

# **THE MILLION DOLLAR BET**

**(“Life Ain’t Over ‘Til It’s Over!”)**

**A Musical Comedy**

**It’s as much about love as it is about a bet.**

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**ACT ONE. SCENE 1.**

**VO - Reception room for ex-singing super-star EDDIE HUNTER and his fifth wife Wendy a perky blonde, one-third Eddie's age.**

(Jerry and Leila seated stage right rise and cross to mikes stage right)

JERRY

Leila honey, I need a pep talk. All those guys in \$5,000 suits? I feel like I'm wearing a sign for Rent-A-Tux.

LEILA

Relax, Honey. You couldn't come to Eddie's wedding in a track suit. And no one's looking at us. We don't have an entourage.

(Eddie and bride rise stage left and cross to center.)

EDDIE

Jerry! Leila! Great to see ya. (Jerry and Leila cross center) Wendy, meet two of my oldest friends. Jerry was my first press agent. Leila sang back-up on my recordings. And she ran my fanclubs. (self-mockingly) My thousands and thousands of fanclubs. That's how they met. Little me – I was their Cupid. (turns to Jerry) It's been a while, Jerry.

JERRY (grins)

Not that long, Eddie... We were at your last wedding.

BRIDE (laughing)

Well, sure. Eddie's a member of the Vegas Wedding-of-the-Month Club.

EDDIE

A charter member. Vegas and honeymoons? They're like...bacon and eggs. Or lettuce and tomatoes. A perfect fit. What's a bigger gamble than marriage?

JERRY (Abruptly -- unable to hold it in longer)

Eddie, I dreamt about you last week. We both sang on the Tonight Show and well... it was only a dream, but I got more applause than you did.

EDDIE (Hoots)

Gee, you're better than my agent. The Tonight Show hasn't booked me in years. But you cut me? Even in a dream that's ridiculous. I haven't forgotten the old days...when we were on the road together. When you sang in the shower? I stuffed cotton in my ears.

JERRY

I wasn't that bad.

EDDIE

Jerry, Jerry. I love you! But you know what Freud would say if he heard that dream?  
"Meine dear boy. You are suffering from Microphone Envy!"

JERRY (thoughtfully)

Well, actually Freud would be right. When you were onstage and I was backstage there were times I'd think, "What if? What if I'd actually gotten singing lessons?"

LEILA

Well, maybe you don't have a trained voice, but it's a darned good one. And you write wonderful songs, too. (to Eddie) Jerry serenaded me with some of them the night he proposed. I swooned. Into his arms. And I've been there ever since.

EDDIE

You're a good wife, Leila. Standing up for your husband. But I know Jerry's songs. I almost recorded one of them. For friendship's sake. But, hey, I know how to pick winners. Thirty consecutive gold records! And Jerry's songs? Clever lyrics. Lotsa heart. But not enough June-Moon. About as commercial as...Spinach Yogurt.

JERRY (annoyed)

I didn't enjoy your rejections, Eddie: "Stick to writing press releases!!"

EDDIE

Sorry, Jerry. This is a tough business. No place for sentimentality. I don't want to be too hard on you. We go back too far. But it's time to move on. Fageddabout it! If you could sing, you'd have been a singer. You can't. Except...in your dreams.

JERRY

Which sometimes come true. Yours did!

LEILA. (desperately trying to change the subject)

Uh...Jerry sang at his niece's wedding last month, Eddie. (enthusiastically) He went over bigger than the wedding cake.

EDDIE

Did he? Well, Jerry, it's a lot easier to sing for Aunt Alice and Uncle Ben than to sing at Caesar's Palace. But what are friends for? The bathroom baritone wants to come out of the bathroom? I'm happy to open the door.

JERRY (suspiciously)

How?

EDDIE

We've got a band. We've got an audience. By the way...some pretty important Hollywood people. Even a camera crew from Entertainment Tonight. But don't let that make you nervous. Tell you what. I'll help your Medicare singing career along. I'll introduce you. Sing one of my hits. Seems like you've been itching to do that for years.

JERRY

You know what? You're on. But not your oldies. I wrote a wedding song. I was hoping you'd sing it.

EDDIE

No, Jerry. You wrote it. You sing it.

JERRY

(beat) Are you serious?

EDDIE

Why not? Pretend you're at your niece's wedding.

JERRY (challenged)

(beat) Well...okay. But I have to warn you. It's tough to write a moonlight-and-roses song for a guy who's been married five times. So this song, well...the moon is full, but the roses are a little wilted.

EDDIE

Can't wait to hear it. (he walks toward band)

LEILA

Sweetie, these people are all in the business. When they listen to a singer, it's Tony Bennett at the Bellagio or Barbra Streisand at the MGM Grand. Are you crazy enough to really do this?

JERRY

Buckle your seatbelt, Leila. We're about to find out.

(Eddie steps forward with microphone)

VOICE FROM CROWD

Sing Eddie, sing!

SECOND VOICE

Yeah, let's hear it, Eddie.

EDDIE

Thank you. Thank you one and all. Sorry to disappoint you (audience groans) but I'm three times as old as my beautiful new bride. Gotta save my strength for the honeymoon.

BRIDE (from upstage)  
Yes! Please! I don't wanna just watch TV.

EDDIE  
However...however...I do have someone to sing for you. Someone I've known for 40 years, and I just found out...just found out tonight...that all these years he's wanted to be...me.

BRIDE  
Do I get to choose? (laughter)

EDDIE  
Tonight, at long last, my first press agent, Jerry Reiss, gets his chance to be a star. So please welcome a talented young boy singer – a 66-year-old boy singer – singing a song he wrote specifically for this occasion.

(Jerry gives lead sheet to pianist, confers briefly with him, struggles with center microphone. Eddie patronizingly steps onstage to help him with it, then walks off with wife to mikes left and challenges an old acquaintance sitting stage left. MIMI.)

EDDIE  
Mimi...how'd you get in without an invitation? If I knew you were coming, I'd have stayed home.

MIMI. (not intimidated rises and crosses to left mikes)  
Eddie, when the invitation came, I was more surprised than you are. In fact...I was stunned. What you don't seem to know is...I was your blushing bride's first agent. And I guess she's too young to know I wasn't only your first agent, I was your first wife. And that our parting was as sour as a barrel of pickles.

EDDIE  
This parting will be more of the same.

(He stalks off left? Wife gives Mimi a pained look and follows Eddie. Mimi shrugs and returns to chair. Spotlight and sound return to Jerry. Leila crosses right.)

JERRY  
Ladies and Gentlemen, I've known Eddie for 40 years. I ghosted so many magazine articles and speeches for him I could practically read his mind.

VOICE FROM CROWD  
Careful! It's X-rated. (laughter)

JERRY (nods)

So I can say with absolute certainty...absolutely absolute certainty...that this is what Eddie Hunter was thinking just before he said, "I do."

JERRY SINGS: "I LOVE EVERY WOMAN THAT IS"

(speaks whimsically)

NOW THAT MY BRIDE'S WALKED DOWN THE AISLE

I GUESS I SHOULD CONFESS AWHILE:

(sings to bride)

IT'S ONLY FAIR TO TELL YOU

THAT I HAVE A VERY WEAK HEART.

AND EVERYWHERE I TURN

CUPID HITS IT WITH A DART.

I LOVE SALLY, LOVE IRENE

I LOVE ASHLEY, TAMIKA, AND LIZ

IT'S NOT THAT I'M FICKLE

I'M JUST IN A PICKLE:

I LOVE EVERY WOMAN THAT IS.

IT'S A SOCIAL DISEASE

FOR I FEEL I MUST PLEASE

EACH AND EVERY FAIR MAIDEN I MEET

I CAN'T MARRY THEM ALL

BUT RESPOND WHEN THEY CALL?

WHY SHOULDN'T I GIVE THEM A TREAT?

I LOVE REDHEADS. LOVE BRUNETTES.

I ADORE THEM IN JUMP SUITS OR TANKS

BY PUCCI OR GUCCI

IF THEY HOOCHY-KOOCHY

I'LL ALWAYS BE THERE TO GIVE THANKS.

IT ALL IS QUITE STRESSFUL

IT'S NOT AT ALL RESTFUL

I SLEEP POORLY. AT TIMES I AM NERVOUS.

BUT AS GOD'S GIFT TO FEMALES

WHEN I GET THEIR E-MAILS

WHY NATURALLY, I'M AT THEIR SERVICE.

'CAUSE I LOVE EVERY WOMAN

I LOVE EVERY WOMAN

I LOVE EVERY WOMAN THERE IS.

I READ SCOUTING REPORTS  
THIS ONE'S TALL. THAT ONE'S SHORT.  
BUT I REALLY JUST COULDN'T CARE LESS.  
IT'S INCREDIBLE FUN.  
WHEN TWO HEARTS BEAT AS ONE  
BUT ALL OF THAT'S OVER...I GUESS.

I'M REFORMED NOW. I'M IN LOVE.  
I'M IN LOVE WITH ONE WOMAN. JUST ONE.  
TO ALL OF THE OTHERS I'M DEEF.  
ONCE I LOVED A TO Z  
NOW I LOVE NONE BUT THEE.  
I'VE TURNED OVER...AT LAST...A NEW LEAF.

(Spirited applause from surprised audience. Wendy leaps onstage, rewards Jerry with a kiss. Eddie scowls and deliberately crosses to Jerry)

EDDIE

Well, well. Not bad, Jerry baby. Ladies and gentlemen, what do you think? Next stop the Grammys?

(To Jerry)

So, Jerry, all those years when the bobbysoxers were chasing me down the block, you fantasized that they were chasing you. Well let's be realistic. You've never had a singing lesson. You only sing at weddings. And you're a little too old to be a sex symbol. You've got about as much chance of making it as an ice cube in Death Valley. (beat) I'd bet a million on that.

JERRY (slowly)

A million what?

EDDIE

Samoleons! Shekels! Dollars! Why not? It's a bet I can't lose...and you can't win. But come on, Jerry. Take the bet. Take one last shot at something you've dreamed about for years. Reach for the big brass ring. (beat) Reach it in one year and you hit the Eddie Hunter Jackpot: a million smackeros. Cold cash.

JERRY (thoughtfully)

You're tempting me, Eddie. But my name is Reiss. Not Rockefeller. Alright. Alright. So how about your million against a year of my Social Security checks? Say, ten thousand dollars.

EDDIE

A hundred to one? I don't like the odds.

JERRY (he hesitates, looks at Leila , then rashly)  
Okay. I'll throw in Leila 's pension. (Leila is startled. Their eyes meet. She slowly nods her permission.) There. Now it's only 50 to 1.

EDDIE

This is getting interesting. (beat) Let's see. You want to be a star? Okay, do what made me a star. (beat) A record that hits the charts. (beat) A gig here at Caesar's. And, oh, one more thing. That dream you had about singing on the Tonight Show? Make that happen, too. But no sweat, Jerry 'cause you've got plenty of time – a whole year. Win the bet and I won't just give you a million -- I'll open for you in Vegas.

MIMI

(Crosses to SL mike)

I know you've got a lot of money in the bank, Eddie. I know because I helped you make it. But a million dollar bet?

EDDIE

Don't worry, Mimi. I've lost nearly that much on a weekend in Vegas. And on this bet, my money's safer than the gold in Fort Knox. (Eddie crosses to his chair. Mimi looks thoughtful. She sits. Jerry and Leila step upstage as voice over happens and then step forward.)

**VO- SCENE 2 Jerry and Leila in serious discussion.**

JERRY

Eddie's right, Leila . You're looking at an ice cube in Death Valley. In August. I'm melting fast and our twenty thousand dollars with me. Why didn't I keep my dreams of glory to myself?

LEILA

Jerry, you can't drown your dreams. That's how people get migraine headaches. And, Sweetie, you've been dreaming it for (BEAT) how long?

JERRY (ruefully)

Since I was 13.

(Jerry and Leila sit stage right. The family comes from stage right to mikes. father right mike and mother center and son left center)

**VO-SCENE 3. Flashback to an evening after supper in the eat-in kitchen of a neat but unimpressive apartment in the Bronx, circa 1940. FATHER is at kitchen table reading World-Telegram stock listings. At the sink, MOTHER and son JERRY (about 13) are on K.P. She's washing. He's drying.**

YOUNG JERRY

Mom, I wrote a song. For us. For now. Wanna hear it?

MOM

I'm all ears. (she indicates them, smiling)

YOUNG JERRY (sings a cappella – thus: no music track)

I LOVE DRYING DISHES  
WHILE YOU DO THE WASHIN'  
I'M REALLY GOOD AT IT  
I DO IT WITH CAUTION.

I NEVER BREAK ANY  
I DRY THEM COMPLETELY  
AND WHEN I AM FINISHED  
I STACK THEM ALL NEATLY.

MOM

Nice, Jerry. Very nice. But two can play that game. Let me think. (beat) Oh! Got it.

SINGS (a cappella – no music track)  
I LOVE WASHING DISHES  
'CAUSE THAT'S WHEN YOU SING  
AND I'D RATHER HEAR YOU  
THAN LISTEN TO BING.

YOUNG JERRY

Mom, do you really mean that? Or are you just saying it 'cause you're my Mom?

MOM

Mean it? I'm still getting phone calls about your bar mitzvah: "Jerry sings so beautifully I could cry! Oh, that voice!" You could be a professional, Jerry. If you wanted to.

YOUNG JERRY

I guess I'd like to Mom, but---

DAD

Naomi, don't encourage him, please. He should be thinking about a real profession. Not some cockamamie---

(The scout crosses to left mike)

**VO-The doorbell rings.**

MOM

Who's there?

SCOUT

A talent scout, Ma'm.

MOM

A talent scout? Could he have been at Jerry's bar mitzvah?

DAD

Open the door and we'll find out. (she starts to cross) No, wait. Let me do it. (He crosses left as mom and Jerry counter right) Yes?

SCOUT (hands him a brochure, enters, and crosses center with Dad. bursts into speech enthusiastically)

Yes I'm a talent scout from MGM

Here. (offers one to dad) Have a cigar.

I'm a talent scout from MGM

And I can make...your kid...a star.

DAD

Since when does MGM come to the Bronx to look for talent?

SCOUT

My MGM is in the Bronx. On Fordham Road. We teach the Mickey Rooneys and the Judy Garlands of tomorrow. Did you know that John Garfield came from the Bronx? And June Allyson?

DAD

But MGM? How can you use their name? They'll sue the pants off you.

SCOUT

Nah! First of all, we don't make movies. Not even Coming Attractions. And second of all, can a hundred lawyers take away the names we were born with? Meyers. Grossman. Moscovitz. (beat) See? MGM. And that last M? That's me. Harry Moscovitz. (hands Dad his oversized card. Dad crosses left mikes to inspect the card.)

SCOUT (a capella "rhyme-speak")

We teach kids how to dance and we teach them how to act

Of course they don't all go to Broadway. That's a fact!

But a kid with real ambition can drive a fancy car

And I promise you, sir!

We'll make your kid a star.

We teach kids breath control

We teach 'em how to sing

Best of all we teach 'em how

To grab that big brass ring.

MOM (flustered – rhyme-speak)  
Would you like a glass of tea?  
Would you like a piece of cake?

SCOUT  
No thanks, I'm here to orchestrate  
Your kid's big break.

DAD (“rhyme-speak”)  
But you haven't heard him sing.  
Howdaya know he's got the stuff?

SCOUT  
My sister-in-law Shirley told me enough.  
She said, "Harry, ring 4-g. There's a kid just turned thirteen.  
He sings like an angel. He out-sings Bobby Breen.”

MOM  
Shirley is your sister-in-law, Mr. Moscovitz? Shirley from next door in 4-f? She's my  
best friend.

MOM (continuing)  
Shirley's not exaggerating.  
Jerry sings right from the heart.

SCOUT  
Ma'am, we can make your son a star  
And today's the time to start.

MOM  
Jerry's a really good actor, too. In second grade, he had only one line in the school  
pageant, but he stole the show. Tell the gentleman about it, Jerry.

(Jerry crosses to center mikes next to Moskowitz.)

YOUNG JERRY  
Well, I was dressed like a peanut. My Mom sewed the costume. And I said, "I'm not a  
nut. I'm a nutshell!" (Pause as Moscovitz looks at him blankly.) It was a show about  
littering.

SCOUT  
Oh. (smiles with an effort) Right. Got it!

MOM

Everybody thought he was adorable. Well, he was. The next year he played the part of Japan in a play about the League of Nations. He wore a kimono and he had a wonderful Japanese accent. (turns to her son) What was it you said?

YOUNG JERRY

And to the League, we plomise to be tluе.

SCOUT

Great! A great reading! I like it...a kid who sings and does comedy, too. But time to start, Jerry. Sing me a song. (beat) Not your bar mitzvah parshah.

YOUNG JERRY

I dunno. (Looks at his parents)

MOM

How about "Rainbow on the River," Jerry? The one Bobby Breen sang on the Eddie Cantor Show.

SCOUT

Great choice. I like it.

YOUNG JERRY

SINGS (a cappella)

(shyly at first, then with more confidence, the first half-dozen bars of the song)

WHEN THERE'S A RAINBOW ON THE RIVER

THE SKIES ARE CLEARING

YOU'LL SOON BE HEARING A HEAVENLY SONG

ALL THE DAY LONG.

WHEN THERE'S A RAINBOW ON THE RIVER

THE BIRDS ARE MATING

THEY'RE BUSY DATING EACH OTHER ALONE...

(Jerry pauses. Mom looks at Talent Scout proudly and expectantly)

SCOUT

Bobby Breen? He sings circles around Bobby. Yeah, he cracked once, but that's where we come in. A couple of years with my MGM and he'll be ready for the west coast MGM...big time.

(SINGS "I PREDICT")

I PREDICT

YES I PREDICT

THAT THIS KID IS GOING FAR

I PREDICT. I'M NEVER WRONG!

WE'RE GONNA MAKE THIS KID A STAR.

I PREDICT  
THAT YOUR BOY  
IS HEADED FOR THE TOP  
I'M NEVER WRONG  
AND I PREDICT  
THAT HE'S GONNA GO NON-STOP.

HE'S GOT THE LOOKS  
HE'S GOT THE PIPES  
HE'S GOT PERSONALITY  
MGM WILL TEACH HIM ALL THE REST  
HE'LL MAKE IT BIG I GUARANTEE.

I PREDICT  
HIS TIME WILL COME  
YOUR BOY IS GONNA REACH THE HEIGHTS  
I'M NEVER WRONG  
IT WON'T BE LONG  
YOU'LL SEE HIS NAME UP THERE IN LIGHTS.  
WE'RE GONNA MAKE THIS KID A STAR.

DAD (crosses to center mike left and sings)  
TWO YEARS YOU SAY?  
IT WON'T COME CHEAP  
TO MAKE OUR SON A STAR.

MOM (crosses to center mike right and sings)  
DON'T WORRY, DEAR  
IT'S QUITE ALRIGHT (beat)  
I'VE GOT MY COOKIE JAR!

SCOUT  
Here. Take my card. See you at the studio. Saturday morning. 10 a.m.

ALL (SING)  
WE'RE GONNA MAKE  
THIS KID  
A STAR!

(Moskowitz sits left. Mom, Dad and Jerry cross far right, ready to re-enter)

**VO-ACT ONE. SCENE 5 Mom, Dad, and Jerry outside a smoked-glass door with the words "MGM Performance Studio" in gold letters on it.**

(Family comes to mikes right)

DAD

This must be the place.

**VO- 8x10 glossies of young singers and dancers mixed with studio shots of stars cover the shabby waiting room's walls.**

(Family crosses to center mikes while looking around)

MOM

Look. Fred Astaire. Ginger Rogers. Bing Crosby. Rudy Vallee. Betty Boop. Were they all from The Bronx? Mr. Moscovitz didn't mention them.

DAD

Maybe they were just passing through. (wipes brow with handkerchief) We should have asked what lessons cost.

YOUNG JERRY

( looking at imaginary pic downstage) "To Marvin Meyers, who taught me everything I know...Sara Goldstein."..."To Mr. Grossman, star-maker extraordinaire...Gregg Levitsky."..."A million thanks to Meyers, Grossman, and Moscovitz for putting me on the stairway to stardom...Stella Esposito."

DAD

Sara Goldstein. Stella Esposito? They weren't in any movie I ever went to. And that Fred Astaire photo? It doesn't have anything on it but his autograph. Neither does Bing Crosby's. Anybody could get pictures like that. Just by writing to a Hollywood studio. This is an expensive idea and it's a bad idea. Let's go.

Dropping Moscovitz's business card on a table, he nods to Mom. Torn, she hesitates. Dad stops and frowns impatiently. Reluctantly, she accedes and cross to chairs stage right. Jerry starts to follow, then runs back to the table and picks up the card. He gazes at it wistfully.

YOUNG JERRY (a cappella)

WILL I GROW UP TO BE A COP?

COULD I BE A BASEBALL PLAYER?

SELL INSURANCE LIKE MY DAD?

OR...MAYBE RUN FOR MAYOR?

WHEN YOU'RE THIRTEEN IT'S HARD TO KNOW  
WHO YOU'LL BE...OR WHO YOU ARE  
AT LEAST I KNOW WHAT I WON'T BE  
I GUESS I'LL NEVER BE A STAR.

Exit to chair stage right

**VO- ACT ONE. SCENE 4. Back to the ante-room with Jerry and Leila continuing their serious talk.**

(Jerry and Leila cross to center mikes.)

JERRY

Eddie played me like an old harmonica. The way he challenged me after my song? I knew where he was going. I just couldn't help following. (beat) But Leila , we've been there. It takes ten years to become an overnight star. You think he'll let me out of the bet if I say I was just kidding?

LEILA

It didn't sound like he was kidding. But remember how I warned you you'd be singing to a tough bunch of pros? Well you did. And you won them over.

JERRY

I did, didn't I?

LEILA

You absolutely did. (whimsically) And all you need now is a booking in Vegas, a hit record, and a shot on the Tonight Show.

JERRY

While I'm at it, I might as well walk on water.

LEILA

Hey, we helped Eddie's impossible dream come true. And if the audience throws tomatoes...we'll make a salad. (Jerry grins appreciatively and embraces Leila .)

JERRY

Hold onto that thought Leila . We might need it.

(Jerry paces, then sings.)

JERRY'S SONG: LIFE AIN'T OVER 'TIL IT'S OVER

Verse—(pensively. Can take mike out and cross downstage and play full stage)

I'M AT AN AGE WHEN I KEEP WONDERING  
WHAT'S THE MEANING OF LIFE?  
SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO HAVE GREAT CHILDREN  
AND A PERFECT WIFE.

BUT SOMEHOW I KEEP WONDERING  
WHAT I MIGHT HAVE BEEN  
AND WHERE DID I GET LOST?  
AND IS IT TOO LATE TO BEGIN?

(enthusiastically)

BUT...LIFE AIN'T OVER  
TIL IT'S OVER  
YOGI BERRA GOT IT RIGHT.  
LIFE AIN'T OVER  
TIL IT'S OVER  
DON'T GIVE UP  
WITHOUT A FIGHT.

(to Leila) YOU AGREE WITH YOGI  
AND SO SHOULD I  
IT'S MUCH TOO SOON FOR DREAMS TO DIE.  
WHY SHOULD YOUR FUTURE  
GET STUCK IN YOUR PAST?  
IF YOU CAN BE FIRST, WHY SETTLE FOR LAST?

LIFE AIN'T OVER  
'TIL IT'S OVER  
JOHN PAUL JONES GAVE US A TIP  
NO BATTLE'S OVER  
'TIL IT'S OVER  
HE THUNDERED: DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP.

WHEN YOU RISE AND SHINE AT SEVEN  
AND YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO DO  
WHEN YOUR CALENDAR IS FULL OF NOTES  
AND THE BLANK SPACES ARE FEW.

WHEN YOU'VE GOT PLANS FOR TOMORROW  
THE DAY AFTER AND NEXT WEEK TOO  
THERE ARE PLENTY OF YEARS LEFT TO BORROW  
AND PLENTY OF LIFE IN YOU.

ACCEPT EACH CHALLENGE  
THEY KEEP YOU YOUNG  
TAKE EVERY BET  
EACH DAUNTING DARE  
CAUSE LIFE AIN'T OVER  
TIL IT'S OVER  
DOESN'T MATTER  
IF YOU FALL ON YOUR DERRIERE.

LIFE AIN'T OVER  
TIL IT'S OVER  
DON'T SHOP FOR YOUR COFFIN YET  
LIFE'S NOT OVER  
TIL IT'S OVER  
IS IT EVER TOO LATE?  
NOT YET!

LEILA

(Jerry walks back to put mike back and she embraces him) And Jerry, I pronounce you (kisses him, he responds)...very much alive.

JERRY

Thank you, doctor.

LEILA

But now what? Full speed ahead is all very well if you know where you're going. But you've had nothing to do with show business for years.

JERRY

And I still haven't had a voice lesson. (Looks thoughtful....reaches into his pocket...)

LEILA

You need someone who can give you a strategy. At least some pointers.

JERRY

(thoughtfully pulls an old worn business card out of his wallet, gazes at it...) I have one word for you: Moscowitz.

(Leila stares at him, baffled. Then...)

LEILA

Moscowitz?

(Jerry and Leila cross off right during voice over then re-enter to center mikes)

**VO- ACT I, SCENE 5**

**The same MGM office we saw in Scene 3, but somewhat the worse for wear. Of the enormous letters “MGM” on the wall, a solitary “M” remains. Jerry and Leila enter. Jerry looks around, nods in amusement at a huge poster of Eddie Hunter, inscribed: “To Harry and MGM, with all my thanks for the jump-start...” There is no one at the receptionist’s desk, so Jerry gives the call bell an emphatic whack. Sound of a toilet FLUSHING. Moskowitz, also somewhat the worse for wear, appears, wiping his hands on his trousers.**

MOSKOWITZ (entering to stage left mikes)  
Chelsea? Chelsea! (shakes head) Kids these days. Excuse me...do you have an appointment?

JERRY  
I’m afraid I don’t. I tried to call, but the old number didn’t work. And MGM isn’t in the Bronx phone book any more. What happened?

MOSKOWITZ  
MGM? You remember us from MGM? (beat. Crosses to center mikes) Well...it took a while, but the other MGM finally noticed us. Long story short, they sued, the no good anti-semitts.

JERRY  
And?

MOSKOWITZ  
We had a stroke of luck. Well, Grossman had a stroke...so we had to change the name anyway.

JERRY  
To---

MOSKOWITZ  
M&M.

JERRY  
M&M? But that’s---

MOSKOWITZ  
Yeah, yeah, I know. They were filing papers, but we were too quick for them. My brother took Grossman’s place in the business, so we changed the name again.

JERRY  
M&M&M?

MOSKOWITZ

Psssh. We came up with something catchier: 3M.

JERRY

You're kidding. So did they sue you too?

MOSKOWITZ

Who?

JERRY

The 3M Company. They make scotch tape.

MOSKOWITZ

We don't. We make audition tapes.

JERRY

Yes, but 3M...

MOSKOWITZ

(sighs) Long story short, it's all seltzer under the bridge. Also irrelevant.

JERRY

Irrelevant?

MOSCOWITZ

That, too. I'm the only one left. So it's just---(gestures toward single "M" on the wall)

JERRY

(nods) Mmm.

MOSKOWITZ

Like I tell the young kids, keep it simple. That's my contention. So, young man, what can I do for you?

JERRY

I'm Jerry Reiss.

MOSKOWITZ

Yes? And?

JERRY

That doesn't ring a bell?

MOSKOWITZ

Sure it does. I just can't hear it. Can you give me maybe a hint?

(Jerry hands him the old business card. Moskowitz looks at it, shakes his head in disbelief.)

MOSKOWITZ

You got this where...the Museum of Natural History?

JERRY

You came to our apartment. On the Grand Concourse. I've bought new wallets a dozen times since then, but I could never bring myself to throw away your card. You said I sang better than Bobby Breen. (sings a capella): WHEN THERE'S A RAINBOW ON THE RIVER, THE BIRDS ARE MATING, THEY'RE BUSY DATING EACH OTHER ALONE." You said...you said you'd make me a star.

MOSKOWITZ

(hands back the card) Pssh, call that a hint? I said that to all the boys. (Jerry is crestfallen.) Well, not all the boys. Just the ones with talent. But over the years... When was that, anyway? It must have been—

JERRY

Hmm. About fifty years ago.

MOSKOWITZ

(chuckles, shakes head) Fifty years...And, forgive me, how long did you work with us?

JERRY

I didn't. We came to the studio, but then...my dad got cold feet.

MOSKOWITZ

And this is my fault?

JERRY

No, no... What I mean is...I need a second chance.

MOSKOWITZ

(stares at him in astonishment, then) May I speak frankly? At your age, most people are thinking of retiring. Not starting a new career.

JERRY

You don't look so retired to me.

MOSKOWITZ

If my shmendrik of a grandson would go into the family business instead of digging in people's brains with a scalpel, then I could retire.

(A teenage girl enters to stage right mikes with earbuds in, texting furiously.)

JERRY

How about... Elsie?

CHELSEA

Chelsea.

MOSKOWITZ

That pisher? She's just an intern. My cousin Bernie's granddaughter.

JERRY

But she could develop.

MOSKOWITZ

(looks at her, shakes head) Doubt it. She's 17 already.

JERRY

I meant...

MOSKOWITZ

Besides, her last name is Steinberg. What am I gonna call the business, MS? And get sued by the disease?

JERRY

There's always S & M...

MOSKOWITZ

Like the green stamps? (Jerry and Leila look at each other acknowledging his missing the joke) Feh. But, as it happens, this young lady will be extremely helpful to your second career, and I will explain you why. Remember this fellow?

**VO- Moskowitz points to the huge poster of Eddie Hunter**

MOSKOWITZ

One of our most distinguished alumni.

JERRY

Funny you should men—

MOSKOWITZ

Time was, you couldn't turn on the radio without hearing him. The charts weren't big enough to hold all his hits. And where is he now?

JERRY

Actually, he's on his honeymoon. In Antigua.

MOSKOWITZ

Exactly. An antique! And you know why? Because he couldn't adapt. Long story short, the world changed, and he stood still.

JERRY

Well, he's not—

MOSKOWITZ

Of course, if he'd stuck with me, things would have been different. That's my contention.

JERRY

It's funny you should mention Eddie. You see, last week I was at his wedding and we made a bet. My twenty grand against his million. That I could make it big as a singer. In... one year.

MOSKOWITZ

A year? Are you serious?

JERRY

I know, I know, I was out of my—

MOSKOWITZ

A whole year? What is this, archeology we're talking? Young man, this is the Digital Age, not the Jurassic! Why...today, we can make you famous tomorrow!

JERRY

(gazes at him in astonishment, then) Well, that's great, but... Digital? Me? Well sure, I write on a computer. But anything more than Cut and Paste, I call my 8-year-old granddaughter.

MOSKOWITZ

Young man, so do I. Well, not your granddaughter, obviously. Look: for us, digital is a foreign language. But Chelsea here is a native speaker. Not only that, but a trendsetter! An opinion leader! An anti-social networker. She has... how many Faces on Friendbook?

CHELSEA

(rolls her eyes) Friends on Facebook.

MOSKOWITZ

That's what I said.

CHELSEA

Five thousand two hundred and twenty-three.

JERRY

Wow. You must be very... friendly. (She gives him a dirty look)

MOSKOWITZ

She is. She is. So friendly that when she gets to work on you, you will spread like a social disease, in the best sense of the word. You will go spiral!

CHELSEA

Viral.

MOSKOWITZ

Wait. Let me spell it out for you.

(Jerry and Leila cross left)

SINGS: "Digital This"

(INTRO SPOKEN)

When I was young, there were simple rooms  
For launching a lad into orbit.

He started out in a two-bit dive  
And worked his way up to a four-bit.  
A record – that was the name of the game  
Just like the puck in hockey.  
You cut some tracks and then you waxed  
The palm of some greasy disk jockey.

But now for vinyl  
It's curtains, it's final  
Even CDs  
Are feeling the squeeze...

78 – 45 – 33 – HECK!  
(Mimes hiking cd to Jerry who avoids it)

Don't worry, it's empty  
It's got nothing in it  
'cause any way you stack it  
Any way you spin it  
Now we got more revolutions per minute...

(song proper)  
DIGITAL THIS, DIGITAL THAT  
INTERNET  
DONTCHA GET  
THAT'S WHERE IT'S AT?

YOU GOTTA TWIT  
(**Chelsea:** Tweet)

YOU GOTTA GIGGLE  
(**Chelsea:** Google)

YOU GOTTA BOOKFACE AND YOURSPACE  
(**Chelsea:** Whatever.)

YOU GOTTA BE FRIENDED  
YOU GOTTA BE SHARED  
BUT FRIEND, YOU'LL DEAD-END  
IF YOU'RE TECHNO-IMPAIRED

WINKEN LINKIN' TO BLINKEN  
BLINKEN LINKIN' TO NOD  
A TWEET FROM BIEBER  
AND ACH DU LIEBER!  
YOU'RE ON EVERYBODY'S YOUPOD.  
(**Chelsea:** iPod)

ALGORITHM  
I GOT GOOGLE  
I GOT MYSPACE  
WHO COULD ASK FOR ANYTHING MORE?

VIRTUAL THIS, VIRTUAL THAT  
CYBERSPACE  
THAT'S THE PLACE  
THAT'S WHERE IT'S AT?

YOU GOT YOUR I-TUBE?  
(**Chelsea:** Youtube)

YOU GOT YOUR YOU-TUNES?  
(**Chelsea:** Itunes)

YOU GOT YOUR BLEG? YOUR BLAG?  
(**Chelsea:** Whatever)

DONTCHA BE TIMID, PAL  
DONTCHA BE FRIGHTENED  
A DIGITAL MIDGET'LL  
GROW TO A TITAN

ABRAHAM LINKIN' TO ISAAC  
ISAAC LINKIN' TO JAKE  
YOU'RE HOT! YOU'RE TRENDING!  
THEY'RE CLICKING! THEY'RE SENDING!  
WHO CARES IF THE WHOLE THING'S A FAKE?

(Dancing the Hokey Pokey; Jerry follows his lead)  
YOU PUT YOUR ITUBE IN (**Chelsea:** iTunes)  
YOU TAKE YOUR YOUTUNES OUT (**Chelsea:** youtube!)

AND SHAKE 'EM ALL ABOUT  
YOU CATCH A BUNCH OF EARDRUMS  
IN YOUR WIDE WORLD WEB  
THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!

DIGITAL THIS, DIGITAL THAT  
(**Jerry and Chelsea:** Digital this. Digital that.)

ALL  
THAT'S WHAT  
IT'S ALL  
ABOUT!

(Moskowitz and Chelsie exit right to chairs. Jerry and Leila cross right to center on VO)

**VO- ACT ONE. SCENE 6. Jerry and Leila in their apartment.**

LEILA  
Okay, Sweetie, we've waited long enough.

JERRY  
But Moskowitz said---

LEILA  
It's like holding a Power Ball ticket and waiting for Saturday night for the winning numbers. Or there's a box of chocolates you can't wait to open ---

JERRY  
I feel the same way. But Mr. Moskowitz said to be patient. He said, "Don't keep looking. Give it time."

LEILA

One week, right? Well, according to my calculations it's exactly seven days since Elsie---

JERRY  
Chelsea.

LEILA  
...since Chelsea put your video on YouTube.

JERRY  
Are you sure?

LEILA  
Jerry... Are you afraid to look?

JERRY  
Afraid? Of course not. I mean, I'm nervous, sure. But optimistic. Very very very cautiously optimistic. I've been looking at YouTube videos and the numbers are amazing. Al Martino's video of "Daddy's Little Girl" has almost 300,000 views – and he's been dead for years. Carly Rae Jepsen -- 238,306,877 hits. And she only came in third on Canadian Idol. 238,306,877 hits? That's probably more than the population of Western Europe.

LEILA  
I'll be satisfied if you hit the population of Andorra. For starters.

JERRY  
Because I'm so Andorrable?

(Leila crosses to chairs and gets an iPad and crosses back and hands it to Jerry. Leila looks over his shoulder. We hear his hip-hop video autostart.

JERRY  
I'M THE VOICE OF EXPERIENCE  
SO LISTEN UP GUYS  
I'VE BEEN THERE BEFORE  
SEEN THE WORLD THROUGH YOUR EYES

OH SURE THAT WAS  
A LONG TIME BACK  
BUT LIKE YOU I TRIED  
TO GET MY GIRLFRIENDS IN THE SACK.

LEILA (She stops the video)  
I don't think this is the best material for you.

JERRY  
Of course it isn't, but if this is what sells...

LEILA (a bit suspiciously)  
Jerry...who was that chick you were dancing with, and why was she wearing a raccoon mask? And hardly anything else?

JERRY  
Chelsea booked her. I just showed up. I'm sorry Leila. We don't have to play it all the way through.

LEILA  
No. No. (wryly) I can't wait to see what happens next. I just hope our grandchildren don't see it. Hit the start button. (He hits it.)

NOW I DON'T SAY YOU SHOULDN'T  
BUT KEEP IN MIND THIS WARNING  
BEFORE YOU GET HER IN THE SHEETS  
THINK ABOUT TOMORROW MORNING

WHEN SHE TEARFULLY TEXTS YOU  
AND SHE SHOWS UP CRYIN'  
JACK, YOU KNOCKED ME UP  
AND I SWEAR I AIN'T LYIN'.

SO KEEP YOUR ZIPPER ZIPPED, JACK  
DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD  
SAVE YOUR SPERM BANK DEPOSIT  
FOR WHEN YOU GET WED.

DO YOUR ROCKIN' AND YOUR ROLLIN'...  
ON YOUR HONEYMOON BED.

LEILA  
I can't believe what I just heard! Who wrote these lyrics? Not you, I hope. (beat)  
But...how many nibbles did you get? Or hits? Or whatever they're called?

(long pause, then sorrowfully)

JERRY  
23 views, Leila. A whole week and only 23. That's three point something views a day.

LEILA

But, were there any reviews? Or comments?

JERRY

(brightening) Actually, there is a comment!

LEILA

From a record company vice-president?

JERRY

No, from...Chelsea. She says, "This is sick." (beat) It's a compliment, I think.

LEILA

You know what, Honey? Moscowitz is right. We need to give this time to catch on. But maybe, while we're waiting – and hoping – you should try something a little more...

JERRY

A little more me?

LEILA

(nods) The bar on the corner, McGinty's—they have an Open Mike, don't they?

JERRY

Tuesday nights.

LEILA

You could sing a few of your songs. Real songs.

(Jerry and Leila cross to stage left mikes as EMCEE and singer cross to center mikes from their chairs stage right)

**VO- ACT ONE. SCENE 8 An Open Mike at a small club in the Village. Jerry and Leila are at a ringside table. A singer walks offstage to applause. (Singer does so) The emcee introduces the next performer.**

EMCEE

And now a gentleman who tells me this will be his first appearance since he knocked them dead at his niece's wedding...

JERRY

Gee, I wish I hadn't told him that.

EMCEE

A great big welcome, please, for Jerry Reiss.

JERRY (to LEILA )

Gosh, Leila . My heart's pounding so hard it's going to tear a hole in my jacket.

LEILA

Just get up there and knock them dead, Jerry. Well, not dead. Just semi-conscious.

EMCEE

Jerry Reiss, where are you?

(Jerry approaches the piano and hands his music to the pianist, who plays his intro. EMCEE crosses right and sits. Jerry crosses to center mike but comes in too late. He turns and embarrassedly asks the pianist to repeat the intro. This time he hits it correctly and sings the first two lines. Suddenly, he stops. Pianist looks bewildered.)

JERRY

I'm sorry. I forgot to do the introduction: "Thousands of hopeful young performers flock to Manhattan each year. Fortune smiles at a fortunate few. It laughs at the others." (he turns to pianist) Okay. Play, maestro.

JERRY SINGS: "CANYONS OF NEW YORK"

CANYONS.

CANYONS

GLITTERING GLASS CANYONS

ECHOING TO A MILLION RESTLESS FEET

CANYONS

CANYONS

COLD UNCARING CANYONS

WHERE THE WIND BLOWS PAINFUL MEMORIES DOWN THE STREET

THE FIRST TIME I STROLLED THE CANYONS OF NEW YORK

THE DREAMS I DREAMED WERE SKYSCRAPER TALL

OF TALENT SCOUTS RECRUITING ME

HEAD WAITERS SALUTING ME

IN A YEAR OR TWO I'D HAVE IT ALL.

I WOULDN'T WALK. I'D LIMOUSINE.

AND AT MY SIDE A BEAUTY QUEEN

A DIFFERENT MISS AMERICA EACH DAY

SMILING 'CHEESE' FOR PHOTOGRAPHS

GRANDLY SIGNING AUTOGRAPHS

LUNCHING WITH SINATRA AND TORME.

THE WIND WHISTLES THROUGH THE CANYONS OF NEW YORK

THE NEWS AND TIMES BLOW PAST THE NEW YORK POST

I PLOD ALONG UNHAPPILY  
REGRETTING THINGS I'LL NEVER BE  
INADEQUATELY EXORCISING GHOSTS.

THERE'S THE CORNER WE MET ON  
HERE'S WHERE WE STOPPED TO KISS  
WE WERE ON TOP OF THE WORLD THEN  
HOW IN THE WORLD DID WE MISS?

(The pianist keeps playing, but Jerry stops. He panics. He stumbles to the piano and tries to read the lyrics on the sheet music. He can't. He reaches in his breast pocket for his reading glasses, but they're not there. The pianist stops playing. Jerry's shoulders sag. He walks to the microphone where he is met by the emcee who comes back to center mikes.)

JERRY (to emcee)

I'm sorry. I...I forgot the lyrics. Which is ridiculous because I wrote the song.

EMCEE

Well, go home and learn them. And when you're ready, come back and try again. But be forewarned. You'll go on last – when nobody's here but the busboys.

JERRY

I guess I deserve that. (to the audience) Looks like I'm not ready for prime time. (faint applause as he slinks back to Leila while EMCEE mimes at mike)

JERRY (to Leila )

I sure made a mess of that. Moscovitz warned me. Never look the audience in the eye. You might get distracted by the spinach on some lady's teeth. I think I saw broccoli....

LEILA

Well, it's better to make your mess at the bottom of the ladder. And, Jerry, the part that you sang? You were wonderful.

JERRY

Thanks. But I'm beginning to wonder if all the stress is worth even ten million dollars.

LEILA

Maybe it isn't. But don't decide now. Sleep on it. If you still feel this way by dawn's early light, just phone Eddie and give your concession speech.

JERRY

He'll laugh his head off. Would you consider...?

LEILA

Calling him for you? No way. You got yourself into this. Sure, he'll laugh. But just man up... and we'll move on.

(Exit emcee and Leila. Jerry to stage right mikes and Eddie at stage left mikes)

**VO- ACT ONE. SCENE 9 Jerry and Eddie are in a phone conversation.**

EDDIE

And to what do I owe the pleasure of this call? Don't tell me! You've won the bet and you want me to write you a check. Where are you opening? Caesar's Palace? Or...no...more appropriate. The Mirage?

JERRY

Okay, Eddie, okay. Don't make this harder for me than it already is. I just wanted to tell you that every month when my Social Security check comes in, I'll be signing the back and mailing it off to you.

EDDIE

Ha! I knew you'd quit. For a bathroom baritone like you -- Mission Impossible! Why do you think I was willing to bet a million? Because I knew you didn't have a chance in a million. You don't have the training. You don't have the discipline, and you sure don't have the voice.

(Leila walks in from stage right chair and listens.)

JERRY (angered)

Eddie, I *was* ready to give up. Ready to pay off. But that gracious little speech of yours? Well, it changed my mind. Don't spend that twenty-thousand yet. I've still got ten months to win the bet. Ten months and a million reasons. And the most important reason? The chance to make you eat those words. (hangs up)

(Eddie sits)

LEILA

(applauds) Bravo! Now that's the man I married.

JERRY (determinedly)

Let's check YouTube again. It's been, what three more days? (Leila hands him iPad)

LEILA

Four.

JERRY

Eleven since it went live. Luck, be a lady... (We hear his rap autostart.)

LEILA

So?

JERRY

(pause as rap continues, then...) 45 hits.

LEILA

(encouraging) Well... the pace is picking up. Maybe it will go...

JERRY

Viral? (beat) It isn't even bacterial.

He clicks, sound cuts off abruptly. Silence. Then...

JERRY (cont.)

But wait... There's a comment. Not Chelsea. Another one..... It says, "Jerry, this is not your demographic. Call me!" There's a phone number and it's signed, "Mimi Whitestone, Whitestone Talent Agency, Inc."

LEILA

Wasn't she Eddie's first wife?

JERRY

Yes, she was. But, more to the point, Leila. Mimi was Eddie's first agent. (He turns off the computer and walks off right with Leila, determined.)

**VO- ACT I. SCENE 10 MIMI Whitestone's office.**

(Jerry and Leila are mikes right, Mimi center.)

MIMI

...So when I came across you singing on YouTube – which is something I do every couple of weeks just in case there's actually some new talent there – I almost spilled my Starbucks. A guy in his 60s singing rap? If that was your idea, you need a brain transplant. If it was someone else's, he should be tarred, feathered, and run out of town on a skateboard.

LEILA

It was a 17-year-old. And she meant well.

MIMI

And to think in another year she'll be allowed to vote! God save our country!

JERRY

Ms. Whitestone, if you asked me to come here just so you could tell me how bad I was...

MIMI

I asked you to come here because I liked what I heard the night you sang at Eddie's wedding. Look, you're not Pavarotti and you're not Sinatra either, but for a schlepper on Social Security, you're not half-bad. And from what I saw you've certainly got chutzpah.

JERRY

Well, thanks for that.

MIMI

While you were singing, I was thinking, "What could I do for him? If anything." On the evidence, not much. How do I book a guy who's never sung professionally, probably takes gold shots for arthritis, and could die of old age onstage?

JERRY

Oh, is that all? Okay, I take out a ten million dollar insurance policy. I name you beneficiary. If I die onstage, you never have to work again.

MIMI

Don't bother calling your broker, Jerry. I enjoy challenges, and if there ever was one, it's you. Anyway, the most fun in this business comes in signing somebody nobody ever heard of and making him famous and me rich.

JERRY

Can you make me just a little rich?

MIMI

Maybe. I hear singers all day long. Singers with youth, great looks, God-given talent. God hands out too much talent. So they make rounds by day and wait tables by night. After years of waiting to star on TV, they're selling TVs. Or real estate. But Jerry, you've got something they don't have.

JERRY

I do? What?

MIMI

Old age.

JERRY

I was afraid you'd say that.

MIMI

Don't be afraid of it. Use it. But rapping, trying to be young, won't work. Be yourself. And if you can put together a 40-minute act, I can try selling you as...as...how about "The Silver Fox with the Golden Voice?"

LEILA

Look, I hate to pour the ice-water. But how many 70-year-old ladies go to pop concerts and buy CDs?

MIMI

The demographics on Sun Belt grandmas aren't bad. A lot of them have money to spend. And senior senioritas with nothing to do but bake brownies for church suppers will run a temperature every time Jerry opens his mouth to sing.

LEILA

I'm not sure I like the sound of that. Couldn't you just get him on American Idol? I know the performers are mostly young, but how about that English woman? Wasn't she...?

MIMI (annoyed)

Listen, Mrs. Reiss...you do the laundry and I'll do the thinking.

LEILA

Listen, Ms. Blackstone. Kindly do not patronize me. Yes, I do the laundry. The one time Jerry did it our clothes all turned pink. (beat) But I sang back-up for Eddie Hunter when he was getting started, so I do know something about the music business.

MIMI

Okay. Leila, maybe you were in show biz in the Gay Nineties, but things have changed since then. American Idol? They're booked more than a year in advance. We don't have that kind of time – not if we want to see that bum lose his million bucks. Frankly, nothing would give me more pleasure. I helped him make him a lot more than that before he showed me the door. But this time...(Mimi rears back and sings)

MIMI'S SONG: "20 PERCENT OF EVERYTHING"

FROM TODAY ON I'VE A RIGHT  
TO TWENTY PERCENT OF EVERYTHING  
FOR EVERY SONG YOU SING (waves document)  
RIGHT HERE IN BLACK AND WHITE.

TWENTY PERCENT OFF THE TOP  
RECORDINGS, CLUBS, APPEARANCES  
I'M IN CHARGE OF CLEARANCES  
AND YOU PERFORM NON-STOP.

IN CASE YOU THINK THAT'S A LOT OF MONEY  
WELL THINK AGAIN. LEMME TELL YOU, HONEY  
THAT IT'S NOT HALF OF WHAT I OUGHTTA GET.  
I WORK MY FINGERS TO THE BONE  
DIALING THIS STUPID TELEPHONE (pulls it out of purse)  
WORKIN' HARDER THAN ANY BROAD YOU EVER MET

TWENTY PERCENT OFF THE TOP  
I SOMETIMES WISH THAT I COULD STOP  
IT'S 100 PERCENT PURE AGGRAVATION, TOO.  
MY CLIENTS NEVER STOP COMPLAINING  
THEY EVEN BLAME ME WHEN IT'S RAINING  
I BET IT'S GONNA BE THE SAME WITH YOU.

(Jerry shakes his head in vigorous denial.)

ONE HUNDRED PERCENT OF YOUR PARANOIA  
"HOW COME I'M MAKIN' LESS THAN LATOYA?"  
WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG  
IT'S ALWAYS THE AGENT'S FAULT.  
ULCERS AND MIGRAINES TWO HUNDRED PERCENT  
TEN MINUTES OFF IS A BLESSED EVENT  
SOME DAYS I WISH IT WOULD COME TO A SCREECHING HALT.

TWENTY PERCENT OF EVERYTHING  
TWENTY PERCENT OF EACH SONG YOU SING  
BUT TO TELL THE TRUTH SOMETIMES I WANNA BAWL  
CAUSE TWENTY PERCENT OF EVERYTHING  
IS WORTH THE WORK FOR A REAL SURE THING  
BUT WHAT IF IT'S TWENTY PERCENT  
OF NOTHING AT ALL?

LEILA

Not to worry, Mimi. It's gonna be 20 percent of a lot of money. That bet with Eddie is news. It's Man Bets Dog. Why, People Magazine will sit up and beg for an interview.

MIMI

Exactly right. Jerry's kind of Grandma Moses with tonsils. People love that. Chevalier was still selling out houses at 70. And Sinatra at 75.

LEILA

And we're gonna have something they didn't: Grannysoxers!

MIMI AND JERRY

Grannysoxers??

(Mimi exits as Grannysoxers come to center. Jerry and Leila at mikes right)

**VO- ACT ONE. SCENE 11 Leila and Jerry's living room. TWO GRANDMOTHERLY WOMEN are holding a meeting.**

LEILA

The forty-second annual meeting of the Eddie Hunter International Fanclub Alumni Association is hereby called to order. Hmm, not many of the faithful left, are there?

SUE

We'll keep coming 'til they measure us for wheelchairs.

EDNA

Yeah. You're looking at two bobbysoxers who never grew up.

SUE

I've still got acne, but now I cover it up. With liver spots.

EDNA

Who wants to grow up? I liked it better when my mother did the laundry.

SUE

Those were the days. We had only three responsibilities: Do your homework. Wash the dishes. Vote 100 times apiece for EddieHunter in Brad Phillips' Battle of the Baritones.

EDNA

Geez, could that be what started my arthritis? I wrote Eddie's name on so many postcards, I got writer's cramp in my whole body.

JERRY

Too late to apply for Workman's Comp, Edna.

EDNA

Nah, it was worth it. Eddie would never have been elected King of the Baritones without all us busy little teenage bees stuffing the ballot box: Eddie's Steadies.

SUE

Eddie's Ever-Readies.

EDNA

Don't forget Hunter's Manhunters. And Hunter's Headhunters.

SUE

Yep, we were king-makers. But hey, all's fair in love and politics. And we didn't start playing dirty tricks 'til we found out what Vic Damone's fanclubs were doing.

EDNA

We just did it better.

(Crossing to center)

LEILA

Well, how would you like to take on another Mission Impossible?

SUE

Eddie's making another comeback? I don't believe it! That'd be about his tenth.

LEILA

No, this time it's Jerry. But not as Eddie's press agent. As Crown Prince of the Baritones.

SUE

Jerry a singer? I don't believe that either.

JERRY

I know it sounds crazy, Sue, but there's something even crazier. I have a million dollar bet with Eddie. He bet a million dollars against a year of my Social Security checks -- and Leila's pension -- there was no way I could be a singing star in a year. He's probably right, but I took the bet and I'm stuck with it.

EDNA

I didn't even know you could sing. And if Eddie's betting a million bucks, he must be sure you can't...Can you?

JERRY

Well, I'm not Eddie Hunter. But Eddie's not Eddie Hunter anymore either.

EDNA

I've gotta be convinced. How about you give us a sample?

JERRY

(Crossing to center as Edna and Sue cross to mikes left)

Well, okay. But help me out here, Leila. How about we do that duet I wrote for us? Hey, if we sing it together, they might make you a star, too.

LEILA

Two stars in the family would be one too many. But I warn you, the last time I sang it was just, "Oom, oom, oom," singing backup on Eddie Hunter records.

(She crosses to center mikes)

JERRY

Which was, nevertheless, a very good thing. 'Cause that's when our romance got going.  
So let's do it, Leila. Only not just oom, oom, oom.

JERRY AND LEILA

SONG: "WE'VE GOT NOTHING IN COMMON"

JERRY

THEY SAY THAT OPPOSITES ATTRACT  
AND IF THE NORTH POLE HAD A MOUTH  
INSTANTLY IT WOULD DECLARE  
ITS FONDNESS FOR THE SOUTH.

LEILA

NO LAW OF NATURE STATES  
THAT BLONDES MUST LOVE BRUNETTES  
COULD IT BE TRUE? COULD I LOVE YOU?  
GENTLEMEN PLACE YOUR BETS.

JERRY

WE'VE GOT NOTHING IN COMMON  
YOUR NYLONS LIE WHERE THEY FALL  
YOUR HAIR IS DONE IN HASTE  
YOU NEVER CAP YOUR TOOTHPASTE  
IT'S A WONDER I CAN STAND YOU AT ALL.

LEILA

LISTEN TO MR. PERFECTION  
EVERYTHING'S NEATLY ARRANGED  
YOUR TIES ARE HUNG BY COLOR  
WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE DULLER/  
FRANKLY, I THINK IT'S DERANGED.

BOTH

WHAT HAVE WE GOT IN COMMON?  
WHAT HAVE WE GOT TO SHARE?

JERRY

WHEN I TELL YOU THAT I LOVE YOU IN PAJAMA TOPS  
YOU SLIP INTO SILK UNDERWEAR.

LEILA

YEP. WE'VE GOT NOTHING IN COMMON  
WE NEVER EVEN VOTE THE SAME.

JERRY  
WHEN I THANK HIS MAMA  
FOR BARACK OBAMA  
YOU VOTE FOR WHAT'S-HIS-NAME.

BOTH  
WE'VE GOT NOTHING IN COMMON!

LEILA  
WE'VE GOT NOTHING IN COMMON  
WE HARDLY EVER AGREE  
ANY TIME WE BATTLE  
YOU NEVER FAIL TO TATTLE  
YOU TELL YOUR MOTHER ON ME.

JERRY: RIGHT...WE'VE GOT NOTHING IN COMMON  
LEILA : YOUR VANITY TAKES THE CAKE  
JERRY: WHY SHOULD YOU GRUMBLE? YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY HUMBLE  
LEILA : IS THIS LOVE OR IS IT A WAKE?

JERRY: I LOVE INKY EXPRESSO2  
LEILA : I PREFER CAFE AU LAIT  
JERRY: WHEN I WANNA SPEND A QUIET EVENING AT HOME  
LEILA : I'M IN THE MOOD FOR CABARET.

LEILA : WE COULDN'T BE MORE DIFFERENT  
JERRY: WE'RE TWO PODS WITHOUT A PEA  
LEILA : ALL WE DO IS FIGHT  
JERRY: FROM BREAKFAST TO LATE AT NIGHT  
LEILA : WHY? IT'S NO MYSTERY  
BOTH: 'CAUSE WE'VE GOT NOTHING IN COMMON

JERRY: WHAT DO YOU THINK?  
LEILA : WE'RE OUT OF SYNCH  
JERRY: WHY ARE WE WASTING OUR TIME?  
LEILA : WE OUGHTA FORGET IT  
JERRY: WHAT IF WE REGRET IT?  
LEILA : IT'S TIME TO GET OFF THE DIME

BOTH: WE'VE GOT NOTHING IN COMMON

JERRY: I READ PROUST  
LEILA : WHILE I WATCH "ROSANNE"  
JERRY: WHY NOT AT LEAST TRY TROLLOPE?  
LEILA : HOW WOULD YOU LIKE A WALLOP?  
JERRY: BETTER FIND YOURSELF ANOTHER MAN.

JERRY: I GO FOR TOFU CUTLETS  
LEILA : ME...I'M THE BURGER QUEEN  
JERRY: YOUR CHOLESTROL'S A MENACE  
LEILA : GO PLAY FOUR SETS OF TENNIS  
JERRY: HOW CAN YOU BE SO MEAN?

BOTH: WE'VE GOT NOTHING IN COMMON

LEILA : WE'VE GOT NOTHING IN COMMON. I'M AN EAGLE  
JERRY: AND I'M A DOVE  
LEILA : WE'VE GOT ABSOLUTELY NOTHING IN COMMON  
JERRY: POSITIVELY NOTHING IN COMMON

BOTH: NOTHING IN COMMON BUT LOVE (repeat)

(Grannies applaud vigorously.)

EDNA

More! More! I like it, Jerry. I feel warm and fuzzy. And...and...and young! Or could it just be a hot flash?

LEILA

Whoa! It isn't Show Time yet. But if you help us and this works out...cross my heart and hope to get divorced...you get free first-class plane tickets to Las Vegas...luxury suites...ringside seats at Jerry's opening...all the champagne you can drink...and personal lifeguards to keep you from drowning in it.

SUE

So this is serious?

LEILA

Extremely! The bet was three months ago. We've only got 275 days left.

EDNA

(Crossing to center) Well, I always thought Jerry was cuter than Eddie. But with my mother already convinced I was a nut case, how could I start a fanclub for Eddie's press-agent? She would've grounded me for life.

LEILA

(Switches places with Jerry protectively) Well, I started one. And I'm still president.

SUE

Sweet. Very sweet. But a fanclub for a singer old enough to be on the Supreme Court? Sorry, Jerry. You may be willing to make a fool of yourself, but I'm not. Count me out.

(Jerry and Leila cross right to mikes)

EDNA

Not so fast, Sue. We owe Jerry. In the old days, he went out of his way for us plenty. Think of all the times he got us past the goons at the stage door and into Eddie's dressing room. (Sue crosses center) Think of the parties he got us invited to. And the premieres. Think of...

SUE

Alright already. I've thought. You're right. And I'm in.

EDNA

Okay. Then let's organized. If your condo's anything like mine, there are as many old Eddie Hunter fans in it as there are bottles of Advil.

SUE

And lots of Eddie Hunter fanclub presidents would be happy to help. We could hire a detective to track them down. Maybe take out classified ads.

EDNA

...In Tucson, Phoenix, Rancho Bernardo, St. Pete, Boca. This is gonna be fun. Just like the good old days.

SUE

Just like the good young days.

GRANNY SOXERS

(they huddle like the Andrew Sisters and sing)

“THE GRANNYSOXER SONG”

SUE

WE USED TO WEAR WHITE BOBBY SOX  
AND GET THEM AUTOGRAPHED

EDNA

BY ELVIS AND PAUL ANKA  
WHILE WE WENT COMPLETELY DAFT.

SUE

WE CHASED THEM TO THEIR LIMOS  
WE HUNG OUT AT STAGE DOORS

EDNA: WE SCREAMED.

SUE: WE SIGHED

EDNA: WE SWOONED

BOTH: SOME OF US (they hang heads) ACTED LIKE WHORES.

BOTH  
BUT WE'RE NOT BOBBYSOXERS ANYMORE.  
NO, WE'RE NOT BOBBYSOXERS ANYMORE.  
WE'VE LOST OUR FEAR OF HALITOSIS  
NOW WE DREAD OSTEOPOROSIS  
CAUSE WE'RE NOT BOBBYSOXERS ANYMORE.

SUE  
WE READ EACH AND EVERY STORY  
IN OUR FANCLUB MAGAZINES

EDNA  
FRANK'S FAVORITE FOOD WAS PIZZA  
EDDIE LONGED FOR LIMA BEANS.

SUE  
WE MEMORIZED STATISTICS  
HEIGHT, WEIGHT, COLOR OF EYES

EDNA  
HELD GIGGLY FANCLUB MEETINGS

SUE:  
AND ATE TOO MANY FRIES.

EDNA  
WE BOUGHT EVERY SINGLE RECORD  
WE SAW EVERY SINGLE SHOW  
BEGGED ADVANCES ON ALLOWANCES  
WHEN WE WERE SHORT OF DOUGH.

SUE  
WE DREAMED THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM  
WE THOUGHT (exaggerates sexy voice) THE UNSPEAKABLE THOUGHT  
WHEN THEY SANG WE QUIVERED AND SCREAMED:  
LORDY! LORD! WHAT GOD HATH WROUGHT!

EDNA  
DEAR EDDIE, I WROTE  
I DON'T LIKE TO BEG  
BUT I'LL CHEERFULLY GIVE UP  
AN ARM OR A LEG

YOU'LL MAKE ME SO HAPPY  
I'LL JUST FLOAT ON AIR  
(shouts) IF YOU'LL PLEASE-PLEASE-PLEASE-MAIL-ME  
A LOCK OF YOUR HAIR.

LEILA (interrupts)  
And, um, did he?

EDNA  
I wear it in my locket to this very day. In memory of my lost youth. (opens locket around her neck) Look!

LEILA (To Jerry)  
I think it's confession time, Jerry.

JERRY  
Well, to tell the truth, that...may not be Eddie's hair. It could be mine.

(grannysoxer consternation)

LEILA  
I'm sorry, Edna. We had so many requests, Eddie would've gone bald.

EDNA  
You mean to tell me I've been showing off this counterfeit Eddie Hunter curl for 40 years? And all the time it was yours?

JERRY  
Well it could be Eddie's. We used the same barber. Rudy swept it up, put it in an manila envelope, and we mailed out locks of anonymous hair whenever a request came in. (silly grin) I guess you could say I was Eddie's..."hair apparent."

EDNA (winces)  
Oh well. His hair. Your hair. What's the diff? But if I'm going to keep it in my locket, it might as well be famous hair. So...to protect my investment...I've gotta help make you famous...like we made Eddie famous.

WE'RE GREAT AT MAKING SUPERSTARS  
WE'LL DO THE SAME FOR YOU.

SUE  
NOW WE'RE ITCHING TO BEGIN  
ISN'T THAT WHAT OLD FRIENDS DO?

EDNA  
WE'LL JUMP AND SHOUT "YAY JERRY!"  
WHEN YOU COME OUT TO SING.

SUE  
WE'LL SCREAM  
WE'LL SIGH  
WE'LL SWOON

BOTH  
WE'LL MAKE YOU BIGGER THAN STING!

SUE  
WE FIND OUR SKIRTS TOO HARD TO CLOSE

EDNA  
NO BOBBYSOX. ELASTIC HOSE!

BOTH  
'CAUSE WE'RE NOT BOBBYSOXERS  
NOPE. WE'RE NOT BOBBYSOXERS ANYMORE

SUE  
But we're ready to make Jerry a star. Right, Edna?

EDNA  
Right!

SUE  
Then, let's get started!

LEILA  
Jerry, I think you better get started, too. Before you can be a star, you've gotta have an act.

(Grannysoxers exit left as Jerry crosses to center and Leila right picking up a glass of water.)

**VO- ACT ONE. SCENE 12 Two months later, back in the living room. Jerry is in mid-song beside piano. Leila watches adoringly.**

CANYONS  
CANYONS  
GLITTERING GLASS CANYONS  
ECHOING TO A MILLION RESTLESS FEET

CANYONS  
CANYONS  
INDIFFERENT CONCRETE CANYONS  
WHERE THE WIND BLOWS PAINFUL MEMORIES DOWN THE STREET.

I NEVER KNEW THE DANGERS OF THE CANYONS OF NEW YORK  
NEVER REALIZED HOW FAR A GUY COULD FALL  
THERE ARE TEN MILLION PEOPLE IN THE CANYONS OF NEW YORK  
AND NO ONE TO HEAR YOU WHEN YOU CALL.  
NO ONE...HEARS YOU...CALL!

(Jerry hits the money note at the end of "Canyons." Leila applauds, crosses to Jerry and hands him a glass of water.)

JERRY

(Drinks) Umm, I needed that. When Eddie did it, it looked so easy. I never realized it was such (cell phone rings and he picks it up. Mimi crosses to mikes left) hard work. Hello. Oh, hi Mimi. We just finished rehearsing. I've got an act. I know my songs cold. Now all you've gotta do is find me an audience.

MIMI

I've made so many phone calls, I've had to get nail transplants. Everybody wants headliners, not grandpas. When they ask where you've worked, what can I tell them? Eddie Hunter's wedding? When I tell them about your million-dollar bet, they say, "Interesting. Call me back when he wins it."

JERRY

Sounds grim.

MIMI

Well, it's not as bad as it sounds. I called in a favor at a hotel in the Catskills. Next Wednesday night at Kutsher's it's a pair of Flamenco dancers, a ventriloquist, and you. By the way, it's a three-hour car ride.

JERRY

I'll be there if I have to steal the car. And Mimi, thanks.

(Mimi sits and is replaced by Eddie at stage left mike. Leila sits and Jerry crosses to stage right mike)

JERRY (continued)

Hello?

EDDIE

Well, hello-o-o Jerry. Just one of your fanclub presidents checking in to see how you're doing career-wise. I keep reading Variety looking for reviews. But I never see your name. And Billboard. Nary a mention.

JERRY

Very thoughtful, Eddie. Very thoughtful. (beat) Which makes me wonder if it's really you. But since you take such an interest in my career, you'll be happy to hear that I've got my first gig. In the Catskills where your brilliant career began. So stay tuned. And start thinking about selling some of your real estate. (doorbell rings) Oh, sorry Eddie, I've got to go. I'm about to be interviewed by Entertainment Tonight.

EDDIE

Sure, Jerry...when the Pope gets bar-mitvahed.

(Leila enters right as Both hang up. Eddie sits and is replaced by reporter.)

LEILA

I take it that was Eddie again. But what was that about an interview?

JERRY

Just made it up. Trying to make him as nervous as he makes me. (doorbell rings again) Oh, I better get that. (goes to door Stage left opens it to find blonde reporter at mike left.)

REPORTER

Hi! Cheryl Edwards... REPORTER from "Entertainment Tonight." My camera guy will be up in a minute. He's unloading the car. We're here for the interview your wife set up.

JERRY (to Leila )

Interview? What interview?

LEILA (crossing to center mikes)

When she phoned yesterday afternoon, I thought it was another one of Eddie's zingers, so I played along. I told her 3 o'clock today would be fine...( reporter crosses to center) Jerry, Jerry -- it's better than fine. It's wonderful. Exactly what you need for a jump-start.

REPORTER

It's so good of you to do this on such short notice.

JERRY

Good of me? I'd do it in my pajamas. I spend most of my life setting up interviews for other people and suddenly ... But why? (Crosses to center)

REPORTER

Simple. When we covered Eddie Hunter's wedding a few months ago, Chuck kept the video rolling when Eddie introduced you -- and for that million dollar bet afterward. I didn't pay much attention. It sounded like an inside joke. And we were Big Name Hunting.

JERRY

Which definitely left me out.

REPORTER

But our producer told me to save it. Just in case. Yesterday Mimi Whitestone called to say you had your first gig. So we'll run a few bars of your song at the wedding. Plus "the bet" scene. Plus this interview. And probably a follow up talk with Eddie.

JERRY

When he hears the piece is about me, he won't talk. He'll sputter. ( Leila and Jerry hug then all exit right. Eddie comes center with reporters mikes left)

**VO- ACT 1. SCENE 9 Eddie Hunter's hotel room. The Entertainment Tonight crew is there to wrap up the piece on "The Million Dollar Bet."**

REPORTER:

So EDDIE, how are you feeling about your million dollar bet now that Jerry Reiss' career seems about to take off?

EDDIE:

Take off? Crash-land is more like it. Listen, if Jerry thinks he can rub his magic microphone and become a star overnight without ever taking singing lessons...he's higher than a crack-head on the Eiffel Tower.

REPORTER:

So you're absolutely convinced he's going to bomb on his date in the Catskills?

EDDIE

Bomb? He'll be nuked.

(All exit left to chairs as Jerry and Leila cross to mikes right)

**VO- ACT ONE. SCENE 10**

**Backstage at Kutsher's. Jerry is about to go on.**

LEILA

This is it, Jerry. Your big chance. Now get out there and break a leg.

JERRY (glumly)

Rhymes with "lay an egg." Leila, I shouldn't have peeked through the curtain. That is a very large audience. And I don't have any aunts or uncles in it.

LEILA

Jerry, you can do this. You're singing better every day. And you've got your act down pat.

JERRY

But Leila, I don't have butterflies in my stomach. I have...pterodactyls. I wish I'd never made that damn bet. Life was so calm...and serene...and wonderfully boring before all this started.

LEILA

Jerry, if that's the way you feel, just get through this show. And afterward...well, if you still feel that way, we'll take out a loan, write Eddie a check and go back to the way we were. (embraces him) Which wasn't half-bad.

(She kisses him and he takes heart from her words and affection.)

JERRY

Leila, you give better pep talks than Vince Lombardi. And you do mouth-to-mouth resuscitation better, too. I know what I'm gonna do now...that old public speaking relaxation trick from Dale Carnegie. I'll just picture the whole audience naked.

LEILA (smiling)

But only men. No women!

OFFSTAGE EMCEE ( at mike stage left)

And now...in his debut performance at Kutcher's...how about a great big hand for crooner...and million-dollar-bettor...Jerry Reiss?

(Music comes up. Jerry takes one last kiss and sails blithely onstage center. Looks out at audience and gains confidence and smiles as VO starts)

**VO- ACT ONE. SCENE 11 Backstage at Kutcher's.**

( Leila hugs Jerry as he crosses to her at mikes left)

JERRY

They liked me. They actually liked me.

LEILA

No, they didn't. They loved you.

JERRY

Of course, they're my kind of people. 65 and over.

LEILA

Not true. I saw one guy with black hair. Well...he could have been an usher.

JERRY

Who cares? (sings snatch of song) "THEY'RE NEITHER TOO YOUNG NOR TOO OLD." But, where do we go from here?

MIMI

(bustles in from stage left followed by the jubilant Grannysoxers to center)

How's two weeks in Ft. Lauderdale and Boca? I talked to Bobby Breen about you before the show. Remember Bobby Breen?

LEILA

I do. Wasn't he that adorable little kid singer on the Eddie Cantor Radio Show a thousand years ago?

MIMI

He's an adorable booking agent now, and very big in South Florida. Jerry, he said if you made it with the Catskill crowd he'd book you into a bunch of senior condos. Not a lot of money, but the experience will be great.

SUE

Florida here we come!

EDNA

I wonder how I'll look in a bikini.

SUE

Like New Orleans after Katrina. Or New Jersey after Sandy. (retreats as Edna threatens her) Okay. Okay. Buy a bikini. But promise me one thing: you'll cover it up with a mu-mu.

**VO- ACT ONE. SCENE 12**

**Auditorium of a condo complex in Florida. Jerry belts final bars of "Canyons," and senior women converge on him, led by the two Grannysoxers. They grab souvenirs: his jacket handkerchief, his bow tie, the sleeves of his jacket. They rip off his shirt. He's standing there in his boxer shorts. Mimi is in the corner talking on her cell phone. A policeman rushes in from one side. A TV crew rushes in from the other side. A reporter is busy scribbling in his notebook.**

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE. SCENE 13

Ringside table at Caesar's Palace shared by Mimi, Leila, and the two Grannysoxers. A waiter ceremoniously opens a champagne bottle, fills all the goblets, and retires.

(Leila, Sue, Mimi and Edna cross to center mikes. Leila center, surround by Sue and Edna. Mimi on end. Sharing the three mikes.)

SUE

Well, Leila, you kept your promise. First-class plane tickets.

EDNA

A ringside table.

SUE

And all the champagne we can drink.

EDNA

Which is what? Half a glass and my ankles swell up.

MIMI

Don't forget the royal suite. Only high rollers and fan club presidents get rooms like that.

LEILA

But you earned it. The way you led the applause in Florida. The way you ganged up on Jerry and practically tore his clothes off after every performance.

EDNA

Heck, we couldn't have done it if you hadn't gotten the tailor to baste his tuxedo sleeves on.

SUE

Anyway, the media ate it up: "Sexy Grandpa Smiles as Grannysoxers Strip Him." It was too good a story to pass up...even if they suspected the fix was in.

EDNA

Well, pardon me for bragging, but we wouldn't have had the Miami Herald story without my Leon. At first he said, "No way! Ma, I'm a financial writer. I write about money." I said, "What's a million dollars? Stuffed cabbage? (beat) And anyway" -- I said this very slowly so he'd be sure to get the point -- "it may be in your financial interest to do what your aged mother wants you to do." So he did.

MIMI

Somebody help me pat myself on the back. First I phone the cops to break up the riot. Then I phone the local "Eye Witness News" to film the cops breaking up the riot.

SUE

Yeah. That show at Century Village? It was like jungle fever in that audience. Women were fighting to get a piece of Jerry. By the time they got through, he had nothing on but his boxer shorts.

LEILA

One lady tried to get them, too. The only way I could stop her was to slap her on the kisser.

.

EDNA

Yeah. It still hurts.

LEILA

Was that you, Edna? Gee. I'm sorry.

EDNA

No, I deserved it. I got carried away. Well, I hadn't seen a man in boxer shorts since my Harold passed away. You know, for a guy his age, Jerry looks real good in his underwear. Better than Harold did. Does he run?

LEILA

Only when chased by grannysoxers. (looks at her watch) Hmm, I wonder what's holding up the show. It was supposed to start ten minutes ago. I hope Jerry's alright.

(all exit to chairs.)

**VO- ACT ONE. SCENE 14. Jerry's dressing room. He's lying on the couch in obvious distress with worried stage manager hovering over him.**

( Jerry, and SM cross to center)

STAGE MANAGER

It's okay, Jerry. It's okay. The doctor's on the way.

JERRY

He better get here soon. (Doctor come in stage left.)

STAGE MANAGER

Dr. Fink. Am I glad to see you!

JERRY. (panting the words)

You can say that again.

DOCTOR. (applies stethoscope)  
You're going to be fine, Jerry. Just relax and answer a few questions...First, where's the pain?

JERRY  
It's kind of...tightness...in my chest. And I can't catch my breath.

DOCTOR (palpating him)  
When did the feeling start?

JERRY  
About an hour ago. After dinner. But Doc, why should I have a heart attack? I'm on a low-fat diet. I eat salmon twice a week for Omega-3's. I exercise. I eat grapes and nuts and more greens than a herd of goats. I exercise. Where did I go wrong?

DOCTOR  
Calm down, Jerry. Have you had any sharp pains in your back or your arm?

JERRY  
No...but I'm afraid if I go out there I'll keel over in the middle of a song.

DOCTOR  
Relax, Jerry. I've got just what you need. (to stage manager) Get me a good sharp pair of scissors. (He crosses to chairs left and returns in a moment with costume shears.)

JERRY (in alarm)  
You're not operating on me. Not here! Not now! (beat) Not without a second opinion!

DOCTOR  
Trust me, Jerry. I've been a doctor a lot longer than you've been a singer. Turn around.

**VO- (Jerry hesitantly follows orders. Doc Fink slips shears onto waistband on Jerry's tux trousers and cuts briskly.)**

JERRY  
Doc, what are you doing? This tux cost me \$2,500.

DOCTOR  
And you made sure it fit just right. Right? Maybe even...just a little bit snug? And you had a pretty good dinner?

JERRY  
Well, you know how it is. When you're nervous...you eat.

DOCTOR

But now you can catch your breath?

JERRY (experiments cautiously)

Gosh, yes. (hugs Dr. Fink) You're a miracle-worker, Doc. I feel great. But Doc, you don't have any other calls to make? Do you?

DOCTOR

Don't worry, Jerry. I'll hang around backstage. (winks) Just in case I missed the diagnosis.

(On VO stage manager and doctor exit to chairs. Jerry takes mike and steps forward)

ACT ONE. SCENE 15

Overture begins. Jerry comes onstage and instead of singing, holds up his hands and signals to the orchestra leader to stop, then turns to audience.)

JERRY (to mystified applause)

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I apologize for the late start. Nothing serious. I was just having a heart attack in my dressing room. (laughter) My new tux was so tight I couldn't breathe. Dr. Fink, the hotel doc, operated on me a few minutes ago with a pair of shears. Wanna see my scar?

(Turns around. Lifts jacket. Exhibits the cut waistband. Audience applauds. Jerry glances off-stage.)

Thank you, doc. The A.M.A. is naming the procedure in your honor: the Fink Maneuver...which makes possible my next maneuver...(he signals to orch leader)  
Maestro...

(music swells and Jerry opens mouth and -- echoing the show's theme -- sings the final verse of "LIFE AIN'T OVER 'TIL IT'S OVER" as his intro)

LIFE AIN'T OVER

'TIL IT'S OVER

DON'T SHOP FOR YOUR COFFIN YET.

LIFE AIN'T OVER

'TIL IT'S OVER

IS IT EVER TOO LATE?

NOT YET!

(On VO, girls join Jerry center and Leila and camera girl enter to mikes right)

**VO- ACT ONE. SCENE 16 Jerry's dressing room after the first show. A bevy of chorus girls surrounds him, hugging and congratulating him. Leila stands in the doorway aghast.**

FIRST CHORUS GIRL

Jerry, you were wonderful!

SECOND CHORUS GIRL

They couldn't get enough of you!

CAMERA GIRL

I've got 20 tables out there that want a picture with you.

LEILA (to Jerry)

Hmm. I get the picture.

JERRY

Oh, you mean this? No...no...they're just...happy for me.

LEILA

I don't think "happy" is the right word. Maybe "orgasmic?"

FIRST CHORUS GIRL

Oh, you don't have to worry about us, Mrs. Reiss. Your husband's adorable, but we'd never mess around with a married man. Would we, girls?

(They exit left, camera girl right. Leila crosses to center)

JERRY

Leila, what was that all about? I'm a success for ten minutes and it's getting to you already?

LEILA

I had a sudden flashback to Eddie Hunter Before and Eddie Hunter After. If stardom could mess him up, it could mess you up, too. And our marriage.

JERRY

Leila, these girls. I'm old enough to be their grandfather.

LEILA

That didn't seem to bother them. (beat) Oh, I guess seeing you surrounded by all that naked young flesh got under my wrinkled old skin. If you forgive me, I'll forgive you -- for looking like you were enjoying yourself so much.

JERRY

Leila, you worry too much. (tenderly) Unnecessarily.

JERRY SINGS TO LEILA : "ALL I EVER THINK ABOUT IS YOU"

I FANTASIZE.  
SO DO ALL GUYS. IT'S HUMAN.  
BUT FOOL AROUND  
I'D BE A FOOL TO DO.  
SO I MAY STARE AT AN AU PAIR OR TWO. IT'S TRUE  
BUT ALL I EVER THINK ABOUT IS YOU.

WHEN SKIRTS GO BY  
THEY CATCH MY EYE. IT'S NORMAL.  
BUT TO PURSUE  
IS SOMETHING I WOULD RUE.  
WHY CHASE THE REST WHEN I'VE ALREADY GOT THE BEST  
AND ALL I EVER THINK ABOUT IS YOU?

ON THE DAY WE WERE MARRIED  
I BADE FAREWELL TO ARMS  
AND I VOWED TO BE YOURS  
FORSAKING OTHER FEMALE CHARMS

THERE WERE TIMES  
I WAS TEMPTED  
AND YET  
THERE IS NO WAY  
I CAN FORGET I LOVE YOU  
I ALWAYS HAVE. I KNOW I ALWAYS WILL.

SO I ACCEPT THIS SOUND ADVICE  
NO LOVE AFFAIR IS WORTH THE PRICE  
AND SO YOU KNOW  
THAT ALL I'LL EVER THINK ABOUT IS YOU.

LEILA (hugs him)

Okay, Jerry. I'm convinced. For now. But we have another problem. Sandee phoned. Looks like the baby's coming two weeks early. The idea was for us to fly there together when you finished up here. I know you can't do that yet. But I have to. I've booked a flight on the red-eye.

JERRY

Give me a break, Leila. It's Sandee's third baby, and it's only my first big booking. I could use your support here.

LEILA

Jerry, I've been there at the birth of every one of our grandchildren. I was there at Sandee's first labor when she squeezed my hand so hard the diamond popped out of our engagement ring. I haven't missed a one and there's no way I'm missing this one.

JERRY

Okay, I understand. I really do. But don't expect me to be happy playing second fiddle to a grandchild who hasn't even been born yet.

LEILA

I'll be back in a few days, and from what I just saw, I doubt that you'll notice I'm gone. But remember what happened to John Garfield and Nelson Rockefeller.

JERRY

Remind me.

LEILA

They died with their boots on. In bed. Somebody else's. And while I'm reminding, I may as well mention an interesting little medical study I read the other day. It said husbands are twice as likely to have fatal coronaries making love to a bimbo...as making love to their wives.

JERRY (grinning)

Well sure. It's more exciting.

LEILA

Very funny. But at your age, excitement's not so good. If you're not careful, those young crocodiles in pasties will nibble you to death. And don't tell me, "Oh yeah, but what a way to die!"

JERRY

Why not get the Sierra Club to watch me while you're away? You obviously think I'm an endangered species.

LEILA

Not just endangered. Darned close to extinct.

(She stalks out to mikes right and Jerry crosses and sits left. The chorus girls, after a discreet pause, go back in to mikes left. Leila, out of their sight line, pauses and watches, clearly disturbed, as they sing.)

CHORUS GIRLS: "WE LOVE OLDER MEN"

FIRST CHORUS GIRL  
THE TROUBLE WITH YOUNG GUYS  
IS THEY TELL ENORMOUS LIES  
AND ALL THEY WANT IS...  
WELL I GUESS YOU KNOW.

THE PROBLEM WITH YOUNG GENTS  
IT'S OUR BIG PREDICAMENT  
IS THEY PUT THEIR CLOTHES BACK ON  
AND OFF THEY GO.

SECOND CHORUS GIRL  
YES THE TROUBLE WITH YOUNG CHAPS  
AND WE DON'T MEAN PERHAPS  
IS THEY'VE NO WISH TO BUY A GIRL A RING  
THEY MAY BUY US GIFTS GALORE  
BEST IN THE JEWELRY STORE  
BUT NOT THE ONE THAT WE WANT THEM TO BRING.

BOTH  
SO WE LOVE OLDER MEN  
WE LOVE THEIR SILVER HAIR  
AND THEIR PATERNAL AIR  
THE TENDER SMILE, THEIR LACK OF GUILF  
THE WAY THEY WALK US DOWN THE AISLE  
YES WE LOVE OLDER MEN.

FIRST CHORUS GIRL  
THE PROBLEM WITH YOUNG MEN  
NO MATTER WHO OR WHEN  
IS THEY BELIEVE COMMITMENT'S SUICIDE.  
THEY LEAD YOU ON AND ON  
IN A PROMISE MARATHON  
AND WON'T ADMIT THAT THEY DON'T WANNA TAKE A BRIDE.

SECOND CHORUS GIRL  
THE TROUBLE WITH YOUNG GUYS  
IS ALL THEY WANT'S... A RISE  
NO MATTER HOW OFTEN I-LOVE-YOU HAS BEEN SAID  
THE TROUBLE WITH YOUNG MEN  
AND NOT JUST NOW AND THEN  
IS THEY ALL WANT THEIR QUEEN  
IN A KING-SIZED BED.

BOTH  
SO WE LOVE OLDER MEN  
THEY DON'T COME ON TOO STRONG  
ADMIT IT WHEN THEY'RE WRONG  
THEY OPEN DOORS. THEY HOLD YOUR CHAIR.  
PROJECT THE FEELING THAT THEY CARE  
YES WE LOVE OLDER MEN.

FIRST CHORUS GIRL  
I'VE HAD MY FILL OF DISCO  
JUST WANNA SPEND A QUIET EVENING AT HOME  
I'M SICK OF ONE-NIGHT STANDING  
ALL I WANT'S A HAPPY LANDING  
WITH A GENTLEMAN WHO'LL NEVER EVER ROAM  
WITH A GENTLE MAN WHO'LL BE A STAY-AT-HOME.

SECOND CHORUS GIRL  
YOUNG GUYS WORK OUT IN GYMS  
THEY DON'T HAVE DOUBLE CHINS  
BUT WILL THEY GIVE US A CHECKBOOK AND A PEN?  
I ADMIRE THEIR ABS AND PECS-ES  
BUT I'D RATHER DRIVE A LEXUS  
CAN'T WAIT TO HEAR THE MINISTER SAY, "AMEN."

BOTH  
SO WE'LL SAY IT ONCE AGAIN  
THAT WE LOVE OLDER MEN  
AND WHAT'S THE BIGGEST PLUS?  
OLDER MEN LOVE US-S-S-S!  
(After the song, Leila sings a plaintive echo of the chorus girls' song and then exits right)

LEILA SINGS:  
I LOVE AN OLDER MAN.  
I'VE LOVED HIM ALL MY LIFE  
DON'T WANT HIM FOR HIS MONEY.  
I JUST WANT TO BE HIS WIFE.  
**VO- CURTAIN and here we would have the intermission.**

#### **ACT TWO. SCENE 1**

Mimi and Jerry (and RECEPTIONIST) in the outer office of Mastadon Records in L.A.

(Jerry and Mimi at mikes right)

JERRY (sighs)

Six record companies. Six rejections. (looks at his watch) And this is the last one we'll have time for. If we don't catch the next shuttle flight to Vegas, I miss the 9 o'clock show. Not a good career move I wouldn't think.

MIMI

Jerry, when it comes to career moves, I'll do the thinking. What we're doing at these record companies in L.A. is planting seeds. Letting them know you're hot. Letting them know you're available. I warned you not to expect too much the first time around.

JERRY

But Mimi, I've got only three months left. There may not be time for a second time around.

MIMI

Look, you're the one who made that crazy bet, not me. Sure, it'd be nice to win the million. And I still think you can. But if you don't...hey, look at the run you're getting for your Social Security checks.

(ATKINS, the record company boss, enters left and welcomes them. All cross to center mikes. Atkins left, Mimi center, Jerry right.)

ATKINS

Mimi, good to see you. Jerry, I hear you're doin' great things in Vegas. Surprising a lot of people. And I hear the pipes are outstanding...for a guy your age.

MIMI

For a guy any age, Harry. He can do your bottom line a lot of good.

ATKINS

So you're shopping him around. And so far no takers.

MIMI

True to the first part. False to the second. A couple of A & R men we've seen here are very interested. But they have to talk it over with their brass. You're on top of the totem pole. You can give me an answer all by yourself alone.

ATKINS

And I am interested, Mimi. (Jerry perks up.) But I have to be realistic. (Jerry droops.) Yes, there's a lot of interest in Jerry because of this bet with Eddie. But what you've got here is a kind of Catch 22.

JERRY

Namely.

ATKINS

Namely, the only way you're gonna hit the major media -- and hit them big -- is after you win the bet. That's when I'd want you on a CD. Not now. Not before you happen. Anything else is a gamble, and if I were a gambler my office wouldn't be here, it'd be in Vegas.

MIMI

Harry, Jerry's not a gamble. He's going to make it. Before you can get him cheap. After he's gonna cost you a bundle.

ATKINS

Your confidence in your client is refreshing, Mimi. But not convincing. Tell you what. Put your money where your lipstick is. You and your singer lay out the money for the arrangements, the recording session, and the promotion -- say, \$50,000 -- and I fax you a contract first thing tomorrow morning.

MIMI

Forget it, Harry. I've had better offers from a guy who tried to sell me a time-share in the Everglades. With snorkel. Next door to an alligator. And if I signed right away he'd throw in the Golden Gate Bridge. After the earthquake. Let's go, Jerry. Harry, you're gonna regret missing the boat on this one.

ATKINS

Actually, Mimi, I hope I do. Jerry, I wish you luck. But I can't run a business on pipedreams.

(Jerry mumbles thanks and he and Mimi exit to mikes right, pausing briefly in the outer office.)

JERRY

Mimi, he's right. It's still a pipedream. (takes out billfold and removes a check.) See this check? A couple of months ago, I made it out to Eddie. I wrote in the \$10,000, but I never signed it. To spur me on. To remind me how much I stood to lose if I didn't work my butt off. Well, I've worked my butt off. And so have you. But maybe it's time to put the check in the mail.

MIMI

Jerry, you wimp.

MIMI SINGS (a capella – no music track):

LIFE AIN'T OVER

'TIL IT'S OVER

YOGI BERRA (AND EDDIE) GOT IT RIGHT

LIFE AIN'T OVER

'TIL IT'S OVER

NEVER YIELD THE DAY WITHOUT A FIGHT.

JERRY (enheartened) SINGS (a cappella)

ACCEPT EACH CHALLENGE  
THEY'LL KEEP YOU YOUNG  
TAKE EVERY BET. EACH DAUNTING DARE.  
LIFE AIN'T OVER 'TIL IT'S OVER  
WHAT DOES IT MATTER IF YOU FALL ON YOUR DERRIERE?

(Jerry does a derriere fall, scrambles to his feet, holds up the check and tears it into confetti. Atkins, reentering, glares. Jerry gets on his knees and starts to pick up the pieces. On VO, Atkins exits and sits left, Mimi exits and sits right while Jerry crosses to center right mike)

**VO- ACT TWO. SCENE 2 (Jerry's dressing room between shows. He's resting on a chaise lounge in a dressing gown. There are humidifiers everywhere. Knock on the door.)**

JERRY  
Come in.

(Mafia Goon enters left and crosses to center left mike)

MAFIA GOON  
Geez. It's a jungle in here. All you need is a couple of monkeys and a python. What's all this? Global warming?

JERRY  
The hotel doc tells me Tom Jones does it all the time. Humidity keeps the vocal chords moist.

MAFIA GOON  
Yeah, well I caught the first show tonight. And whatever you're doin', keep doin' it. (wipes his brow) But if you don't mind, I'm gonna take off my jacket.

(When he removes jacket, a shoulder-holstered revolver is disclosed.)

MAFIA GOON (continued)  
I'll make this a quick visit. I got an offer for ya. A great offer. And you're not gonna wanna refuse it. 'Cause you see, I'm a Family man.

JERRY (uneasily)  
I'm listening.

MAFIA GOON

I heard about your bet with that lasagna, Eddie Hunter. I want you to win it.

JERRY

Gee, thanks. But where do you come in?

MAFIA GOON

I got friends in the music business. Connections with record companies, with hot DeeJays and with radio program directors who write the play lists. And I'm real tight with the Tonight Show producer. You got your Vegas booking. That's Step One. But to win you gotta take Steps Two and Three: a hit record and a shot with Tonight. I can arrange that. Easy as pizza pie.

JERRY (suspiciously)

But when you make it happen, how am I supposed to say thank you?

MAFIA GOON

Easy. You collect the million. You gimme half.

JERRY

Half a million!

MAFIA GOON

It's only fair. You enjoy your half. I enjoy my half. I arrange for you to record an album. I reward a few helpful DeeJays. You're on the charts in no time. Hey, it's as easy as...puttin' on a pair of concrete shoes and takin' a walk on the bottom of Lake Tahoe.

JERRY

(So angry he forgets to be scared) Listen up. I made my bet with Eddie Hunter, not you. I either win it fair and square or I lose it fair and square. So...dammit...my answer is, "Hell, no!" I don't care what Family you represent.

MAFIA GOON

Well, well, the kid has spunk. I like that. Now let's see how you like this.

(He draws his gun, points it at Jerry, and fires point-blank. The sound of a silencer is heard. Jerry is dazed but unhurt.)

JERRY

What in the...?

MAFIA GOON

Hey, who are you? Superman? (laughs aloud, hands gun to Jerry) Relax Jerry, this piece is a movie prop. It's equipped with a silencer, but all it fires is blanks.

(Jerry recoils as the Don reaches into his pocket, but he only pulls out a card and hands it to him. He reads it.)

JERRY

S.A.G...The Screen Actors' Guild?

MAFIA GOON

You got it. I played Mafia soldiers in "The Godfather." Parts 1 and 2. Really had you goin' there, didn't I?

JERRY

Yes, quite a performance. But (points gun at the Don) if this gun fired real bullets...

MAFIA GOON

Hey, don't shoot the messenger. Shoot the guy who sent him -- Eddie Hunter. See? If you were willing to cheat, you'da lost the bet. But you know something? You got cast-iron balls. I hope you win it all. And you can keep my half.

JERRY

Well, aren't you the jolly Good Fella? Okay, I've got something I want to give you. The gate. (Smiles and gestures to left) I don't wanna see you again. Not 'til your next movie.

**(Crossing left the actor rendezvous-es with Eddie at mikes left, who has an expectant grin on his face.)**

EDDIE. (eagerly)

He fell for it. Right?

MAFIA GOON

Sorry, Eddie. I tried. But the offer he couldn't refuse? He refused it.

(they both sit left)

JERRY. (in dressing room)

Come to think of it, he was a messenger bringing good news. If Eddie hired him to play that scene, it means he's beginning to worry. Worry that he's gonna have to write me a check. A check for a million dollars.

SONG: "WHAT DO YOU DO WITH A MILLION DOLLARS?"

JERRY

I HAVEN'T REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT  
OR NOTIFIED MY NEXT OF KIN  
BUT IT'S STARTING TO LOOK LIKE MY 50 to 1 SHOT  
MIGHT...JUST MIGHT...COME IN.

I GUESS IT WOULDN'T HURT TO HAVE A MILLION DOLLARS  
I SURELY WOULDN'T WANT TO TURN IT DOWN  
HAVING IT WOULD NOT BE TOUGH  
IT COULD BUY A LOT OF STUFF  
AND LEILLA WOULDN'T MIND A DIOR GOWN.

I COULD BUY A DOZEN SUITS. A CADILLAC TO BOOT.  
WE COULD DINE AT THE BEST RESTAURANTS IN TOWN.  
THOUGH A MILLION DOESN'T BUY  
WHAT A MILLION USED TO BUY  
I DON'T THINK THAT WINNING IT WOULD MAKE ME FROWN.

A MILLION COULDN'T BUY A CONDO ON PARK AV.  
BUT MAYBE IT COULD BUY A WALK-IN CLOSET.  
WE COULD LOOK IN SECAUCUS  
OR DEEP IN THE CACAUSUS  
I HOPE I'D HAVE ENOUGH FOR THE DEPOSIT.

A LEXUS MIGHT BE NICE  
BUT THE SUBWAY WORKS JUST FINE  
MY PROBLEM MIGHT BE FRIENDS EAGER TO BORROW.  
OF COURSE I'D BE ALL EARS  
BUT THEN I'D SAY 'MY DEARS  
I WONDER IF YOU COULD COME BACK TOMORROW.' (pause)

BUT MAYBE IT WOULD HURT TO HAVE A MILLION DOLLARS  
I'M PRETTY SURE I KNOW WHAT LEILA'D SAY  
FORGET ABOUT IT HONEY  
I LOVE YOU NOT YOUR MONEY  
SO I SUGGEST WE GIVE IT ALL AWAY.

(Mafia Don and hood cross to mikes left)

**VO- (Imperious knock at door.)**

JERRY (cheerfully)  
Come in.

**VO- A Mafia Don enters, dressed in a camel cashmere jacket over a chocolate turtleneck. His wavy silver hair is expensively cut. He's accompanied by a bodyguard in a mob uniform – black shirt with white tie.**

JERRY  
Oh, no, not again. What is this, Central Casting?

DON

Jerry, my name is Carlo Ferrara. Allow me to say that I am very impressed with your performance. A guy your age with no stage experience holding the audience in a tough club like this. It's...impressive. I came backstage to tell you that if there is anything I can do for you, I am at your service.

JERRY

As a matter of fact, there is something. Tell your buddy Eddie Hunter that I'm sick of his games. Sending one actor dressed up like a Mafia hood is funny. Sending two is ridiculous.

HOOD. (Steps threateningly towards Jerry)  
You saying the boss is ridiculous?

DON

Relax Tommy. The man means no disrespect. There is some misunderstanding here. (hood backs off and Don crosses to center) Now Jerry, exactly what did you mean?

JERRY

I'm ...I'm a little confused here. Isn't...isn't Eddie Hunter paying you like he paid the guy who just left? I mean...you're actors. Right?

DON

Actors? Me and Tommy? That's a good one. I've had a D.A. or two call me a bad actor. But ...the only movies I've ever been in were shot by undercover cops. Staked out in vans across the street.

JERRY

So you're...for real? I owe you an apology.

DON

None needed. No offense taken. Consider me just another fan. All I want is an autographed 8 x 10 for my lady... who loved your show and, by the way, is waiting outside. May I bring her in?

JERRY

Of course. (MARIE, brassy but sexy blonde enters from left and crosses to center)  
Pleased to meet you. Your husband's told me so much about you. Well, not really. He only told me you liked the show.

DON (sotto voce)

Sorry, Jerry. My turn to apologize. This is not my wife. Marie is, like I said, my lady. My wife is home ...playing with the grandchildren.

MARIE

Liked the show? I adored it. I'd like to take you home with me so you could sing me to sleep. (eyes Don cautiously) Well, maybe there's a safer way. Have you cut any records?

JERRY

No, but I'd love to. In fact I...I absolutely need to.

MARIE (turns to Don)

Whatcha waitin' for? Didn't I pick "The Purple People Eaters" for you? And "The Loudmouths?" Am I ever wrong? You got three record companies. Sign the man up.

DON

How about it, Jerry? If you're good enough for Marie, you're good enough for my record companies. And I'll give you a good deal. Ready to sign on the dotted line?

JERRY

Would I! Well, I would if I could. I can't 'til I clear it with my agent. But do you really think I'd sell records?

MARIE

Like hot calzones. Don't worry, Jerry. You sing 'em. We'll sell 'em.

DON

Yeah. We have our ways. Marie, you tell Jerry about what we do and how we do it. I gotta go to a meeting. I'll pick you up when it's over. (exits left with goon)

MARIE

You've got nothing to worry about, Jerry. (She rumples his hair.) You're in good hands. Matter of fact, you're in great hands. Here. (She opens his robe and starts to peel it off) Lemme relax you with a massage.

JERRY

I ...I don't think Carlo would approve.

MARIE

Come on, Sweetie. I like living dangerously. And Carlo won't be back for at least an hour. Sing me that sexy song you wrote for your wife. What was it? Oh yeah. "All I Ever Think About Is You." While you make love to me, you can think about her.

JERRY

This is not a good idea. In fact...

V0- He struggles loose, leaving the robe in her hands, and simultaneously grabbing a towel which he smoothly wraps around his waist.

JERRY

...it is a very bad idea.

MARIE

Jerry, are you saying I don't appeal to you? You are turning me down? You are humiliating me!

JERRY

No, no. That's not it at all. You're a beautiful woman. I'm just saying that if Carlo and Tommy walked in and caught us screwing our brains out, very quickly my brains would be out. And it would be very hard to sing that way. So could you please...please...leave?

MARIE

Not 'til I tell the world what you tried to do to me. Against my will!

**VO- She yanks on the bodice of her gown, exposing a section of very attractive anatomy. Then, with a grim smile, she opens the door and screams.**

MARIE (crosses to left mikes)

Rape! Rape! Somebody help me! Jerry's attacking me!

JERRY

Marie. Marie. Stop, please! What are you doing?

MARIE

Ever hear of a woman scorned, Jerry? Well, you got one right here in your dressing room...which, by the way, you will probably not be in much longer. (to stage manager who has entered left) Look what your singing star did to me! (she displays torn bodice)

STAGE MANAGER

Calm down, Marie. This can be handled. Fix yourself up, and come with me. I'll call Carlo. He'll know what to do. (to Jerry) I'm sorry, Jerry. I don't think Carlo is going to like this, and he is a very heavy hitter in this town.

JERRY (as they leave left)

There goes my recording contract. For starters.

(He buries his head in his hands. Don and Goon cross left)

**VO- there is a knock on the door**

DON- Who's there?

DON

It's me. Carlo. We need to talk.

(Jerry looks around as though in search of a window exit. There is none. Resigned, he opens the door. Jerry and Don cross to center mike, Goon to left mikes.)

JERRY

Mr. Ferrara, please. You don't think I tried anything with your lady, do you? I'd have to be crazy. It would be like going to bed with a stick of dynamite.

DON

You got that right. She's dynamite in bed.

JERRY

I know it looks bad, but...but I didn't touch her. Honest! In fact, that's why she got mad at me. She wanted to...and I...I wouldn't.

(Bodyguard moves menacingly toward Jerry. Don motions him back.)

JERRY (continued)

Look, I didn't want to be the one to say that. But who else can? I mean...it was only me... and Marie. There were no eye witnesses.

DON

Jerry, I go with the facts, and the facts look bad. Marie told me her side of the story. Now I've heard yours. It's time to break the tie. There were no eye-witnesses, but there was an ear-witness.

JERRY

An ear-witness?

DON

(holds up Marie's clutch bag) The CIA and the FBI...they develop some pretty good electronics. (He opens it, displaying a little button.) I got a bug in her bag. And a recorder in my pocket. (takes out mini-recorder. Mimi crosses to left entrance) So now let's hear from the ear-witness.

**VO- He plays back the scene between Marie and Jerry. A small smile appears on Jerry's face. It broadens as the tape plays on.**

JERRY

That's the way it happened alright. Your lady is a knockout, Mr. Ferrara, and with that body she's enough to tempt Saint Peter and Saint Paul. But when my wife's away, this cat does not play. My problem is... Vegas has more temptations than it has slot machines.

DON

Jerry, when I play this tape for Marie, her problems with me will begin, but your problem with her will be over. As for your other problem...your bet with Eddie Hunter. I meant what I said before, and I mean it more now. I like you. I like the way you sing. In fact, I like you so much I'm even gonna give you a fair contract...which I do not ordinarily do. So, what do you say?

JERRY

What can I say? If it's jake with my agent, it's sure jake with me.

MIMI

(breezing in the ajar door left and to mike left)

Of course, I'll want to cross the T's and dot the I's. And I'll put in some whereas-es and take out some wherefores. But, other than that, it's very jake with your agent. Which means, Jerry...that you're halfway to your first million. Eddie Hunter's million.

(All exit during applause. Sherri and Heather cross up of center mikes. Jerry enters right and crosses to center on VO)

**VO- ACT TWO. SCENE 3 Jerry, drenched to the skin, collar, tux dripping water, enters his hotel room. Two chorus girls, right out of the Victoria's Secret catalog, each with huge red ribbon bows around their necks, pounce on him..**

SEXPOTS

Surprise!

(They start to undress him – jacket, tie, cuff links)

JERRY

Whoa! What's going on? And what's with the gift wrap?

SHERRI

Tonight was your closing night. Right?

JERRY

Right.

HEATHER

Well, Management wanted to say thanks.

SHERRI

Here's the card that comes with us...

JERRY (slowly opens envelope and, stunned, reads aloud)  
Orchids are purple.  
Roses are red.  
Your wife's out of town? (beat)  
Try our harem instead.

JERRY (stalling)  
Oh, I get it. Leila 's away. But when she comes back, the four of us are gonna play scrabble.

SHERRI  
Close, Jerry. Actually, what we had in mind was strip poker.

JERRY (staring at their costumes)  
Looks like it would be a very short game.

HEATHER  
Forget the cards! Let's just play! (goes back to unbuttoning Jerry's shirt)

SHERRI. (opens Jerry's trouser belt)  
Sure. I'd lose anyway. All I've got is (looks down at her cleavage)... a pair.

HEATHER (thrusts out her chest)  
Pair of aces here, Jerry.

JERRY  
Look, ladies, you are the nicest present I ever got in my life. But...

SHERRI  
Shh. We'd better get you out of those wet clothes. Before you catch cold.

JERRY  
Look...I know this could be a night to remember. But what you've gotta remember is that I'm married...And it's a helluva challenge...but (plaintively) I've gotta remember it, too.

HEATHER  
Come on, girl! He's weakening. Let's pull off his chastity belt. I'll put on some mood music. You light the incense.

**VO- They shove him onto the bed, and yank off his trousers. Sheri sets two incense candles on a table, lights them. A thick smoke rises . She dances back to the bed. Suddenly the smoke alarm goes off.**

JERRY  
Ohmigosh!

**VO- Jumps off bed, stands on chair under the alarm, coughing and fanning air furiously with his hands. He turns to Heather.**

JERRY- Quick, I need something to...to disperse the smoke.

**VO- She obligingly removes her top and hands it to him. Flustered, he hands it back like a hot Idaho.**

JERRY

No. Not that. Never mind. I'll get it.

**VO- He jumps down, removes a pillowcase, and tries again. Alarm continues to ring stridently. Someone pounds on the door. It's opened with a pass key. SECURITY MAN with a fire extinguisher hurries in. The girls squeal, grab pillows to cover up and dash for the bathroom, slamming the door.**

(Security come in right then girls run off left)

SECURITY MAN

Where's the fire?

**VO- He sees the incense candles, pinches them out. The alarm weakens and gradually peters out**

JERRY

I'm sorry. I...we had no idea...

SECURITY MAN

Hey, those bosom buddies of yours are such hot stuff ...I'm surprised the sprinkler system didn't turn on, too. Well, you can sound the all-clear and get back to whatever you were doing. But this time no incense. (He exits right, laughing)

**VO- The girls return merrily. (They do) Jerry, now in T-shirt and boxer shorts with the sheet pulled over him sits back against the pillows, in between helpless and amused, enjoying this unexpected experience so much that, with the best of intentions, he doesn't want it to end. Sherri pours champagne, Heather feeds him grapes from a fruit bowl. Sherri puts on a CD: (Sinatra singing "The Lady Is A Tramp.") They hop into bed, surrounding Jerry seductively. Phone rings. Sexpot mime picks it up. Alarmed, Jerry grabs it.)**

JERRY

You're kidding! You're serious? Oh, boy. (He hangs up, turns to girls) That was the front desk. You've gotta get out of here. My wife's back from Boston and she's on her way up. They just gave her the key.

SHERRI

So what? We haven't done anything. (beat) Yet.

(Leila enters right and stands there a horrified expression on her face. Sexpot's voice trails off.)

SHERRI (continued)

Anyway, we can explain...

LEILA

(to Sherri) There is no way you can explain this. (to Jerry) So all you ever think about is ....who?

JERRY (stalling)

Leila. Honey. How are you? And how's our new grandchild? Boy or girl? Okay, okay. I know this looks bad, but...

HEATHER

Mrs. Reiss, would you believe Jerry ordered a collection of designer lingerie for you... and the designer sent us here to model it.?

LEILA

On? Or off? What's the movie, Jerry? "Gullible's Travels?" I suppose the script says I turn on my heels and walk out on you. But you'd only go ahead with your...orgy. No, I think I'll just stay and watch. I might learn something.

JERRY

Leila, there's nothing to watch. Anyway, this wasn't my idea. Ask Heather. Ask Sherri. They'll tell you. I was resisting. Honest!

LEILA

Right. They undressed you at gunpoint. You didn't want me to be a widow. So you did it. For me.

HEATHER

Mrs. Reiss. Cool it. Jerry didn't do anything. The management sent us up. It was like...half a joke and half a reward for the crowds he pulled in.

SHERRI

And he really was resisting. Honest! I held him down while Heather yanked off his pants. Hey, we all work out. Look. (flexes her very bare abs and pecs)

LEILA

Please. I've seen enough already. And Jerry's seen too much. Why don't you all get your clothes on...if you own any...and leave me alone with my husband. Who may be my ex-husband.

(They leave right. One of them, making sure Leila 's not looking, mischievously blows Jerry a kiss.)

JERRY

Leila, the movie is "Fort Bravo." And the U.S. Cavalry arrived in the nick of time.

LEILA

And if they didn't...

JERRY

It would have been "Remember the Alamo." And I'd have died fighting.

LEILA

Fighting? Or the other "f" word? Why do I have the feeling you'd have run up a white flag with your jockey shorts on it? (beat) This is what I was afraid of, Jerry. That you'd change. That success would mess up our marriage. It has. Your two lady friends just proved it. And lady just might be the wrong word.

JERRY

Okay, I admit they had my undivided attention. I admit I was at risk. But, Leila. All I did was open the door to my room. Suddenly there I was...innocent bystander me...in the middle of a Hugh Hefner Playboy dream come true. It was...interesting. What should I have done? Called Hotel Security?

LEILA

You could have resisted a little harder.

JERRY

While you were away, I did. Many times. But would I have been able to if Sherri and Heather slipped under the sheets and started making nice? I'll never know. You came galloping in and saved me. And I know this will be hard to believe, but I'm glad you did. A thousand and one nights with every chorus girl on the Strip wouldn't make up for losing you.

LEILA (starts to leave but stops and slowly comes back to right mikes)  
Flattery will get you...somewhere.

LEILA SINGS: "YOU'RE NOT PERFECT (BUT I LOVE YOU)"

verse:

THERE ARE PERFECT DIAMONDS  
ABSOLUTELY UNFLAWED  
AND THERE ARE PERFECT HUSBANDS  
YOU DON'T WIN THAT AWARD.

YOU'RE NOT PERFECT  
BUT I LOVE YOU  
YOUR HAIR'S BEGUN TO GO SOUTH  
YOU'RE NOT PERFECT  
BUT I LOVE YOU  
THE TOWER OF LONDON HAS FEWER CROWNS  
THAN YOU'VE GOT IN YOUR MOUTH.

YOU'RE IMPERFECT  
BUT I LOVE YOU  
YOUR DOUBLE CHIN'S GROWING A CHIN  
YOU'RE IMPERFECT  
BUT I LOVE YOU  
IF I GET ANGRY AND YOU SMILE AT ME  
YOU'RE INSTANTLY IN LIKE FLYNN.

YOU NEVER BRING ME FLOWERS  
BUT I CAN LIVE WITH THAT  
WHEN YOU PUT YOUR ARMS AROUND ME  
UP GOES MY THERMOSTAT.

YOU'RE NOT PERFECT  
BUT I LOVE YOU  
YOU STEAL THE BLANKET AT NIGHT  
YOU SNORE TOO MUCH  
BUT YOUR SWEET TOUCH  
INEVITABLY IMMEDIATELY MAKES EVERYTHING FEEL RIGHT.

I'M KINDA GLAD THAT YOU'RE NOT PERFECT  
THAT THERE'S SOME CORK IN YOUR CHABLIS  
YOU'RE NOT PERFECT  
BUT I LOVE YOU  
AND YOU'RE POSITIVELY-  
NO-DOUBT-ABOUT-IT-ABSOLUTELY-PERFECT FOR ME.

Crosses to center and she spies management's gift card on the floor, picks it up, reads it)

LEILA  
Well, well. It really wasn't your idea.

JERRY  
No, it sure wasn't. But, Leila, this town is worse than the twin cities.

LEILA  
Minneapolis and St. Paul?

JERRY

Sodom and Gomorrah. Leila , I know Sandee needed you. But I did, too. And I don't know how much longer I could've held out. My resistance is low. Very low.

LEILA

Then I came at just the right time. (Slowly she snuggles in to him.)

LEILA

But don't think you can take any liberties with me.

JERRY

Give me liberties. Or give me death.

LEILA 'S SONG: ALL I EVER THINK ABOUT IS YOU

I FANTASIZE

SO DO ALL WIVES

IT'S HUMAN. (Kisses his cheek)

BUT TO COQUETTE

IS SOMETHING I'D REGRET. (kiss)

SO I HAVE THUNK

ABOUT A HUNK OR TWO, IT'S TRUE

BUT ALL I EVER THINK ABOUT IS YOU. (two kisses)

WHEN FELLOWS GAZE

I LOVE THEIR PRAISE

IT'S NORMAL. (kiss)

BUT LIAISON (lee-ay-zon)

I'VE NO RAISON TO DO (kiss)

WHY CHASE MORE GUYS

WHEN I'VE ALREADY

WON THE PRIZE?

AND ALL I EVER THINK ABOUT

IS YOU.

(They embrace. Both exit on VO as Grannysoxers come to center)

**VO- BLACKOUT. ACT TWO. SCENE 4**

**Jerry's apartment in New York two months later. The Grannysoxers are seated at a table covered with postcards. They are scribbling away.**

SUE

Gosh! This is just like old times with Eddie.

EDNA

Except now we're sending the song request postcards for Jerry. And the stamps aren't three cents any more.

SUE

And I have to ice my elbow every five minutes...like a pitcher between innings. Maybe we should be doing this on the internet.

EDNA

Nah. Mine keeps crashing. But we're getting results. Jerry's songs are starting to get a lot of air play. Hey, maybe we should say we're Gray Panthers, and if they don't give him enough plays we'll bomb the station.

SUE

Anybody here know how to make a bomb?

EDNA

Take two parts tequila to one part Ensure and one part Geritol and shake vigorously. But I could be wrong. We might need some Metamucil in there. As an accelerant.

SUE

Then the bomb plot's off. I'd do anything for Jerry. But I'm not giving up my Metamucil.

EDNA

Forget the bombs. Our Grannysoxer Network is working like clockwork. Miami. Fort Lauderdale. West Palm. Phoenix. Santa Fe.

SUE

Unzurra agents are everyvare. Unt we haff just begun to write. (she writes another card, stamps it, and dumps it on the pile)

JERRY

(enters to right mikes brandishing a copy of the latest "Billboard")

We cracked the charts! Number 49. Zowee! Yowee! Wowie!

EDNA

Boy, is this a Millenium Moment! Looks like the best man is gonna win. Congratulations, Jerry.

JERRY

You guys deserve the congratulations. And a lot more. If I win that million, you each get a piece of the pie.

EDNA

No pie for me, thanks. Too many calories. But if you're talking money, well...maybe I'll indulge just this one time.

SUE

Let's not lay those ball-point pens down yet. Yep, "a record that hits the charts" was the way Eddie put it. But let's keep writing 'til it hits the Top Ten.

(Telephone rings. Jerry picks up cell phone.)

JERRY

Hello. Jerry Reiss here.

(Eddie has crossed to mikes left)

EDDIE

I just got my copy of "Billboard."

JERRY

And...

EDDIE

And I can't say I'm delirious with joy. But I've gotta hand it to you. And, in a funny way, even though what I've gotta hand you may be a million bucks, I'm kind of enjoying it.

JERRY

Eddie, could you repeat that? I think there's something wrong with my phone.

EDDIE

Well, kind of enjoying it. It's like you went into the Super Bowl a 50 to 1 underdog and with 30 seconds to play you're up by three touchdowns. I find myself rooting for the underdog. Much to my amazement.

JERRY

Mine, too.

EDDIE

Well, I am having to rationalize it a bit. Remember when we first got together, when I was just getting started, and you were getting...what?...\$25 a week to do publicity for me? I was a Nobody from Nowheresville then and you believed in me enough to work for peanuts.

JERRY

I did believe in you – from the first time I heard you singing with the band at Grossinger's.

EDDIE

Well, you could have asked for a piece of me then and I'd have gladly given it to you. With all the money I made, even five percent would have added up to a million. So maybe you're just getting what was coming to you all along.

JERRY

If I can get booked on the Tonight Show.

EDDIE

With all the press our bet is getting, I wouldn't be surprised if that's your next phone call.

JERRY

You know what? All of a sudden you sound like the Eddie Hunter Leila and I knew and loved...in the good old days before fame and fortune went to your formerly curly head.

EDDIE

We had some interesting times, didn't we?

JERRY

Like in Philadelphia just before your first wedding...when you told me you didn't really love your bride-to-be and couldn't go through with it?

EDDIE

But I did go through with it.

JERRY

Yes, and it was partly my fault. I told you every groom gets cold feet and once you were married everything would be great. I meant well...but was that ever bad advice!

EDDIE

Well, you weren't my marriage counselor for the other four wives. Anyway, I just wanted to tell you I've joined your fan club.

JERRY

Well, thanks. Thanks a million.

EDDIE

You've got the right number there.

JERRY

Oops, Eddie, can you hold on a minute. I've got another call coming in. Well, never mind. My voice mail will pick it up.

EDDIE

No...take the call, Jerry. You never know. What if it's the Tonight show?

JERRY

Nah. It's probably just (beat) "If you are a senior citizen..." But thanks, Eddie. Your call made my day. No. My year. (clicks to call-waiting as Leila enters and Eddie sits) Hello. Jerry Reiss here. (listens) Yes...Yes...Yes...Yes! You'll call later with the details? Well, thanks. Thanks a million. (hangs up, then to Leila ) Guess who that was.

LEILA

The Tonight Show?

JERRY

No.

LEILA

The Letterman Show?

JERRY

No.

LEILA

Then who?

JERRY

It was Mimi. She heard from the Tonight Show *and* the Letterman show.

LEILA

And...

JERRY

They both want me.

GRANNYSOXERS

Jerry! You win the bet! ( Leila and Jerry hug then Grannysoxers exit left while Jerry and Leila cross to center on VO)

**VO- ACT TWO. SCENE 5. Jerry and LEILA 's apartment. It's the next evening and they've just finished dinner. LEILA's washing. Jerry's drying.**

JERRY

Why don't you just use the dishwasher, Leila? Superstars' wives aren't supposed to have dishpan hands.

LEILA

I would, but it's good therapy. And cheaper than a shrink.

JERRY

What makes you think you need a shrink?

LEILA

We both might. And maybe marriage counseling, too. It all depends on how you handle fame and fortune.

JERRY

You're still worried about that? I've managed so far, haven't I?

LEILA

Just barely. If I remember Las Vegas correctly, "barely" is the applicable word. And then there were the two weeks in Atlantic City.

JERRY

You sure kept me on a short leash. Every time a beautiful showgirl got within three feet of me, you gave them your "Drop dead!" stare. Pretty effective, too. They're still picking up beautiful dead bodies.

LEILA (turns from sink to embrace)

Well, life sure is full of surprises. I never thought that 31 years into our marriage I'd have to wage hand-to-hand combat to keep a gray-haired old goat like you to myself.

JERRY

You are truly selfish. Tell you what. I'll phone Dr. Fink in Vegas. Maybe he's got a shot that'll make me allergic to beautiful women. Nope. Bad idea. Then I'd be allergic to you.

LEILA

Jerry, I'm serious. Can't you be...for just a moment? We've got some important decisions to make.

JERRY

I know. I've been thinking about it a lot. I mean...applause is...well, it's attention...and approval...and kind of affection...and that's nice at any age. But all those people flocking backstage after every show to tell me how wonderful I am? (grins) They're wasting their time. I already know it. Anyway, after a show I'd rather just cut and run...to be alone with you...the way it used to be.

LEILA

I can't even remember the way it used to be. And I'm not crazy about swimming in a celebrity goldfish bowl. If one more star-struck matron asks you to autograph a menu in the middle of our dinner...and stands there telling you you're God's gift to women...well, push might come to shove. And you might have to complain, "Waiter, there's a woman in my soup!"

JERRY

And your mother thinks you don't have a mean bone in your body! But I know what you mean. Fifteen minutes of fame and fortune is fine. Well I don't object to the fortune part, but I'm starting to think that the 20 minutes of fame might be five minutes too long.

JERRY AND LEILA IN "OPERATIC" DUET: "FAME AND FORTUNE"

JERRY

EVER SINCE YOUNG DICK WHITTINGTON LEFT THE FAMILY FARM  
WITH EMPTY POCKETS AND A HUNGRY CAT BENEATH HIS ARM  
AND STRODE THE POST ROAD TO LONDON TO SEEK HIS FORTUNE...  
EVER SINCE YOUNG BEN FRANKLIN STROLLED THE RUTTED STREETS  
OF PHILADELPHIA MUNCHING ON A LOAF OF BREAD  
WITH DREAMS OF FAME AND GLORY IN HIS HEAD...

JERRY (spoken):

Tens of millions have taken that same route.  
Mellon. Carnegie. Vanderbilt. Astor.

AND THAT WOMAN IN THE NAVY SUIT HAILING A CAB  
ON HER WAY TO THE OFFICE. I WOULDN'T PUT IT PAST HER.

LEILA : HAVE YOU HAD ENOUGH APPLAUSE?

JERRY: I'M NOT SURE THAT IT'S GOOD FOR ME.

LEILA : HAVE YOU HAD ENOUGH APPLAUSE TO LAST FOREVER?

JERRY: IT'S INTOXICATING.

LEILA : I DON'T WANT TO BE DEFLATING.

JERRY: BUT IS IT TIME TO CALL AN END TO THIS ENDEAVOR?

LEILA : FAME AND FORTUNE.

JERRY: FORTUNE AND FAME.

LEELA : FAME AND FORTUNE.

JERRY: FORTUNE AND FAME.

LEELA : CAN'T BE A WINNER IF YOU DON'T PLAY THE GAME.

JERRY: IF THIS KEEPS UP I'LL BE A HOUSEHOLD NAME.

LEILA (spoken): Like Sinatra?

JERRY (spoken): Like Ronzoni.

LEILA : IT WASN'T EASY GETTING HERE.

JERRY: I'VE ENJOYED IT ALL SO MUCH.

LEILA : PEOPLE CHEERING WHEN YOU SING.

JERRY (wryly): I SEEM TO HAVE THAT GOLDEN TOUCH.

LEILA : FAME AND FORTUNE.

JERRY: FORTUNE AND FAME.

LEILA : CAN'T HIT THE BULLSEYE IF YOU DON'T TAKE AIM.

JERRY: IT TOOK SO LONG. I'VE COME SO FAR.

LEILA : ACTUALLY IT'S KIND OF FUN BEING MARRIED TO A STAR.

JERRY: HOW IN THE WORLD WILL WE DECIDE?

LEILA : (taking a quarter) LET'S JUST GIVE THIS COIN A RIDE.

JERRY

Save your quarter for a one-armed bandit in Atlantic City. My mind's made up. I'm announcing my retirement from showbusiness on the "Tonight" show.

LEILA

Not so fast. This is not something you really want to do. You're doing it because you think that's what I want.

JERRY

Well. Don't you?

LEILA

Well, no. I want whatever makes you happy.

JERRY

Which brings us right back where we started. Undecided. Because whatever makes you happy makes me happy.

LEILA

Well, Jerry, maybe there's something that'll make us both happy -- midway between the slow lane and the fast lane. Suppose we ask Mimi to book you lightly. A week or two here. A weekend club-date there. A Mediterranean cruise ship. Lots of time off and lots of bookings in cities near where our kids live. That way you can have your cake and eat up our grandchildren, too.

JERRY

Why didn't I think of that?

LEILA

You didn't have to. Isn't that why you married me? For my brains?

JERRY

I've never been so insulted...or so happy...in my life.

(They hug then break on VO and Mimi comes in to center left)

**VO- ACT TWO. SCENE 9 Backstage at "The Tonight Show." Jerry's in his dressing room with Leila fussing over his hair and Mimi pouring over a contract when there's a knock.**

JERRY

Come in. (Eddie enters from left. Mimi and Leila counter to right mikes) Eddie, what a surprise!

EDDIE (he's wearing a Sinatra hat and crosses to center)  
Jimmy Fallon invited me. He wants the big dramatic moment to take place on his show...me handing you the million dollar check.

JERRY

I like it. 20 million witnesses.

EDDIE

But Jerry, there's something I've gotta tell you. Something...well something I never thought I'd have to tell you because...well...I never thought that you could win the bet.

JERRY

So you're saying...

EDDIE

I'm saying I can't pay off. When I phoned the other day? I wanted to tell you. I just couldn't get the words out. To admit that I'm not a big shot anymore, just a big blowhard.

JERRY

But that monster wedding. Champagne. Hot and cold running hors d'oeuvres. The works.

EDDIE

The hotel comped me. They got a lot of free media.

JERRY

But all that oceanfront property in Jamaica? And that fancy hacienda?

EDDIE

It went long ago.

JERRY

But five wives...

EDDIE

Chew up a lot of alimony. And when I visit Vegas -- well, you know me -- I generally leave without my shirt. So...the long and the short of it is I'm short...about 999,000 dollars short.

JERRY

Is this some kind of joke?

EDDIE

I wish it were. (pensively) It's the old story. Earn big. Spend bigger.

JERRY

Eddie, I worked pretty hard for that million...

LEILA

But we don't need it, Jerry. I mean...it would be nice to have a million dollars...to give to charity. But we've always had enough. And now that you're making all this money in night clubs and on recordings -- well, who needs it? (beat) And there's that really big money from Uncle Sam. You won the bet so...you get to keep your Social Security checks.

JERRY (looks at Leila proudly, back at Eddie)

Leila 's right, Eddie. She usually is. And if it hadn't been for you and your crazy bet, I'd have missed the most exciting year of my life. Come to think of it, you don't owe me. I owe you. But go easy on me. I don't have a million either. At least, not yet.

(Mimi crosses to right mike)

MIMI

But you will soon, Jerry. The bookings are coming in so fast I'm running out of calendar.

EDDIE

Mimi, while I'm mending fences, I'd like to put a few pickets in yours. I owe you an apology. Big time.

MIMI

I'm not sure I want to hear it.

(Jerry crosses to Leila)

EDDIE

I realize that. After all that's happened between us, it could be as hard for you to accept my apology as for me to pay-off to Jerry. But I'm really sorry. About the past. To put it in Olde English: I've been a cad and a bounder.

MIMI

That's a pretty good definition, Eddie. A very good definition. But I can add to it.

MIMI SINGS:  
I HAVE TO CONFESS THAT I WANTED  
TO BOIL YOU IN COD LIVER OIL  
TO TEAR OFF YOUR FINGERNAILS ONE BY ONE  
FROM YOUR LITTLE PINKY TO YOUR BIG FAT THUMB  
AND THEN FEED YOU TO A GARGOYLE.  
AND I WISHED THAT YOU'D NEVER BEEN BORNED  
BECAUSE I WAS A WOMAN YOU SCORNEED.

I WANTED TO HEAR YOU GROAN ON THE RACK  
TO BROIL ON A SPIT DEEP IN HELL  
BEING ROASTED WITHOUT AN ICED SNAPPLE  
IN YOUR MOUTH A MACINTOSH APPLE  
AS I CHEERFULLY WISHED YOU FAREWELL.

AND I WISHED THAT YOU'D NEVER BEEN BORNED  
BECAUSE I WAS A WOMAN YOU SCORNEED.

BUT THAT'S ALL IN THE PAST  
KIND OF LIKE THE STONEHENGE  
AND I HEALED REALLY FAST  
SO TO HELL WITH REVENGE

FOR LATELY I'VE DONE SOME RETHINKING  
IS IT POSSIBLE THAT I WAS WRONG?  
COULD IT BE THAT YOU WEREN'T SO BAD?  
OR THAT I WAS IMPERFECT? EGAD!  
AND PERHAPS JUST A TRIFLE HEADSTRONG?

WELL I'VE HEARD FROM MY BETTER ANGELS  
AND THEY'RE URGING ME TO FORGIVE  
THEY SAY GRUDGES ARE HEAVY TO HOLD  
THEY SAY, MIMI, JUST LIVE AND LET LIVE.

SO EDDIE THOUGH YOU'VE BEEN A BASTARD  
AND I'VE WANTED TO WRING YOUR NECK  
I HEREBY COMPLETELY FORGIVE YOU

EDDIE  
Completely?

MIMI. (slowly holds up separated thumb and index finger).  
WELL THERE IS THIS ONE LAST LITTLE SPECK.

LEILA

Eddie, when you present Jerry with his check on the show tonight, no one has to know it's pure rubber. Except maybe the IRS. If we don't tell them, we'll be stuck with a tax bill the size of California.

EDDIE

You guys are too much. But I promise you one thing. If I ever win the lottery, you get the first million. Right off the top. Plus interest.

JERRY

But Eddie, there's one clause in our contract I'd kind of like to enforce. Remember? The one where if I won the bet you'd open for me in Vegas? That would be kind of fun.

LEILA

Jerry, we can't ask Eddie to do that. It would be too humiliating.

EDDIE

It would, Leila. But I deserve it. I'll just grit my teeth and hope nobody's covering the opening.

LEILA

I've got a better idea. That "Friendship" song you wrote, Jerry? You and Eddie could sing it together. In fact, why not do it on the Tonight show? Tonight.

(Eddie looks hopefully at Jerry)

JERRY

Neat idea, Leila. But there's no time to rehearse, no arrangement for the band, and Jimmy Fallon's producer would have a fit. Ten fits. But what the heck! We're pros, right? Well, anyway you are. Let's wing it – with sheet music!

MIMI

Gentlemen, this is where I come in. Million-Dollar-Bet Night at Caesar's Palace would go over bigger than a Kentucky Derby trifecta. Good for Caesar's. Good for Jerry. And Eddie, great for your Second Coming. Or is it your Tenth? Whatever. You might even be able to pay Jerry that million you owe him. With the right representation.

EDDIE

Well then, how about it, Mimi? With our history, I'm not sure. Would you be willing to represent me?

MIMI

For 20 percent of everything, I'd represent the devil...who, if I'm not mistaken, you no longer are. (She lifts his Sinatra hat off.) Just as I thought. (to Leila) Look Leila! No horns!

FALLON SHOW ASSISTANT (who has come to stage left mikes)  
Ten minute warning, gents! Mr. Reiss, you're on first. Mr. Hunter, please stand by.

(Mimi and Leila exit and sit right as Eddie and Jerry follow assistant left. He goes off, they wait by mikes left. Fallon crosses to center)

**VO- ACT TWO. SCENE 7 Onstage at "The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon."**

FALLON

And now, ladies and gentleman, a very special guest. You've read about him in Time and Newsweek. You've seen his picture on the cover of People. So here is the pride of the Social Security set. A guy with an impossible dream who not only made his dream come true but won a million dollars along the way...Jerry Reiss.

(Typical Tonight Show whoopin' and hollerin' as Jerry comes in, shakes hands with Fallon, and takes his seat.)

JERRY

Thanks, Jimmy. This is what Yogi Berra calls "deja-vu all over again." A little over a year ago, I dreamed I sang on this show.

FALLON

And you will. But that comes later. Let's talk first. Jerry, when I'm your age, will I be able to sing like you?

JERRY

Only if you don't take singing lessons.

FALLON

You didn't take singing lessons?

JERRY

My folks couldn't afford them. And then I got into other things. Like doing publicity for Eddie Hunter.

FALLON

Well, this is kind of "This is your life, Jerry Reiss." Because...more deja-vu...here's Eddie Hunter now. (Eddie comes onstage. Jerry feigns surprise. They embrace.)

JERRY

Is there a cardiologist in the house? I think I'm gonna need one.

EDDIE

More than you know, Jerry. Because I'm here with a small token of appreciation and, well, I have to admit, with a little regret, for your successful completion of a Mission Very Impossible -- winning the bet I never thought I could lose.

(He reaches into jacket pocket, pulls out check, hands it to Jerry)

JERRY

(reading it)

Holy Stromboli! One million dollars!

FALLON

Drop it, Jerry. Let's see if it bounces.

EDDIE

I had it certified.

FALLON

Don't spend it all in one casino, Jerry.

JERRY

Call me Lucky. Not crazy.

FALLON

Eddie, for a guy who just lost a million dollar bet, you're looking pretty happy. Amazingly happy.

EDDIE (wryly)

Easy come. Easy go.

FALLON

Well, how about something easy before you go? Two good buddies singing a little duet. A friendly duet. A little bird told me you've been practicing it backstage. And the Tonight Orchestra? Well, they can follow anyone anywhere.

EDDIE

Jimmy, your wish is our command. And folks, Frank and Dean and Sammy, my Rat Pack buddies of the 60s, are gone. I guess it's time for Eddie and Jerry: The Mouse Pack!

JERRY AND EDDIE DUET: "YOU CAN'T BUY FRIENDSHIP" (they sing holding sheet music)

JERRY

AN ATOM OF OXYGEN FLOATING IN THE ATMOSPHERE SHYLY SAID HI  
TO TWO ATOMS OF HYDROGEN CRUISING BY IN THE SKY

EDDIE  
THE FRIENDSHIP THEY STRUCK UP BROUGHT ON A TRANSFORMATION:  
THEY TURNED INTO H2O AND WATERED THE ENTIRE NATION.

JERRY: YOU CAN'T HAVE A MARRIAGE WITHOUT FRIENDSHIP  
EDDIE: YOU CAN'T FILL A CARRIAGE WITHOUT FRIENDSHIP  
JERRY: YOU CAN'T SHARE A GARAGE WITHOUT A FRIENDSHIP  
JERRY AND EDDIE: FRIENDSHIP MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND.

EDDIE: YOU CAN'T THROW A PARTY WITHOUT FRIENDSHIP.  
JERRY: YOU CAN'T LAUGH AS HEARTY WITHOUT FRIENDSHIP.  
EDDIE: MARTIN CAN'T BE MARTY WITHOUT FRIENDSHIP.  
JERRY AND EDDIE: CAUSE FRIENDSHIP MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND.

JERRY: THERE ARE STEAMSHIPS.  
EDDIE: AND THERE ARE CRUISE SHIPS.  
JERRY: BUT NO SHIP RIDES OUT A STORM LIKE A FRIENDSHIP.  
EDDIE: THERE ARE TRUSTEESHIPS.  
JERRY: AND INTERNSHIPS.  
EDDIE: BUT LIFE IS LUKEWARM WITHOUT FRIENDSHIP.

JERRY: IT'S FUN TO LAUGH WITH A FRIEND.  
EDDIE: TO SHARE A GAFFE WITH A FRIEND.  
JERRY: A CARAFE WITH A FRIEND.  
EDDIE: A GIRL WITH A FRIEND  
JERRY AND EDDIE: FRIENDSHIP MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND.

EDDIE: THERE'S NO ONE TO CONFIDE IN WITHOUT FRIENDSHIP  
JERRY: LIFE'S A VERY ROUGH RIDE WITHOUT FRIENDSHIP  
EDDIE: LOTS OF PEOPLE HAVE (sadly) DIED WITHOUT FRIENDSHIP.

JERRY AND EDDIE  
FRIENDSHIP MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND.  
FRIENDSHIP MAKES LIFE WORTHWHILE  
NEVER GOES OUT OF STYLE  
FRIENDS ALWAYS MAKE YOU SMILE

(LEILA and MIMI come out, throw arms around both, and sing with them)  
FRIENDSHIP MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND.

## **FINAL CURTAIN**

(marching applause music to “Friendship Makes the World Go Round”)

