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*This play is dedicated to anyone who  
still has a dream after thirty.*

## Cast of Characters

PAULIE "THE PUG," 32. A MMA fighter with big dreams.

MARY, 32. Paulie's wife.

JOEY, 25. Mary's little brother. A mailman.

PENNY, 25. Paulie's little sister. A country/western singer.

OLGA, 30. Penny's girlfriend. A keyboardist.

SONNY, 35. Flossie's other uncle.

SALLY, 32. Flossie's uncle.

FLOSSIE, 18 (?). Joey's young conquest.

PETIE "THE PIT," 32. Mary's ex-husband. A war veteran.

STEVIE, 23. Petie's gay male nurse.

LARRY "THE LAB", 32. A gentleman with a family.

## Setting

The action takes place in Mary, Paulie and Joey's 2 bedroom home in Brooklyn's Coney Island.

## Acknowledgments

*Happy in the Poorhouse* was first performed by The Amoralists from March 11-April 26 at Theatre 80 in New York City with the following cast and crew:

MARY . . . . . Sarah Lemp  
PAULIE "THE PUG" . . . . . James Kautz  
JOEY . . . . . Matthew Pilienci  
PENNY . . . . . Rochelle Mikulich  
OLGA . . . . . Selene Beretta  
SONNY . . . . . Matt Fraley  
SALLY . . . . . Mark Riccadonna  
FLOSSIE . . . . . Meghan Ritchie  
PETIE "THE PIT" . . . . . William Apps  
STEVIE . . . . . Nick Lawson  
LARRY "THE LAB" . . . . . Patrick McDaniel  
Director . . . . . Derek Ahonen  
Assistant Director . . . . . Dan Lockhart  
Production Stage Manager . . . . . Judy Merrick

## Acknowledgments (continued)

Set Design.....	Alfred Schatz
Fight Choreographer .....	Alfred Schatz
Lighting Design.....	Jeremy Pape
Costume Design .....	Ricky Lang
Sound Design.....	The Hernandez Brothers
Spiritual Advisor.....	Larry Cobra

All production groups performing this play are required to include the following credits on the title page of every program:

New York City premiere production presented by The Amoralists.

### Production Note

It's important that the performances in this piece are absolutely sincere. The comedy, anguish, and madness of the piece will come from sincerity. Any shade of irony will kill *Happy in the Poorhouse*.

#### *A Note on Olga*

Olga speaks in a thick German accent and should look intimidating.

#### *A Note on Stevie*

Stevie should be cast with a lanky white male who can channel a big black woman from New Orleans. All of the characters should feel larger than life in the most honest way possible.

# HAPPY IN THE POORHOUSE

by Derek Ahonen

## ACT I

*(Lights up on Paulie and Mary's two-bedroom apartment in Brooklyn's Coney Island. The home is half set up for a "Welcome home" party. It is filled with stereotypical party decorations. Unpainted spackled holes cover the apartment walls. A punching bag hangs in the corner with MMA gear below it. A beat up couch sits center stage. A kitchen with a sink, stove, refrigerator, and kitchen table sit on stage left. A door leading to the bathroom is behind the kitchen. A window looking out on the street is in the back of the apartment near the punching bag. The whole apartment should feel as though it's from the 1950s.)*

*(PAULIE, a well built, but diminutive MMA fighter, sits on the couch weeping. He is bruised and cut all over his body from a competitive fight the previous night. MARY enters from the bedroom and sets up the remainder of the decorations in a fit of rage.)*

**MARY.** Stop crying, pussy!

*(PAULIE punches his thigh through tears.)*

**PAULIE.** I love you!

**MARY.** Your kinda love is for children!

*(PAULIE punches his thigh through tears.)*

**MARY.** Quit punching your thighs! They're your Achilles heels!

*(PAULIE stands up and punches a hole through the wall.)*

**MARY.** Get the spackle.

*(PAULIE grabs the spackle from a familiar spot. PAULIE spackles the hole.)*

**PAULIE.** I love you.

**MARY.** What did I say?

**PAULIE.** I love you.

**MARY.** Paulie!

**PAULIE.** I love you.

**MARY.** *(Sighs.)* ...Yeah?

**PAULIE.** (*While spackling:*) I love you more than my mother, my father, my sister, my old Terrier Tiny Tim... I love you more than cage fighting, more than money, more than anything, Mary.

**MARY.** (*Sighs.*) ...I know you do, Paulie.

(*A moment. MARY watches PAULIE spackle the wall.*)

**MARY.** Here...let me spackle...you're in pain. Stay off your feet, honey.

**PAULIE.** I'll spackle.

**MARY.** It was my fault you punched the wall.

**PAULIE.** When I break something...I fix it.

**MARY.** You can help me hang the "Welcome Home" banner.

**PAULIE.** I'm not touching that.

**MARY.** Why?

**PAULIE.** You know why.

**MARY.** Paulie, there ain't no point in closing your eyes and praying for a rainbow... He's gonna be here soon. *The damn party's for him to begin with.* What difference does it make if you touch a stupid banner?

**PAULIE.** I ain't touching it. (*A moment.*) How'd he sound on the phone?

**MARY.** Like he sounds.

**PAULIE.** Tougher or softer than the old days?

**MARY.** I don't know, Paulie... he wasn't talking much and I don't want to be nothing but gentle to him. Poor guy gets his divorce papers handed to him while he's fighting a war...

**PAULIE.** Is he glad to be back?

**MARY.** Wouldn't you be?

**PAULIE.** Did he say he *wanted* to fight me?

**MARY.** No.

**PAULIE.** Do you think he'll *try* to fight me?

**MARY.** Yes.

**PAULIE.** Then why are we throwing him a party?

**MARY.** Because we both love him!

**PAULIE.** (*A moment.*) I love you.

**MARY.** (*A moment.*) I love you too.

**PAULIE.** Do you love him more?

**MARY.** *(A moment.)* What time does your sister get in?

**PAULIE.** Penny called when you were at the store. She's just outside the city.

**MARY.** *(Chuckling;)* I can't wait to see my brother's reaction when he sees your sister. Joey's gonna kill us for not giving him time to take all those photos of her off his wall.

**PAULIE.** *Mary...* Do you love him more?

**MARY.** No.

**PAULIE.** Would you've divorced him if he didn't go to the desert?

**MARY.** No.

**PAULIE.** So you'd still be with him?

**MARY.** Yes.

**PAULIE.** And not with me?

**MARY.** Yes.

**PAULIE.** *(A moment.)* Yeah... I can't wait for Joey to see Penny.

*(The phone rings. MARY answers it.)*

**MARY.** Hello? *(A moment.)* Hello? Petie? Anyone there? *(A moment.)* Goodbye.

**PAULIE.** *(To himself;)* I'm a good guy. I'm a good guy. I'm a good guy.

*(MARY hangs up the phone. She looks at her husband spackling. She walks up behind him and wraps her arms around his chest. She kisses the back of his neck. PAULIE turns around and kisses his wife passionately.)*

**MARY.** You're a good guy, Paulie...a great guy.

*(MARY pulls PAULIE to the couch. He falls on top of her.)*

**MARY.** Please, Paulie.

**PAULIE.** I love you.

**MARY.** Show me.

*(MARY takes PAULIE's hand and places it on her breast. PAULIE slides it off.)*

**MARY.** Make love to me. Please...make love to your wife. I can feel you want to.

**PAULIE.** I do.

**MARY.** You thinking about someone else when you kiss me?

**PAULIE.** No.

**MARY.** You cheating on me?

**PAULIE.** Never.

**MARY.** Then take off my clothes and be with me. Please...

**PAULIE.** Mary...

**MARY.** Please Paulie...I'd jump in front of a train for you.

**PAULIE.** Don't do that.

**MARY.** I'll do anything you tell me to do. *(Through tears:)* Please, Paulie... I need to feel close to you...*before he gets here.*

*(MARY takes his hand and places it on her breast.)*

*(PAULIE kisses her and slides his hand off.)*

*(MARY pushes PAULIE off of her and exits into her bedroom.)*

**MARY.** Fruitcake!

**PAULIE.** I love you!

**MARY.** *(Off-stage:)* You're a fruitcake!

**PAULIE.** I aint!

**MARY.** *(Off-stage:)* Prove to me you aint!

*(PAULIE punches a new hole in the wall.)*

**MARY.** *(Reentering:)* What do any of these holes prove, Paulie?

**PAULIE.** That I'm a man!

**MARY.** *Those holes don't prove you're a man, this hole does!*

**PAULIE.** *(Limping away from her:)* Don't talk that way about your body!

**MARY.** What do you think I am...a nun?

**PAULIE.** No!

**MARY.** I ain't no whore neither, Paulie! This ain't our first date at the Red Lobster. I been married to you for eight friggin months and you still wont touch me.

**PAULIE.** I touch you.

**MARY.** You poke me with your finger like a palsy patient.

**PAULIE.** Those are love pokes!

**MARY.** You poke me like we used to poke the guinea frogs in science class!

**PAULIE.** It's not time yet!

**MARY.** When's the right time? When we're strappin Depends to each other's hoogies?

**PAULIE.** Soon!

**MARY.** I waited till we got married, Paulie. I never waited with nobody...

**PAULIE.** Don't remind me!

**MARY.** But I waited with you. I told myself...he ain't no fruitcake.

**PAULIE.** I'm a beefcake.

**MARY.** He's been with plenty of women...

**PAULIE.** I have!

**MARY.** He's just trying to make me feel unique.

**PAULIE.** You got it!

**MARY.** But were married now! You could rape me up the coolie and I'd still know you love me.

**PAULIE.** I'd never disrespect you like that!

**MARY.** It ain't disrespect if I'm begging for it!

**PAULIE.** Never beg a man for nothin!

**MARY.** *Unbelievable...* It's like hopping around the carousel backwards trying to make sense of your logic.

*(MARY punches the punching bag. A moment. MARY crosses to PAULIE and punches his arm.)*

**MARY.** That hurt?

**PAULIE.** Don't be a meany.

**MARY.** *(Punching again:)* That feel good?

**PAULIE.** It don't.

**MARY.** *(Still punching:)* Pretend I'm one of them sweaty, half-naked chumps wrestling round the cage with ya. This get you going? Pretend I'm dripping with man juice and get me to submit!

**PAULIE.** No!

**MARY.** C'mon! Eye gouge me!

**PAULIE.** Eye gouging ain't allowed.

**MARY.** I wanna feel you! I need to feel close to you!

*(MARY falls into PAULIE's arms weeping.)*

**PAULIE.** Mary... I can't do it, sweetheart. I ain't got no thoughts about no one else. Not girls, not guys...not nothin. Just my Mary.

**MARY.** I don't understand you.

**PAULIE.** You know me better than anybody.

**MARY.** What am I doing wrong?

**PAULIE.** Nothing.

**MARY.** You ain't attracted to me?

**PAULIE.** You're the best looking babe on the boardwalk.

**MARY.** Do I smell bad?

**PAULIE.** (*Tender:*) You smell like a baby duck kissing my heart.

**MARY.** Then what is it?

**PAULIE.** You know when you asked me if I was thinking about you when I was kissing you and you was making me grab you over there?

**MARY.** Yeah?

**PAULIE.** Well I am thinking of you. But it's like... (*Sighs.*) ...it's like I'm thinking of you when we was kids. Back when we was building them forts and hiding from them imaginary bad guys. I'm seeing you at six...skipping around on the pogo stick across the street. That's when I first knew I loved you...*droopin dresses and braided braids.* I know you're a woman now and you got woman...*body...needs.* I know...but just give me some time. I'm sure this is just some trick or treat my brain is cheap shotin me with. Soon enough it'll pass and then I'll see you like I need to see you.

**MARY.** How you need to see me?

**PAULIE.** As a girl...a *grown girl*...that I can do that to.

**MARY.** How did you see the other girls you did that to?

**PAULIE.** As girls you do that to.

**MARY.** Honey...you gotta stop thinking that you're doing something *to* me, but that you're doing something *with* me.

**PAULIE.** I'm working on thinking thoughts like that.

**MARY.** It's just like when we was little in them forts...we're a couple of teammates.

**PAULIE.** My entire life I grew up thinking that women hated sex and that they only did it to keep a man happy. And anyone who does something they don't like to make someone happy is a *loser*. And anyone who gets happy from someone doing something they

don't like is a bad guy. I just don't want to feel like a bad guy dripping all that sweat on your goosebumped...things.

**MARY.** You're not, baby...you're the hero...*my hero*. You're only the bad guy if you *don't* drip that sweat... Because then my body starts thinking crazy thoughts 'bout why you don't want it. Paulie...*I need it*. I need it all the time...*like calcium*.

**PAULIE.** Don't talk dirty.

**MARY.** I'm talking biological.

**PAULIE.** That's better!

**MARY.** You know... If I can't get it from you I'll be forced to go somewhere else.

**PAULIE.** You'll get it from me. *I swear...You'll get it from me.*

**MARY.** The only reason I don't wander around with the lustful eyes is because I know it will destroy your sad heart and I'm a good person who don't want to see your cookies crumble down the fire escape.

**PAULIE.** Thank you.

**MARY.** But I can't take it no more...especially with Petie coming back. I don't know if I'll be able to control myself. I might just pounce him out of pure tiger lady recklessness.

**PAULIE.** I strangle him!

**MARY.** You can't beat Petie in a fight!

**PAULIE.** He hasn't fought in years!

**MARY.** He's been fighting a goddamn war!

**PAULIE.** That don't mean he's *roundhouse kicking* the Taliban!

**MARY.** That ain't even what I'm trying to say. (*Pulling out her hair:*) I mean how do you expect us to have kids, Paulie?

**PAULIE.** I love kids.

**MARY.** Well how do you plan on making one...screwing the stork?

**PAULIE.** (*Laughing:*) Birds don't screw.

**MARY.** Love and sex ain't two differentiating things. They're one and the same thing. You show me you love me by making love with me.

**PAULIE.** I show you I love you by treating you good.

**MARY.** I don't want you to spend money we don't have on things I don't need.

**PAULIE.** You said you loved those Mr. Potato Heads!

**MARY.** We're not ten years old!

**PAULIE.** But that's how I see us!

**MARY.** Ugh!

*(MARY steps on a stool and begins to hang the banner. The banner is a homemade banner that reads "WELCOME BACK FROM OVER THERE, PETIE!")*

Tacks!

**PAULIE.** What?

**MARY.** Hand me the friggin tacks, Paulie.

*(PAULIE grabs a little box of tacks and begins handing them to MARY when she throws out her hand.)*

**PAULIE.** I've loved you so long in my heart. Just give my body some time to adjust.

**MARY.** I know you love me, Paulie, that's why I gave you the loan to buy me the ring.

**PAULIE.** I would always watch you go out with those other guys who would treat you bad.

**MARY.** I'd treat *them* bad.

**PAULIE.** Only because they'd treat *you* bad. You'd weep on me and I'd say to myself... "I'm gonna treat her right. Just give me a chance dear Lord and I'll do her right."

**MARY.** Ha!

**PAULIE.** Then I see you fall hard for my best friend, Petie... A guy you wouldn't even know existed unless my shoulder was there for you to be crying on. I felt betrayed by the both of yous. But I tell my jealous heart, "Don't be jealous." I tell my enraged spirit, "Don't be enraged." Let them be in love. Let them both look at me as the best friend forever. Cause what I got inside is pure and ten nuclear detonations couldn't melt away the innocence I feel towards you. And when I go to sleep at night I can smile to the floating sheep because I got a love that can never be mocked.

*(MARY finishes hanging the banner and steps down from the stool.)*

**MARY.** What does that have to do with you screwing me?

**PAULIE.** Don't use that word!

**MARY.** Want me to use the other one?

**PAULIE.** Jesus!

**MARY.** So what's your point with all this waxing poetry, Paulie?

**PAULIE.** My point is...

**MARY.** Yeah?

**PAULIE.** That I love you.

**MARY.** I should have never let you convince me into divorcing Petie. *(A moment.)* He's gonna be here soon. He's very disappointed in us. Especially you, Paulie.

**PAULIE.** You think he's coming to steal you back?

**MARY.** I *know* he is. I just hope he's not successful.

*(JOEY enters grandly through the front door. He wears his mailman uniform with mailman shorts and cap. He just got off of work. He is holding a cake he picked up for the party.)*

**JOEY.** Chalk another one up for Joey from Coney! *(Slams the door behind him.)* There is a God and today he squeezed his asshole tight and stopped shitting on Joey! Oh thank you my friend in the sky! Thank you for not abandoning me when I was ten and offered blind Bobby twenty bucks to drink a glass of his own piss and then when he did I laughed and told him I was broke. Thank you for having my back all the times I'd shove Mary's troll dolls in my arm pits and laugh at her when she'd kiss them later. Thank you for believing in me whenever I'd throw my fastball at that freckled kid who caught leukemia's head just so I could hear his lisping Dad stand up and scream, *(Lisping:)* "Hey blue, we don't have to take this sit *(Trying to say shit.)*, If cancer's not gonna bring down my boy, I sure as hell ain't gonna let that douchbag from Mermaid Avenue take him out!" *(Laughing:)* Who calls a kid a douchbag? *(Laughs:)* Thank you, thank you and thank you sweet Lordy. I don't deserve this, but I'll take it with gratitude. *(A reflective, celebratory moment.)* I did it guys. I finally put the Peter McArthur to it.

**MARY.** *(Flipping out:)* What the hell you do Joey? You go on like a retard...yappin and yappin and yappin. Just tell us what you did you long winded prick!

*(MARY storms into the bathroom to clean furiously.)*

**JOEY.** This cat captured his mouse. His sweet little untouched 18-year-old mouse... *My Penny substitute.*

**PAULIE.** Watch it.

**JOEY.** What I did today was legal, consensual and 100 percent grade-A pleasurable. Life without limits, baby! You remember little Flossie from down the block...*years ago...*the little sweet thing with

the nipples neck and angry ankles? Didn't speak too much cause she was Terrible Tony's kid...

**PAULIE.** Tony did terrible things.

**JOEY.** Hence da name. Well anyway, about seven years ago, he had to pick up with little eleven-year-old Flossie and shake because some of those terrible things had caught up with him. So a couple years back, little Flossie turns up in the ghetto with the shines on my mail route. Except she's not little no more...she's big. And when I say big, Paulie, I mean... (*He gives PAULIE a thumbs up and a wink.*) ...bazoons busting...she's sixteen, baby.

**MARY.** (*Off-stage:*) So you do her?

**JOEY.** Easy...wait...I mean, hang on...we're two years ago right now and she's sixteen at this point and I ain't no pervert. Although...you know, what difference does it make if I do a kid or two? We're family and a family can tell each other anything. Anyone in this room can murder someone and we'd all lie under the oath, right? You bet your goddamn ass I'm right. Besides what's the big deal about sixteen, I mean how old were you when you first took it, Mar...thirteen, fourteen? Thirteen, right? Weren't you thirteen when you lost it?

**MARY.** (*Off-stage:*) Get on with the story, Joey.

**JOEY.** To the black guy with the white voice. What was his name?

**MARY.** Richard.

**JOEY.** Yeah...Richard. *Dick.* And I bet he had one too...*oh!*

(*PAULIE punches a hole in the wall.*)

**JOEY.** Now what was I saying before? Oh yeah...so Flossie turns up on my route a few years back living with Grandma.

**MARY.** (*Off-stage:*) No Tony?

**JOEY.** No. I allegedly heard that T-squared got whacked out by those Russians near the city... (*Grabs his crotch.*) ...so I heard. So everyday for two years, I drop the mail off at Grandma's place and little Flossie waits for me at her door. And everyday me a Flossie flirt...and not with our words, but with our cosmic energies. *She* knows I want her and *I* know that she's trusting me to be Charles in charge since I'm the adult. And grandma kinda helps the tension by being like my wing-man...saying things like, (*In an immigrant accent:*) "Hey Joey...when you gonna take my Flossie out on a date?" And I say, "In two years Grandma." Then a year goes by and I say, "In one year Grandma." And then six months go by and grandma goes, "I ain't gonna call the cops, take little Flossie out." And I says, "In six months Grandma...there's laws for a reason." Then grandma

calls me a half-a-scevatz and I laugh at grandma and say, "Grandma, you old comedian." Ha. That grandma...she's a...you know... nobody like that grandma. So to make a long story short...

**MARY.** (*Reentering and continuing to clean:*) Or a short story long.

**JOEY.** So I'm dropping off the mail today and Flossie opens the door with a smile. And I says, "Where's grandma?" And she says, "Grandma just died." And I says, "No! Not Grandma." And then she grabs my arm and pulls me in Grandma's home. "Today's my eighteenth birthday," she whispers. Then I whisper, "Can I finally ask you out on a date?" And she says, "Yes." And before I can officially ask her out on a date, she throws me on grandma's plastic covered couch and strips down to da poose. Then I nailed her... *I nailed little Flossie...* Flossie got nailed.

**MARY.** What happened to Grandma?

**JOEY.** She was in her bed when I left. Asleep...well...you know... (*Does a sign of the cross.*) ...permanently asleep. Flossie was waiting for me to come before she called the ambulance.

**MARY.** What'd you do?

**JOEY.** I gave Flossie a kiss on the cheek, finished my route, and now I'm ready for Petie's party baby! Toss me a beer... Joey's thirsty!

(*PAULIE tosses JOEY a beer.*)

**JOEY.** You guys excited for this shit tonight?

**MARY.** Paulie still won't touch me.

**JOEY.** The guy's having a rough time of it, sis...it happens.

**MARY.** It ever happen to you?

**JOEY.** Hells no!

**MARY.** It never happened to Petie either.

**JOEY.** Don't be bringing up your ex man in front of your new man, when your new man is throwing your ex man a "Welcome Back From Iraq" party.

**PAULIE.** Afghanistan.

**JOEY.** Potato potato.

**MARY.** Sorry, Paulie.

**JOEY.** See...that's why you gotta love my sister. She always knows how to apologize.

(*JOEY kicks his feet up and enjoys the first sip of his beer.*)

**JOEY.** (*Refreshed.*) Ah! Hey Paulie...you do some more wall decorating with your fist?

**PAULIE.** Yeah.

**MARY.** I'm running to the store for a pack of Pall Malls. You need anything?

**JOEY.** Don't smoke, Mary. That's what did Grandma in.

**MARY.** Don't tell me what to do! I'm a mess of stress.

**JOEY.** Why? You nervous to be seeing Petie?

**MARY.** What do you think?

**JOEY.** Don't be. Petie's reasonable. I'm sure he understands how lonely you were when he went away to fight them cab drivers. He gotta know that a woman needs a warm bed with a cold man to keep her from cutting her wrists.

(*PAULIE punches a hole in the wall.*)

**MARY.** I'll tell you what...

**JOEY.** What you got?

**MARY.** I'll quit smoking this second for infinity if Paulie takes me into our bedroom and beds me.

(*A moment. They all look at each other with negotiating eyes.*)

**JOEY.** You could save her life, Paulie.

**PAULIE.** (*A moment.*) Pick up one of those banana protein drinks I like.

(*MARY exits with disgust.*)

**PAULIE.** So you like this Flossie?

(*PAULIE limps quickly to the window to watch MARY walk down the street.*)

**JOEY.** Who?

**PAULIE.** The girl on your mail route.

**JOEY.** There's lots of girls on my mail route... *And I gave em all hog hayrides, son.*

**PAULIE.** No...I mean...you got gentle feelings for Flossie?

**JOEY.** Not like I do for your sister...but I figure to push up in Flossie's Flossie a few more times.

**PAULIE.** What's she like? Kind?

**JOEY.** You know...Flossie don't talk much...aint got a personality worth writing home about. But she is young. Young and less damaged than the rest of the broads I bang. There's a lot to be said about women that don't know that they're not special. Once a woman starts thinking she's not special, they rely on a man to prove to them that they are. And no man can adequately accomplish that. Nobody is much different than anyone else up in this thing. Except women don't want to believe that. *Men* love it when they meet someone just like them. "Hey man, you got the same clothes as me...I like the way you think." But women see someone like them and they feel threatened and need a *man* to make them feel like they're a one of a kind model. And they're not. There's two types of people in this world, Paulie. Those who think they're special and...*hey*... Let me ask you something... Do I sound like a *misogynist*?

**PAULIE.** A what?

**JOEY.** A *mis-o-gy-nist*. It's like a man who thinks men are packing and women ain't nothing but a few holes that either smell bad or yell at you.

**PAULIE.** (*A moment.*) Sometimes.

**JOEY.** I do?

**PAULIE.** That's alright. You'll see things differently when you hit thirty.

**JOEY.** I don't mean to sound like a misogynist, because I think women are a beautiful piece of blue sky. *I'm on the women's side of the quotation in life.* I feel bad for them having to go through this world they way it is...Puerto Rican Pepe's whistling at em...having to sit on diseased shitters when then piss in public...

**PAULIE.** They squat in public.

**JOEY.** *They squat?*

**PAULIE.** Strong thighs. (*An awkward moment.*) So are you gonna see Flossie again?

**JOEY.** On my routes.

**PAULIE.** No...like...take her out on that date?

**JOEY.** Paulie, you don't milk the cow once you already got the eggs. And besides...*I'm the mailman.*

**PAULIE.** What's that mean?

**JOEY.** It means I'm the mailman...*I fuck.*

**PAULIE.** Oh.

**JOEY.** What's with you, bro? You don't like my sister's body?

**PAULIE.** I love your sister's body.

**JOEY.** You got an addiction to porn or something?

**PAULIE.** What?

**JOEY.** You know...a lot of people who watch porn have a hard time sticking it in their wife.

**PAULIE.** Why?

**JOEY.** Cause like...in porn...they see these women going, "I gotta serve you, I gotta serve you...hit me in the face with it...money shot, money shot... Give me the hog bad boy." They beg for it in porn and in real life it ain't like that once you get married. So a lot of husbands cant do their wives because their wives don't beg.

**PAULIE.** That's not the problem.

**JOEY.** Really? Mary begs? What a tramp.

**PAULIE.** Joey!

**JOEY.** Lighten up! (*A moment.*) Hey...you kick the crap outa that Samoan last night?

**PAULIE.** I won.

**JOEY.** (*Standing up and throwing a kick to the air:*) That's what I'm talking about, son! Booya! Hey, for Christmas this year, how bout you take me to the bar, let me get all liquored up and start running my mouth off to the biggest sonofabitch in there. *Please, Paulie!*

**PAULIE.** That would be an abuse of my training.

**JOEY.** And trying to make money in the cage aint?

**PAULIE.** (*Putting JOEY in a playful headlock:*) You fight your own fights, Joey.

**JOEY.** I'm not a fighter...I'm a *player*.

**PAULIE.** Then don't get liquored up and run your mouth off to tough guys.

**JOEY.** No, son...I gotta run my mouth. It's in my blood son...it's in my blood. Shit...looks like that Samoan got some good ones in on ya.

**PAULIE.** He was good.

**JOEY.** Goddamn Samoans. (*A beat.*) You're gonna make it Paulie.

**PAULIE.** Thanks, Joey.

**JOEY.** I one thousand percent believe it. So what's up son? If Mary begs you for it...

**PAULIE.** I don't watch porn!

**JOEY.** Is there something wrong with the hog...*physically*? Can you only give her the soft serve?

**PAULIE.** The soft serve?

**JOEY.** Yeah...the soft serve, son...*soft serve*. It's where you gotta tie a popsicle stick to the flaccid hog before the penne-ala-tration.

**PAULIE.** No...I don't do that.

**JOEY.** I don't get it then. Growing up, I used to hear all these legendary stories about you and Petie in high school, taking home six different black girls and putting em all on the rotisserie.

**PAULIE.** (*Smiling:*) We did.

**JOEY.** I heard that the hookers would pay *you* the money.

**PAULIE.** (*Laughing:*) That was Petie...and the hooker was a transvestite.

**JOEY.** Really? Shit...did he still do her? The old, "Close your eyes a mouths a mouth" rule? (*Laughs heavily.*)

**PAULIE.** That scumbag, Petie broke his jaw and stabbed him in the bladder...*animal*.

**JOEY.** Did he survive?

**PAULIE.** Yeah. Actually, in the long run it helped him. Gay Gary...*the transvestite*...got out of the hospital and stopped breaking his parents' heart with his freakiness. Now he runs a miniature golf course upstate with his wife and kids.

**JOEY.** So a happy ending. (*A moment.*) What was I saying earlier?

**PAULIE.** Me and Petie being baddasses.

**JOEY.** Yeah...you were baddasses man...infamous for all the trains you'd run. (*Doing the 'train conductor':*) "Hoo Hoo!"

**PAULIE.** We had great times in high school.

**JOEY.** So what happened then, Hefner?

**PAULIE.** Petie married Mary. Mary married me.

**JOEY.** Marriage is for fags. (*A moment.*) Can't wait to see Petie, man. You know he's a war hero.

**PAULIE.** I know.

**JOEY.** They gave him some beating heart medal. I wonder if he got any action over there.

**PAULIE.** He was in an intense battle.

**JOEY.** No, Paulie. I mean like, "action." Pussy, son...*pussy*.

**PAULIE.** Knowing Petie...he got whatever he could.

**JOEY.** Yeah...I bet he did, but it probably wasn't the kind of ass he wants to remember on Easter morning if you know what I mean. Yo, son...I saw some photos of our female soldiers...man, they're hideous, Paulie...*beastly*. They better all be "Dykes on Bikes" 'cause I wouldn't touch em with *your* foreskin. (*Ponders.*) Although...I bet when you get over there, it's like prison...everything starts looking good. Even them sand people. (*Laughs. A moment.*) I gotta drop a loose deuce.

(*JOEY walks to the bathroom.*)

Oh, damn...I forgot to tell you. I heard your sister on the computer radio last night.

**PAULIE.** (*Smiling big:*) That's my girl. *That's my girl!*

**JOEY.** Yeah, it was on one of those country/western interweb stations. Not bad for a little Italian girl from Coney.

**PAULIE.** It's taken her five years but I guess them hicks down there are finally taking her seriously. How'd she sound?

**JOEY.** Strong...like a strong woman. *Confidant*. One day, Paulie...*one day*...I'll work my magic on her and she'll be my wife.

**PAULIE.** You should do it.

**JOEY.** Watch me.

**PAULIE.** I plan on it.

**JOEY.** Yeah...well unless someone croaks when's the next time she's gonna come back to this dump of a neighborhood?

**PAULIE.** She's driving into the city now.

**JOEY.** What?

**PAULIE.** Yeah.

**JOEY.** *This* city?

**PAULIE.** Yeah.

**JOEY.** Today?

**PAULIE.** She wants to welcome Petie back.

**JOEY.** Why?

**PAULIE.** It seemed strange to me too. She don't come to my wedding, but she comes back for this guy? Who knows the minds of the women?

(MARY *reenters.*)

**JOEY.** Mary! Penny's coming!

(JOEY *rushes into the bathroom. He turns around and reenters.*)

I gotta take all the pictures of her off my bedroom wall! Why didn't you guys tell me? This could have been humiliating!

(JOEY *exits into his bedroom.*)

**MARY.** I thought we were gonna surprise him.

**PAULIE.** I messed up.

**MARY.** You think he's got a shot with her?

**PAULIE.** Don't know. She said she's bringing her "Significant other." She wants us to meet him. *(The telephone rings.)* Paulie. Who? Is this the same guy that's been calling the past few days? Yeah, well listen... I told you that she don't live here no more and I ain't seen her in five years. Well I know you're a big fan, I'm a big fan of Tony Bennett, but that don't mean I call his son up and try to track the old crooner down. Just buy her records and read the tabloids cause that's as close as you ever gonna get to my sister.

(PAULIE *hangs up the phone.*)

**MARY.** What was that?

**PAULIE.** Some asshole looking for my sister.

**MARY.** A stalker?

(MARY *and* PAULIE *run to each other and embrace with genuine joy.*)

**PAULIE.** I told you she'd make it!

**MARY.** What'd he want?

**PAULIE.** Wanted to know if she's here, but I ain't gonna give some unknown the classified information.

**MARY.** I wonder where she's staying? Big hotel you think?

**PAULIE.** Of course.

**MARY.** Remember to ask her about that thing we talked about.

**PAULIE.** Mary...

**MARY.** Paulie...We're broke. My unemployment's running out and you aint been able to get beyond an amateur undercard in all the years I know you. If Joey wasn't in the union, we'd be living like animals.

**PAULIE.** A grown man shouldn't ask his kid sister for money.

**MARY.** In times like this you throw everything you think you know out the window.

**PAULIE.** You don't throw codes of morals out the window when the sky turns gray.

**MARY.** Are your codes gonna keep the heat on this winter?

**PAULIE.** You play by the rules and pray for some luck.

**MARY.** Then give up your dream of making it to the UFC. You're thirty-two years old and you've watched hundreds of younger fighters pass you by. It's over...luck don't even know you exist.

**PAULIE.** You think I wanna bounce at the dive bars for chump change on weekends? Five times a night some drunken frat boy tries to boil my blood cause he thinks I'm too small to throw him out. I'm not thinking this is my paradise either, Mary. But I'm happy in the poorhouse cause the dream is worth the million little beatings I get for believing my life's worth a damn.

**MARY.** I know Paulie... I agree with you. That's why I'm telling you to keep your little dream and ask your sister for money.

**PAULIE.** Mary...

**MARY.** You're doing it! Who raised your sister after your parents had the accident? Who bought your sister her first guitar? Who gave that Coney Island Baby the money to get from here to Nashville in the first place? She owes you. And you owe me.

**PAULIE.** (*Under his breath:*) Jealous.

**MARY.** What?

**PAULIE.** Nothing.

**MARY.** What'd you say?

**PAULIE.** I said...*jealous*.

**MARY.** What you saying with saying that?

**PAULIE.** Just cause you give up on all your *flavor of the day* dreams don't mean you gotta bitch it up to everyone who still got high hopes for themselves.

**MARY.** You really saying this to me, Paulie?

**PAULIE.** What happened to your dream of being an actress? You ever once go on an audition? You ever once even take an acting class?

**MARY.** I got a book that said you gotta imagine your mom being murdered in a field of lilacs to cry...*it's stupid*.

**PAULIE.** What about your dream of writing them books for children?

**MARY.** I'm waiting to find an illustrator.

**PAULIE.** I introduced you to Jerry The Jew from Brighton Beach. He draws great drawings.

**MARY.** He paints the posters for your fights.

**PAULIE.** And he makes me look great!

**MARY.** It ain't exactly children material!

**PAULIE.** Then what about your dream of a career in designing fashion?

**MARY.** I never wanted a career in fashion design! Joey wanted me to do the fashion so I'd meet city girls for him!

**PAULIE.** I hate this country! It ain't no longer a country of dreamers who murder for beauty instead of power. This is a country of proud pawns with greedy fingers and phony smiles.

**MARY.** Quit making excuses for being broke!

**PAULIE.** I deal day in and day out with your constant self-unsatisfaction with yourself! If you can't find something to do with your life that makes it your own, fine. You and Joey can be working class nothing nobodies till the day you breathe the last breath. But my sister and me are fulfilling our destinies and all of Coney Island is gonna know we ain't no snails in the dirt.

*(A knock at the front door.)*

*(MARY crosses to the front door.)*

*(PAULIE grabs MARY by the arm and pulls her in. He kisses her.)*

**PAULIE.** I'm sorry.

*(MARY fixes PAULIE's hair.)*

**PAULIE.** I didn't mean to call you a snail in the dirt.

**MARY.** I know.

*(PAULIE kisses MARY.)*

*(A knock on the front door.)*

*(PAULIE opens the door to reveal PENNY. She has many suitcases along with a guitar and keyboard.)*

**PAULIE.** Hey!

**PENNY.** Hey!

**PAULIE.** *Hey!*

**PENNY.** *Hey!*

*(PAULIE hugs his sister tight.)*

**PENNY.** Hey you!

**PAULIE.** Aw...you look beautiful!

**PENNY.** And you look like you been in a fight.

**PAULIE.** Oh yeah...last night. I won.

**PENNY.** My big brother's a winner!

*(PENNY gives PAULIE a forceful kiss on the cheek.)*

**PAULIE.** Okay...all right...you're gonna break my neck.

*(PENNY makes some childish animal squeaks towards PAULIE with love.)*

**MARY.** It's good to see you, Pen.

*(PENNY awkwardly exchanges a half-hug with MARY.)*

**PENNY.** I'm so sorry I couldn't make the wedding, Mary. I got the pictures though. You looked like a hottie.

**PAULIE.** That's okay, baby. We knew you had a big gig that weekend. Look at you! Gonna be a big superstar soon... The next Loretta Lynn!

**PENNY.** Well I don't know about that.

**PAULIE.** Of course you're gonna be that! The man upstairs got big plans for the Pizzarulli kids.

*(JOEY walks out of his bedroom with a garbage bag full of pictures of PENNY.)*

**PENNY.** There he is!

**JOEY.** Me?

**PENNY.** Is that *fat* Joey?

**JOEY.** I'm not fat no more, Penny.

*(MARY grabs the bag from JOEY and hides it in the kitchen.)*

**PENNY.** I can see...wow oh wow. You look so handsome.

**JOEY.** Really?

**PENNY.** Oh yeah... How long's it been since you had the belly?

**MARY.** Five years, Penny.

**PENNY.** Has it been that long since I seen yall? Well I guess so. You were still married to Petie...gosh...long time, long time. *(Makes some*

*childish animal squeaks.*) So I guess you're my brother-in-law now, Joey.

JOEY. Brother-in-law?

PENNY. Yeah...we're all a family now.

JOEY. Well...uh...you know...I'm not *really* your brother-in-law.

PENNY. Well ya sure are. Mary's my sister-in-law and you're her brother.

JOEY. But there ain't a label for the people that marry in.

PENNY. But you didn't marry in.

JOEY. Exactly.

PENNY. Yeah.

JOEY. That's what I'm talking about.

PENNY. So you don't want to be my brother-in-law, Joey? Shucks. Cause I'd really like to be your sister-in-law.

JOEY. No...it's just...I'm saying that there's no label that binds us... *legally*. We could be whatever we want...we're free.

PENNY. So if you ain't my brother in law, what the heck are ya?

JOEY. I'm the mailman.

PENNY. What?

JOEY. I'm the mailman...I... *(Contemplates and decides to hold himself back.)* ...I deliver the mail.

PENNY. Well good for you, fat Joey.

*(A moment.)*

So...there's someone I want y'all to meet.

PAULIE. Yeah...you brought a date? Where is he?

JOEY. A date?

PENNY. Not a date...the love of my life.

JOEY. What?

*(JOEY sets the garbage bag down and begins to rooster up.)*

PENNY. *(Calling down the hallway:)* Come on out, scaredy-cat. Come on...

*(OLGA appears in the doorway.)*

PENNY. Paulie, Mary, Joey...Olga. Olga...my brother, his wife, and my brother-in-law, *the mailman*.

**OLGA.** Hallo.

(PAULIE and JOEY think this is a joke.)

**PAULIE.** Hey.

**MARY.** Welcome.

**JOEY.** I'm the mailman.

**PENNY.** Isn't he adorable, Olga. He wears his cute little outfit and delivers birthday cards from little old ladies.

**OLGA.** Mein brother in Germany is also delivery boy.

**PENNY.** I've always had crushes on mailmen.

**JOEY.** I know.

(A moment.)

**MARY.** Um...so...pardon me...did you say that you were...is this woman your...

**PAULIE.** Wait...*what?*

**JOEY.** You're...*my Penny*...uh...sorry...*Penny*...you're a...

(PENNY kisses OLGA.)

(JOEY, MARY, and PAULIE look at each other in disbelief.)

**PENNY.** Yep. The love of my life... *dearest Olga*.

**OLGA.** (*Overcompensating:*) I am a fan of America. I want to say that before you place any judgment upon me. I am not ein...how you say it?

**PENNY.** Elitist.

**OLGA.** Yes! I like heavy butter, action films, big cars...I like the sport of football...*your* football... I like the McDonalds, Christmas Carols, and I believe that wars are sometimes a good way to destroy what you're being threatened by...but that may be just the German in my blood speaking out. (*Laughs at her own joke.*) Nein! I am not loving fighting. I love *love* and I love this woman here, who has made all of my childhood fantasies come to life in human form. (*Hugs PENNY.*)

(A moment.)

**PAULIE.** Well...um...can I grab you's girls a beer?

**PENNY.** I'd love one! Thanks, Paulie! You want one, baby?

**OLGA.** Beer...yes! I love American beer...the Bud Light lime flavoring, the Coors Light silver bullet can, the Pabst Blue Ribbon special award, the Miller High Life champagne of beers... I love the Ameri-

can gimmicks you place on everything you sell. Put can on ice und it turns color. I love the fun of this country. In Germany, they laugh at Americans, but they don't have fun. What good is feeling better than someone if you're not having as much fun as them? *Party country!*

**PAULIE.** Two beers coming up.

*(PAULIE goes to the refrigerator.)*

**PENNY.** Well someone grab our bags and make us feel at home, darnet.

**MARY.** Get their bags, Joey.

*(JOEY hesitantly walks to OLGA and PENNY and picks up their bags. He looks OLGA up and down not knowing whether to hit on her or be threatened by her.)*

**JOEY.** Lot of bags here.

*(PENNY walks into the home like she's taking the stage. She wears a big smile.)*

**PENNY.** Oh I miss the smell of New York. It's so good to be home.

**MARY.** Then why'd you run away like a mouse in the night?

*(PENNY makes some mouse-like squeaks.)*

**PAULIE.** Nashville's the country music capital of the country, Mary.

*(PENNY continues to squeak like a mouse.)*

**OLGA.** That's her impersonation of mouse.

**PENNY.** Mice. Plural.

**OLGA.** She teaches me your rules in talking, but I always have my accent so I don't fuss with small parts of language. I am German and this is America. I'm just happy to be amongst people that are not the...what do you say, Penny?

**PENNY.** Pretentious.

**OLGA.** Yes...the *(Mocking:)* "Look at me, my daddy did not hug me so I'm going to go walk around the block and hope you pity me" crowd. Ha! I hate Germans. *(To PENNY in German:)* Alaubst du dass sie mich gern haben?

**PENNY.** Du machst echt gut.

**OLGA.** Ich liebe dich.

**PENNY.** Ich liebe dich auch.

*(Penny's cell phone rings. She looks at it and puts it away. PENNY looks at OLGA with nervous eyes.)*

**PAULIE.** Oh...Pen...This guy has been calling here the past few days asking if you were here.

**PENNY.** What'd you say?

**PAULIE.** I told him to take a hike.

**PENNY.** Did you tell him I was coming?

**PAULIE.** No. Why?

**PENNY.** Oh... (*Looks at OLGA.*) ...good. Thanks Paulie.

**PAULIE.** (*Jokingly:*) Looks like somebody's got a *stalker*...a fair price for success, sis.

**PENNY.** (*Forcing a laugh:*) Did he say what he wanted?

**PAULIE.** Yeah...you. Boo! (*PAULIE laughs.*)

**PENNY.** Never tell him you saw me...*ever!*

**PAULIE.** Okay. You okay?

**OLGA.** We're fine. (*PAULIE hands her the beers.*) Danke Schon.

**JOEY.** (*Dropping a bag and grabbing his crotch:*) Dong! (*Embarrassed:*) I'm sorry.

(*A moment.*)

**MARY.** So...um...how long are you staying in town for?

**PENNY.** Well I figure about till I get old and squirrelly and sail on off from this here body of mine.

**MARY.** You're not going back to Nashville?

**PENNY.** I'm moving back guys...*forever.*

**MARY.** What about your tour?

**PENNY.** Cancelled it. *Cancelled all my tours.* Cancelled my whole life as a singer. I'm done.

**MARY.** You're kidding.

**PENNY.** The kid kids not.

(*A moment.*)

**PAULIE.** *What?*

**PENNY.** I can't do it anymore, Paulie.

**PAULIE.** Can't do what?

**PENNY.** Tour...try to be a star...

**PAULIE.** You *are* a star!

**PENNY.** I'm hardly a star. I'm more like a fun little sparkler.

**PAULIE.** You're a fireworks festival of life!

**MARY.** We hear you on the computer radio...*you got stalkers calling for you...*you're making money from it!

**PENNY.** Just cause I'm on the computer don't mean I'm making money.

**MARY.** Don't lie to us!

**PENNY.** Everyone is everywhere with the technology these days. Shoot, Mary...you're probably just as much a star as I am.

**PAULIE.** *The hell she is!* So, what...you're just done?

**PENNY.** Paulie...don't you want me back? Don't you miss me?

**PAULIE.** All the singing classes, guitar lessons, moving around the country, disappearing from my life the past five years to go make it big, it's all...done?

**PENNY.** Yeah, but now I'm back forever and ever and ever and ever.

*(PENNY does some animal squeaks.)*

**PAULIE.** Knock that animal shit off. Penny...what's going on here? This ain't you...and who's that?

**PENNY.** That's Olga.

**OLGA.** I play the keyboards for her band. Men...they would tell her to take it off...*"Pull out the boob!"* She didn't enjoy it anymore.

**PENNY.** Paulie...I'm still gonna sing, but it'll just be for all yall loved ones in private.

**OLGA.** The sign of a true artist.

**PAULIE.** Excuse me lady, but this is between me and my sister.

**OLGA.** I'm coming to her defense...

**PENNY.** That's okay, Olga.

**PAULIE.** This ain't wherever the hell you're from. This is the USA. Here...you are what you do...not what you're good at.

**OLGA.** So what do you do?

**PAULIE.** I'm a... *(With embarrassment:)* ...a bouncer.

**PENNY.** You're not a bouncer, you're a fighter, Paulie.

**PAULIE.** I am...but...not yet... I don't get paid nothing but nothing so that makes me just a bouncer until I make it.

**PENNY.** You're gonna make it, Paulie.

**OLGA.** That's so sad because I believe what you are inside is who you are when you say what you want to be on the outside.

**PAULIE.** (*A moment.*) So what now?

**PENNY.** Well Olga and me were planning on getting a job at a flower shop near the beach. Something nice and calm where we can hug the plants and blow kisses to the sky.

**PAULIE.** You quit a life in music to become a friggin *flowerist*?

**PENNY.** Yeah...I'll sing to the flowers.

**PAULIE.** Are you gonna be happy when after you die nobody knows you ever existed?

**PENNY.** The flowers will...Olga will...our babies will.

(*PENNY hugs OLGA.*)

(*PAULIE fills with rage and punches a new hole in the wall.*)

**JOEY.** Jesus.

**MARY.** Joey...

**JOEY.** I got it. Damnit, Paulie.

(*JOEY grabs the spackle and begins to fix the hole.*)

**PAULIE.** Mom and Dad are turning in their graves. They're shaking their invisible heads at the uselessness of our lives.

**PENNY.** My life ain't useless Paulie!

**PAULIE.** It is if you throw in the towel.

**PENNY.** If taking care daffodils is what makes my insides light up, than that's more valuable than all the sold out concerts I can dream of having!

**PAULIE.** Vicky and Jimmy Pizzarulli are very disappointed in you.

**PENNY.** I ain't letting no one down!

**PAULIE.** You're letting me down!

**PENNY.** (*Through tears:*) How can you say that to me?

**PAULIE.** Because I love you!

**PENNY.** You're hurting me, Paulie!

**PAULIE.** I don't mean to hurt ya.

**PENNY.** (*Crying:*) I love my big brother so much.

**PAULIE.** Then don't break his heart.

**PENNY.** Why are you making me feel bad?

**PAULIE.** If you love me than you'll stick with sticking out the music career a few more years. Penny...you're twenty-five years old. It's way to soon for you to tap out on your dreams.

**OLGA.** How can someone ask someone they love to live a life they don't want to live?

**PAULIE.** You can quit at thirty. At that point if things don't work out you always got the flower life to fall back upon.

*(Penny's phone rings.)*

**OLGA.** Things *are* working out. It's not working out with it working out.

**PAULIE.** How could it not be working out when it's working out?

**OLGA.** Why are you not being a garbage boy picking up the streets?

**MARY.** Lady...

**PENNY.** Her name is Olga!

*(PENNY hits mute on her phone and puts it away.)*

**OLGA.** Why aren't you doing that?

**MARY.** Watch how you speak to my husband.

**OLGA.** You don't like garbage manning your life because it brings you unhappiness, ya?

**MARY.** Around here, you don't talk back to a man in his house.

**OLGA.** She's unhappy with her chose life.

**PENNY.** Don't you want me to be happy?

**PAULIE.** Of course I do...*of course.* But I just think you'll be less happy with this choice at the end of the night.

**JOEY.** She's happy with the flowers, P.

**PAULIE.** Shut up.

**JOEY.** Let her water and sell the things. Isn't it great to have her back?

**OLGA.** *(Sarcastic:)* Be sure not to talk back to a man in his house.

**JOEY.** I pay all these bills! This is my house, son!

**MARY.** That's private Joey!

**JOEY.** So is a person's personal hopes for happiness!

**MARY.** Go to your room!

**JOEY.** Don't tell me what to do with my life!

**MARY.** I'm the head of this house and I'm telling you to go to your room!

**JOEY.** Go to yours!

**MARY.** Joey!

**JOEY.** Penny's a grown-ass woman! Everyone just leave her alone!

**PENNY.** Thanks Joey.

**PAULIE.** Penny...

**PENNY.** *What?*

**PAULIE.** There's something I got to tell you.

**PENNY.** What?

**PAULIE.** It's a secret I've kept from you for years.

**JOEY.** Don't start making shit up Paulie.

**PAULIE.** I'm not.

**PENNY.** What is it?

**PAULIE.** It's certain specifics about our parents' death.

**MARY.** Paulie...you ain't gonna really go there now are you?

**PAULIE.** Get your nose out of my business.

**MARY.** This ain't the right time. Petie's gonna be here...

**PAULIE.** Shudup.

**PENNY.** What's going on, Paulie?

**PAULIE.** That weekend our parents died...when they were down on that beach in Virginia...*Virginia Beach*. There's a different reason as to why they were down there. Remember that I told you they were doing the vacationing?

**PENNY.** Yeah?

**PAULIE.** They weren't. Mom was having an affair...with a... (*Braces PENNY through tears for what he's about to say:*) ...a Korean.

(*MARY sighs.*)

**PENNY.** What?

**PAULIE.** Yeah. He was a *Korean* painter. He traveled the world and painted these landscape portraits of the ocean. She met him on the beach during one of her walks.

**PENNY.** No.

**PAULIE.** Our parents married too young. Mom had big dreams for herself as a young girl. You know she wanted to be a dancer?

**PENNY.** She *was* a dancer, Paulie. She'd twirl around the kitchen in her apron, remember?

**PAULIE.** Yeah, but she coulda done the Swan Lake at the fountain center. But then she got the kids and the mortgage so she had to throw it away to help dad with his debts.

**PENNY.** Paulie...she would kiss me on the forehead and say I was her baby girl. She said she'd do it all again the same.

**PAULIE.** She wouldn't have. She regretted us all. Especially, broke Dad.

**JOEY.** Don't be saying this to the girl in front of us all, Paulie. Broken illusions are best to be best dealt with in private.

**PAULIE.** *Shutup. (Regaining composure:)* Ten years ago...the summer they died...Dad told me about the *Korean*. He told me that he didn't believe she was really in love, but just that she was having some female mid-term crisis. Because the *Korean* wasn't rich...he wasn't good looking...wasn't even much of nothing compared to Dad's mandom. But what he was was an artist...a dreamer. His head was in the sky and not on the street with the gnawing rats. And all that shit opened up a part of mom she thought she had buried when she said "yes" to the family life.

**PENNY.** You know about this Mary?

**MARY.** I'm sorry, Pen.

**PAULIE.** When dad found out he confronted mom. She said she was gonna leave us for the *Korean*. She had the next flight out to Virginia Beach's view of the Atlantic. The day after she left, Dad rounded up all of his change and followed her down. After two days of spying on her, he realized that his marriage was...*over*. Mom was in love. He saw her splashin in the ocean and realized only a time machine would be able to get her back. So he readied himself to say goodbye and that's when it happened.

**PENNY.** *(Crying:)* No!

**PAULIE.** He saw the shark drag her down. He rushed into the ocean to save her and the shark got him too.

**PENNY.** No!

**PAULIE.** Dad didn't even hesitate rushing in he loved her so much.

**PENNY.** *They died in love, Paulie!*

**PAULIE.** Dad loved ma...ma loved the *Korean*.

**PENNY.** No!

**PAULIE.** He told me at the hospital...with his last words, that it was my job to take care of you. That it was my job to make sure you have the best life possible. And that it was my job to make sure you never settled for second best.

**OLGA.** Stop manipulating your sister.

**PENNY.** Why didn't the Chinese guy save her?

**PAULIE.** He ran...*the yellow bastard.*

**PENNY.** I hate him!

**OLGA.** (*Holding PENNY:*) Oh baby...

**PENNY.** Why did he do that to a happy family?

**PAULIE.** That's the point...we weren't happy...we weren't enough.

**PENNY.** I wasn't good enough for mom?

**PAULIE.** No.

**PENNY.** No!

**OLGA.** Stop this!

**MARY.** Lady...

**OLGA.** I don't care...this is not how you speak to people you love!

**PAULIE.** We weren't good enough, Penny.

**PENNY.** No! I hate that mean man!

**OLGA.** You don't hate anyone Penny.

**JOEY.** Yeah, Pen...you're the greatest person alive.

**PENNY.** People are so mean!

**PAULIE.** (*Through tears:*) People are just unhappy when they don't follow their dreams.

**JOEY.** Stop talking ya goddamn gargoyle!

(*JOEY hugs OLGA and PENNY.*)

**JOEY.** It's gonna be alright, Penny. Everyone in this room loves you. We're a family.

**PENNY.** I hope something evil happens to that Chinky.

**OLGA.** Shhhhh....

**PENNY.** No I don't. I don't...I miss you so much, mommy!

**PAULIE.** (*Through tears:*) If you don't...don't...follow your dreams, Penny...*you get eaten by sharks.*

(*JOEY confronts PAULIE.*)

**JOEY.** I'm gonna lay you out, man!

(*MARY gets between JOEY and PAULIE.*)

**MARY.** Joey...

**JOEY.** Just keep your frickin lips zipped, P.

**PAULIE.** Excuse me?

**JOEY.** You're being a jerk wad.

**MARY.** Paulie's in pain too, Joe.

**JOEY.** I can see his watering eyes, but that don't mean he's got a free pass to spread his pain around like the telephone game.

**PAULIE.** You think you can rock with me, Joey?

**JOEY.** I don't want to rock with you, but I'm the only other man around, so I will.

**OLGA.** What's that mean?

**JOEY.** It means I'm a man and when another man is picking on a woman it's my god given duty to step up and rock the casbah.

**PAULIE.** (*Ordering a dog:*) Sit down, Joey. Sit!

**JOEY.** I know you could mop the floor with me, Paulie, but I got to let you know I'm like your Dad.

**PAULIE.** What?

**JOEY.** I'll fight a shark for Penny!

**MARY.** Oh...dear.

**PENNY.** It's okay, Joey.

**MARY.** Listen to her.

**JOEY.** Tell wacko-head over there to listen to her. She's growing the flowers cause she hates the drooling drunks. End of story, lights out, tip your waitresses...okay?

**PENNY.** Joey...

**JOEY.** (*Rushing it:*) I love you Penny! I've loved you my whole life! I love you when you was two and I was two. When you was sick, I was sick. When your parents died, my parents died too! I'll do anything you ask me to and I'll be the best husband you can get without a leprechaun. Now I know that every girl's got to do a little

experimenting at some point in her life. That's good...I support that. And you, Olga, you seem like a really nice broad that is taking my Penny through a healthy transitioning period away from the bar guys that tell her bad things. But I want you to know, Penny that every second of my life, I've dreamed of taking you to The Phantom of The Opera and The Olive Garden. Wherever you want to go...I'll take you there! And if you want to go buy a flower shop, I'll save my last nickels and dimes for you, Penny. I love you!

**PAULIE.** Ouch!

*(PAULIE clutches his heart in pain.)*

**MARY.** What's the matter? You okay?

**PAULIE.** Ouch...

**MARY.** Baby, tell me what's wrong.

**PENNY.** Paulie...

**PAULIE.** Oohh...ouch...

**MARY.** Talk to me.

**PAULIE.** A sharp pain in my chest. Like knives...stabbing...

**PENNY.** He's having a heart attack! Call an ambulance, Olga!

**OLGA.** Is it 9-1-1 in New York?

**PAULIE.** Don't call no hospital.

**MARY.** Get him a can of 7-up.

*(PENNY rushes to grab PAULIE the soda. OLGA stares at JOEY with piercing eyes of wrath.)*

**PENNY.** Paulie...I love you so much!

**PAULIE.** Oh...oh...ouch.

**PENNY.** Don't die, Paulie.

**PAULIE.** Oohh...

*(PENNY hands PAULIE a can of 7-up.)*

**MARY.** Sip this.

*(PAULIE sips the soda. MARY pats PAULIE on the back and burps him. PAULIE burps. Relief.)*

**PENNY.** Paulie... You all right?

**PAULIE.** A little better.

**MARY.** Somebody had a little gas around here.

**PAULIE.** Was that what it was?

**MARY.** My mother had the same problem. When did you go to the bathroom last?

**PAULIE.** A couple days ago.

**MARY.** That'll do it.

**PENNY.** Why aren't you going to the bathroom, Paulie?

**PAULIE.** I've been so upset about the Petie situation...and now you with the flowers... I'm all backed up.

**MARY.** Why don't you go sit down on the John for a little bit. See what happens.

**PAULIE.** Yeah...I will.

*(MARY helps PAULIE to the bathroom. PAULIE continues to clutch his chest.)*

**PAULIE.** Hey Pen...

**PENNY.** Paulie?

**PAULIE.** I don't mean to hurt you, baby girl. I can't stand to see you crying. It's just...since you was five all you ever told me you wanted was to sing the country western music to the world. I never knew why you liked it so much...it's all that ever seemed to make you happy. I don't know... I'm just confused. Whatever you want to do with your life... I got your back. Just so long as it ain't turning tricks. Over here, hooking is frowned upon, Olga.

**OLGA.** I'm not Dutch.

**PAULIE.** *(A moment.)* Good.

**PENNY.** I love you, Paulie.

**PAULIE.** You're a good girl.

*(PAULIE exits into the bathroom and closes the door behind him.)*

**MARY.** I hope you appreciate your big brother, Penny.

**PENNY.** He's my favorite.

**OLGA.** I guess it is good quality to build up and take down then build up and take down again like a cycle of dirty laundry. It keeps your insides balanced.

**PENNY.** Oh, Olga...I'm sad.

**OLGA.** You're beautiful.

**JOEY.** Excuse me...um...guys...um...*ladies*...I mean...

**MARY.** Joey...help me finish setting up.

**JOEY.** I was trying to say something before.

**OLGA.** I thought you were having a *party* for this veteran.

**MARY.** We are.

**OLGA.** Where is the party?

**MARY.** You're looking at it.

**JOEY.** Um...Penny...

**PENNY.** Where is everyone?

*(MARY grabs a staple gun and begins to staple ribbon streamers into the wall violently. This staple gun will play a significant role in Act II. Place it wisely and take the staples out at intermission.)*

**MARY.** That asshole pissed this whole neighborhood off before he signed up for the war.

**PENNY.** I don't remember Petie being patriotic or nothing.

**MARY.** He wasn't.

**JOEY.** You're kinda leaving me hanging here.

**MARY.** One day I wake up to see him staring at the ceiling with big crazy eyes and whispering to himself, "I'm a bad man. I'm a bad man." I didn't think nothing of it until the next morning when he opens the shower on me with his bags packed saying he was going to go off and sign up to do something good with his life.

**PENNY.** He wasn't a bad guy.

**MARY.** He wasn't a great husband. He'd disappear for days...I'd express at him about my feelings and it was like I was talking another language...man had the sensitivity of a Nazi. Oh...sorry, Olga. Petie was just...he knew how to get me...we had a very *very* good...well...nevermind. He ain't Paulie and Paulie ain't him.

**PENNY.** I got nothing but the fondest of memories for Pete. He was the first man I ever had the feelings towards.

**OLGA.** And we're seeing this man today?

**PENNY.** Oh Olga...it was innocent...child love. You never loved an older man when you was a kid?

**OLGA.** Never.

**PENNY.** When I was a kiddy he would take me on the Ferris wheel. He'd hold my hand on the Cyclone...

**JOEY.** I love you.

**PENNY.** He'd buy me the cotton candy from the scary clowns.

**MARY.** *(To herself:)* I can't believe he left me.

**PENNY.** He thought he was bad?

**MARY.** No matter how bad he thought he was that still wasn't no reason to go runnin off with a lonely wife at home.

**OLGA.** *(Quoting a poem she may have made up:)* "Men run towards the gun. With mission, to destroy woman's position."

**JOEY.** I goddamn love ya, Penny! You hear what I'm saying? I loved you my whole life and I never loved no one but you till death do us part!

*(A forceful knock on the front door.)*

**PENNY.** Oh no! Olga...

*(OLGA rushes to her bag to grab a knife.)*

**MARY.** It's Petie!

**PENNY.** You sure?

**OLGA.** Get behind me, Penny.

*(OLGA holds her knife and stays low.)*

**MARY.** When I open the door, everyone yell, "Welcome back."

*(Another knock.)*

**PENNY.** Be careful!

**MARY.** Ready?

*(MARY fixes herself up and opens the front door.)*

**MARY / JOEY / PENNY / OLGA.** Welcome...

**OLGA.** Back!

*(FLOSSIE, SALLY, and SONNY stand in the doorway. They are dressed straight out of the 1970s only they don't know it. Bright tacky colors with flower schemes on their shirts. SONNY wears a Phany Pack with his glucose meter in it.)*

**SONNY.** Where is he?

**FLOSSIE.** *(Pointing at JOEY:)* There he is!

**MARY.** Who are you?

**JOEY.** Flossie?

**SONNY.** This douchbag right here?

**FLOSSIE.** That's Joey!

*(OLGA puts her knife away.)*

**JOEY.** How'd you know where I lived?

**FLOSSIE.** That's the man who raped me!

**JOEY.** *Raped you?*

*(SONNY and SALLY walk past MARY and circle JOEY like wolves preparing to prey.)*

**JOEY.** Who...who...who is...what's going on here, Flossie? Who are these guys?

**SONNY.** Don't you worry bout who the hell we be... I'm Sonny. That's Sally. Were Flossie's uncles. You know her father, Tony?

**JOEY.** Terrible Tony?

**FLOSSIE.** *(Crying:)* You told me he's not terrible Uncle Sonny.

*(SALLY starts huffing and puffing with clenched fists.)*

**SONNY.** Easy, Sally.

**SALLY.** *(Growling.)*

**SONNY.** Look what you did. You upset Flossie. And when you upset Flossie, you piss Sally off. And when you piss Sally off, you force me to stop him from killing. And when you force me to stop him from killing, it makes my blood sugar rise. And when you make my blood sugar rise I get dizzy. And when I get dizzy I can't keep Sally calm. And when I can't keep Sally calm...*Vietnam.*

**JOEY.** Vietnam?

**SONNY.** *Vietnam.*

**MARY.** I'm sorry... I don't know who you are, but...

**PENNY.** This is a house of love! Be nice!

**FLOSSIE.** *(Stepping up in PENNY's face:)* What's that mean, skank?

**JOEY.** Flossie...

**FLOSSIE.** Is this one of your whores, Joey? House of love? What's that mean? Are you a whore, whore?

**OLGA.** *(Stepping up in FLOSSIE's face:)* Watch how you speak to her!

**FLOSSIE.** What are you gonna do, camel-toe face?

**JOEY.** I'm sure we can all...

**FLOSSIE.** If you so muched as kissed any of these bitches, Joey, I'll cut all y'all's tongues out and feed em to the wolves. Then I'll kill the wolves!

**JOEY.** Why are you acting like this, Flossie?

**FLOSSIE.** Cause I'm a stone cold killer with an appetite for whore carcass.

**OLGA.** I'll strangle your neck little one.

**PENNY.** Olga...

**SONNY.** Sit down, lady.

**PENNY.** Her name is Olga!

**SONNY.** I don't care if her name Frankie Friggin Sinatra, she's step-pin to the wrong family.

**OLGA.** If you have ein problem mit Joey, that's your problem with him, but get out of my girlfriend's face!

**FLOSSIE.** You think you better than me you bloody tampon?

**OLGA.** Step away!

**FLOSSIE.** All right, carpet muncher...I'll back off. I came here to do one thing: Get my man. And I ain't gonna let any of you trick ass bitches get in the way of that.

**JOEY.** Flossie...you don't talk like that...you're gentle...like a purple feather.

**FLOSSIE.** You're mine Joey. We're gonna be together forever or my uncles will gut you like a fish.

**JOEY.** Um...you can't rush these things Flossie...you have to get to know someone or you get divorced and cry.

**SONNY.** Oh...but you don't have to know someone before you take their virginity in front of their dead grandmother?

**JOEY.** Listen...I knew her for two years...and I'd see her everyday.

**SONNY.** So you know her then, right?

**JOEY.** No...I know...

**SONNY.** So you know her well enough to give her the sausage, but not well enough to treat her like a woman and send her flowers after the pasta fagioli?

**JOEY.** No...it's...listen...

**SONNY.** Little girls don't know the difference when men love them or when men just wanna sail the bobsled. *You* gotta be the mature one. *You* gotta let her know you're a Satan serving bastard out for only his own rocks off.

**FLOSSIE.** *(Crying:)* I want my Daddy!

**SALLY.** *(A loud scream that crescendos into a yell that could stop a truck.)*

**SONNY.** Now the way I look at it is we got a problem. And ain't none of us hitting the bricks till we ain't got those problems no more.

**JOEY.** Listen...

**SONNY.** No you listen!

**JOEY.** Okay.

*(A moment.)*

**SONNY.** Say something, ya rectum.

**JOEY.** You just told me to listen.

**SONNY.** What'd you say?

**JOEY.** I'm listening.

**SONNY.** That's right!

*(A moment.)*

You getting smart with me?

**PENNY.** You told him to listen! He's not gonna interrupt you when you're trying to say something to him!

**SONNY.** I'm trying to say something!

**MARY.** Then say it!

**SONNY.** I'm trying to!

**MARY.** And get the hell out of my house!

**SONNY.** Don't be rude to a guest!

**OLGA.** *I'm* guest, *you're* intruder!

**SONNY.** Jesus with these women...

**PENNY.** Were not gonna let you come in here and give my brother-in-law the strong arm!

**JOEY.** I'm not your brother-in-law!

**FLOSSIE.** What is she, Joey?

**MARY.** You all smell like a homeless shelter!

**SONNY.** Easy!

**MARY.** Leave!

**SONNY.** You're suffering enough, Joey. We should let you go.

**MARY.** Get out of here!

**FLOSSIE.** *(Crying:)* Leave my uncle alone!

JOEY. Then tell him to say what he has to say!

SONNY. *You say what you gotta say!*

JOEY. I got nothing to say!

SONNY. Then say it!

FLOSSIE. I love you!

SALLY. *(A loud scream that crescendos into a yell that could stop a truck.)*

*(A moment.)*

JOEY. I didn't rape nobody.

FLOSSIE. Yes you did!

*(FLOSSIE storms JOEY with tears and pushes him.)*

JOEY. It was consensual.

FLOSSIE. *(Embracing JOEY:)* Oh...I love you.

JOEY. Tell these guys how it went down, Flossie. You threw me on the sofa, you got me going... *I'm* the victim here.

FLOSSIE. He didn't rape me.

JOEY. That a girl.

SONNY. Flossie...

MARY. He didn't rape the girl! Make sense? For two years Flossie and her grandma begged my brother for it. He finally gave it to her and that's that. It's a little harmless sex and everybody's happy. Now unless there's anything else that needs to be said here, I'd prefer it if you clowns would exit my home so you don't ruin a beautiful moment for a war hero returning home.

SONNY. Don't get me wrong, *because I respect the flag*, and America's the greatest country alive...but where in the book of laws does it say it ain't rape when a grown man tricks a sixteen year old girl into doing the dirty with him?

JOEY. Sixteen?

SONNY. Sixteen.

JOEY. Flossie...*I'm* sorry you have to hear this, Penny...

OLGA. Can I smoke in here?

MARY. Go to the window.

PENNY. Stop smoking Olga.

OLGA. Tomorrow.

**PENNY.** You said that yesterday.

**OLGA.** I mean it today.

**SONNY.** Ladies...we're talking here!

**JOEY.** Sixteen? You're *eighteen!*

**FLOSSIE.** What does age mean when you're in love, Joey? I'll do anything for you. I'll take the stand and lie for you. I'll go to work for you. You like dogs? I'll get a dog and teach him not to hump people for you! I love you my baby Joey!

**JOEY.** Why did you lie to me?

**FLOSSIE.** Because I couldn't wait any longer.

**JOEY.** Just wait a minute. Wait a goddamn minute here...Now I met this girl two years ago and like a good Roman Catholic, I waited till she said she was legal to take her down...*I mean out!*

**SONNY.** But you didn't take her out. *You plowed her!* You plowed her on the couch in front of grandma. You gonna try and defend that to me?

**JOEY.** She said she was eighteen!

**SONNY.** What does that have to do with how you treat a lady?

**JOEY.** It doesn't, but...c'mon man, you got *your* morals and I got *mine*. I didn't do nothing...I'm a *good guy*...I'm mean what the hell do you want me to do? You want me to ID every girl that I introduce to the hog?

**SONNY.** You perverted parasite! Get him, Sally!

*(SALLY looks at SONNY with confusion.)*

**SONNY.** *Get him, Sally!*

**SALLY.** Ahhhh!

*(SALLY grabs JOEY by the shirt.)*

**JOEY.** Hey!

**MARY.** Leave him alone!

**SALLY.** Ahhhh!

*(MARY rushes SALLY. SONNY grabs MARY and holds her back.)*

**MARY.** Paulie!

**FLOSSIE.** Don't hurt him!

**SONNY.** Give it to him!

(FLOSSIE tries to pull SALLY off JOEY.)

**MARY.** Paulie get out here!

**JOEY.** Violence is not the answer!

**SONNY.** You threw the answer out the window when you decided to commit the stachatory.

**MARY.** Let go of me!

(MARY bites SONNY.)

**SONNY.** Ahhhh!

**SALLY.** Ahhhh!

(PAULIE kicks open the bathroom door. He pulls his pants up.)

**PAULIE.** What the hell is going on out here?

(A moment. SONNY recognizes PAULIE.)

**SONNY.** Oh shit. Sal...Sally...look.

(SALLY sees PAULIE and releases JOEY. JOEY scurries to hide behind MARY.)

**SONNY.** Of all the goddamn houses in Brooklyn. This has not been our year, Sally.

**PAULIE.** You wanna tell me what this is all about?

**SONNY.** You're Paulie Pizzarulli.

**SALLY.** Paulie "The Pug" Pizzarulli.

**PAULIE.** I know who I am...what I don't know is who you is. Now you got one second to bolt like a lightening bolt before I crack both your skulls across your necks and make you lick your brains off my floor.

**PENNY.** (Raising her fist in the air:) Yeah!

**SONNY.** No, no, no, no,...we don't want no trouble.

**PAULIE.** One...

**SONNY.** No...listen...

**PAULIE.** Two...

**SONNY.** I saw your fight last night. (A moment.) You beat the shit outa that huge-ass Samoan.

**SALLY.** Goddamn Samoans.

**SONNY.** Goddamn Samoans!

**PAULIE.** Thank you.

**SONNY.** You got a manager?

**PAULIE.** I had one. He got eaten by a shark.

**SONNY.** I'm sorry to hear that. You're a hell of a fighter.

**PAULIE.** Thank you.

**SONNY.** You know, me and my brother, Sally here... *I'm sorry...* My name is Sonny. This is my brother Sally and that's our pride and joy, Flossie.

**PAULIE.** Hello Flossie.

**FLOSSIE.** Do you love me, Joey?

**SONNY.** Aw...sweet kid, huh? So anyhow, my brother and me are big fans of the cage fighting and were in the process of starting up our own management team.

**SALLY.** You'd be our first client.

**SONNY.** You talk too much, Sally.

**SALLY.** What?

**SONNY.** We've managed other people before. But they got scooped up by Russian snakes after we discovered them and gave them a name.

**PAULIE.** Like who?

**SONNY.** Doyle...*Boyle*...Murphy.

**PAULIE.** Never heard of him.

**SONNY.** He was an immigrant.

**SALLY.** Stop lying, Sonny.

**SONNY.** You want a piece of da back of my hand? Yeah...so take my card and if you're looking to advance your career a little...you know...give me...

**SALLY.** Or *me*.

**SONNY.** *Mainly me...*a little ring a ding ding.

(SONNY *carefully hands* PAULIE a card.)

**MARY.** Tell these guys to beat it Paulie.

**PAULIE.** I coulda had other managers. I just...I have a lot of loyalty to the spirit of my first one.

**SONNY.** I know it's not your fault you ain't got representation. This country ain't got no vision no more...people cant see past how tiny you are. You gotta look beyond the lamb and see the beast inside a

man. Me and Sally always ignored your lamb and respected your beast.

**SALLY.** You got a great beast, Paulie “The Pug.”

**PAULIE.** Oh thanks guys.

**SONNY.** If you don’t mind me asking...how old are you?

**PAULIE.** Thirty-two.

**SONNY.** (*Under his breath to SALLY:*) Thirty-two? Ooff...well that ain’t good...size is one thing, but age...ooff...nevertheless that still don’t mean he ain’t got a shot.

**SALLY.** He’s gonna be a star, Sonny!

**SONNY.** If he signs with us he is!

**SALLY.** Yeah, baby!

(*SALLY gives SONNY a high-five.*)

**SALLY.** You’re amazing Paulie.

**PAULIE.** You know I work very hard.

**SALLY.** It shows.

**PAULIE.** I train five hours a day.

**SALLY.** Looks like you train ten.

**PAULIE.** Lift the big weights...make em look light.

**SALLY.** That’s a light weight, baby.

**PAULIE.** I kick the bag hard.

**SALLY.** Kick it, baby.

**MARY.** We have a guest coming!

**SONNY.** Yeah, that’s right...the war hero. Sally, Flossie...

**FLOSSIE.** I’m never leaving Joey’s side again!

**SONNY.** Oh yeah...shoot...I almost forgot why we was here.

**SALLY.** You sure you wanna go on with this Sonny? I mean we just made a good contact.

**SONNY.** (*Dragging SALLY into a corner:*) Let me run the business.

**SALLY.** I think we should just drop it.

**SONNY.** Shut up.

**SALLY.** I’m just saying...

**SONNY.** What’s the rule? *I bark, you bite.*

**SALLY.** But we look like idiots now.

**SONNY.** No you look like an idiot when you're stepping on my toes.

**SALLY.** I ain't stepping nowhere.

**SONNY.** You're behaving like a goddamn divorced woman bickering with me up and down in front of our new friends.

**SALLY.** You're bickering with *me*.

**SONNY.** I'm sorry guys. I don't normally let Sally out of his cage.

**SALLY.** Don't say I'm in no cage, man. You in the cage. You in the brain cage up here... (*Points to his head.*)

**SONNY.** You want a fist up your ass?

**SALLY.** I'll fist your ass!

**SONNY.** I'll fist your ass! And then I'll sue you!

**SALLY.** For what? I'm broke!

**SONNY.** Maybe you should learn how to hold down a job!

**SALLY.** Maybe *you* should.

**SONNY.** I have a job it's called making big things happen!

**PAULIE.** Guys...

**SALLY.** You been stringin me along with your big plans since we was kids!

**SONNY.** Of course...you're the worker bee and I'm the Queen!

**PAULIE.** Guys...

**SALLY.** I think you just hate working, *Queeny!*

**SONNY.** Do me a favor and jump off a cliff!

**SALLY.** Do me a favor and don't do me any favors!

**PAULIE.** Guys!

**SONNY.** We need to hide out our little, Flossie, Paulie! She's in... she's in grave danger. Now I know this ain't no way to make the bed right, but we need a favor from some strangers.

**SALLY.** Stupid.

**SONNY.** You want Flossie dead?

**SALLY.** No!

**SONNY.** Then shut up. See...our mother...Flossie's grandmother... as you may have overheard...well she just died and left us with a lot of debt. *Bad debt*...the kinda debt that don't just go away with your

ashes. Our mom...she was a degenerate gambler. She always owed some bookie or shylock something. She died owing this one family ten large. Now that she's gone, they're gonna be coming to us to get it and we ain't got it. We ain't got nothing...we're in trouble. And... these guys...you see...they're evil...really bad men. They hold little girls hostage for fun. I know this looks bad...with us coming here and trying to...you know...behave the way we did...but, we ain't no hustlers...we're just a desperate family...please...*help us.*

**MARY.** Help you with what?

**SONNY.** Now Flossie here really loves you Joey...and we were hoping...that you could take her in...*look after her.*...hopefully be her boyfriend...so if the bookies come to break mine and Sally's legs, they'd never be able to touch our beloved little Flossie.

**PENNY.** (*To OLGA:*) I knew they were good guys!

**OLGA.** No such thing.

**SONNY.** I'm honest about wanting to help your career, but I'm also a fellow Coneyite, who needs a neighbor's help. Please...

(*A powerful knock is heard at the front door.*)

**MARY.** Get ready everyone. When I open the door scream, "Welcome back!"

(*MARY fixes herself up and opens the front door to reveal PETIE and his nurse, STEVIE. PETIE sits in a wheelchair, paralyzed from the waist down.*)

**MARY / PAULIE / PENNY / OLGA / JOEY / FLOSSIE / SONNY / SALLY.** Welcome back!

**PETIE.** Yo!

(*A moment.*)

This is Stevie. He's my gay nurse. I brought him here for you, Paulie. Mary...get your shit together...*we're leaving.*

(*Blackout.*)

*End of Act I*

## ACT II

*(In black.)*

**MARY.** Get ready everyone. When I open the door scream, "Welcome back!"

*(Lights up. Everyone is in the same position we last saw them at the end of Act I.)*

*(MARY fixes herself up and opens the front door to reveal PETIE and his nurse, STEVIE. PETIE sits in a wheelchair, paralyzed from the waist down.)*

**MARY / PAULIE / PENNY / OLGA / JOEY / FLOSSIE / SONNY / SALLY.** Welcome back!

**PETIE.** Yo!

*(A moment.)*

This is Stevie. He's my gay nurse. I brought him here for you, Paulie. Mary...get your shit together...*we're leaving.*

*(PETIE wheels in the home with STEVIE behind him.)*

**PETIE.** Slam that door hard, Stevie.

*(STEVIE slams the front door hard.)*

**MARY.** Leaving?

**PETIE.** You heard me.

**MARY.** Where we going?

**PETIE.** Anywhere. Just so long as it's far away from your fake marriage to my fake friend.

**PAULIE.** Hey Petie.

**PETIE.** Hos before bros, right Paulie?

**PAULIE.** Aint like that, Petie.

**PETIE.** Yeah...what's it like?

**PAULIE.** I loved her longer than you even knew her.

*(STEVIE rushes up to PAULIE and gets in his face.)*

**STEVIE.** What you say? You trying to apple and orange another persons love? You trying to sweep your sins under cupid's rug? You trying to say that it's okay to flip down the pictures of a man that gets blown up trying to make the world safer for little backstabbing vampires like yourself? *Is that what you're trying to say?*

**PAULIE.** No.

**STEVIE.** Good! You people oughta be ashamed of yourselves. You (PAULIE.) ...and you (MARY.) ... (To MARY:) You look a lot better *not* in person. And you (JOEY.) ...that's the brother, right, Petie?

**PETIE.** Yeah...*fat* Joey. You help them move my stuff outa here, Joey? You put all my baseball cards in boxes while you was giving Paulie high fives?

**JOEY.** I didn't steal any of your baseball cards.

**PETIE.** I never said you did.

**JOEY.** (*Looks around.*) We all felt terrible about putting your stuff in storage, Petie.

**PETIE.** Not terrible enough not to do it.

**JOEY.** They're in love.

**PETIE.** I was in love!

**MARY.** Then why'd you leave me?

**PAULIE.** Because he didn't love you enough to stay. But I stayed Mary.

**STEVIE.** You empty-moraled bastards. The whole lot of you make me sick. And I don't even know any of you other people, but if you're associated with this contaminated home I'm sure you got something wrong with you that just ain't right.

**PETIE.** Thanks, Stevie.

**STEVIE.** People like you don't make wars worth fighting. Look what you do with your freedom...you destroy people's happiness. You'd all be more moral under oppressive regimes. (To SALLY:) Whatcha looking at orangutan?

**SALLY.** Are you Petie "The Pit?"

**PETIE.** Been a few years since I went by that, but yeah, that's me.

**STEVIE.** You weren't lying, Petie. You're known.

**PETIE.** Of course I'm known. You youtube my fights? I'm the best.

**SALLY.** Petie...what happened to you? You were less than a year away from making it to the UFC. You never lost a fight.

**PETIE.** I had a sudden urge to do right by my life. Look where it got me. I should just stayed out here and robbed old ladies... I woulda been bad...but I woulda been happy.

**SALLY.** Isn't this unbelievable Sonny? Petie "The Pit" an Paulie "The Pug" in the same house together!

**SONNY.** Hey "Pit"...you ever thought about doing some local autograph signings? I got a few gyms I could book you in right now.

**PETIE.** You know why they call Paulie "The Pug," *Paulie "The Pug"* don't you?

**SONNY.** We'll advertise it like this: "*Petie The Pit: Brooklyn brawler slash Pakistani Pulverizer*" returns home to...

**PETIE.** Why you think they call him "The Pug?"

**SALLY.** Cause he's small but ferocious.

**PETIE.** Ferocious? (*Chuckles to himself*;) The "Pug" is a nickname the high school girls gave him cause his dick's as flat as the nose on a pug.

(*STEVIE howls with laughter.*)

**PAULIE.** Get your laughs in now, Petie.

**PETIE.** I ain't laughin.

**PAULIE.** Today's the only day I'll tolerate this shit from you. Starting tomorrow, you gonna treat my marriage with respect.

**PETIE.** Respect this (*Grabs crotch.*) you flat dicked double-crosser.

(*STEVIE howls with laughter.*)

**SALLY.** This is awesome, Sonny!

(*SONNY pulls out his cell phone and begins recording slyly.*)

(*SALLY gives his brother a wink of approval and pulls out a cell phone as well.*)

**JOEY.** C'mon guys, you guys are friends.

**FLOSSIE.** I'm your friend, Joey!

(*FLOSSIE rushes JOEY and smothers him.*)

**JOEY.** Shut up, Flossie.

**SONNY.** Watch it.

**JOEY.** No you watch it man!

**SALLY.** We're watchin it, we're watchin it.

**JOEY.** Let go of me, Flossie.

**FLOSSIE.** I'll go right out the window for you, Joey.

**JOEY.** Fine, but for now let go.

**MARY.** You're a real sonofabitch, Petie.

**PETIE.** Yeah?

**MARY.** Yeah.

*(PETIE spits on the floor.)*

*(STEVIE spits on the floor.)*

*(A moment. Everyone actively waits for the next move.)*

*(Penny's phone rings. It terrifies PENNY.)*

**PENNY.** What is it?! What is it?! I hate you phone! Leave me alone!

*(OLGA grabs the phone and turns it off.)*

**OLGA.** Stay strong, Penny!

**PENNY.** *(Through tears:)* They won't stop calling!

**OLGA.** We're *strong women*...like the Thelma and Louise.

**PENNY.** Thelma and Louise drove off a cliff, Olga.

**OLGA.** They died with their freedom.

*(A moment.)*

**PETIE.** Hey Penny.

*(PENNY rushes PETIE and hugs him tight.)*

**STEVIE.** Easy lady. You're gonna break him from the waist up as well.

**PETIE.** That's alright Stevie. This is my girl. How's my favorite little kid? How's the squirrel go, Penny?

*(PENNY does a squirrel.)*

**PETIE.** How's the giraffe go?

*(PENNY extends her neck like a Giraffe.)*

**PETIE.** How's the horse go?

*(PENNY does a horse.)*

**PETIE.** How's the mouse go?

*(PENNY does the mouse.)*

**PETIE.** Yeah, sweetheart. I love your mouse.

*(PETIE gives PENNY a kiss on the cheek.)*

*(PENNY starts crying.)*

**PETIE.** You alright, baby?

**PENNY.** Petie...don't be mad at my brother.

**PETIE.** I have to, gorgeous.

**PENNY.** He's a good guy.

PETIE. He did a very bad thing to me.

PENNY. He didn't mean it.

PETIE. I think he did.

PENNY. His mind maybe did, but his heart is innocent.

PETIE. I think both his mind and heart were working together against me on this one, Penny.

PENNY. No...his mind shoulda known better, but his heart ain't guilty.

PETIE. (*Through tears:*) Either way, where does that leave me, kid?

PENNY. I know. It must be so rough for you Petie. I'm sorry. You must hurt so bad inside. Here...let me rub your heart.

(PENNY  *rubs*  PETIE's heart.)

PETIE. You're the only respectable person left in this damn hood... and you don't even live here no more. Hey...some of the guys and me would catch you singing on one of those satellite stations over there. Them rednecks from the south couldn't believe a little dago from Brooklyn would make a splash in the world of country, but I said..."Hey...*Jackie Robinson*, baby."

PENNY. I can't do it no more, Petie... I'm moving back.

PETIE. Well that's just great. Singing's for the birds anyway.

OLGA. Stop rubbing his chest like that!

JOEY. Yeah.

FLOSSIE. What do you care?

OLGA. Get your hands off him.

PENNY. Me and Olga are in trouble.

OLGA. That's private Penny!

PENNY. I need to tell Petie.

OLGA. We never ask a man for help. They fuck everything!

PENNY. I need Petie to know!

OLGA. Get over here!

PETIE. Lady...

PENNY. Her name is Olga...she's my German friend from Nashville.

OLGA. *Friend?*

PENNY. (*Through tears:*) Will you help us?

PETIE. For you...*anything*.

STEVIE. What about me?

PETIE. You too, Stevie.

PENNY. We're in a lot of trouble.

PAULIE. Don't tell *him* that...tell *me* that.

PENNY. Petie...*please*...you're so brave...you're so strong... I need you.

OLGA. Get over here before I slap you!

PETIE. (To OLGA:) Keep it up and *you're* gonna get slapped.

PAULIE. Never hit a woman!

PETIE. I was defending your sister, cocksucker.

MARY. A woman should get what she asks for.

PAULIE. Is that why you let Petie slap you around?

PETIE. I never touched my wife!

MARY. You did, but that ain't why I left you!

PETIE. Why'd you leave me?

OLGA. Penny!

PETIE. Here...you better go back to your friend over there.

PENNY. Petie, I'm scared.

PETIE. Let me get back to getting my wife back and then I'll help you with whatever you need.

PENNY. No.

PETIE. Can it wait five minutes?

PENNY. Don't let them get us!

PETIE. Tell you what...I'm standing right here...

STEVIE. *Sitting.*

PETIE. (PETIE *looks at STEVIE and tears up.*) I'm sitting right here... if whatever is bothering you has to come through this doorway...I swear on my mother's grave I'll dismantle it into pieces before it ever gets close to your delicate skin, okay?

PENNY. Okay. Please keep one eye on me.

PETIE. I will. Just give me another mouse.

PENNY. No.

PETIE. Just a little quiet one.

(PENNY smiles and does a soft mouse squeak. PENNY gives PETIE a kiss on the cheek and walks back to OLGA.)

**OLGA.** You're such easy prey.

(OLGA pulls PENNY into the corner and they talk privately.)

**PETIE.** So...Mary...we can do this the easy way, or the Paulie way. You choose.

**PAULIE.** She's with me now.

**PETIE.** Only legally. It's a paper marriage...good for nothing but tax returns and Christmas cards.

**PAULIE.** Mary...tell him you're with me.

**MARY.** What did I tell you, Paulie? You remember what I told you? I know myself too good not to know what I'm thinking to myself. You should have done what I've been telling you to do.

**PAULIE.** This ain't the time, Mary.

**PETIE.** Wife of mine...why don't you tell this Palooka the truth. Tell him how you was only biding your time till I got back. Tell him if you wanted him so badly you woulda left me while I was still making your coffee every morning.

**MARY.** You never made me coffee you hung over bastard.

(STEVIE and PETIE share a small smile.)

**PETIE.** Then tell him how even with the bottom half of me like a dead eel, I'm still twice the lover he'll ever be.

**PAULIE.** Don't tell me that, Mary.

**PETIE.** Tell him that I can do more with my little pinkie ( *Holding his pinkie up:*) than he can do with his...

**STEVIE.** Hang on a second, Petie... I need to check your bag.

**PETIE.** Not now, Stevie.

**STEVIE.** You want another infection?

**PETIE.** Not now!

**STEVIE.** (*Offended:*) It's your body.

**PETIE.** And tell him that if he charges me, I'll take a bite outa his neck and shove my colostomy bag straight down his fuckin throat!

**SALLY.** (*Pulling out a Snickers bar:*) You getting this, Sonny?

**SONNY.** You know guys...if you both want to settle this in the cage, I could promote the hell out of it. We all could stand to make a few months rent. Put the candy bar down! You wanna get the diabetes?

**SALLY.** I'm not gonna get it if you got it.

**SONNY.** It's genetic! And at your weight it's very likely.

**SALLY.** I'm fine.

**SONNY.** You idiot...*hold this.*

*(SONNY hands SALLY the phone and pulls out his glucose meter out of his Phany Pack. He pricks his finger in anger.)*

**PAULIE.** I ain't fighting you, Petie.

**PETIE.** You know I'd win.

**PAULIE.** I don't know nothing.

**PETIE.** That's right. You don't know nothing other than the fact that you can't beat me in a fight. I'm that much better than you...even now.

**SALLY.** You dying?

**SONNY.** No I'm *living!* You're dying ya obese statistic.

**FLOSSIE.** Let's get away from all these loud talkers and lie down in your bed. C'mon my Joey...I'm not wearing any underwear.

**JOEY.** Flossie!

**FLOSSIE.** You like underwear?

**JOEY.** No...I mean, yes...*Flossie...*you're sixteen.

**PENNY.** Don't bully me, Olga!

**OLGA.** Quiet!

**FLOSSIE.** In India men do nine year olds.

**JOEY.** Well this aint...what?

**FLOSSIE.** Just close your eyes and pretend I'm an Indian.

**JOEY.** Jesus! Here...just go lie down in my bed and I'll be in there in a second.

**FLOSSIE.** Really?

**JOEY.** Yeah.

**PENNY.** I wanna give em back!

**OLGA.** They don't deserve to be married!

**FLOSSIE.** Can we make love again?

**JOEY.** Man... (*Up to the heavens:*) I take all of my thank yous back Lord! Shit...we'll discuss this later, Flossie.

**FLOSSIE.** You have a huge elephant trunk, Joey.

**JOEY.** Okay...go lie down...wait...how do you know about sizes?

**FLOSSIE.** My friend Ginny told me that guys like to hear that.

**JOEY.** They do but...you know...men wanna believe you're telling the truth and not just trying to... (*PAULIE and MARY gesture heavily at JOEY to get FLOSSIE out of the room. JOEY starts rushing her out.*) ... here...go lie down in my bed and then I'll crawl down next to you and I'll teach you a few things about being a lady.

**SONNY.** And then you'll look after her for a while?

**JOEY.** Quit pressuring me!

**FLOSSIE.** I'm never leaving my Joey's side again.

(*JOEY pushes FLOSSIE in his bedroom and closes the door.*)

**FLOSSIE.** (*Off-stage:*) I love you!

**OLGA.** Listen to me!

**PENNY.** They've been following us from Nashville! They won't stop calling!

**OLGA.** We can't be afraid of men!

**PENNY.** What we did was morally *wrong*, Olga!

**OLGA.** Our *love is beautiful!* We deserve to be married as well. Penny, I love you!

**PENNY.** I love you too, but two wrongs don't make it less wronger.

**OLGA.** Shut up.

**JOEY / PETIE / PAULIE.** Don't ever tell her to shut up!

**OLGA.** (*Cursing heavily in German!!!!!!!*) Ach! Come here! Verdammte scheiss mander machen mich verruckt!

(*OLGA pulls PENNY into the bathroom and closes the door behind them.*)

**SALLY.** Still recording?

**SONNY.** I stopped it.

**SALLY.** Why?

**SONNY.** Cause I'm saving it for if the guys fight.

**PETIE.** Yeah. Get a good video of me giving Paulie “The Pit and the Pendulum.”

*(PETIE swings his elbows from one side of his body to the other like a pendulum.)*

**SALLY.** That’s your move!

**PETIE.** Me and Mary will watch it while I’m bathing her. You miss my baths, Mary? You remember how I’d lather my hands with the soap and massage it gently onto the insides of your ass cheeks? Remember how I’d stand behind you, come up underneath both your arms with the soap and rub the tips of Mona and Angela? I’d lick behind your ear lobes and your legs would gyrate so much I’d have to hold you up from breaking your neck.

**MARY.** I remember.

**PAULIE.** You remember all the times you’d complain to me about how you couldn’t live with him no more? How you were sick of his drinking or sick of his bar fights or sick of having to borrow money from your mother to bail him out of jail? You remember all that? He never used his training for nothing but causing trouble.

**SALLY.** *(To SONNY:)* And winning fights.

**PETIE.** Your legs shake that way for, Paulie? I can feel you feeling my hand running down your leg...the palm of my hand on the inside of your thigh. You feel it, Mary?

**STEVIE.** I can feel it.

**PETIE.** Stevie!

**STEVIE.** Well don’t get me so hot then.

**PETIE.** I wasn’t trying to.

**PAULIE.** What do you want, Petie?

**PETIE.** I want to enjoy my “welcome back” party. *(Laughs.)* Look at this charade. What’d you think, Paulie... You think I’d walk in here with a smile on my face, ready to congratulate you on your new-found joy.

**PAULIE.** I ain’t joyous.

**PETIE.** You ain’t joyous?

**PAULIE.** I’m unjoyful.

**PETIE.** You steal my wife and you ain’t even joyful?

**PAULIE.** Mary’s the only thing I got that makes my life worth noticing.

**PETIE.** How adorable.

**PAULIE.** My whole existence would be one unjoyfulled nothing without Mary. I got a shit job, a thousand and one bills that my brother-in-law has to help me to pay, a kid sister who ran far away from me the first chance she got, and a broken down dream that I gotta defibrillate all throughout the day to keep it from dying.

**PETIE.** And I can't walk.

**PAULIE.** So we're even.

**PETIE.** Naw...we ain't even. We'll be even when Mary gets her shit and wheels me outa here.

**MARY.** (*Getting in PETIE's face:*) Ain't you mad at *me*, Petie? You laying into Paulie like he ripped off your pension and you ain't even so much as raised your voice in my direction.

**PETIE.** That's cause I ain't mad at ya.

**MARY.** Why?

**PETIE.** Cause you're a whore.

(PAULIE punches his thigh in anger.)

**PETIE.** Whores don't know no better.

(MARY slaps PETIE.)

**STEVIE.** He's a hero!

**MARY.** I ain't no whore!

(MARY goes to walk away. PETIE grabs her by the arm.)

**PETIE.** You *are* a whore. But you're *my* whore and ain't no 130 lbs faggot gonna take you away from me!

**STEVIE.** He *is* a faggot.

**MARY.** Let go of me! Paulie!

**PETIE.** C'mon, Paulie. Come take her. Take her from me! Take the only woman I've ever loved from my arms.

**MARY.** Paulie!

**PETIE.** (*Through tears:*) Be a man! Take her while I'm here you piece of shit!

**MARY.** Let go of me!

**PETIE.** Pry my wife out of my cold dead hands you chicken shit coward!

**MARY.** It hurts, Petie!

(PETIE lets go of MARY.)

(MARY walks to PAULIE and pushes him.)

**MARY.** What's the matter with you, Paulie? Couldn't you see he was hurting me?

**PETIE.** (*Crying:*) I'm sorry, Mary.

**STEVIE.** (*Tearing up with his man:*) That's okay, baby. You can do better.

**PETIE.** I don't want better! I want my wife!

(STEVIE holds PETIE from behind. He bends down and kisses him on the cheek.)

**STEVIE.** Ohhh, baby. I know it's rough. But you're gonna pull through...you're a tough guy. And you're gonna come out of this even tougher. Who needs these people?

**PETIE.** I love you Mary!

**MARY.** Don't give me that crap! You were a drunken asshole to me 24/7 and then the day you wake up and decide to become a "good guy" ain't none of your goodness is directed in my direction!

**PETIE.** I wanted to help our country!

**MARY.** What about helping me?

**PETIE.** It's the same thing!

**MARY.** What are you crazy? You were my husband! You think I'm supposed to be dancing in the street cause you're trying to protect the freedom of teenyboppers in Staten Island?

**PETIE.** I'm sorry!

**MARY.** I'd rather you'd have gone to jail!

**PETIE.** I shouldn't have signed up!

**MARY.** That's right you shouldn't have! You promised me you was just a few big fights away from us having the money to move to Florida to make some kids.

**JOEY.** You were gonna leave me alone?

**PETIE.** We were gonna give you some money.

**JOEY.** I can't believe you thought I'd be happy alone. We're a clan!

**MARY.** Oh, Joey...we woulda taken you with.

**PAULIE.** What about me? You never told me this, Mary. My two best friends were gonna pick up and leave without me?

**MARY.** Shut up, Paulie. It ain't nothing but a pipe dream now.

**PETIE.** I was gonna line you up with some fights when I got down there, Paulie. Florida's a big state for cage fighting.

**SALLY.** Write that down Sonny.

**SONNY.** You think I don't know that?

(SONNY writes it down.)

**MARY.** Did you get bored with me?

**PETIE.** I was never bored.

**MARY.** Didn't we screw enough?

**PETIE.** All the time!

(PAULIE punches his thigh.)

(SALLY whispers in SONNY's ear. SONNY nods.)

(PAULIE grabs SALLY by the shirt and makes a fist.)

**PAULIE.** I'm getting real sick of you twos thinking thoughts about thoughts.

**SALLY.** We're not thinking nothing.

**SONNY.** He was just asking me about the war. I told him...*you know...* I don't know.

**STEVIE.** It's an important war...*Liberal losers.*

**SONNY.** Hey man, I ain't no liberal. I just don't know about wars. When I fight, I fight people that I know personally...that's all.

**MARY.** Did you go fight the war because you wanted to have sex with other women?

**PETIE.** Of course not.

**STEVIE.** But this Stallion did do good for himself over there. He wasn't sitting around crying over yours two's spilt milk. Even after he got blown up, the girls over there were begging him to put that velvet tongue of his all over their wet...

**PETIE.** Stevie!

**STEVIE.** They need to know!

**MARY.** Bastard.

**JOEY.** I knew it!

**PETIE.** *Stevie!*

**JOEY.** Me and Paulie was just talking about how all the bombs in the world couldn't stop your missile from launching. Were they hot, Petie?

**STEVIE.** Every one of em!

**JOEY.** Really?

**STEVIE.** You think all our soldiers were Lynddie England looking bitches?

**MARY.** So you cheated on me?

**PETIE.** I didn't cheat on nobody! *Stevie!*

**MARY.** I knew that's why you left me!

**PETIE.** I didn't touch a broad till you handed my paralyzed ass the divorce envelope.

**MARY.** I didn't know you was paralyzed until you came through that door!

**PETIE.** I didn't want to tell you...

**MARY.** Why not?

**PETIE.** Because I was afraid!!

*(PETIE is overcome with emotion. Everyone is still.)*

I was afraid...you'd leave me.

**MARY.** I was your wife... Why would I leave you?

**PETIE.** Cause what good is a man who can't screw! I know I ain't no Einstein...

**JOEY.** *(Trying to make PETIE feel better:)* You're the Einstein of sleaze!

**PETIE.** You was with me cause I was tough and I knew how to get you off!

**MARY.** There's more to a relationship than just sex!

**PAULIE.** That's what *I'm* saying!

**PETIE.** Stay out of it, Paulie.

**MARY.** Don't tell him to stay out of it. He's my husband!

*(MARY hugs PAULIE.)*

**MARY.** And he's never been nothing but the best to me.

**PETIE.** Better than me?

**MARY.** He was better to me even when you was at your best.

*(MARY kisses PAULIE passionately. A moment.)*

**PETIE.** Does he screw as good as me?

(MARY continues to kiss PAULIE. PAULIE can't bring himself to own his wife physically.)

**PETIE.** Tell me he screws as good as me and I'll leave!

(MARY continues to kiss PAULIE.)

**PETIE.** Stop torturing me!

**JOEY.** Hey Pete...you wanna go get one of them Singapore Slings you like?

**PETIE.** Shut up milkman!

**JOEY.** *Mailman.* I'm the mailman, son.

**PETIE.** Naw...you the milkman to me. Mary!

**STEVIE.** Let's go to the hotel Petie.

**PETIE.** After she tells me.

**STEVIE.** They're in love. You said you needed to see. Now you see it.

**PETIE.** I need her to tell me. Mary! Does he screw you as good as me?

**MARY.** (*Breaking violently from her kiss:*) He doesn't screw me at all!

**PETIE.** What?

**MARY.** (*Through tears:*) We ain't never done it...understand?

**PETIE.** What you mean?

**MARY.** (*Breaking down:*) I mean we ain't never made love! Our marriage ain't consummated!

(*A moment.*)

(*PETIE is confused. PAULIE is humiliated. And MARY moves through tears into a corner by herself. JOEY follows her and holds his sister.*)

**PETIE.** Stevie...

**STEVIE.** What?

**PETIE.** She couldn't do it. She couldn't bring herself to make love to the guy! I told you she couldn't be feeling no sexuality for nothin but me! We were meant to be together, Mary. God takes one energy and splits it in half at birth and when those two energies find each other as adults, they can never be re-separated...or I don't know how the expression goes...*I ain't no poetry analyst*...but the point is you love me! That's why I came here to retrieve you! Now go grab your stuff and lets get on with pretending this Paulie fiasco never went down.

**PAULIE.** Ahhhhhh!

(PAULIE loses control and charges PETIE. They will fight throughout all of the upcoming dialogue. This should be a highly choreographed and realistic, yet over the top and hilarious fight. [Because we have two professional MMA fighters it should not appear “stage fighty.”] Being that PETIE is in a wheelchair, he will only be able to use his hands and arms to fight. PAULIE should be athletic, mobile, and in use of his fists, feet, ability to jump and kick. However it is set up, PETIE needs to be able to block any kick, punch, or pillow thrown his way. PETIE needs to be in control of the fight from start to finish. Even as a paraplegic, PETIE is the better fighter.)

It will also be funny if you could get STEVIE to push PETIE around the couch in a circle toward PAULIE. PAULIE should back pedal in fear which will generate laughs because PETIE is in a wheelchair. SONNY and SALLY should be flying around the room trying to video the fight on their phones from the best possible angles while trying to avoid getting hurt by the fighters. As PETIE catches punches and launches PAULIE across the room, JOEY should be grabbing valuable family objects and moving them out of the way. He should barely be able to hold any more by the time of the fight’s end. Once LARRY enters the home, MARY should be on the opposite end of the stage from LARRY so that they both can shout their conversation about Larry’s wife over the fight at each other.)

(A knock on the front door.)

(JOEY crosses from MARY to the front door.)

(FLOSSIE peeks her head out from within Joey’s bedroom.)

**FLOSSIE.** What’s going...

**JOEY.** Stay in there.

**MARY.** Don’t hurt him, Petie!

**SONNY.** Listen to your boyfriend, Flossie.

**JOEY.** I’m not her boyfriend.

**FLOSSIE.** You are! And I listen to what my boyfriend says.

(FLOSSIE retreats into the bedroom.)

**MARY.** Please, Petie...don’t hurt him. Paulie, stop fighting!

(JOEY moves around the fight and opens the front door.)

(LARRY walks in with energy and charm. He holds a bundle of flowers.)

**JOEY.** (*Hugging LARRY:*) YOOOO Larry!

**LARRY.** Sorry I'm late. I have a special date with my wife and I had to pick up these flowers. What's going on here?

What is this...a little playing around like the old days? Petie still handicapping himself to level the playing field? C'mon Paulie, he hasn't fought in years, you can beat him without the wheelchair.

**JOEY.** He's not handicapping himself, Lar. He's handicapped.

**LARRY.** *Handicapped...* For real?

**JOEY.** Yeah.

**LARRY.** What happened?

**JOEY.** He got blown up.

**LARRY.** Why?

**STEVIE.** He was fighting a war. People get blown up.

**LARRY.** Is it permanent?

**STEVIE.** Yes! He's a paraplegic for the rest of his life.

**LARRY.** What about the stem cell research?

**STEVIE.** The what?

**LARRY.** I read that the permanent degeneration of tissues and leg numbing organs are gonna be a thing of the past in the future.

**STEVIE.** I hope you're right.

**LARRY.** *I don't.* That technology is morally not right. There's too many people around...when it's time to go, it's time to go. That's why the ice caps are going down like a left over turkey in a refrigerator without power.

**JOEY.** You want a beer?

**LARRY.** If I didn't have to go have my special night with the wife, sure, but since I do I gotta give ya the nay nay. Are they really fighting?

**STEVIE.** Yeah. My man's gonna tear him a new asshole.

*(STEVIE lights up a cigarette.)*

**MARY.** Smoke at the window!

**STEVIE.** What difference does it make?

**MARY.** My husband has rules and I want you to follow them!

**STEVIE.** It's all over in 2012 anyway.

*(STEVIE crosses to the window.)*

**SONNY.** Imagine if we could convince these guys to do this in front of paying customers, Sal?

**SALLY.** They'd never give a wheelchair victim a license to fight, Sonny.

**LARRY.** Hey guys...are you really fighting for real?

**PETIE / PAULIE.** Yes!

**LARRY.** Like... I know you're exchanging blows, but like...is there like feelings involved in this?

**JOEY.** Yeah...this is a real fight.

**LARRY.** Why are they really fighting?

**JOEY.** Cause they both love my sister.

**LARRY.** Oh yeah. Hey Mary.

**MARY.** (*Broken:*) You look handsome, Larry.

**LARRY.** Yeah, I got a big night with candles, Al Green, and the wife.

**MARY.** She's very lucky.

**LARRY.** Well the poor thing has just felt so hideous after the mastectomy... I'm just trying my best to make her feel as lovely as she felt before.

**MARY.** She doing better?

**LARRY.** Physically yeah. But emotionally...she's just paranoid that I'm not attracted to her no more.

**MARY.** She's a stunning woman.

**LARRY.** You know...that's what I try to tell her when I brush her hair and floss her teeth. I tell her her one boob is still bigger than most girls two. Anyway, she'll get better... I'll tell her you said hello.

**MARY.** Thanks.

**LARRY.** Guys...you need to stop before one of yous hurts yourself.

**SALLY.** You're Larry "The Lab."

(*LARRY does his patented "Larry The Lab Bark" towards SALLY.*)

**SALLY.** Yeah, baby!

**LARRY.** C'mon buddies...stop this.

**SONNY.** (*To SALLY:*) Why they call him "The Lab."

**SALLY.** Cause he acts like a gentleman when he has you in a headlock.

(*LARRY attempts to step in between PETIE and PAULIE.*)

**LARRY.** Stop this!

(PAULIE punches LARRY. LARRY shakes it off.)

**PAULIE.** Larry! I'm sor...

(When PAULIE turns back to fight PETIE, PETIE has capitalized on Paulie's distracted moment. He punches PAULIE in the stomach, grabs a staple gun and fires three staple into PAULIE's head.)

**ALL.** Oh! Whooh! Ouch! Etc...

**MARY.** Paulie!

**PETIE.** I'm sorry, Paulie. You okay?

**LARRY.** Guys! We fight in the cage, not out of the cage!

(PAULIE holds his face as he back peddles into the kitchen. He discreetly pulls out a butcher's knife and charges PETIE with it.)

(Commotion amongst everyone.)

**MARY.** No don't!

(LARRY intercepts PAULIE and puts him in a headlock. LARRY brings him to the ground slowly.)

**LARRY.** Shhhhhh. Relax.

**SALLY.** See, Sonny. The Lab's a gentleman.

**LARRY.** Shhhhhh. Let go of the knife.

(PAULIE releases the knife. JOEY rushes to grab it along with the staple gun. He hides both weapons in the stove in the kitchen.)

**LARRY.** Shhhhhh. You smell good Paulie. You using some new conditioner?

(PAULIE shakes his head in the headlock.)

**LARRY.** Shhhhhh. Somebody smells good around here.

(PAULIE puts up one last fight like a fish out of water. He shakes and tries to break free. He is no match for "The Labrador Lockdown.")

**SALLY.** Look at the sheer strength in Larry "The Lab." It's as if he don't waist any of his energy.

**SONNY.** If he's so good how come he hasn't made it?

**SALLY.** They banned most of his moves because his style ain't too fun to watch. But nobody could touch this guy in a world without rules.

**LARRY.** Easy, boy. Shhhhhh.

**SALLY.** He's got "The Pug" in his legendary "Labrador Lockdown"

**SONNY.** Hey "Lab." You got somebody looking out for you? Like a manager? Somebody to help ensure your financial success?

*(Larry's phone rings. He answers it while continuing to hold PAULIE in the headlock.)*

**LARRY.** *(In a puppy dog voice:)* How's the most beautiful woman who ever lived? I know it feels like forever, but it's only been a half an hour, baby. I picked you up some flowers to go with our candles. I'll pick up a pork roast from Rose and Joe's. Garlic Mashed potatoes? What else? Lobster ravioli? Will you make one of your California salads for me? Don't add walnuts, baby. When you add walnuts it ruins the whole salad. Did my mom pick up the kids yet? Why was he throwing up? He knows he's allergic to chocolate, why was he eating... *(Sighs.)* ...I'm gonna give him a crack across his sloppy ass. Yes... I'll pick up some carpet cleaner. *(Talking sexy:)* Looks like two carpets are gonna get cleaned tonight. *(Winks at everyone in the apartment.)* No one's around. No... I left. Mary said hello. He's good. No, they didn't fight. Everyone was just happy that Petie was alive and well. Okay. Get the candles ready my sweet little pony princess. I love you too.

*(LARRY puts his phone away.)*

**SALLY.** *(To SONNY:)* The Gentleman.

**LARRY.** We good boys?

**PETIE.** Mary...get your stuff.

**LARRY.** Pit?

**PETIE.** Yeah... I don't want to fight.

**LARRY.** Pug?

*(PAULIE nods his desperate head.)*

*(MARY grabs her purse and crosses to the front door.)*

**PAULIE.** Don't go with him. I'll treat you better. Mary?

**MARY.** I need to be alone.

**PAULIE.** You coming back?

**MARY.** *(Through tears:)* I don't know, Paulie. I'm none too happy right now.

**PETIE.** You coming to my hotel after you get done being alone?

**MARY.** Petie...you can't just come back in here and...you know everyone is just trying to be happy. You understand that? And Paulie...

you say you love me, but you don't do what you need to do to make me feel close to you.

**PETIE.** So you want to remarry me?

**MARY.** Oh, Petie, just drop it for a second will ya? The only thing I can think about remarrying around here is my sanity.

**PAULIE.** You still love me?

**MARY.** Love ain't got nothing to do with what you and I got not going right. Paulie...I...I... (*Unable to talk.*) ... (*Momentarily gains control.*) ...You just can't make plans in this world. They never go the way you draw them down.

(*MARY exits. A moment. MARY reenters.*)

Joey?

**JOEY.** Yeah.

**MARY.** (*Embarrassed:*) Lend me a twenty will ya?

**JOEY.** Here's forty.

(*JOEY pulls two twenties out of his pocket and gives it to MARY.*)

**MARY.** Thanks...I'll get you back.

**JOEY.** Keep it. Just spread it around to my friends at the Cobra Lounge.

(*MARY kisses her little brother on the cheek through tears. She exits.*)

(*PAULIE and PETIE are both exhausted. PAULIE remains on the floor. A moment.*)

**PETIE.** Hey Paulie...

**PAULIE.** Yeah.

**PETIE.** Remember when me and you went down to Virginia and broke that Korean guys neck?

**PAULIE.** Yeah?

**PETIE.** You never did tell me why we was doing that to him.

(*PAULIE, exhausted beyond his comprehension, can no longer hold his head up.*)

**PAULIE.** What?

**PETIE.** I was just thinking... If we woulda never done that, I probably never woulda left to go fight that war.

**PAULIE.** What?

**PETIE.** I felt so bad about doing that with ya that the only reason I enlisted was to cancel that shit out.

*(PAULIE is knocked out by the weight of Petie's statement.)*

*(A moment.)*

**SONNY.** So...Sally, you ready? *(SALLY nods.)* So me and my brother is gonna hit the road like Ray Charles. I already gave you our card, Pug, but Pit and Lab... *(Handing PETIE and LARRY his card:)* ...take one of these bad boys. Like I said to Paulie before...I'd really like to promote any of you's fighting each other, or if you don't want to go doing that, I'd like to consider managing yours careers as fighters. Petie, I don't know if you plan on fighting still, but from what I just saw you could keep...

**LARRY.** Hang on.

*(LARRY is reading the card.)*

**LARRY.** You're Sonny and Sally Sarducci?

**SONNY.** Yeah that's our name right there on the card...we're legitimate.

*(LARRY pulls a photo out of his back pocket. He stares at the photo and then back at SONNY and SALLY.)*

**PETIE.** Yo, Stevie... If you gotta change that bag, do it now, before any girls get in the room.

*(STEVIE changes Petie's colostomy bag.)*

**STEVIE.** The things I do for you.

**PETIE.** Yeah, you love me.

**STEVIE.** *(Kissing PETIE on the head:)* That I do, pumpkin.

**LARRY.** Listen...shoot...this is you right?

**SONNY.** What...in that photo?

**LARRY.** This is you two in this photo here.

**SALLY.** Really? Let me see.

*(SALLY grabs the photo from LARRY.)*

**SALLY.** *(Excited:)* That's us, Sonny.

**SONNY.** Yeah, back before you learned what a Chinese buffet was. Why you got this photo of us?

**LARRY.** Um...

**PENNY.** *(Off-stage:)* They're gonna deport you, Olga!

**OLGA.** *(Off-stage:)* Lower the voice!

**LARRY.** We got a problem...well...*you* got a problem.

**JOEY.** What's up, Larry?

**LARRY.** Maybe this ain't the right time for this right now.

**JOEY.** For what?

**LARRY.** Ah screw it, I'm here right now...why prognosticate. Listen, guys...I don't want to be doing this with my life, but you know...my wife just beat the cancer and the bills are pilling up. Plus my daughter is gonna be sixteen soon and she's got things she wants and my son is twelve and you think football equipment pays for itself?

**JOEY.** Larry...

**LARRY.** I owe three different department stores, plus the alimony from the first wife, and my sister-in-law is in and out of rehab every other day, so what am I gonna do? You got any idea how hard it is to find real work out there? Sure, I get the two hundred bucks a week in unemployment from the car dealership going under, but that ain't enough to provide for a family man like me! I worked hard since I was seven and what did it get me?

*(Everyone stares at LARRY like he's a lunatic.)*

**LARRY.** Sonny and Sally Sarducci...you owe my boss ten grand.

**SONNY.** Sally...this has not been our year.

**SALLY.** I told you we shoulda left earlier.

**SONNY.** My Ma just died. How'd they find out so soon?

**LARRY.** That's what they do... They find things out soon.

**JOEY.** You collecting now, Larry?

**LARRY.** *(Embarrassed:)* I needed something off the books. It's just temporary till I take care of my wife's hospital bill. You know me, Joey... I'm a good guy. I hate the mob.

**PETIE.** But you're working for em ain't you?

**LARRY.** Hey, life is about compromise, Petie. You try and live life black and white and ain't nothing but a gutter full of empty stomachs awaits. *(To SONNY:)* So I'm sorry to hear about your mother, but you got the ten grand she owes us?

**SONNY.** We ain't got it.

**LARRY.** They told me you'd say that. Now, I gotta tell you that you got a week to start selling all your mom's shit on the Internet.

**SONNY.** She don't got no shit to sell. She sold it already to save my brother Tony's life from the Russians.

**JOEY.** Terrible Tony's still alive?

**SONNY.** (*Tearing up:*) No...he drowned himself to repay our mother with his life insurance policy.

**LARRY.** So where's *that* money?

**SALLY.** (*Tearing up:*) She gambled it away trying to raise college money for Flossie.

**LARRY.** Her home? Can you sell it?

**SONNY.** She rented.

**LARRY.** Your home?

**SONNY.** I rent.

**LARRY.** How bout you?

**SALLY.** I live with him.

**LARRY.** You got anything you could sell?

**SONNY.** I got a great idea for a movie I been trying to sell to some studios, but they wont...

**LARRY.** No, man...you got a watch? A television? Anything?

**SALLY.** Not yet.

(*LARRY unzips this shirt on his jumpsuit and flexes his muscles.*)

**LARRY.** Well that's not good.

**JOEY.** Why don't you leave these guys alone, Larry?

**LARRY.** You can't declare no bankruptcy with the people I work for, Joey. They gotta come up with their ma's dough or I'm gonna pull their legs outa their sockets.

**SONNY.** Can't you not do that?

**LARRY.** Gotta. It's my job.

**SALLY.** Just pretend you didn't see us.

**LARRY.** I'm only gonna have to go to your place tomorrow and tell you the same damn thing.

**SONNY.** Then don't come tomorrow.

**LARRY.** Gotta. It's my job.

**SALLY.** Can't you just not do your job well?

**LARRY.** Then I get *my* legs pulled from outa their sockets and you still gonna get yours pulled by someone uglier than me. And boys where does that leave us?

**SALLY.** With no legs to stand on.

**LARRY.** Exactly.

**SONNY.** What if we...now don't interrupt me Sally, cause I'm brainstorming aloud...but what if we don't pay you but you let us know when you gonna come and break our legs so that me and Sally can get real loaded on whisky and pills so that it don't hurt so much.

**LARRY.** You know...maybe we could work out some arrangement like that and...wait...no...can't do it.

**SONNY.** Why not?

**LARRY.** Cause they were telling me that it ain't like the old days... where the boss just has your legs broke and the example of your broken body is good enough for everyone. Nowadays they say I gotta keep breaking you until you find a way to pay. No...they said that after I break your legs, if you're still not willing to rob a bank, I gotta go find some niece of yours and bring her to some of my bosses more dirtier employees.

**SONNY.** No!

**LARRY.** Yeah.

**SONNY.** You can't!

**LARRY.** I'm just the messenger.

**PETIE.** (*With big crazy eyes:*) So are suicide bombers, Larry.

**SALLY.** What are they gonna do to her?

**LARRY.** Hey man, what do you think dirty men do to little girls? They do things that mess em up in the brains forever.

**SONNY.** Please don't bring her to them!

**JOEY.** Larry, please man. I know you for ten years. You don't want to hurt Flossie. She's a sweet and courteous little kid...

**LARRY.** I'm just doing my job.

**JOEY.** Your job ain't moral.

**LARRY.** I got kids at home!

**PETIE.** You hurt some innocent girl and it's gonna live on the back of your neck forever, man. I guarantee you that.

**LARRY.** Then tell them to pay me the money!

**JOEY.** It's not fair to the little girl.

**LARRY.** Was cancer fair to my wife?

**JOEY.** Ain't the same thing.

**LARRY.** That's right it aint! Joey, these guys had a degenerate in their family that they couldn't keep under control. My wife was a good citizen who sat at church every Sunday till God gave her the cancer.

**JOEY.** It wasn't God. It was a bunch of random jamooks blowing their second hand smoke on her boobs.

**LARRY.** Either way it ain't fair to her.

**JOEY.** Nothing's fair, Larry. It's just a random cycle of randomness.

**LARRY.** Then I'll be sure to tell Flossie that as I'm bringing her to the boss.

*(FLOSSIE peaks her head out of the bedroom.)*

**FLOSSIE.** Did someone say my name?

**JOEY / SONNY / SALLY.** Go back inside!

**FLOSSIE.** I love you Joey.

**JOEY.** I love you too. Go inside and lock the door.

**FLOSSIE.** Really Joey? You love me?

**JOEY.** Flossie...

**LARRY.** Flossie?

**SONNY.** That ain't nobody.

*(LARRY pulls out a photo. He looks at it and then at FLOSSIE.)*

**LARRY.** Hello Flossie.

**FLOSSIE.** *(Waving adorably:)* Hi!

**JOEY.** Do what I said.

*(FLOSSIE closes the door with a wide smile.)*

**FLOSSIE.** *(Off-stage:)* He loves me!

*(LARRY looks back at SONNY and SALLY.)*

**LARRY.** Adorable.

*(SONNY charges LARRY. LARRY punches SONNY. SONNY falls hard to the ground.)*

**SALLY.** Ahhhhhh!

*(SALLY charges LARRY. LARRY barks ferociously at SALLY. SALLY throws himself to the ground before he can get hurt.)*

**LARRY.** (*Standing over SONNY and SALLY:*) You think I'm fooling around!? I'm gonna put your whole family in the hospital if you don't get me that money.

**PETIE.** You ain't nothing but a two-bit thug, Larry.

**LARRY.** You want some of this?

**STEVIE.** Monster. He's a paraplegic!

**LARRY.** Then I'll make him a whole-body-plegic.

**SALLY.** I thought you was supposed to be the gentleman.

**PETIE.** Get out of my home, Larry!

**JOEY.** Stay right there, Larry!

**LARRY.** What?

**JOEY.** Stay right the hell there, man!

*(JOEY storms into his bedroom. Simultaneously PENNY bursts from out of the bathroom with OLGA. They are tugging at Olga's leather jacket. STEVIE exits into the bathroom with the colostomy bag.)*

**OLGA.** Stop it!

**PENNY.** Let go of me Olga!

*(PENNY pushes OLGA off of her and grabs a crumpled up American flag bandana from inside the jacket.)*

**PENNY.** Petie...*take these!*

*(PENNY rushes to PETIE and opens up the handkerchief. Two wedding rings fall in PETIE's hand.)*

**PETIE.** Are these wedding rings?

**PENNY.** Uh huh.

**OLGA.** We had a plan, Penny.

**PENNY.** These two guys are after us for those. I want to give them back, but I'm afraid they'll deport Olga after we meet them.

**OLGA.** Were not giving those pigs anything! We're selling them and buying something nice!

**PETIE.** What happened?

**PENNY.** These two married guys were harassing us everywhere we played. They'd follow us around and sexually insult all my girls in the band. The other night they were waiting for us backstage with their... *I was so scared, I didn't know what to do. So Olga said they*

could watch us get naked backstage and...you know...have a good time. So then to teach them a lesson, Olga slipped em a bunch of her special roofies. After they was knocked out we stole their wedding rings and split.

**OLGA.** Now the bastards will have fun time explaining that one to wives. Ha! You men will get what you have coming to you!

**PENNY.** Stop it! Men aren't bad just because they're men.

**OLGA.** No, they're bad because they have penis.

**PENNY.** The problem, Petie, is that these guys we drugged turned out to be police officers. They followed us all the way to New York and wont stop calling.

**PETIE.** So...you want me to be the liaison in the giving them back of the rings?

**PENNY.** Yeah.

**PAULIE.** *I'll do it, Penny.*

**PENNY.** Well, Paulie...I was thinking that with Petie being a war hero and all, the police will do him a favor and let us slide. Then I can keep my Olga.

*(PENNY goes to touch OLGA. OLGA rips her arm away from PENNY. OLGA is very upset and sad.)*

*(JOEY reenters from his bedroom with a shoebox. He walks up to LARRY and hands it to him.)*

**LARRY.** What's this?

**JOEY.** Eighty-five hundred dollars. I know it's short...it's all I have. Can you give this to your boss and maybe the boys can find a way to work the rest of it off?

**LARRY.** I think I can talk to him about that.

**JOEY.** Okay.

**SONNY.** Joey, we can't pay you back any time soon.

**JOEY.** I don't want you to pay me back.

**SONNY.** *(Standing up:)* Thanks Joey! Look at this guy, Sally...coming through in the clutch with a huge bailout!

**JOEY.** I'm not doing it for you. I'm doing it for Flossie. I've made too many beds without laying down in em.

**SONNY.** Well put.

**JOEY.** Now leave. You too, Larry.

**SONNY.** You want me to get Flossie?

**JOEY.** She can stay here.

**SONNY.** Really? She don't have to now, you're a free...

**JOEY.** She didn't have to before.

**SONNY.** Okay. Okay my man. Sally?

**SALLY.** *(Standing up:)* Yeah?

**SONNY.** Let's hit it.

**SALLY.** Okay.

**SONNY.** So guys...you got my card...call me. You too, Lab. I forgive you for punching me. You wanna go get a drink? On us? *(Tapes the shoebox.)*

**LARRY.** I gotta stop by the store and pick up the pork roast.

**SONNY.** You going south on up the street?

**LARRY.** Yeah.

**SONNY.** Lets all walk together.

**LARRY.** Alright. Hey, man...sorry I hit you. It's just my job.

**SONNY.** Don't worry about it.

**LARRY.** See ya, Petie. It's good to have you back.

*(LARRY looks at PENNY and OLGA confused. PENNY waves at PETIE with childlike affection. PETIE smiles at a woman he knew only as a little girl.)*

**SONNY.** Hey and Pug...call me tomorrow? I'll make a lot of money for you.

**PAULIE.** Yeah...I'll call you.

**SONNY.** Yeah...get the "Pug" outa Coney and up to Park Avenue in less than a year. I got big plans for us, Paulie...

**SALLY.** Big Plans, baby!

**PAULIE.** I'll call you.

**SALLY.** Gonna be a star, Paulie!

**PAULIE.** Thanks.

**SONNY.** Yeah...okay. Tomorrow.

*(SONNY, SALLY, and LARRY are walking out the door.)*

**SONNY.** *(To LARRY:)* Hey Lab, I know how this world works...you got the sick wife...you gotta earn somehow. You know Sally and me

are big contributors to the cancer foundation of society, ain't that right Sally?

**SALLY.** Stop lying.

**SONNY.** And we got a little girl in Africa we feed once a month as well.

*(Their voices trail off as they have exited the home.)*

**PETIE.** Yeah...I'll take care of this, Pen. I got the connections. Nothings gonna happen to your beautiful boyfriend over there.

**OLGA.** *(Through tears:)* Nothing was going to happen with me in charge.

**PENNY.** Olga, you're an illegal alien...just shut up.

**OLGA.** You young Americans have no wisdom of life. You don't know nichts about suffering. Except for the black man, when has anyone in this country ever suffered? What plagues have you dealt with? What genocides? What wars have destroyed your land? When you grow up you'll know that it's a steal or be stolen from world... Childish country.

**PENNY.** Olga...everyone I know is poor.

**OLGA.** That's why you should steal from the rich.

**PENNY.** But cops aren't rich here...cops are poor.

**OLGA.** But they defend the rich's money.

**PENNY.** Olga...stop being so proud! We're just gonna give these guys back their wedding rings. Hey...they could be happily married guys who just had a little too much to drink. We all make mistakes. Give me back my phone, Olga.

**OLGA.** Nein.

**PENNY.** Give me back my phone Olga. I don't want to ruin families... *(Tearing up:)* ...like the Chinese did mine.

*(OLGA gives PENNY her phone. PENNY searches for the number and hits send.)*

**PENNY.** Hi. This is Penny Pizzarulli. Is this the guy that was leaving me all those scary messages? Yeah...me and my girlfriend was the ones that stole your wedding rings. Because married men shouldn't be bothering girls the way you was bothering us. Hey, calm down mister! You want me to flush them down the toilet? Okay, good then. So listen...I feel bad about taking them rings and I want to return them safely to you. But I want to know...is there any way we can give em back with no trouble? Because when you were knocked out we took some pretty embarrassing photos of you that we wouldn't

want to have to send to your wives if you know what I mean. Stop crying. Please stop crying, mister. Okay, I'll call you soon from an undisclosed location with my soldier friend. Yeah, he's a war hero so no funny business. And recommend do something special for your wife when you get back mister. (*With a big smile.*) Bye. (PENNY hangs up.)

PETIE. What photos you take of those cops?

PENNY. I was playing the bluff.

OLGA. Look at you...very strong...like in your songs.

PENNY. I love you.

OLGA. I love you too.

(PENNY hugs OLGA.)

PETIE. How'd they know you were in New York?

OLGA. A girl in our hood of sisters...how you say it...“Cracked under the pressure.”

PAULIE. Penny...

PENNY. I feel so much better already!

PAULIE. Was these cops the reason you ran out of that town?

PENNY. Yeah.

PAULIE. So is it true what you was saying about giving up your singing career?

PENNY. Of course not. I thought I'd have to live in hiding the rest of my life.

PETIE. (*Chuckling.*) Over a wedding ring?

PENNY. Yeah. I don't want to quit singing the country music, Paulie. It's all I ever loved. Remember when I was thirteen and all those kids booed me off the stage for singing, *Stand By Your Man*, at that talent night? Nobody understood me around here. I hated all that other cold music the kids were listening to...*all that too cool for school stuff*. ain't nothing cold about country...it's love.

PAULIE. Oh thank you God...she's still gonna be special.

PENNY. I never cared about being special, Paulie. All I ever cared about is love...sharing the love in my heart with anyone who'll share it back.

PAULIE. She's gonna make it. I knew it...she's gonna make it.

**OLGA.** You don't listen. She's not staying the singer for you. She's staying the singer for her because she loves the singing for her.

**PAULIE.** Okay...good...so you give these cops the rings and you're back to Nashville in a day or two, right?

**JOEY.** Hey Penny, you can stay here! They got a lot of country/western bars in town.

**PENNY.** Really?

**JOEY.** Yeah Penny! I'll show you around. This broad I used to...I mean this broad on my route... I mean this nice married lady with kids who I know...she owns this bar with a stage. She owes me... I mean... She likes country music so let's put you on that stage and soon enough you'll be the biggest thing in Brooklyn!

**PENNY.** Thanks, Joey. Maybe I'll give this ragatag town another chance.

**JOEY.** Penny...you think I ever got a shot with you?

**PENNY.** *(Trying to let him down easy:)* Joey...why you wanna take a shot at your family?

**JOEY.** So...

**PENNY.** No.

*(PENNY gives JOEY a big hug and kiss. OLGA points her finger like a gun and pulls the trigger at JOEY. PENNY doesn't see this. JOEY nods his head at OLGA as to communicate, "I get the message.")*

**PENNY.** Okay. Let's go to the hotel and call these guys.

**PETIE.** Yeah. Stevie?

**STEVIE.** *(Off-stage:)* Just a second.

**PETIE.** If you got a date tonight, you can clean your asshole out in the hotel! *(PETIE laughs.)*

**STEVIE.** *(Off-stage:)* At least I can clean my asshole, asshole.

**PETIE.** Fair enough. *(Pulls out a pack of cigarettes.)* Paulie...when Mary gets back, have her call me. You hear me, Paulie? I mean since you never slept with her, I ain't gonna hold no grudges against you and hopefully we can go back to all being a classic trifecta. Come here...give me a hug.

**PAULIE.** I'll see ya later, Petie.

**PETIE.** *(Grabs his right leg and throws it grandly over his left as he lights his cigarette.)* Hey, buddy...I know you love her. But it ain't meant to be. Me and her...we was made for each other.

**THIS PLAY IS  
NOT OVER!**

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