you're very good looking, but...

DAVID
And you want to use my song, don't
you?

PAUL
(finally)
Yes...

DAVID
Well then, that's my price...You
come home with me...tonight.

PAUL
 Even knowing how I feel...? You
 could have anyone you wanted... Why
 would you want me?

DAVID
 A lot of reasons...
 (beat)
 Now, what's it gonna be... do I sign
 this piece of paper or not?

PAUL
 (finally)
 All right, you win...

DAVID
 Who knows, you might even enjoy it.

David picks up a pen and signs the bottom of the paper.
 David is triumphant, Paul is not happy about the situation.

EXT. CONDO COMPLEX - LATE NIGHT

In front of Mark and David's Condos. The lights are out in
 both condos for a moment and then the lights go on in the
 upper condo, David's.

INT. DAVID'S CONDO

LIVING ROOM

Paul and David are in the living room. Paul stands there
 stiffly, David is unbuttoning Paul's shirt.

DAVID
 (whispering)
 Relax... Just go with it...

PAUL
 David, I...

David places a finger across Paul's lips to stop him from
 talking.

DAVID
 Shhhh...don't talk.

David runs his hands underneath Paul's shirt and over his
 chest. Paul closes his eyes beginning to respond to David's
 hands. David peels off Paul's shirt and begins kissing his
 neck. David manages to take his shirt off as well.

David kisses Paul on the lips, his arms around Paul. Paul
 pulls back, but David pulls him back in and kisses him
 passionately. By now, Paul is responding. David takes hold
 of Paul's hand and leads him to the bedroom.

BEDROOM

David, leading Paul by the hand comes into the bedroom from the living room. The two of them sink down onto the bed, kiss and caress each other.

With a free hand, David reaches over to the nightstand and reaches underneath the ledge to press a small button.

Up in the bookcase, a small red light goes on, belonging to a camera hidden among the books, recording everything going on.

Back on the bed, with Paul and David caressing, David's hand moves down below Paul's waist to an area that causes Paul to gasp with pleasure.

INT. MARK'S CONDO - NIGHT

BEDROOM

Mark is sleeping in his bed, the lights off. The SOUND of THUMPING, punctuated with MOANS of pleasure can be heard. It gets to the point that Mark wakes up, and turns the light on next to his bed, and looks over at the clock. It's 3 AM.

Mark lays back down on his bed and looks up towards the ceiling, where the noise from upstairs continues.

MARK

(exasperated)

Damn... d..doesn't he ever sleep?

Mark gets out of bed and grabs a pillow and the blanket off the bed. He is dressed in a pair of sweats and a Tee shirt He moves out of the bedroom.

LIVING ROOM

Coming into the living room from the hall in the dark, an exasperated Mark mumbling under his breath, tosses the pillow and blanket onto the couch, and reaches over and turns on the light next to the couch.

Mark straightens out the pillow and the blanket on the couch and then gets under the blanket, reaches up and turns off the light.

EXT. CONDO COMPLEX - MORNING

Fran comes up the walkway to Mark's door.

INT. MARK'S CONDO

LIVING ROOM

Mark is sleeping on the couch, The DOORBELL RINGS and he stirs. He sits up, and the DOORBELL RINGS again. Mark stands up and moves towards the door.

MARK
 (grumpy)
 I'm coming....

Mark gets to the door and opens it to see Fran standing there at the doorway. Fran looks at Mark as she comes in the door.

FRAN
 No offense, but you look terrible.

MARK
 (indicates upstairs)
 D..David had one of his b..boys
 upstairs last night...

Fran looks over at the couch.

FRAN
 Oh, I see...a night on the couch.

MARK
 The b..bedroom was t..too noisy. I
 couldn't sleep. Coffee?

FRAN
 Not for me... I can only stay a
 minute. I just wanted to see how
 the rose show went...

Mark's face falls. Fran comes in and Mark closes the door.

FRAN
 I take it it didn't go well?

MARK
 The Rose Show was fine... b..but
 Paul never showed up...

FRAN
 Oh...Oh Mark, I'm sorry... but you
 don't know, maybe something prevented
 him from coming.

MARK
 Maybe he just c..changed his mind.

FRAN
 From what you told me about him, he
 seemed very interested in you.

MARK
 I t..thought so t..too...

FRAN
 Look, he went to all that trouble to
 meet you, and he kept telling you
 how much he wanted to get to know
 you better.

FRAN (CONT'D)

That doesn't sound like someone who would stand you up on purpose.

MARK

I know, b..but...

FRAN

Mark, don't give up on him, not until you know for certain. I'm sure that there is a logical explanation.

MARK

I hope you're right. Now all I have to d..do is find him again.

FRAN

Tell you what. Come to my office after your meeting tomorrow and I'll take you to lunch. We'll put our heads together and find this guy. He's probably closer than you think. Okay?

Mark nods.

INT. BAR - AFTERNOON

It's before opening time. Tommy is doing an inventory of the liquor, crouched down counting bottles, and Kirk is adjusting the glasses hanging overhead, getting ready to open.

From outside, David breezes into the bar and over to Tommy. In his hand, he carries an envelope large enough to hold a DVD. David sits at the bar, across from Tommy.

DAVID

(cheerful)

Hey Tommy...

Tommy turns to see David's smiling face looking down on him. He stands, looks at his watch.

TOMMY

What are you doing here? Your shift doesn't start for two more hours...

DAVID

I brought you something...

David puts the envelope on the bar. Tommy looks at it.

TOMMY

(suspicious)

What is it?

DAVID

Something worth two grand to me and
hours of viewing pleasure for you...

A little ways away, but within earshot, Kirk hears the conversation. Even though he is doing his bar activities, he is still following the conversation.

David brings forward the envelope and pushes it towards Tommy, who reaches out and takes it. Tommy is not pleased.

TOMMY

Is this what I think it is?

DAVID

One genuine seduction and a pretty
hot one too, if I do say so myself,
and all on DVD...

TOMMY

When did this happen?

DAVID

Last night...

TOMMY

How did you get him to agree?

DAVID

Paul was very grateful to me for
writing that song, and he needed me
to sign a release...so I took
advantage of the situation.

TOMMY

But you didn't write it.

DAVID

No one knows that except you and me.

TOMMY

And what happens if the real writer
shows up..?

DAVID

The troll..? He hardly ever leaves
that condo of his, except to work in
his garden... You say boo to him and
he hides. He won't be any trouble...

(beat)

Now, about your end of the wager?

TOMMY

(picks up the envelope)

I'll have to look this over first...

DAVID

I'm sure you'll enjoy it...

TOMMY

And you're going to let Paul down easy, right...? I don't want to lose him... he's too good for business.

DAVID

I'm not planning to let him down at all...

TOMMY

Why not?

DAVID

Paul's on his way to becoming very rich and I'm planning on sticking around and getting my piece of it...

Kirk, disgusted by the whole exchange, moves off.

INT. FRAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Fran is seated at her desk, working on her laptop. The door to her office opens up and Mr. Nichols comes into the room carrying a large envelope. Fran looks up.

NICHOLS

Fran... I've just gotten Paul Geller's contracts from legal. Would you take them down to the rehearsal room and get his signature on them? I'd do it myself, but I've got a conference call in five minutes.

FRAN

Sure, not a problem. I've got a friend coming for lunch. I'll drop them off on my way out.

Mr. Nichols places the envelope on Fran's desk.

NICHOLS

Thanks Fran... You're an angel...

Mr. Nichols moves towards the door, but stops and turns, remembering something.

NICHOLS

Oh, and ask Terrence if he thinks Mr. Geller would be ready to perform at the next showcase concert.

FRAN

That less than two weeks away. Are you going to fast track him?

NICHOLS

Only if he's ready.

FRAN

I'll give him the message.

NICHOLS

Thanks... Talk to you later.

Mr. Nichols turns and continues out the door. Fran goes back to her work.

INT. HALLWAY

Outside of the rehearsal room. The SOUND of Paul singing warm-up exercises can be heard through the door leading into the rehearsal room O.S. There are several benches across from the door.

Mark and Fran come INTO VIEW from an adjoining hallway, heading for the door, Talking as they go. Fran is carrying the envelope with the contracts in it.

MARK

I d..don't think I've been to t...this part of the b..building...

FRAN

I only come here if Mr. N needs something from Terrence.

FRAN

(holds up envelope)
Or in this case, something signed.

By this time, they have gotten to the door. Mark seems hesitant.

FRAN

You want to come in with me?

MARK

No,... no I'll w..wait out here.

FRAN

Have a seat. I won't be a minute.

Mark moves over to the bench as Fran starts to open the door.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM

Terrence is sitting at the piano, playing warm-up exercises, with Paul standing nearby, singing them.

The door opens and Fran enters the room with the envelope in hand. Paul hears the door open and turns, still singing, smiles, and waves to her. Terrence looks up as well and sees her. He stops playing and smiles at her.

TERRENCE

Good morning Fran...What brings you down to the dungeon?

Fran comes over to the piano with her envelope.

FRAN

Sorry to disturb you two, but Mr. N would like Paul to sign these.

PAUL

What are they...?

FRAN

Your contracts, fresh from legal. I don't think the ink's dry yet.

Fran opens up the envelope and pulls out the papers and places them on the top of the piano in front of Paul. She also produces a pen and hands it to Paul, who takes it. He looks at the contracts.

PAUL

This is just happening so fast...

TERRENCE

It certainly can feel that way...

FRAN

Go ahead Paul...

Paul leans over and signs the contract. He straightens up.

PAUL

There you are...

Terrence stands and offers his hand to Paul who shakes it readily.

TERRENCE

Congratulations Paul, welcome to the family... officially.

PAUL

(smiling)
Thanks...

Fran gives Paul a big hug as well. Breaking away from Paul, she turns her attention to Terrence.

FRAN

Mr. N wants to know if you think Paul will be ready for the next showcase...?

PAUL

What's that?

TERRENCE

We take our new talent and give them
a test drive in front of a live
audience.

PAUL

And when's the next one is?

TERRENCE

A week from Saturday...

PAUL

That soon? I mean, I don't have
anything prepared.

TERRENCE

(to Fran)

He'll be ready...

(to Paul)

You'll do fine. We can work on a
selection of songs starting with
'Standing Here.'

PAUL

Are you sure I'll be ready on time?

TERRENCE

It's going to take a lot of work...
If you think I've been driving you
hard before, just wait.

Smiling, Fran gathers up the contracts and carefully places
them back into the envelope.

FRAN

I'll give Mr. N the good news...and
put the contracts on his desk
personally.

PAUL

Do you want to stay a while and
listen..?

FRAN

I'd love to, but I have a friend of
mine in the hall waiting to go to
lunch...But I'll stop by later...

(to Terrence)

Don't work him too hard...

TERRENCE

No promises....

Fran smiles, and then moves to the door. She opens it, goes
out and shuts the door behind her.

INT. HALLWAY

Mark is seated in a chair not far from the door, waiting. When Fran comes out the door, he stands. Fran goes over to him. The SOUND of Paul doing vocal warm-up exercises begins again, accompanied by Terrence on the piano.

FRAN

Ready?

MARK

(Nods. Indicates
rehearsal room)

Who's d..doing the singing?

FRAN

One of Mr. N's new acquisitions..

MARK

Nice voice...

FRAN

I think this guy's going places...

(beat)

Okay if we drop this contract back
at Mr. N's office before we go?

MARK

No p..problem...

The two of them walk down the hallway and around the corner, while O.S. Paul can be heard doing his exercises.

EXT. MARKET - AFTERNOON

The front of the neighborhood market.

INT. MARKET - DAY

Pushing along his cart down one of the aisles is Mark, There are a few groceries in it. He, as usual is not looking up as he pushes his cart along. In his shirt pocket is a small pad of paper and a pen.

He comes around the corner, and Paul is there as he turns the corner. Mark looks up and sees Paul smiling at him. Mark is surprised and a little uncomfortable.

MARK

P..Paul...

PAUL

(delighted)

Mark...How are you?

MARK

I'm f..fine...

PAUL

You don't know how glad I am to see you.

(beat)

Listen, about the show, I want to apologize for standing you up...Something happened that I couldn't get out of.

MARK

Oh,...I t..thought you c..changed your mind...about meeting up with me I mean.

PAUL

Mark, you have to believe me. What I told you before, about getting to know you, and spending more time with you...I meant that. I... I guess we should have exchanged phone numbers. It would have made things easier. I've been coming in here almost every day, hoping to run into you...So that I could explain...

MARK

Well, what d..did happen?

PAUL

Friday...The owner of a talent agency came into the bar and heard me play... And I guess he liked what he heard.

MARK

T..that's great,... isn't it?

PAUL

Yeah, but he wanted to see me the next day at his office, so that I could sing for his talent manager. Mark, you've got to understand.. I've worked so hard to get to this point. I couldn't blow this chance.

MARK

I understand t..that...

PAUL

The only problem was, I couldn't get hold of you to let you know what was happening...

MARK

D..did they sign you?

PAUL

(nods)

My first concert is this Saturday...

MARK

You're g..giving a c..concert already?

Paul nods, reaches into his pocket and brings out a pass. He presents it to Mark, who takes it.

PAUL

I've been carrying this with me for a week, in case I saw you. It's a pass for the concert...I want you to come as my guest...

MARK

(looks at the pass)
Me..? I... I couldn't... I...

He looks up at Paul.

MARK

(smiles)
Of c..course I'll c..come.

PAUL

Great... You don't know how much it will mean to me to have you there...

Paul pulls out his wallet and searches it until he pulls out a card and hands it to Mark.

PAUL

This has my phone number on it... I don't want to risk losing touch with you again...

Mark puts the pass and card in his pocket and takes out the pad and pen. He flips to a clean sheet of paper and writes on the pad.

When he finishes, he tears off the sheet and hands it to Paul, who takes it. Mark puts the pad and pen back in his pocket

MARK

T..these are my home and cell p..phone numbers. I... I guess we should have d..done this earlier.

PAUL

Maybe then, we could have gone out for that cup of coffee...
(beat)

But right now, I've got to go back to rehearsal. They're working me pretty hard, trying to make up for lost time. I'm going to be pretty busy until the concert between the rehearsals and my job, so I won't be able to see you until then.

MARK

I understand.

PAUL

Saturday...eight o'clock... I'll see you there...Promise?

MARK

P..promise...

Paul comes over and gives Mark a big hug. Mark is a bit taken by surprise, but then responds by hugging him back. Being West Hollywood, no one walking around seems to take notice. Paul breaks away, smiles at Mark...

PAUL

Later....

MARK

Okay...Have a g..good rehearsal.

PAUL

Thanks...

Paul moves off down the aisle and OUT of SCENE. Mark watches him leave, then heaves a sigh.

EXT. CONDO COMPLEX - DAY

Late afternoon at the complex, outside Mark's Condo. Coming up the walkway, walking quickly, is Fran, heading towards Mark's condo. She goes up to his door and opens it.

INT. MARK'S CONDO - DAY

Fran comes through the door.

FRAN

(calls out)

Mark!?... I came as soon as I could...Where are you?

MARK

(O.S.)

In the b..bedroom.

Fran heads towards the bedroom.

BEDROOM

Mark is sitting on his bed, looking around him. Scattered around the bedroom, are his clothes. Both his dresser and his closet are empty, everything having been pulled out. Sadly, the clothing is quite dated.

Fran appears at the doorway. She looks around at the mess and gives out a low whistle.

FRAN

What happened here...?

MARK

I've b..been going through my clothes..

Fran comes into the room.

FRAN

With what, a shovel? What's going on?

Mark gets up and faces Fran, and reaches into his shirt pocket and pulls out the pass.

MARK

T..this...

He brings it around to her and she takes it. She looks at it for a moment, then up at him with a curious look.

FRAN

Where did you get this?

MARK

From Paul, the guy I met couple weeks ago...t..the one we've been trying to find... I saw him at t..the market. He's been looking for me too. He has a concert t..this Saturday and he invited me t..to it.

Fran starts laughing. Mark is surprised....

MARK

What's so f..funny?

Fran continues to laugh. She sits down on Mark's bed. Mark is starting to get embarrassed, and lowers his eyes. She notices.

FRAN

Mark, sit down...

Mark sits down next to Fran, looking a little dejected.

FRAN

It's okay, I'm not laughing at you..Look..

Fran reaches into her pocket and produces a pass that matches the one Mark has.

MARK

I d..don't understand....

FRAN

Paul is the new client you heard last week, the one we just signed. Now it all makes sense...Mr. N was the reason he didn't meet you at the Rose Show. He insisted that Paul come into the office so that Terrence could hear him....

MARK

You're k..kidding?

FRAN

Here we've been trying to find your Paul for the last week, and I've been seeing him just about every day... Well, now we know why we haven't been able to find him. Terrence has been keeping him in rehearsal during the day... and he's been working just about every night... Mystery solved.

She hands the pass back to Mark who takes it from her and puts it back in his pocket.

FRAN

(indicates disaster)

Now, back to the disaster. What gives?

MARK

The concert...I want to make a good impression, b..but look at my clothes. Some of these are from college...I never really noticed t..them before or the way I look...Fran, I need your help..

FRAN

You've got it, you know that. What can I do...?

MARK

I need to look g..good for t..the concert.

FRAN

Are you asking me to do a makeover on you?

MARK

(nods)

P..please Fran, Your company d..does this for a living...Making p..people over is p..part of your business.

FRAN
 (thinks for a moment)
 You're right about that. Mark, are
 you sure you want this?

Mark nods.

FRAN
 And do you trust me?

Mark nods. An idea comes into her mind... and she smiles.

FRAN
 Where's your phone?

Mark points to the phone on the nightstand. Fran gets off
 the bed and goes over to it, picks up the receiver and punches
 a phone number.

FRAN
 A lesbian doing a makeover on a gay
 man...this may be the end of
 civilization as we know it...
 (listens)
 Cynthia...it's Fran....Set up the
 team...

Fran Looks over at Mark, who looks to say the least,
 apprehensive.

FRAN
 I've got a job for you....

Mark looks a bit apprehensive.

MONTAGE

HAIR SALON

Under the supervision of Fran, a MALE STYLIST is working on
 Mark's hair, cutting a lot of it off. Mark looks nervous,
 and this whole thing is torturous to him, but Fran is doing
 her best to calm him down.

SPA

With hair that is much shorter, a really good shave and the
 busy eyebrows tamed, Mark is undergoing a series of skin
 treatments:

Mark is sitting calmly, for him, while a BEAUTICIAN applies
 some cream-like material to his face, again under the watchful
 eye of Fran.

With tweezers in hand, the Beautician plucks some hairs out
 of the space between his eyebrows, while Mark grimaces.

While laying back in a chair with another cream treatment on his face, a different color this time, A SECOND BEAUTICIAN is working on his nails. Fran is seated nearby, reading a magazine.

CLOTHING STORE

Various scenes of Mark trying on clothing:

The SALESPERSON has a large array of shirts on hangers. Fran and Julie watch as the salesperson holds up a succession of shirts against Mark. They either nod or shake their heads, which lets the salesperson know which pile to put them in.

Mark, dressed in a pair of black slacks and a nice-looking shirt, is being helped by the salesperson to put on a jacket. After fussing with it for a moment, the salesman steps away and then looks down at Fran and Julie standing there.

Mark looks over, looking for an opinion. Fran smiles and nods. The salesperson helps Mark off with the coat.

A SHOE SALESMAN helps Mark, seated in a chair, put on a pair of black dress shoes. Mark then stands and walks around in them for a moment. He looks over to Fran and Julie for their opinion and they nod.

OPTOMETRIST OFFICE

Mark is being fitted with a new pair of glasses with very stylish wire frames, a vast improvement to the black plastic ones he had before. The OPTOMETRIST fiddles with the frames until they fit just right.

Mark looks up after the optometrist is done and sees Fran smiling at him, nodding her head, reflected in the mirror.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - DAY

BEDROOM

The bedroom has a queen-sized bed, a couple of nightstands on either side of it and a dresser across from the bed. There are lamps on each of the nightstands. A door leads to the bathroom and another leading to the living room next to it.

Sitting on the ruffled and unmade bed is David, getting dressed. David has that satisfied look on his face, as he puts on his shirt. His pants and shoes are already on.

The door to the bathroom opens and Paul comes out wearing a robe. He has the look of a man with something on his mind.

PAUL

David...?

DAVID

Yeah...?

PAUL
 We need to talk... I can't do this
 anymore. I want out.

DAVID
 (groans)
 Not this again...

David stands and looks over at Paul.

DAVID
 I don't care if you don't have any
 feelings for me. I don't even care
 if you're in love with someone
 else...As long as I'm letting you
 use my song, I call the shots. You'll
 do this as long as I say you do...

PAUL
 (angry)
 You.. Don't.. Own.. Me!

DAVID
 (snaps back)
 Oh, don't I...? What were you before
 'Standing here'? You were a piano
 player in a gay bar, playing for
 crummy wages and whatever tips you
 could scrounge. And where are you
 now? You've been signed by one of
 the largest talent agencies in the
 city. You're performing at a concert
 tonight in front of some of the
 biggest names in the music and film
 industry... You've got a great future
 and I helped put you there... don't
 forget that.

David moves over to Paul and runs his hand under Paul's robe,
 caressing his chest while he talks.

DAVID
 Besides, it's not like I'm asking
 for much...just a little fun now and
 then...and I haven't seen you fail
 to respond yet...I wonder what the
 man you're in love with would think
 about that...

PAUL
 (through clenched
 teeth)
 Get out.

DAVID
 (chuckles)
 Whatever you say....

David removes his hand from Paul's chest and straightens his robe back into place. He moves to the doorway to the living room, Paul turning to watch him leave. David stops at the doorway and turns.

DAVID

See you tonight...

Without another word, David goes through the door. After a moment or two, the SOUND of a door OPENING and then a moment later CLOSING. Paul is still staring at the door, but by the look on his face, he knows that David is right.

INT. MARK'S CONDO - EVENING

BATHROOM

Mark is taking a shower, just finishing up the last rinse. He opens up the shower door and grabs a towel hanging on the towel bar and dries himself off, wrapping the towel around his waist.

Mark goes over to the sink and takes out the shaving cream. The difference is that there is no towel across the mirror as there was before, and Mark is looking at his own reflection as he starts to put lather on his face.

EXT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

An older theater, rather on the small side. There are no letters across the marquee. This is a private function. There is a sign next to the entrance that reads "Nichols' Representation presents - Showcase Concert - By invitation only."

INT. DRESSING ROOM

Small and cramped, it looks every inch a single dressing room. There is one table in front of a lighted mirror and a couple of chairs. Across from the table is a door leading to backstage.

Sitting in front of that mirror is Paul, looking totally petrified. Dressed in a tuxedo, he adjusts and re-adjusts his tie. There is a KNOCK on the door, which causes him to turn towards it.

PAUL

Come in...

The door opens slightly, enough to let Fran into the room. She closes the door behind her. Paul sees her and gives out a sigh of relief.

PAUL

Fran, it's you...I was afraid it was the stage manager coming to tell me that I was on.

FRAN

You got a few minutes yet...

(beat)

Nervous..?

PAUL

I think I've gone past nervous into petrified....

FRAN

That's always a good sign...

PAUL

I hope you're right... Anyway, thanks for being here...It makes me feel better to see a friendly face...

FRAN

Actually, two friendly faces...

Before Paul can say something, Fran goes to the door and opens it, revealing a new and improved Mark, although when the door opens he's looking at his feet, but he lifts his face to meet Paul's gaze, and manages a weak smile.

Paul, stunned by the new look, stands.

PAUL

Mark....?

MARK

C..can I come in...?

Paul motions him in, delighted.

PAUL

Of course...come in, come in...

Mark comes into the dressing room. Paul is still floored by the change. He walks around Mark, taking in the details.

PAUL

Oh man, you look great...you really do. Your hair...the new glasses...everything..

MARK

You can blame Fran...she p..put me through a total makeover.

PAUL

You mean you two know each other?

FRAN

We live in the same complex...we've been friends for the last five years.. And as for the star treatment, I really didn't have to do much...Just

FRAN (CONT'D)

a little polishing here and there..
and no matter what Mark says, there
was already a lot to start with...

(beat)

Now, if you two will excuse me, I'm
gonna get to my seat. I have a lovely
lady waiting for me... Oh, and Mark,
don't stay too long...He's got a
show to do...

She goes to the door and begins to close it behind her.

FRAN

Be good...

She shuts the door behind her. Now that they're alone, Mark
is self conscious.

MARK

Are you n..nervous...?

PAUL

Oh yeah...and my hands are shaking
so badly I can't get this tie
straight...could you give me a hand?

MARK

S..sure.

Mark moves closer to Paul and reaches over to adjust his
tie. After a moment fiddling with the tie, Mark finishes.

MARK

There, t..that should do it...

Mark starts to lower his hands, but Paul takes hold of them.
They stare in each others eyes.

PAUL

(softly)
I'm really glad you came...

MARK

Me t..too...

PAUL

Mark, I've got to be honest with
you, my life's pretty complicated
right now,...A lot of people telling
me where to go and what to do...it's
a little overwhelming...

MARK

T..that's t..the way show b..business
is, at least t..that's what Fran
t..tells me.

PAUL

It's more than that...You see, I'm tangled up in something I'm trying to get away from...But soon, when that's all behind me...what I mean to say is...I... I think I'm falling in love with you...

Mark manages a weak smile.

MARK

T..trust me, I know t..the feeling...

The two of them lean in to kiss, very tentatively, but before they manage it, The SOUND of KNOCKING on the door interrupts them, and, startled, they both straighten up.

PAUL

(recovering his
composure. to Door)
Yes....?

VOICE (O.S.)

Seven minutes Mr. Geller...

PAUL

Thank you...

Paul looks at Mark as he says this. There is a brief moment of awkwardness. Mark disengages his hands from Paul's.

MARK

I should b..be getting to my seat...

Mark begins to back up to the door.

PAUL

Can we get together afterwards?

MARK

I'd like t..that...very much...

(beat)

Well, ah, I t..think b..break a leg is what you're supposed t..to say.

PAUL

Thanks...

Mark gets to the door and opens it to go out...

PAUL

And Mark...

Mark stops and turns back to Paul.

PAUL

You really do look great...

Mark nods, and smiles. He goes out the door and closes it behind him and is OUT of SCENE. Paul smiles back at the door.

INT. BACKSTAGE

Mark had closed the door leading to Paul's dressing room and begins to make his way down the hallway to the seats. Hovering nearby is David, watching Mark leave, unseen.

David looks back at the dressing room with a look of concern on his face.

INT. CONCERT HALL

The seats are filled to capacity. Seated about in the middle of the auditorium are Terrence, Nichols, Julie and Fran. The seat on the aisle is empty. Mark comes down the aisle and slips into his seat. Fran looks over at him.

FRAN
(teasing whisper)
How'd it go...?

MARK
(whispering)
Fine...

FRAN
Fine?...Just fine?

MARK
I d..don't kiss and t..tell.

FRAN
(a little louder)
He kissed you...?

MARK
(a bit embarrassed)
Well... almost... then t..the stage manager knocked on the d..door.

FRAN
Ouch...bad timing...

MARK
But he wants to get t..together after the show....there's more, but that's all you're going to g..get out of me right now, so d..don't even try.

Mark and Fran sit back in their seats and look straight ahead, up to the stage. Fran's pouting, Mark's smug.

Nichols leans over to Julie.

NICHOLS
 (whispering)
 Who's sitting next to Fran...

JULIE
 Her neighbor Mark...

NICHOLS
 Have I met him...? He looks vaguely
 familiar..

JULIE
 She brought him to the client
 Christmas party...

NICHOLS
 ...You don't mean the guy that sat
 in a corner and didn't talk to anyone
 for the whole evening...?

Julie nods.

NICHOLS
 What happened to him...?

JULIE
 Fran did a little make-over on him...
 with help from some of your staff...

Nichols looks over at Mark again

NICHOLS
 (to Julie)
 I'm impressed...

The curtain opens, revealing a grand piano with a microphone
 next to it for Paul to sing into. Paul comes on stage and
 the crowd begins to clap for him. Paul catches sight of
 Mark and smiles, then sits down at the piano.

Mark and the rest sit back in their chairs, preparing for
 the music. Mark is smiling. Fran reaches over and takes
 Julie's hand.

Paul begins the first few bars of the song 'Standing Here'.
 The smile on Mark's face begins to fade to a look of shock
 as he comes to the realization that Paul is playing the song
 he wrote.

Mark starts squirming in his seat, as Paul gets further into
 the song. Fran looks over at him...

FRAN
 (whispering)
 What's the matter...?

Mark turns to her, but doesn't know how to explain it.

MARK

I...uh...I...

He tries haltingly to say something but nothing comes out. Paul, up on stage is so into the song, he is oblivious to the audience.

MARK

I..I've got t..to leave.

Mark gets out of his chair and heads up the aisle. The others look over to Fran, but the only thing she can do is shrug. After a moment, Fran gets up and follows him.

INT. BACKSTAGE

David, from his vantage point in the wings is watching Mark and Fran leave, a sly smile on his face.

EXT. CONCERT HALL

Outside of the concert hall, a confused and upset Mark is pacing back and forth in front of the theater, not knowing what to do. In the background, Paul, singing the song, can barely be heard O.S.

Fran comes out of the theater and makes a beeline to Mark and stops him mid-pace.

FRAN

Mark, what's the matter with you!!?

MARK

(shocked and confused)
T..that song,... The one Paul's singing...

FRAN

What about it?

MARK

Where d..did he get it?...How could he have?...I d..don't...Oh D..dman...

FRAN

(interrupting)
Mark, take a deep breath....calm down...

Mark takes a couple of deep breaths.

FRAN

Now, start from the beginning....

MARK

(calmer)
T..the song he's singing... 'Standing Here'...I wrote it...

FRAN

You did..?

(thinks)

The song you were humming in your garden the night I came back from Santa Barbara... I thought it sounded familiar the first time Paul played it...But how did he get a hold of the music?

(realizes)

David.... David showed the song to Paul and told him that he wrote it. But how did David get it from you?

MARK

I gave it to him...

FRAN

Why?

MARK

David heard me p..playing the song... He t..told me he had a friend t..that might be interested in hearing it....He b..borrowed the music, to show it to him...He brought it b..back the next morning... and said t..that his friend d..didn't like it...He must have made a c..copy and gave it t..to Paul.

FRAN

Then you've got to confront David. You can't let that son of a bitch get away with it... It's your song, you wrote it...it belongs to you. Paul needs to know the truth.

MARK

What if he already knows?..what if his attention t..to me is b..because...

FRAN

(interrupting)

Mark, don't think that. Paul wouldn't do that...not to you...

MARK

How d..do you know? Some people will d..do almost anything t..to b..be famous.

FRAN

Not Paul...He's not like that and you know it...

MARK

I can't t..think right now...I can't
stay here...I've got t..to
leave...Make up an excuse for
me...anything...

Mark begins walking away from the concert hall, down the street to mix in with the crowds.

FRAN

(yelling after him)
Mark!!...You can't run away from
this!!.... Mark!!

It's too late, Mark is gone, swallowed up by the crowd. Fran looks down the street, makes a big sigh and then her head goes up as a idea has come into her mind. She smiles, as though relishing the thought.

INT. CONCERT HALL

Paul comes to the close of his song, and with the last bars of the song, the crowd erupts into a frenzy of clapping. Paul stands and acknowledges the crowd, bowing.

Paul looks over to where Mark was sitting and notices two empty chairs. He looks over at Julie, who can only shrug. Paul is perplexed for a moment, but then puts on the stage smile and bows again. The clapping dies down.

Paul sits down at the piano again and starts playing another song.

Fran comes down the aisle and slips into her seat next to Julie. She leans over to Fran.

JULIE

What happened?

FRAN

I'll tell you during intermission,
but I may need you to put on your
work hat.

JULIE

Sounds serious.

FRAN

Oh, trust me, it is....

Both women go back to watching the performance.

EXT. CONDO COMPLEX

The front of Mark's condo. All the lights are out. The SOUND of a PHONE RINGING can be heard O. S.

INT. MARK'S CONDO

BEDROOM

Still fully clothed, Mark is sitting on his bed looking miserable, in the dark. The PHONE next to his bed RINGS. Mark looks over at it, but makes no attempt to pick it up.

EXT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

The show is over and people are coming out of the hall and going towards their cars or limos. Waiting in the front are Fran, Julie and Terrence, talking amongst themselves. Fran has her cell phone up to her ear and is listening.

After a moment, she closes the phone.

FRAN

(To Julie and Terrence)

No answer...Either he's not home yet
or he's not picking up.

Mr. Nichols comes out of the front of the hall and looking around, spots the other three and goes over to them. He joins their little circle.

NICHOLS

They're on their way out...To be honest Fran, this is a major problem. I've got three recording studios who want to get Mr. Geller in for a session because of that song... and I'm not sure who the writer is. This is not the way to do business.

FRAN

I believe Mark...

JULIE

So do I...

NICHOLS

Frankly, I'm a bit skeptical...I don't know Mark as well as the two of you do, but I've certainly never seen anyone less likely to be a songwriter...

(to Terrence)

Terrence, what do you think?

TERRENCE

I'm going to reserve judgment until Fran's plan is underway.

NICHOLS

Okay, I'll go along with it then, but only so that we can clear this all up.

About that point in time, Paul and David come out of the front of the hall. Several people stop to shake Paul's hand along the way. Paul graciously thanks them and makes his way over to where the rest of the group is.

David stays a little away from the main group.

PAUL

We're here...

Paul looks around.

PAUL

Is this all of us? I had hoped that...

FRAN

Mark said he was sorry, but he wasn't feeling very well, so he went home.

PAUL

(disappointed)

Oh,.... I'm sorry too.

(to Terrence)

Well teacher, how did I do?

TERRENCE

You did very well. I was quite pleased with your performance. A lot of other people noticed as well, but I'll let Mr Nichols tell you about them.

Paul turns his attention to Mr. Nichols.

NICHOLS

I've spoken to three of the major recording studios. They were quite impressed with your vocal talents...

(indicates David)

Is that the young man who wrote 'Standing Here'

Paul nods

NICHOLS

(to David)

Please join us Mr. Scott... this concerns you as well.

David comes over, curious.

NICHOLS

As I was saying, the three studios in question are vying for exclusive recording rights to the song.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

I believe that the competition will be fierce, not to mention lucrative, and I expect that the two of you will make a goodly amount of money from this competition.

This has caught David's attention.

NICHOLS

(to David)

Mr. Scott, I would be very happy to add you to my client list, if you're interested.

DAVID

(surprised)

Me...?

FRAN

We have several songwriters as clients, David. Some of the best. You'll be in good company...

DAVID

I don't know... I mean, I've already signed the release.

NICHOLS

True, but you should get protection against illegal use of your song...something that a release can't cover. A contract will make sure that you get everything you're entitled to.

(Beat)

I want to set up a meeting for Monday morning at nine, in the rehearsal hall at our downtown office, if that's alright with you.

DAVID

Yeah... sure...Thanks...

NICHOLS

(to Paul)

I expect to see you there as well, Mr. Geller.

PAUL

Nine o'clock...Yes sir.

NICHOLS

Fran will give you the address, Mr. Scott.

(smiles)

Well, all in all, a very satisfactory evening everyone. Thank you. Until

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Monday... Terrence, can I give you a lift?

TERRENCE

I'll take you up on that, John.
(to the rest)
Good night all.

Mr. Nichols turns and heads towards the line of limos with Terrence beside him, leaving the rest of them standing there. David lets out a sigh.

DAVID

He always like that?

FRAN

That's why he's the best.

David, after a moment begins to laugh. The rest of the group are perplexed.

PAUL

What's so funny?

DAVID

It just hit me... I'm going to be rich...

Fran and Julie exchange a glance and smile.

INT. BAR

The bar is busy. Techno music is blaring out of the speakers. Kirk is working behind the bar along with IAN, another bartender. Various CUSTOMERS talk amongst themselves.

Into the Bar comes Fran and Julie, walking hand-in-hand. They weave through the crowd and up to the bar, taking two empty seats. Kirk turns to them, smiling. He places two cocktail napkins in front of them.

KIRK

Evening ladies, the usual?

Both nod. Kirk turns towards Ian...

KIRK

(calls out)
Ian....?

Ian turns at the mention of his name.

KIRK

Cosmo and Lemon drop...

IAN

You got it...

Ian moves off to prepare the drinks. Kirk turns back to Fran and Julie.

KIRK

Well....?

FRAN

Well what..?

KIRK

Paul's big debut...How did it go? I figured you came here from the concert...

JULIE

He was wonderful...The audience loved him.

FRAN

Mr. N's already had several record companies show interest in him.

KIRK

That's great...the sooner Paul gets out of this place, the better.

FRAN

Why do you say that?

KIRK

Well, let's just say that Paul's been getting a pretty raw deal around here. He....

He stops speaking when he spots Tommy coming down the bar, looking pissed. He moves towards Kirk.

TOMMY

(sharp)

You working tonight or not?

FRAN

It's our fault Tommy...we were telling him about Paul's concert...

JULIE

Paul was a big hit...Everybody there was talking about how great he was.

*

FRAN

You may be looking for a new piano player soon.

TOMMY

That's fine with me...he's cost me too much money already...

TOMMY (CONT'D)

(to Kirk)

I might be replacing a bar manager
too...if he doesn't get back to work.

Ian appears from down the bar with a cosmo in one hand and a
lemon drop in the other.

IAN

Comin' through...

Kirk and Tommy part enough to let Ian come through.

IAN

Who had the Cosmo...?

Fran raises her hand. Ian places the Cosmo in front of Fran
and places the lemon drop in front of Julie. He looks over
at Tommy and can see that he's not in a good mood and
withdraws quickly.

Tommy gives a last angry look at Kirk and storms off. Kirk
gives a sigh of relief...

FRAN

What's up with him?

Kirk leans in and motions for them to move in closer.

KIRK

Tommy lost a bet,...Cost him two
grand...

FRAN

Well, you know how Tommy is, he's
always betting on something..

KIRK

Yeah, but this is different.

Kirk leans in closer. The girls do the same.

KIRK

David and Tommy made a bet that David
couldn't seduce Paul. Tommy gave
him three weeks to do it... I
overheard them planning the whole
thing...

FRAN

(loud)

What...?!

KIRK

Shhh, not so loud...Let me tell you,
David tried real hard, using every
trick he knew on Paul, but wasn't

KIRK (CONT'D)
getting anywhere with him...Then
David brought in this song...

JULIE
(interested)
The one he wrote...?

KIRK
David?...He didn't write it...The
man's totally tone deaf...No, he got
it from this guy that he knows and
passed it off as his.

FRAN
What guy?

KIRK
(shrugs)
I don't know...David called him 'the
troll'. I heard him talking to Tommy
about it... Anyway, when Paul got so
much attention from you and your
boss, David convinced him that the
song was the main reason your company
was interested in him...

FRAN
So Paul would feel obligated, and do
whatever David wanted...God, what a
bastard...

KIRK
(nods)
The worst part is that I knew about
all of it and didn't say anything to
Paul. He's a good guy, but I wanted
to save my job, so I kept my mouth
shut. I feel like such a jerk right
now.

JULIE
But even if David did succeed, Tommy's
not going to take his word for it...
not for that kind of money...

KIRK
This is where it gets sleazy...David
recorded the two of them together
and gave the DVD to Tommy to prove
that he had scored with him...he
does that with a lot of his tricks...

Fran is angry now and about ready to say something, when
Julie puts her hand on hers to calm her down.

JULIE
A DVD...you're sure?

KIRK

I heard David and Tommy talking about it. I even saw David hand Tommy an envelope. The sick part is, David's proud of it. The only person that doesn't have a clue about any of this is Paul...and now that he seems to be going places, David's gonna be right there leeching whatever he can out of his fame...

Fran, coldly furious, stands up and then drains her drink in one gulp. Julie watches her.

JULIE

Uh oh... I know that look... Fran, what are you going to do?

FRAN

Me...? I'm going to protect my client and friend. If you'll excuse me, I'm going to see a man about a DVD.
 (to Kirk)
 Thanks Kirk...
 (to Julie)
 I won't be long...

Fran turns and heads in the direction of Tommy's office. Both Julie and Kirk watch her go and then Kirk turns to Julie who takes a sip of her drink and smiles.

JULIE

I almost feel sorry for Tommy...

She takes another sip of her drink.

JULIE

...almost...

She takes another sip of her drink.

EXT. CONDO COMPLEX - MORNING

Fairly early.

INT. MARK'S CONDO

BEDROOM

Mark is sitting on the bed, his back up against the headboard and clutching one of his pillows, his chin on it. Still dressed in the clothes he wore the night before except for the shoes and the jacket. He looks like he hasn't slept all night.

He looks up to the ceiling when he hears the SOUND of FOOTSTEPS above him, which lets him know that someone is upstairs and awake. He lowers his head back to the pillow.

MARK
 (to himself)
 Okay Mark, let's g..get t..this over
 with.

Mark sets the pillow aside and gets up out of the bed. He begins to unbutton his shirt.

INT. DAVID'S CONDO

BATHROOM

Paul is in the shower, his head the only part of his body visible. David, a towel wrapped around his waist, is combing his hair. David is not in a good mood.

DAVID
 I don't know why in the hell you had
 to get up so early...

PAUL
 I told you, I have something I gotta
 do... and I didn't ask you to get
 up, you know.

DAVID
 What's so dammed important...?

Paul shuts off the shower, reaches from behind the shower curtain and grabs a towel. After a moment, the curtain is pulled aside and Paul stands there with a towel around his waist.

PAUL
 That's my business...

DAVID
 Your business is my business...
 remember that...

PAUL
 After you sign the music contracts
 tomorrow...as far as I'm concerned,
 my obligation to you is over, and I
 can get on with my life...

DAVID
 Keep thinking that if you like, but
 we're going to be working together a
 long time. Just get used to it.

Before Paul can say anything, the DOORBELL RINGS

DAVID
 Who the hell's that?

David moves out of the bathroom and in to the living room.

LIVING ROOM

The living room looks pretty much as it did before, except that Paul's tuxedo is draped on the couch, along with other articles of clothing.

With the towel wrapped around his waist, David goes over to the door and looks through the peep hole.

DAVID

Great...just what I don't need...

David unlocks the dead-bolt and opens the door partially with most of his body behind it and peers out. Mark is standing on the other side of the door.

DAVID

What do you want?

MARK

(nervous)

We need to t..talk.

DAVID

I'm busy right now...

MARK

What I have t..to say won't t..take long...

DAVID

Listen you, I've got company... if you know what I mean... which I doubt... Try back later, much later...better yet, not at all.

From out of the bathroom, Paul takes this opportunity to come into the living room. He is still dressed only in the towel around his waist.

Paul goes over to the couch to retrieve his clothes and into the view of the open door. David hears him come in, looks back over his shoulder and sees him. David turns back with a smile.

DAVID

You know, you're right... Maybe this is a good time...

David opens the door so that Mark can see that David is wearing just a towel, and with the door all the way open, Mark can see Paul standing there, also just in a towel.

Paul Looks over and can see Mark standing there. Paul goes pale. Mark is equally stunned, and he lowers his eyes.

PAUL
(shocked)
Mark...I...!

Paul starts to move towards the door, but stops when Mark holds up his hand to signal him to stop. Mark's eyes look at Paul, then at a smirking David. Mark is totally crushed. Paul takes that moment to dash back into the bedroom.

DAVID
Told you I was busy...

MARK
(calm)
Yes, you d..did...sorry t..to have
b..bothered you.

Mark turns and starts moving down the stairs, and with a self-satisfied smile, David shuts the door.

INT. MARK'S CONDO

Mark comes through the door and slams it behind him. His emotions are in conflict. He's not sure whether he wants to break something or cry. He paces the living room, not knowing what to do next.

Mark sits on the couch for a moment and is about to give into tears, but anger and frustration get the better of him. He slams his fist on the coffee table.

A vase of fully opened roses are on the coffee table and the vibration from Mark's fists on the table cause a number of them to drop their petals. He looks over at the roses and all the anger and frustration drain out of him.

Calmly, Mark gets up, moves to the door, opens it, goes through, and shuts it behind him.

EXT. CONDO COMPLEX - NIGHT

Time has passed and it's now late night.

INT. FRAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

LIVING ROOM

Nice, neat, a lot like Mark's condo but with a few feminine touches here and there. A couch, a couple of matching chairs and an end table on each end of the couch. There is also a coffee table finishing out the group.

Seated on the couch, Fran is nervously drumming her fingers on the couch, clearly worried. On the end table next to her is a cup of tea.

The DOORBELL RINGS and her attention goes to the door. In a flash she's off the couch and goes over to the door, looking through the peephole in her door.

FRAN

Mark...!

She hurriedly opens the door and Mark, looking a little worse for wear is standing there. His eyes are bloodshot from crying, and he's looking totally miserable.

FRAN

You get in here....

Mark comes in and Fran closes the door behind him, and then wraps him in a big hug.

FRAN

I was so worried....We've been looking for you everywhere...

She breaks away from him, looks at him.

FRAN

You've probably got fifty messages on your cell phone. Where have you been?

MARK

I d..drove down to the b..beach...I started walking. I d..don't remember m..much more after t..that...it got dark...came back.

(beat)

Fran,...Can I stay here t..tonight...? I really d..don't want t..to go home right now.

FRAN

Of course...Come over here and sit down. You look like you're about ready to fall over.

She leads Mark to the couch and he sits, with Fran sitting nearby, watching him. There is a moment of silence. Then.

FRAN

You want to talk about it?

MARK

(nods)

I went up to see D..David this morning, about my music...I was all ready, I even knew what I was g..going to say t..to him...b..but when he opened the door...P..Paul was standing t..there...

FRAN

I know..

MARK

You know...?

FRAN

Paul's been here, several times actually, trying to find you...He's been frantic... I better call him and let him know you're okay...

Mark starts to say something, but Fran places her hand on his arm.

FRAN

I know what you're going to say...I won't tell him that you're here, just that you're okay. But Mark, a lot has happened since you left the concert last night...

(beat)

After I call Paul, I'm going to make us some tea...then I'll catch you up on a few things you should know about...It may be a long night...

EXT. NICHOLS AND COMPANY BUILDING - DAY

It's Monday morning and the town is awake and busy. A number of people are going in and out of the Nichols building.

NICHOLS (O.S.)

Do you really think this Mr. Scott will show up...?

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM

The rehearsal room looks pretty much as it has before. The only addition is a folding table set up near the piano, with a chair behind it.

Mr. Nichols is seated on that chair. Next to him on the table is an open briefcase and a stack of papers looking very much like a contract. There is a chair in front of the table, empty.

Julie is leaning against the table with her arms folded, watching Fran who is at the moment, pacing. Terrence is seated at the piano. Mark's music is on the piano.

FRAN

(to Nichols)

Oh, he'll show up. All David can see is the money he's gonna get.

NICHOLS

What if this Mr. Pierce warns him...?

FRAN

He won't. Tommy knows that he gets left holding the bag if David bolts.

NICHOLS

(to Julie)

And why are you here?

JULIE

Legal representation...

NICHOLS

Who's...?

JULIE

Don't know yet...Besides, there's no way I'm going to miss this...

The door to the rehearsal room opens and Paul comes in and closes the door behind him. All eyes go to him. Terrence stands up, and smiles. He begins to clap and the others join him.

Paul smiles back, moves to the piano and shakes Terrence's hand. Paul looks very tired.

TERRENCE

Congratulations again Paul...a job well done...

PAUL

Thank you....all of you.

TERRENCE

Is Mr. Scott with you?

PAUL

(frowns)

I saw him driving in as I was getting in the elevator...

(to Fran)

Fran, could I see you for a moment, in private?

FRAN

Sure...

Fran and Paul move away from the rest of the group.

PAUL

How is he...?

FRAN

He's okay... He stayed at my place last night. We talked 'til around three.

PAUL

Where was he?

FRAN

He remembers walking along the beach,
but he says the rest is a blur.

PAUL

How much did he tell you about...?

FRAN

Everything...We did a lot of
talking...He's not angry, but right
now he's really hurting inside...

(beat)

It's going to be okay, I promise.

PAUL

God, I hope you're right.

The door opens again and David comes through it, looking smug and cocky. Fran and Paul turn toward him. Paul is not happy to see him. Mr. Nichols stands and indicates the chair in front of him.

NICHOLS

So good of you to come Mr. Scott...
Please, have a seat.

DAVID

Thanks...

David crosses over to the chair indicated by Nichols. Fran and Paul drift over to where the rest of the group is. Terrence looks over at Fran and she nods. David is about to sit in the chair.

TERRENCE

Mr. Nichols, could have a moment
with our young songwriter...

NICHOLS

Certainly...

TERRENCE

Mr. Scott... I have a musical question
for you...

DAVID

A what...?

TERRENCE

When Mr. Geller was playing at the
concert Saturday, I noticed a small
problem in the bridge section of
your piece.

DAVID
 (clueless)
 Bridge...?

TERRENCE
 Here, let me show you...If you could
 come over here.

David cautiously goes over to the piano. Terrence stands up and indicates that David should sit there, which he does. Terrence leans over and points to a place in the the music.

TERRENCE
 Right there...There's a chord
 inversion that doesn't sound quite
 right to me...Could you play it from
 measure forty-three to fifty and see
 what you think...?

David places his hands on the keys. He's gone pale. The whole thing is unraveling. He makes a motion to play and then stops and removes his hands from the keys.

TERRENCE
 What's the matter, Mr. Scott?

DAVID
 I don't play the piano...

TERRENCE
 I see... and obviously you don't
 compose music either...the area I
 pointed to was the refrain, not the
 bridge...
 (leaning closely)
 You didn't write this song, did you
 Mr. Scott?

David looks around at all the others gathered there, then back at Terrence. He's caught.

DAVID
 (quietly)
 No...

PAUL
 (shocked)
 What?... You told me that you that
 you wrote that song. You lied to
 me... Why?

David stands and faces Paul. Terrence withdraws a couple of steps. Julie watches the whole thing dispassionately. Nichols is leaning back in his chair, watching everything that is going on.

DAVID
 I had my reasons.

PAUL

That's not good enough!

FRAN

(steps forward)

Maybe I can help...

(to Paul)

David made a bet with Tommy that he could get you into bed...David used the piece of music as bait to trap you...and I think you know the rest.

Paul lowers his head, ashamed. Fran gets up close to David.

FRAN

Maybe You should use that two thousand dollars for music lessons...

DAVID

Bitch!

Julie stiffens, and looks like she is ready to launch herself at David, but halts when Fran motions her to stay put.

FRAN

(smiles viciously)

Coming from you, I'll take that as a compliment...

Mr. Nichols, who has been watching the whole thing unfold, leans forward and takes the contract in his hands.

NICHOLS

Mr Scott...In light of this new information, I think our business dealings here are at an end...

Slowly and deliberately, he tears up the contract.

NICHOLS

Good day...

David, trying to keep his dignity, moves away from the piano and towards the door, but he stops and turns back to them.

DAVID

(to all)

You think you're all so smart...

(to Paul)

Enjoy fame and fortune Paul, for awhile... I've still got options...

FRAN

Oh, that's right...I almost forgot...I'm glad you reminded me... I have something for you.

She crosses over to the briefcase during her dialogue and pulls out a six by nine manila envelope and takes it over to David, handing it to him.

DAVID
(Suspicious)
What's this?

FRAN
Something I picked up from Tommy....

David opens it and looks inside. With a look of disgust, he turns the envelope upside down and little pieces of DVD fall out and onto the floor.

FRAN
Somehow I accidentally dropped it into my cross-cut shredder...Makes lovely confetti, don't you think...?

PAUL
What is that...?

FRAN
David recorded the two of you in his condo and then gave the DVD to Tommy...

In a flash, Paul launches himself at David, crashes into him and sends him sprawling. Everybody reacts. Paul picks David up by the front of his shirt, hauls him up.

PAUL
(furious)
You slimy son of a bitch!!!

He pulls back his hand in order to land a blow, but Fran grabs his arm before he can let it fly, preventing him.

FRAN
Paul no!...Remember your hands...It's not worth it...Let him go.

Paul releases David. Fran moves in between them.

FRAN
That's better... I can't have you risk breaking any fingers...Mr. N would never forgive me.

In a quick motion, she hauls off and lands a right hook squarely on David's jaw, knocking him to the floor. Julie smiles. Nichols and Terrence grimace. Fran shakes her hand to get the feeling back. That had to hurt.

David, nursing a cut lip, finds it wiser to stay on the floor.

FRAN

I, on the other hand have no such restrictions...

(to Paul)

You didn't know anything about the recording, did you..?

Paul shakes his head.

Fran looks over at Julie, who moves around and pulls out a tri-fold document from the inside pocket of her suit and moves over to David, dropping the document on his chest.

JULIE

(to David)

Consider yourself served Mr. Scott...there are laws about videotaping someone without their knowledge and consent... especially if used for blackmail. In five minutes there'll be a team searching your condo and confiscating all your recordings and equipment...

(loudly)

Gentlemen, you can come in now!!

The door to the hallway opens and two uniformed POLICE OFFICERS enter.

JULIE

Would you please escort Mr. Scott to the nearest police station...?

(to David)

Being an Assistant DA does have it's perks. Oh, and by the way, after you're booked for your first group of charges... the two of us will sit down and discuss plagiarism... You signed a legal release for a piece of music you didn't write.

One of the officers takes out his handcuffs while Julie is talking, and cuffs David after the other officer stands David up. Quietly, they lead David out and close the door.

Fran gives out a big sigh of relief. Julie goes over and kisses her and then examines her hand and then kisses it. Mr. Nichols comes around from behind the table and over to Fran, as does Terrence.

NICHOLS

Nice right hook...

FRAN

All in a day's work. You know how it is, other duties as required.

TERRENCE

Good going girl.... a worthy display.

Fran bows to him, smiling...

PAUL

(concerned)

Fran, if David didn't write this song... Do you know who did?

FRAN

(nods)

He's waiting for you in Terrence's office... We were afraid that if David saw him, he would have run.

PAUL

So this was all a set up?

JULIE

For David, yes. We know he lied to you about writing that song, but we had to make sure you didn't know anything about him recording you.

PAUL

Thanks for destroying the disc by the way...

FRAN

No problem...

(beat. indicates office)

You should go in and see him...

Paul looks over at the door to Terrence's office. Nichols turns to Terrence.

NICHOLS

Terrence, how about I treat you to a cup of coffee?

TERRENCE

Sounds good...

JULIE

(to Fran)

And we need to get some ice on that hand of yours.

PAUL

Wait a minute, you just can't abandon me like this...

NICHOLS

(smiles at Paul)

Mr. Geller, this is something that the two of you need to work out yourselves.

FRAN

Don't worry Paul, he's really very nice. You two will have a lot to talk about.

Fran, Julie, Terrence and Mr. Nichols move to the door. Nichols, Julie, and Terrence go out the door. Fran stays behind for a moment.

FRAN

Go on... I'll talk to you later.

Fran goes out the door, leaving Paul alone. He turns and walks towards the door to Terrence's office.

INT. TERRENCE'S OFFICE

A rather sparse but comfortable office. The desk with a executive style chair is the biggest thing in the office. A chair is in front of the desk and a small couch is against one wall, with a couple file cabinets against another wall.

On the desk is a computer monitor and a large bouquet of roses in a vase. The chair behind the desk faces away from the door, but someone is sitting in it.

The door opens and Paul comes in, rather nervously and closes the door behind him. He goes and stands behind the chair in front of the desk. His eyes go to the desk, the chair and then the roses. He stands there for a moment and clears his throat.

PAUL

Excuse me...

The chair turns around, revealing a smiling Mark. Paul's eyes go wide with surprise and disbelief.

PAUL

Mark...?

MARK

Hi...

PAUL

What are you... You wrote 'Standing here'?

Mark nods. He stands and starts moving from behind the desk while Paul talks, towards Paul.

PAUL

Why... why didn't you tell me you wrote music?

MARK

I d..don't know... I g..guess I
d..didn't t..think it was g..good
enough.

PAUL

Good enough...? It's a beautiful
song... I love playing it...

MARK

T..that's good, b..because I wrote
it for you...

PAUL

For me?

Mark nods.

PAUL

Mark, after everything I've done, I
don't deserve it...

(beat)

I'm so sorry...about everything...
What I put you through... I never
wanted you to get hurt...I guess I
really messed things up, didn't I?

MARK

But you t..tried to t..tell me, the
night of the concert, remember?

PAUL

I know, but that's no excuse. I
fell for David's whole line of
bullshit. He couldn't have written
anything like that song. I should
have known that, but all I could see
was the fame it would bring me. He
had me totally fooled...

MARK

Me t..too you k..know, so t..that's
something else we have in common. I
can't blame you for t..that... I
f..fell for it t..too.

PAUL

Mark, I...

MARK

(interrupting)

No....It's my t..turn.

Mark takes Paul's hands.

MARK

I wrote the song b..because for the
first t..time someone actually wanted

MARK (CONT'D)

to b..be with me...the first t..time.
It d..didn't matter how I looked, or
t..talked... I felt worth something.
I never had t..that before I met
you. Writing t..that song f..for
you was a p..pretty small g..gift
compared t..to what you've g..given
me.

Paul, lowers his head as if ashamed. Seeing this, Mark puts his hand under Paul's chin and lifts it so that the two of them are looking into each others eyes.

Mark leans in and kisses him gently and Paul responds. After a moment, they part but are still close together. Mark is rather breathless and a little flustered, as is Paul.

PAUL

The roses are beautiful....

MARK

I know how you f..feel about
t..them... and I t..thought that
t..this was...

PAUL

(weakly smiles)
A special occasion...?

MARK

(Nods. Tenderly)
I hope so...

The two of them kiss again, this time more deeply and with much more urgency. After some moments, they part again, still holding onto each other. Paul smiles at Mark, stroking his cheek.

PAUL

What do you say to starting over...?
Put all this stuff behind us... What
do you think?

Mark nods. Paul moves away slightly from Mark and puts out his hand. Mark smiles and shakes it.

PAUL

Hi, I'm Paul Geller...

MARK

Nice t..to meet you, I'm Mark
Cyrano...

PAUL

(repeats)
Cyrano...?

PAUL (CONT'D)
 (thinks a moment)
 Like in the book...the guy with the
 big nose?

Mark nods

PAUL
 You never told me your last name.

MARK
 You never asked....

Paul puts his hand on Mark's chin and examines his nose with a scientific eye. This both amuses and confuses Mark.

MARK
 What are you d..doing?

PAUL
 Just checking....No, the nose looks
 pretty normal to me...

MARK
 T..thank you...

PAUL
 (teasing)
 Still, it does make me wonder....

MARK
 About w..what...?

PAUL
 Well...like if there's anything else
 overly large I should be concerned
 about...

Paul smiles wickedly. Mark gets the joke, and smiles back just as wickedly. Mark moves his hand to the back of Paul's head, and pulls him close.

MARK
 (whispering)
 You'll have t..to find that out on
 your own...

PAUL
 (whispering as well)
 Oh good...

Mark pulls Paul in for another kiss. They kiss and embrace passionately as we...

FADE OUT: