

Frankie Moon's Long Gone
(A Dark Comedy)
By Ean Miles Kessler

Ean Miles Kessler
EanMKessler@gmail.com
(203) 915-6537
5417 North Kenmore Ave., Apt. 311
Chicago, IL 60640
www.EanMilesKessler.com

"Life is suffering."
—Buddha

"When in doubt, go for the dick joke."
—Robin Williams

For my grandmother, Rosalie Sklar.

A Note on Production: The aim of this play was to write a universal story, one that could hold the wide plethora of American identities, regardless of race, faith, or background. To that end, all roles are to be played by actors of color. The hope was to write a "family play," and begin to redefine the notion of how an "American family" is represented on stage.

As to the music, the songs listed are simply suggestions. The song sung by Marty at the top of Act II, Scene Six ("*Steve & Marty & Frank's Suit...*"), should be elegant and somewhat somber; the song sung by Marty and Steve later on in the same scene should be a catchy, fun pop-tune. The music chosen for the play can also, if decided, reflect the backgrounds of the actors playing the roles. (For example, should the play be cast with Korean actors, a production could use a Korean pop tune; etc). Otherwise, all original written songs are indicated with quotation marks.

Cast List

FRANK DELUNE: Male. Mid 60's or older. Has terminal cancer, and has opted to go off treatments.

STEVE DELUNE: Male. Frank's son. Recently out of a long term relationship with his ex boyfriend. He's come home to help care for his ailing father.

MARTY: Male. Mid 30's-50's. A born again nurse. Cheery. Hopeful. Loves show tunes.

ALICE: Female. Mid 40's. Plays both ALICE and KATHY.

ALICE has been hired by Steve as a night home-aide.

KATHY runs a born-again Christian puppetry program.

Act I, Scene One

Frank & Steve...

At Rise: A house: middle class, comfortable. We see the downstairs kitchen, dining, and living room area. There's a downstairs bathroom, and a staircase leads to the upstairs. Old hats and gloves and jackets lie about in disrepair; a Singer sewing machine sits on a desk in the corner. Crates are strewn about the space, filled with cigar boxes and empty bottles and papers, like debris from a wrecked ship.

STEVE takes up a trash bag and begins rooting through the junk strewn about the house. He finds a pack of cigarettes, a tiny bottle of scotch, an old cigar butt. He tosses them. He finds more and more cigarettes; he chucks them by the fistful.

FRANK sits at a desk in front of a typewriter; a cigar is clamped fuming in his mouth. He has a glass of whiskey. A rolling walker stands near the desk, and a cane hangs on the back of his desk chair. FRANK taps away at the typewriter.

FRANK

What are you doing—?

STEVE

I came here t'help you, t'clean all this shit up; I didn't come here—

FRANK

What the *fuck* do you think you're doing—? Gimme those, that—no! *No!*

STEVE

—I didn't come here t'watch you turn this into a *fucking* tire-fire—

STEVE snatches FRANK's cigar and throws it out.

FRANK

What're you doing?! *Oh my God!*

STEVE

I called the doctor, you have your last appointment—

FRANK

I'm not going to the doctor; I'm—

STEVE

Your last appointment with the oncologist for a psych eval—it's mandatory—

FRANK

Steve—

STEVE

The doctor said, if you change your mind—if you wanna go back on treatments, you can go back, it's not—

FRANK

I'm not doin' that, Steve; *Steven*—

STEVE

You can back on chemo; you just...you gotta be sure.

FRANK

Simply:

I'm done, Steve; lemme just enjoy it.

STEVE almost says something, but stops himself. He nods.

STEVE

The realtor gets in on Thursday, she—

FRANK

We're not selling the house; I told you—

STEVE

This isn't a *choice*, Dad—we've talked about this—

FRANK

I'm not selling!

STEVE

No; *you're* not selling the house, *I'm* selling the house. The realtor gets in on Thursday.
[*Muttered to himself:*] Y'...crotchety fuck.

FRANK

What?—what'd you just say?

STEVE

I said—you're gonna need all your luck.

FRANK

Steve; I'm dying. The hell do I need luck for?

STEVE

Yeah, well your choice. Funeral home called; I have a meeting with them next week, figure out the arrangements. What kinda flowers you want?

FRANK

Fuck flowers.

STEVE

Fuck flowers; got it. I called your lawyer, you need t'sign off on the new draft of the will; get everything notarized—

FRANK

I'm making some changes; I'll get it to her.

STEVE

Okay, well hurry it up, Pop.

STEVE continues his hunt for cigarettes.

FRANK

How's uh, how's your mother?

STEVE

She's fine; she's good. Her and Tim, they're going to Malta for vacation.

FRANK

Ah, *Timothy*.

STEVE

He's a nice guy, dad—

FRANK

Fucking...limp-dicked Tim—

STEVE

He's a *good guy*; she's very happy—

Slight moment.

FRANK

I should call her.

STEVE

I think you're fine.

Slight moment.

FRANK

And you, you're—you're good? Everything—okay, or—

STEVE

Yeah, I'm fine; I'm just tired. The home aide starts tomorrow, so I'm gonna—

FRANK

I *told you*, I'm not getting a home aide—

STEVE

Yeah, well, with the laundry, and the cooking, and everything—having someone—

STEVE

—*who can help out*—who can look after you—
so I can run errands or—just fucking—get
groceries, or—fuck!

FRANK

I told you; I made it *very clear*—I don't
want an aide; I don't need an aide—we're
fine, I don't want any other people—

FRANK

—fucking around in my house—!

STEVE

Well he gets here tomorrow, so just deal with it. *Jesus.*

FRANK

“He,” whattayou mean, “he”—who’s a “he”?

STEVE

The home aide. Martin gets here first thing tomorrow.

FRANK

It’s a man?

STEVE

Yes.

Small moment.

FRANK

He’s not one of your little friends—one of your little *gay* friends, is he—?

STEVE

What.

FRANK

‘Cause if he is, if he’s yanno—gay or—whatever, I mean, Jesus Steve, c’mon—!! I got what, two months? I already gotta put up with *your* bullshit—

STEVE holds back.

STEVE

Don’t worry Dad, he’s not gay. I picked him specifically for you. I gotta go, I have—

FRANK

We were supposed t’pick out my suit tonight; we were gonna look at grandpa’s suits—

STEVE

We’ll do it tomorrow, dad— I’ll be back in an hour—

STEVE exits:

FRANK

Did y’at least make food?

STEVE

Offstage:
It's in the fridge!

FRANK

It's not that vegan shit again, is it?

STEVE

Offstage:
It is—!

FRANK

Fuck.

FRANK checks to make sure STEVE is gone. He peers under the desk, and takes out two cartons of cigarettes. He lights one up. Using the cane FRANK hobbles about the house, hiding cigarettes, everywhere he can think of: behind pictures, in vases, in light fixtures, etc.

Lights shift as he works.

Act I, Scene Two
Marty's Arrival...

Next Morning. STEVE stands by the closet, alone on stage. He digs through the junk and pulls out a cigar box; he peers inside. We can't see what he's looking at, but he stares at it as though it glows. FRANK shouts from offstage:

FRANK

Steve! Steven! I found it! Hey Steve!!

STEVE

Alright; hold on! Jesus—

STEVE hurriedly slams the cigar box closed and stashes it back in the closet. FRANK enters with his cane; he carries a man's tailored suit.

FRANK

Whattayou doing?

STEVE

Nothing—I was—there was a weird smell coming from the closet. I gotta clean it.

FRANK

Y'grandfather, he made this. I'm gettin' torched in this suit.

STEVE

Great, Dad; just *wonderful*. Listen, y'gotta decide what you want for the obituary—

STEVE hangs up the suit and pants by the door:

FRANK

Just put, yanno: "Frank. Beloved father, beloved son, beloved husband."

STEVE

We gotta at least *pretend*, Pop; we're not writin' a fucking fantasy novel here—

FRANK

Alright! Fine. I'll think about it.

STEVE

I mean, the doctor said—if you keep with treatments?—you could go three, maybe five years—

FRANK

Steven—

STEVE

Five years, Pop—

FRANK

A' what? MRI's—more bed sores an' blood tests; the fucking...chemo. Those five years? I don't wanna die that tired.

STEVE

You could have a long time—

FRANK

Yes; it's a long time; it would be a *very* long time. I'm alright right now; I'm good, right now.

STEVE

Dad—

FRANK

I don't wanna die small, Steve. This is what it is— So.

Small moment.

STEVE

For the eulogy; now, I can do it, or uncle Eddie.

FRANK

I mean—if you want, you can—

STEVE

It's up t'you, Dad. Your call.

Small moment.

FRANK

You do it then.

STEVE

Sure; yeah, I'll uh, I'll work on it.

FRANK

Just—don't fuck it up, okay?

STEVE

Thanks, Dad.

A knock at the door. From offstage we hear MARTY singing a show tune.

FRANK

What the fuck.

STEVE opens the door. Enter MARTY: Bright, bubbly. A born again Christian with a song in his heart. MARTY is—unfortunately—a toucher.

MARTY

Hey big guy! *Huh!*

MARTY takes FRANCIS by the face, and kisses him on the cheeks.

FRANK

Don't kiss me; please—don't *ever* kiss me again.

MARTY

Yes! Look at this face! *Yes! The face of a warrior!*

FRANK

Let go of my face—

MARTY

Warrior!

STEVE

I hired Marty here t'help out—

FRANK

You what—?

STEVE

I stopped by the YMCA; they have a program and Marty, he was looking for some home-aide work, so—I set it all up— He's gonna be here! T'the very end.

FRANK

Steve.

STEVE

Marty here does *puppetry*; I thought he could bring his *puppets*, wouldn't you like that, Dad—?

FRANK

Steven!!

STEVE

You guys are gonna have a lot of time together—

MARTY

This is gonna be great.

FRANK

I have *cancer*.

STEVE

I'm just here for a bit; help my father out— We're selling the house and—

FRANK

That's not true, that's—no, he—

STEVE

—just has a lotta work needs t'get done, so—

FRANK

He came home, because he lost his job—

STEVE

I didn't lose my job, I was—I'm on leave—

FRANK

Yeah, well he's on a lot of leave, and he can't make rent; so. He moved back home. With me.

STEVE

I'm just helping my father, then I'm going home. I gotta go finish up some paperwork in the other room?—I'll let you two get acquainted.

STEVE exits.

MARTY

I've volunteered to be your spiritual counselor.

FRANK

I don't want a spiritual counselor.

MARTY begins to set up some of his stuff, unpacking his bags.

MARTY

No, no, no; no, I've *volunteered*. I'm prayin' for y'big dog.

FRANK

Well, I don't believe in God, *Martin*—

MARTY

Aaaand I'm gonna let that one slide, onna' count of your under emotional duress, okay, but we're gonna work on that—

FRANK

We're not gonna work on that; that's not—something we're working on— Steven!

MARTY

The guy in the sky is ridin' high...for Francis.

FRANK

...'Kay... *Steve!*

STEVE re-enters.

STEVE

What; whattayou want—

MARTY

Gonna let you get by, don't you be shy, or I'll spit in your eye—(not really)—for Francis.

FRANK

Does he always do this? Is he always just a perpetual...rhyming asshole?

MARTY

Whoa, hey there—*language*—let's just—

FRANK

Could you give us a second? I gotta talk to my son—

MARTY

Sure; right: father-son time. I'm gonna step out, go use the "little boy's room."

MARTY exits. FRANK turns to STEVE:

FRANK

What in the sweet and salty fuck was that, Steven?

STEVE

You go back on chemo, I get rid of him—

FRANK

You got me bargain-bin hospice—?

STEVE

Start doing radiation again? Boom, Marty's gone. Simple as that.

FRANK

You found him at the YMCA!! What, he come with a fucking construction worker and a gay Indian?!

STEVE

It's what we can afford! And technically the term is gay Native American—!

FRANK

This is not what you *fucking do* with a person who is dying—!

STEVE

Or...Homosexual First Peoples, I guess—

FRANK

He called it the "little boys room"—!

STEVE

Yeah, I heard him, Pop. I don't want him here either. Desperate times, desperate measures, okay—? Marty!

MARTY re-enters, drying his hands.

MARTY

Look what the cat dragged in!

FRANK

I'm gonna murder that fucking cat—

MARTY

Aaaand hostility is a part of the grieving process. And that's something we're gonna work through too, okay? And you're welcome, also—

FRANK

You haven't done anything.

MARTY

I was praying for you—in the little boy's room? Prayin' hard and fast.

FRANK

No praying; I don't want anything hard and fast from you—

MARTY stares at FRANK hard, praying for him in his mind.

FRANK

Stop that—

MARTY

Whispering:

You can't stop this train t' Glory...

FRANK

Put the brakes on the train, Martin; stop the train— Steve—!

MARTY

Choo-choo—

FRANK

You need to blink—

MARTY

Pullin' int' that *Salvation station!*

FRANK

You need to blink; why aren't you blinking—

MARTY

Chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga—!

FRANK

I'm not gonna say it again—fuck! *Let your eyes close!*

MARTY

Looks like someone needs a big ol' sloppy hug, big guy! I'm gonna squeeze those cheeks—!

FRANK

Don't you do that—don't *do* that, Martin—no touching—!

MARTY

I'm doin' it—! I'm squeezin'!

FRANK

Martin—!!

MARTY squeezes FRANK's cheeks; FRANK grabs MARTY by the arms.

FRANK

What are you, fucking simple?

STEVE

Yeah, I think this is gonna work.

Lights shift.

Act I, Scene Three
An Uncomfortable Reality...

The next morning. STEVE sits on the floor, assembling a hospital-style bed. It's not going well. FRANK sits at the kitchen table, reading the paper.

Goddamnit! STEVE

You're gonna break it. FRANK

Could you not? I'm trying t'finish this thing; I'm— STEVE

I said that was a stupid idea; I have a bed Steve, the stairs are fine— FRANK

The stairs are not fine, Dad, you're gonna fall, okay—if you fall, or—? STEVE

I said I'm fine. FRANK

Okay, good; well, be fine downstairs then, okay? STEVE

A knock at the door. MARTY sings a show tune from outside. He pokes his head in:

Another beautiful morning! MARTY

He's back. Like a nightmare, he's back. FRANK

Every day, Dad. Till you die. STEVE

Two words, big man: [*He takes out an instrument*¹.] Song therapy. Now, as your spiritual advisor— MARTY

FRANK grabs the TV remote to turn it on; MARTY swiftly snatches it from him.

¹ Some options: a guitar, tambourine, cowbell, triangle, bongos, etc.

FRANK

You are *not* my spiritual advisor!

MARTY

—I'm gonna have to insist. I've worked as a home aide for fifteen years, Frank. Come on; huh—let's just—let's riff— Let's *improvise*. That's a term I learned in children's theater—

FRANK

Oh *goodie*—

MARTY

I'll go, then you go; just—make it up—
“Seagulls—
They fly through the air,
They have not a care,
And they are there, 'cause they are seagulls—”
Huh—?

FRANK

I don't like this—

MARTY

“Seagulls—
They fly in the sun,
They have so much fun,
'Cause they are one—
... With Jesus—”
Yeah—!

FRANK

Jesus *Christ*—

MARTY

Yeah, him!
“Jesus! He is amazing!
In hell you'll be blazing!
'Cuz he's amazing!—and he's the Christ-Lord—!”

STEVE

Don'tchya wanna sing along, Pop—?

MARTY

Come on, Frank! Rock with me!

*MARTY drives into a rousing chorus, trying to rouse FRANK into excitement.
FRANK rips the instrument out of MARTY's hands, killing the sound.*

FRANK

Fucking—*gimme that*—!

MARTY

Easy, baby, easy!

FRANK

Get fucked, Martin! I'm stuck with this bullshit, with these two fucking homos—

STEVE

I would be very careful with your words right now—

FRANK

I'm dyin' here, and I gotta listen t'this sing-a-long homo bullshit!

STEVE

Watch your mouth—

FRANK

Aw, suck a dick, Steve!

MARTY

O-kay; alright— Can we not—

STEVE

Not an insult, *Dad*! I got no problem *doin' that*!

MARTY

—not talk about—that sort of thing—it makes some of us *very* nervous—

STEVE

There's nothin' wrong with suckin' *some dick*!

FRANK

Aw, fuck! What?!

STEVE

Big dicks, little dicks, all the dicks. Dicks of different shades and hues, dicks of different professions and backgrounds—

FRANK

Just stop; just please, stop!

STEVE

Dreamer dicks; wisher dicks; mischievous, impish dicks. Dicks with secrets, hopes, ideals—

FRANK

Oh my God!

STEVE

Dicks you know, dicks you don't. Every dick I can find of sound mind, and legal voting age—

FRANK

Ahhhhhh!!!

STEVE

It's like the old saying goes: *a stranger's just a dick you haven't sucked!*

MARTY

We have a *very* different saying back in Connecticut—

Long tense silence. STEVE goes back to fixing the bed. FRANK glares at his son.

FRANK

You're just tryin' t' piss me off; that's all this is—you're— You didn't really, yanno, do all that.

STEVE

Whatever.

FRANK stares at STEVE; STEVE ignores him and works. Finally:

FRANK

You had a boyfriend. You were dating—that *guy*, that "David"—so it was just, there was just one. One dick.

STEVE

Sure, Dad.

Another long pause. FRANK glares at his son.

FRANK

How many; how many dicks were there?

STEVE

Dad, I'm not gonna—

FRANK

I mean if you're gay; if you're—that's one thing, okay, but— I mean I can handle that; I don't like it, but I can handle that—but if—if you—

STEVE

If I what?

FRANK

All those dicks? *All* of them? I mean, what the fuck is a “dreamer dick”?!

MARTY

A dick with dreams...? Nightmares, maybe...

FRANK

Shut up, Marty! How many dicks did you—yanno—

STEVE

Did I what?

FRANK

Did you...enjoy the company of?

STEVE

I mean... I—had fun in college—

FRANK

Oh my God—

STEVE

It's perfectly normal—

FRANK

One dick—you are a one-dick pony from now on! I'm callin' that boyfriend of yours, David, I'm callin' him!

STEVE

You don't have his number!

FRANK

I'll find it!

Using his cane, FRANK goes to the landline; STEVE rips the cord clean out of the wall. They stare at one another.

MARTY

I...I was gonna make hot dogs tonight...

Lights shift.

Act I, Scene Four
Bath Time & Baby Birds...

Morning; the Kitchen. The cord to the phone has been reattached to the wall with electrical tape. The window by the front door is open. STEVE is alone—he holds the cigar box again, and stares into it. We still can't see what it is he's looking at. FRANK enters behind him, (now using the rolling walker). He carries a pair of dress shoes; FRANK speaks, startling STEVE:

FRANK

What's that; whattayou doing?

STEVE slams the cigar box closed, and hugs it close. He shoves the box into the closet and grabs his coat, hiding the cigar box from FRANK.

STEVE

Jesus, you need t'wear a bell! Fuck! Just—nothing, Dad. Stuff for the realtor.

FRANK

I found the shoes; for the suit.

STEVE

Great. C'mon, you gotta eat. I made kale.

FRANK

Fuck kale.

STEVE

You're welcome.

STEVE puts the shoes by the door, beneath the suit. FRANK catches a whiff of something and draws in the smell like a hound. He hobbles to the window, and seats himself in the rolling walker.

FRANK

You smell that? Camel—Camel Light—Someone's smoking a Camel Light—

STEVE goes to the window, peering outside.

STEVE

Some lady's smoking on the corner. I'm closin' the window—

FRANK

Leave it! I have terminal cancer!—I can sniff what I like—!

STEVE

Dad, I gotta go—I'm meeting with the realtor, I—

FRANK

Ask her for a cigarette; c'mon, we'll go outside, we'll have a smoke together—

STEVE

I told you, I quit—

FRANK

Yes, I know, you've always been a *fucking quitter*. "Aw, I'm a vegan now, I wanna live forever. I celebrate myself, and sing myself"—aw, go fuck yourself!

STEVE

—it's healthy, Dad!

FRANK

I'm dying!

STEVE

So die healthy!

FRANK

I mean, *God* in the morning? A cigarette and a cup a' coffee? Couple a' donuts? Doesn't that sound nice?

STEVE

Well I quit, and you can't have any, so—

FRANK

Leave the window, Steve. Just for the smell.

STEVE considers; he leaves the window open.

STEVE

Marty should be here any minute; I gotta go t'the...

Another show tune from outside. MARTY knocks, and sticks his head in the door:

MARTY

Morning!

STEVE

Marty, he's going to have to give you your bath—

FRANK
What.

MARTY
Ready, big dog!

FRANK
I will see you in hell first, you little *fucking dog*—

MARTY
I'm not goin' t'hell; I'm saved.

FRANK
Fuck your *mother*, Martin!! I can't believe this; Steve, you're serious—?!

STEVE
Dad—

MARTY
My mother was a wonderful woman.

FRANK
Steven, what the fuck—

FRANK
—are you *doing*?

STEVE
I know you don't like this, I don't like it
either, *believe me*, but—

MARTY
She was kind. Sweet.

STEVE
—you need t'take a bath, okay?

MARTY
Gentle. Intelligent.

FRANK
Shut *the fuck up*, Martin!! This is *bullshit*! You're gonna embarrass me like this? You're
gonna—

FRANK
—do this to your father? *Really?*

STEVE
It's what we hired him for—

STEVE

You want me to do it? Huh?

FRANK

I can bathe myself; I—

STEVE

No; you can't, that's—

FRANK

I can do it myself—

STEVE

That's the point, you can't; you wanna do this? You wanna go off chemo, fine, but this is what it is. You can't bathe yourself anymore.

FRANK

I told you, I'm fine—

STEVE

Yeah? Sure; okay. Go ahead, get up, go take a shower—

FRANK

I—

STEVE

C'mon; go. You don't want help, go ahead.

All eyes on FRANK who sits, glaring at the steps. FRANK begins, struggling to rise out of his rolling walker. He gets his feet under him, makes one or two steps up the stairs, and falters, grabbing hold of the railing. He gathers his breath, tries again. Fails again. FRANK keeps trying...it is a long, painful series of attempts... He can't do it and finally lands, sitting in the rolling walker. The strain has winded him, and left him exhausted from the effort. Small moment.

STEVE

Softly:
Take the bath, Dad.

FRANK says nothing.

MARTY

I, uh, I'm gonna go get the water started.

MARTY exits.

STEVE

Go back on chemo, I'll get you another aide. We can get someone *else*. But if you don't? It's Martin. That's his job. Dad, please—

FRANK doesn't answer. STEVE just nods.

STEVE

I gotta go—

STEVE leaves. We hear the sound of the water running in the bathroom. FRANK sits, fuming. MARTY calls from the bathroom:

MARTY

Water's running nice and steamy! You want bubbles?

FRANK

Fuck your bubbles, Martin.

MARTY

Got it!—we'll just do a few bubbles!

MARTY pops his head out from the bathroom, leaving his body still hidden.

MARTY

Also...!

MARTY steps fully into the living room: he's wearing two washcloth hand puppets. They are blue, and made to look like baby birds.

MARTY

Who's ready for baby-bird bath time!

FRANK

I'm gonna kill my son.

Lights shift: FRANK sits on a bath-bench in the tub. His walker and cane are nearby. FRANK wears a bathing suit, and washes himself with a bar of soap. MARTY hovers over him with the baby-bird washclothes on his hands. MARTY gently starts to wash FRANK's back with the puppet; FRANK lurches away.

FRANK

Touch me with your *pigeon hands* and I will fucking—

MARTY

Actually, they're baby blue jays? Now, when our *language* is negative we are negative. *Words* are like baby birds that we feed with our energy—

MARTY uses the puppets, "speaking" as the birds:

MARTY

"Papa! I'm hungry, Papa! Positive energy, we need positive energy!!"

FRANK whacks MARTY's hand with his cane. Hard. MARTY screams.

MARTY

Ahh!! That's my puppetry hand—!

FRANK

I warned you, you were warned—

MARTY

Well; I—will just take that as an apology— Praise be.

FRANK

Just leave me alone!!

MARTY turns his back to FRANK to give him privacy. FRANK washes himself; he's frailer than we've seen him. He works slowly. MARTY raises his good hand over his shoulder, and speaks to FRANK as the baby bird:

MARTY

"You're going to need to wash the downstairs areas, Frank—"

FRANK

Stop that—stop watching me!

MARTY

“My eyes aren't real, Frank. I'm here to make you feel *comfortable*—”

FRANK

That is *not* what you are doing—

MARTY

“Let Marty help you, Frank...let yourself be *helped*...”

FRANK

I will not argue with a fucking birdie puppet—!!

MARTY

“...technically you're doing that now...”

FRANK

Fine, God—! Just stop with the fucking bird—!

MARTY turns to face FRANK; he goes to lift him from under his armpits.

MARTY

Here, I'll just—

MARTY stands in front of FRANK, blocking his body from the audience. He helps FRANK stand. FRANK drops his shorts.

FRANK

Eyes closed! Y'puppet fucker...

FRANK washes himself. MARTY helps FRANK bring his shorts back up and helps him sit on the bath-bench again. MARTY sits, facing away from FRANK.

MARTY

I'll just be over here—

Quiet moment; FRANK washes himself.

FRANK

It doesn't bother you; that Steve—he's yanno. I mean you're...all religious, or—

MARTY

It's really—it's not my business, Mr. DeLune; I mean, I don't—really care. Steve seems...sad, yanno? Quiet an' sad.

FRANK

Shut up; sad, he's not *sad*. Shut up.

MARTY

Sorry. If you need any help just—let me know—

Moment, while FRANK cleans himself. He tries to bring his leg up to wash his feet; he can't reach. Finally he gives in.

FRANK

If you could— Just, I need some help with my legs.

MARTY gently takes FRANK's leg, and props it on the edge of the tub.

MARTY

Is that—that okay—?

FRANK nods. MARTY washes FRANK; he's surprisingly good at his job.

FRANK

Thank—thank you.

Quiet moment: MARTY continues washing FRANK's legs and feet.

FRANK

I...I wanna call that guy; that David?

MARTY

What?

FRANK

I'm tryin' t'track him down. I think they should talk; I'd just like Steve t'talk t'him. I made a list—

MARTY

I don't think that's—

FRANK

I printed out a list. Two thousand, eight hundred, and ninety six David Cullers in the state; I can't call them all; I don't—I don't have time.

MARTY

Frank—

FRANK

I don't have the time. I wanted t'...ask if uh—if you'd help me find Gay David.

MARTY

I think that's probably not his name—

FRANK

Please. Martin, I just...I wanna know Steve's alright— Just—that he's okay.

Moment while MARTY considers. Then:

MARTY

So, my friend Kathy at the YMCA—she has a Christmas puppet show, and...

FRANK

Martin—

MARTY

She invited me to join this year—(I auditioned)—so we bring the story of Christmas to people in hospice! To their homes, yanno? And then, at the end—this is the best part—she does a baptism—

FRANK

No; that—*no*—

MARTY

I can get *baptized* with our hospice patients, and honestly?—it doesn't even have t'be religious for you—! Yanno, whatever you believe; or don't—it's fine—it's *fellowship*—!

FRANK

No *fucking* way, I—

MARTY

It'd actually be my first time?—being baptized with one of my patients, I mean? I just joined up with Kathy so; you'd be my first. It would mean so much; t'share fellowship with you? I'll help with the phone calls; you join me in the baptism.

FRANK

I'd rather be dead.

MARTY

Well...we are in hospice, and...God works in mysterious ways, so...

FRANK

Martin—

MARTIN

You said you couldn't do it alone. Right?

Moment; FRANK relents.

FRANK

Fuck; fine! God-Jesus! Help me find David, then your puppet Christmas orgy.

MARTY holds up the baby birds and speaks:

MARTY

“Thank you, Papa; thank you!”

FRANK

Just wash my feet, Martin.

Lights shift as MARTY washes FRANK's feet.

Act I, Scene Five
Frank & Alice...

Night. The house is dark; only the light in the kitchen is on. Opera music plays softly on the record player. FRANK's suit hangs by the door. ALICE stands near the sink, smoking. She reads an old novel, and blows the smoke out the window. FRANK enters with his rolling walker, and watches her. He speaks, startling her:

FRANK

Who are you?

ALICE

I'm sorry, I thought— I thought you were asleep; I'm sorry.

FRANK

S'alright.

ALICE

Mr. DeLune hired me; Mr. DeLune was—

FRANK

That's my son; that's Steven.

ALICE

Yeah, he uh—your son asked me t' come in, few nights a week, keep an eye on things. I'm sorry, I didn't, um... I'll put it out.

FRANK

It's alright; naw, that's fine. Camel light?

ALICE

Yeah.

She smiles at being caught.

FRANK

Pretty woman with a cigarette, huh—? You lemme have one—?

ALICE

I really don't think—

FRANK

Just one. I'm a dying old man; just flirting a little. Won't kill me, right?

ALICE

Yeah, it will.

FRANK

I won't tell if you won't.

FRANK smiles. ALICE gives him a cigarette. He lights up.

ALICE

Can't sleep?

FRANK

I was gonna make some phone calls—

ALICE

It's late—

FRANK

Yeah; yeah, I guess so. Whattayou reading?

She holds up the book.

ALICE

Saw it on your shelf. Y' read a lot on the night shift; see the books people have. S'm' favorite novel.

FRANK

Yeah; it's a good one. My wife, she used t'wear her hair like that.

ALICE

Is she, uh—?

FRANK

Divorced—almost ten years? Irene—she's a good woman. We just finished up. An' you?

ALICE

Divorced.

FRANK

You got kids, or—?

ALICE

A daughter. She's in highschool, so yanno—makin' me crazy but— I work a lot; I carry the day shift over at the hospital; this is just sort of a...second thing.

FRANK

They break your heart—children? They break it to pieces.

ALICE

Yeah; well— Your son seems nice.

FRANK

He's alright.

Slight silence.

FRANK

He's gay; my son. He's, uh...

ALICE

I didn't know; I couldn't—tell, or—

FRANK

Naw, it's—it's not like you could tell. He's not—like that, he's— But he is; he's—yanno.

ALICE

There are worse things.

She ashes into the sink.

ALICE

That's a nice name; DeLune? It's pretty. Where's it from, your family?

FRANK

Nah, my father he just, he read it in a magazine—just liked the name—

ALICE

Oh; I uh, I thought maybe—

FRANK

Nah, he was a tailor; we had a shop—over on Claremont Ave— He figured people would see the name “DeLune” an' think yanno...it was high-end—Italian or French, or...something. Just wanted t'bring in some business. He went t'the courthouse and took the name.

ALICE

Yeah—

FRANK

Kids at school, they got t'rhyming—"Frankie DeLune, Frankie DeLune, Frankie the Moon."
That's...that's what kids in the yard used t'call me. Frankie Moon. I dunno.

ALICE

Well; hello, Frankie Moon.

They share a smile. She glances over and spots FRANK's burial suit.

ALICE

S'a good lookin' suit.

FRANK

My father made it.

ALICE touches the suit softly; FRANK watches her.

FRANK

How old are you?

ALICE

Excuse me—?

FRANK

I'm an old man; I'm dying, so—how old are you?

She takes a drag on her cigarette.

ALICE

How old do you think?

FRANK

Thirty-eight, forty—early forties, maybe. Your skin...still holds.

ALICE

Well; I can see why you're divorced.

FRANK

You look good; for thirty-eight, or forty—forty-five. You look good.

ALICE

Yeah, to a dying man.

FRANK

Yes; to a dying man.

She tosses her cigarette into the sink, and starts tidying up the last of the dishes.

ALICE

Well; suit looks nice—I'm sure you'll look good in it. I'm gonna clean this up—s'been a long day.

She places the book on the table, and gathers her purse and coat.

FRANK

Y'can have it, if y'want; the book—

ALICE

I don't want your things, Frank; I got my own books.

FRANK

What's your name? I'm Frank.

ALICE

I know.

FRANK

I—

ALICE

Get some rest, Mr. DeLune. I'll see you tomorrow.

She smiles and leaves. FRANK sits in his chair; he glances over, and stares at his father's suit hanging by the door. The opera music continues to play, as the lights shift.

Act I, Scene Six
Frank's Panic...

The next day; the living room. A large splintered hole has been hacked through the door of the downstairs bathroom. FRANK sits in his rolling walker with a hatchet in his lap. He's winded, and glares at the front door. STEVE enters. He stops dead in his tracks.

STEVE

What the fuck.

FRANK

Where were you; where the *fuck* did you go—

STEVE

What happened; shit—what—what'd you do to the door—

FRANK

I'm stuck here; the fucking—*the door!* I mean, Jesus, *the door!!*

STEVE

What; what's wrong?!

FRANK

The door's fucking *locked*—I thought you were in there—and I'm stuck here, like—

STEVE

Jesus Christ—

FRANK

You don't pick up your *phone*; I have *no idea* where you are, if you're—

FRANK

If you're in there, or—or if you—

STEVE

I'm sorry! I went out, I had't—

FRANK

I hacked through that motherfucker like cottage cheese—!!

STEVE

I can see that! Fuck! Where's Marty?

FRANK

He fled when I got the hatchet. Fucking child.

STEVE

Jesus Christ—

FRANK

I was worried! Just pick up your fucking phone when I call you!

STEVE

I'm sorry, I— I left early; I didn't wanna wake you up, I used the bathroom down here, it musta' ...locked by accident—

The effort with the door hits FRANK all at once, and leaves him exhausted.

FRANK

Jesus, Steven—

STEVE

I'm sorry; I—I had t'go to a meeting—

FRANK

Meeting, what kind of meeting? You don't meet *people*!

STEVE

Thanks, Dad—

FRANK

Where the fuck were you?!

STEVE

Group, okay? I'm going to group again; I had t'pick up some prescriptions; it's not—!

FRANK

Prescriptions? What did you get, what are you getting?

STEVE

That's *really* not your business, so—

FRANK

You're gone for two and a half hours—you won't open the fucking door to the bathroom—

STEVE

I'm not—

FRANK

You have pills or—fucking who knows what, I don't fucking know— You're off *gallivanting like a motherfucker*, so just tell me what kinda fucking pills you bought, if you're gonna buy that shit!!

STEVE

Fine!—okay?!

STEVE goes to his backpack: he slams the bottles onto the kitchen table:

STEVE

Buspirone; Sertraline—Deseryl for I don't know what-the-fuck—

FRANK

Those, what're those?

STEVE

Vitamins, alright?! Wilma and Fred Flintstone!! Y'happy?!

Small moment.

FRANK

I'm just—I was—I was worried. I got worried.

STEVE

I know, Pop—

FRANK

The door was locked, and—and you were *gone*, and—

STEVE

Yeah, I know—

FRANK

And you left me—here, alone; you-you left me *alone*— I—

STEVE

I'm sorry; it was an accident.

Slight moment.

FRANK

You—you talk t'him at all, t'David or—

STEVE

No. He got married. To a woman—last spring. They're havin' a kid. I dunno.

FRANK

I—I didn't know that—

STEVE
Yeah; well—

Slight moment.

FRANK
I thought you guys; that—that he was—

STEVE
Gay? Yeah, me too.

FRANK
Can—can he do that—?

STEVE
I mean, he's gotta pregnant wife now, so: looks like he can!

FRANK
I didn't know you could do that.

Small moment.

FRANK
How uh—how'd you meet; you and David?

STEVE
What?

FRANK
I mean—we never talked about him, or...y'didn't...tell me much, so— I was just—asking...

Slight moment.

STEVE
At an art show; David—he does art, he paints, so. He came up and—we talked, I dunno...for like...four hours. I'd lost my phone, and—his was dead, so—he wrote his number down on the back of a uh, a five dollar bill an' he gave it t'me. Said...he said I shoulda' asked for his number two hours ago. Then he left. I didn't call him for like a week and a half.

Moment.

FRANK
When you didn't open the door—I—

STEVE

I know—

FRANK

And, I just—if you—if you did, or—if— I mean— If that happened, and—I missed it, and, and you— Just promise me, you're not gonna—

STEVE

I'm not—

FRANK

Not while I'm here; after, if you want, if—I mean—

STEVE

Okay—

FRANK

I don't *want* you to—but—but I— Just not while I'm here.

STEVE

Okay. Alright. Yeah.

STEVE begins to clean up, putting away dishes from the sink, tidying the countertop, etc. FRANK watches him.

FRANK

Whattayou talk about—with them; group and...whatever.

STEVE

That's none of your business, Dad. It's—

FRANK

Steve—

STEVE

—it's forty-five minutes; forty-five *minutes* without you, or, or Marty, or fucking—David—or anybody. And I just—I just want those minutes. I want to drink them like fucking grapes, because...because the laundry and the cooking and the house and the fucking realtor... And Martin! Fucking Marty! You think I like that sing-song puppetty motherfucker?

FRANK

No one likes Marty; Marty doesn't even like Marty—

STEVE

So I went to group, because, because, because, because—*because* David's married, and I am *here* wiping *your ass*—and I just wanna go back to my *fucking* apartment; and—

FRANK

Yeah—

STEVE

—and *you!*—you won't even take the chemo—just—just—

FRANK

Steve—

STEVE

Just, just, just, just take it, take the chemo; take it—!

FRANK

I'm not doin' that, Steve—

STEVE

Then go fuck yourself, okay?

Small moment.

FRANK

I'm sorry; about David. I'm not thrilled that you are, yanno *that*—

STEVE

Yeah, Dad I know—

FRANK

But that—that's hard. I'm sorry.

STEVE doesn't answer.

STEVE

You hungry?

FRANK

No.

STEVE

I'll make you a sandwich.

STEVE makes a sandwich; FRANK watches his son, as the lights shift.

Act I, Scene Seven
A Family Dinner...

The Kitchen. A few nights later. A shower curtain has been strung up over the bathroom door. Food cooks on the stove; MARTY digs through closet, cleaning. FRANK sits by the window in his rolling walker, looking for ALICE. STEVE enters in work clothes, filthy from cleaning the garage. He carries a crate of junk and a box of donuts.

STEVE

Hey, sorry I'm late. I had t'stop off at the dump; the garage, it's just, it's *chaos*— How's he doing?

MARTY

Your father and I had a *wonderful* day.

FRANK

He knows all the words to *South Pacific*.

MARTY

He had part of a sandwich, it was good—

STEVE

That's good, that's—your appetite back? That's *great*.

STEVE spots MARTY at the closet.

STEVE

Whattayou doing? *Martin*—

MARTY

Thought I'd give you a hand with some of the cleaning; it's really just *packed*—

STEVE

There's shit everywhere Marty, just let it alone— Is...is something burning?

MARTY rushes to the stove.

MARTY

Aw, *Cheese and Rice*; I burned the onions.

STEVE places the box of donuts on the counter, and begins to set the table.

STEVE

I thought uh, about, yanno, what you said; I bought some donuts. For tomorrow morning? I figured yanno we could do a little breakfast, some coffee, it'd be nice.

But FRANK doesn't answer, just stares out the window.

STEVE

Dad. C'mon, we gotta eat.

FRANK

There was a lady, on the corner; there was a...a woman—

STEVE

What? Whattayou talking about—?

FRANK

Nothing—

Using his walker, FRANK moves to the table. The phone rings; FRANK struggles to stand, trying to grab the phone. He gets his feet under him, but STEVE gets there first.

FRANK

I'll get it; Steve—

STEVE

Naw, I got it; just sit down—

FRANK

It's my house; I'll answer my phone, I—!

STEVE

Just calm down, Pop, I got it. *Fucking* phone— [*Into the receiver:*] Yeah, hello. *Hello?* Listen, I can hear you fucking breathing, okay? *Hello.* Fuck—

He hangs up.

STEVE

S'like the fourth goddamn time; they just call, they don't say anything, just fucking—silence.

FRANK

Yeah; I..I'll get it next time.

STEVE

Some kid or something; s'fucking annoying. C'mon, y'gotta eat.

FRANK

I'm not hungry—

STEVE

You can't just drink *wine*, Dad; wine's not food—

FRANK

Grapes are food. You finish the eulogy yet—?

STEVE

I'm—I'm gonna work on it—

FRANK

Have you *started*? It's a fucking eulogy, not a crossword puzzle—

STEVE

I'm doing it, I'm—I'm gonna work on it.

Tense moment; FRANK sips his wine, and STEVE serves himself:

STEVE

So uh, so what'd you guys do today?

MARTY

Uh, yanno, just—phone stuff, or—

FRANK

Nothing.

STEVE

What?

FRANK

Shut up, Marty. It's been a long day; lotta show tunes. Pass me the salt?

STEVE

I thought Marty, he could bring his karaoke machine tomorrow, whattayou think, Dad?

MARTY

*And—aaaaand—*your father asked me to do my Christmas puppet show here at the house.

STEVE

Really. Dad—

FRANK

What; I like puppets—I can't like puppets. Gimme the salt, huh?

MARTY

I was hoping you'd come, Steve—

STEVE

Right, we'll um have to see—

FRANK

The salt; the salt; pass the salt, somebody. Jesus.

STEVE passes the salt to his father. FRANK unscrews the top, and pours out the salt onto his plate, until...a cigarette falls out. He lights up.

STEVE

Goddamnit; put it out—

FRANK

Or what? Whattayou gonna do? Put me in time out? Your grandfather an' me, we used t'start his day—with a cigarette anna' cup a' coffee. Measuring tape draped all around him; pins and needles sticking everywhere. You remember that?

STEVE

Yes, I remember—now would you just *please*—

FRANK ashes and takes another drag:

FRANK

Tell you what, kid: you call that guy David, I'll put it out—

STEVE

No, that's; I'm not—

FRANK

You call him *tonight*, I'll tell you where all the cigarettes are hidden.

STEVE

Dad—

FRANK

I'll eat. Call David right now, I'll start eating.

STEVE doesn't answer.

FRANK

Well then.

FRANK raises his glass in a toast, and finishes the wine.

FRANK

Garçon! More wine!

MARTY

As MARTY pours FRANK a fresh glass:

Uh, okay, well yanno, actually—now that we're all here—we should really discuss a few things? Um, Frank; we'll need t'decide what it is you'd like us to do?—with your bodily remains—?

FRANK

Jesus garçon, at the dinner table—?

MARTY

It's the first chance we've had t'all really sit down and talk? There are some details you gotta figure out. I know you said cremation—so do you want Steve to bury the ashes, or—

FRANK

Jesus, Marty, y'really bringin' me down—

MARTY

Or! We can sprinkle them somewhere special? And uh, Steven? When your father, he makes his transition—you need t'decide if you'd like t'view the body. Afterwards.

STEVE

I—I mean, uh—

MARTY

I can clean the body if you want, change his clothes; y'just gotta let me know.

FRANK

Alright, that's enough, okay—

MARTY

It's something y'gotta think about, Frank. We gotta plan for this.

FRANK

We'll...we'll discuss it later. I'll be right back—

STEVE

What're you doing? Dad—

FRANK

I'm using the bathroom, okay? Unless you wanna come in and wipe my ass for me, huh Steve?

FRANK stubs out the cigarette in his untouched food and exits. STEVE dumps the food, and makes a fresh plate for his father:

STEVE

I found a cigarette in the kitchen sink a few nights ago; he's got cigarettes hidden...*everywhere*... Like a fucking *rat*—

MARTY

Usually we try not to talk about the dying...like rodents, uh...

MARTY

It's sort of...dehumanizing?

STEVE

Fucking *conniving little shit*.

STEVE

We're gonna find those fucking cigarettes— If it kills me, we're gonna find them—

MARTY

Listen, Steve, I—I don't know if this is really a fit—I think I should maybe leave, or—

STEVE

Are you kidding me, it's perfect; just keep going—

MARTY

What—?

STEVE

You're drivin' him nuts; he's gonna break, I can taste it, he's this close—

MARTY

Steve, that's not what—

MARTY

—this is all supposed t'be, I didn't—

STEVE

We gotta use *blunt-fucking-force*—

MARTY

I didn't realize that...that you brought me here to...t'be *problematic*, or— I don't wanna be disrespectful of your father's wishes, Steven, and—

STEVE

He's a fucking pitbull, alright; his brother Eddie, my mom, me—he fights with everybody. That's what he does; he will claw his way from death just to piss on your fucking arguments.

MARTY

I don't want to be peed on, Steven; I—

STEVE

First time he got cancer? He screamed—*railed* in the hospital; threw shit, bitched out the other patients. I talked to one of the doctors?—they called him “The Terror.” Year and a half later, he went home. This—*this* is the game.

MARTY

I don't know, I—

STEVE

If he just—if he just goes back on treatments; I mean—I think—I think he can beat it—

MARTY

Steve—

STEVE

He could beat it; he might...he *might* do it. Please. Just...be yourself. Trust me.

FRANK enters from the bathroom with a fresh lit cigarette. He carries a carton of cigarettes.

FRANK

You wanna play dirty, I can play dirty.

STEVE

Where are you hiding these?!

MARTY

Well, yanno it *is* his end of life process, so—

STEVE

Shut up. I'm talking t' my father Martin; just remember what I said, alright?

MARTY

Steve, I dunno, I—

STEVE

Please; just think about. Now...go in the bathroom, put your hands over your ears and hum.

MARTY

... 'Kay, uh...

MARTIN exits to the bathroom and closes the curtain. STEVE turns on his father:

STEVE

I can't fucking believe—I can't *believe* you— *God, I mean, you could have another five years!*

FRANK

Of this?! Oh, sounds delightful!

STEVE

I have so much shit to do—! I have to paint the house, and—call the realtor! I gotta find you an urn, and—and you—fuck! Shit!!

MARTY calls from the bathroom:

MARTY

Have we tried praying—!

FRANK & STEVE

Shut up, Martin!

STEVE

I don't hear you humming!! I'm in the garage, I'm cleaning your shit—I'm—!

FRANK

I have cancer; it's terminal—I can do *fuck-all*, do you hear me—?

STEVE rummages through the crate, ripping out the various bits of junk:

STEVE

Fucking—newspapers and blenders and
fucking holiday cards and—and the fucking—
broken cigar boxes—?!

FRANK

It's the end of the line, kiddies, everyone
must exit the ride, show's over, game's
done, good night and good luck—!

STEVE

Brandishing several copies of National Geographic:
Eighteen boxes of National Geographic?!—*eighteen boxes?!*

FRANK

They're mine!

STEVE

They're shit! It's all shit!! I'm drowning in a sea of your bullshit!! It's like the fucking end of days in there!

FRANK

Whattayou want, you want a fucking *cookie*?

STEVE

And you're in here like a coward; you're a *fucking* coward, you know that—!

FRANK

Yeah, same t'you—! Y'just don't get it; you just don't *fucking* get it—!

STEVE

No, that; you—

FRANK

You *die*, Steve; that's—

STEVE

No; that *no*—

FRANK

That's what y'do—

STEVE

I—I—!

FRANK

Y'turn int' dust and ash and y'burn, you *fucking die*—you *die*, and you do it the fuck alone—

STEVE

Just—just stop; *just stop!*

FRANK

And all I want is a goddamn piss-ant mother*fucking* *cigarette*—!!

STEVE

I can't—I *fucking*—I can't; I can't breathe in here; I can't *breathe*—I—

STEVE freezes, a panic attack taking over. He can't breathe.

STEVE

Oh my God—

FRANK

Steve; Steven—? It's okay; it's alright, you're alright—you want some water, or—

STEVE

Just—stop talking!—just gimme a minute—I—

STEVE braces himself on the table, taking in measured breathes.

STEVE

It just, it— I mean what...what do you believe in, though? Just...darkness and nothing?

Tiny moment.

FRANK

Yeah.

STEVE

Jesus Dad—

FRANK

There are worse things, Steven.

STEVE nods.

FRANK

There's a lotta time. There's...a lot of waiting. You forget; it's just waiting.

STEVE stands, staring at the floor.

STEVE

You think I don't want a cigarette? You wanna have something? Have some *fucking* chemo. I gotta finish clearing out the garage.

STEVE grabs the carton from his father, and snatches the lit cigarette out of FRANK's hand. He takes a long drag.

STEVE

There, y'happy?

STEVE chucks the cigarette out the window. He tosses the box of donuts into FRANK's lap.

STEVE

Enjoy the donuts—

STEVE exits with the carton. The room is suddenly brutally empty: lonely. MARTY peaks his head out from the curtain:

MARTY

So; for the baptism?

FRANK eats a donut as the lights shift.

Act I, Scene Eight
Frank & Alice at the Opera...

Lights Rise: The Kitchen, night. FRANK and ALICE smoke cigarettes and drink wine. Her book sits on the counter, and FRANK sits in his rolling walker. By the door is a motorized wheelchair.

ALICE

God, I mean, listen—I love my daughter, I do; she's great and wonderful, but *shit*— I'm gonna kill that girl. The hell are you laughing at, I'm not kidding; I might actually kill her.

FRANK

Yeah—

ALICE

She borrowed the car two weeks ago, parked it—didn't pay attention to the meter; got towed—

FRANK

Shit—

ALICE

Eight hundred dollars.

FRANK

Ah, fuck—

ALICE

I called her father, I said listen I'm just lettin' you know, I'm going to murder our daughter; say goodbye. She stayed with him for a week, and I took the bus.

FRANK

More wine?

ALICE

It's late, I should really go—

FRANK

Ah, one more glass won't kill you.

She considers, and finally relents with a smile. FRANK pours her another glass of wine. She goes to the wheelchair and sits in it.

ALICE

Chair's nice.

FRANK

Chairs *motorized*. Steve put it onna' credit card. Figure this means I'm getting close— Why can't you an' Marty switch, huh? I could put up with him, if I was sleeping.

ALICE

Some of us have day jobs, Frank. A teenager t'chase after.

FRANK

How's the book?

ALICE

Still good; still my favorite. How're the phone calls?

FRANK

We called 'em all; between me and Marty?—left messages, got hung up on. Someone's called back—five, six times, but...I just—I keep missing them. I dunno.

Yanno, I see you—before your shift; out there, with a cigarette—? Last hoorah huh?

ALICE

Bad habit, I guess.

FRANK

You mind it; coming here?

ALICE

It's okay; it's a job.

He nods.

FRANK

What's your name? You tell me your name?

She smiles, and sips her wine.

ALICE

This is very good, the wine.

FRANK

My ex-wife—Irene—she used t'drink merlot. Night we met, she had a glass; let me try some. Stained my tongue red. She was gorgeous, Irene?—she was—

ALICE

Yeh—

FRANK

Nah, but she was incredible; and when we were twenty-five, thirty? Christ, she walk in the door, and the room would move. I gotta lotta things wrong with Irene, but—we did alright; for a while. Whattabout you; how'd you and your ex-husband meet?

ALICE

It was a party. He was a friend of my cousin—he was very good looking— He was, I can't help it; not much of a husband, but—very good looking young man. He had bright, *bright* eyes— Even at night; his eyes, they... And he was wearing a shirt—and I could see the line of his shoulders. I always liked his shoulders.

FRANK

I have nice shoulders; I've been told—

ALICE

I'm sure you have, Frank. We shared a cigarette and...that was it. Dani?—she looks just like 'im.

FRANK

We went t'Venice; Irene and I—thirty, almost forty years ago; before Steve, before... Wandered; the whole city— And at night we made love and drank wine. I started listening—to opera; in Venice. You ever...listen?—to opera?

She shakes her head "no." He pours himself more wine.

FRANK

When I got it the first time—when; when I first heard—twelve years ago. We did it all—a, a marathon; an *endurance*. That was before Steve was here—back with Irene; when Irene and I were—still together. Before all of it; we did it all, blood tests, screenings, MRI's. Broke it from my body; and the pieces come along with it. I skinned cancer *alive*—

Slight moment.

FRANK

There will not be a second win.

ALICE

You're gonna be alright, Frank. You're gonna be fine.

FRANK

For someone who's dying.

ALICE

Yeah; for someone who's dying. You'll be okay. I gotta get going.

FRANK

Stay; just for a bit, I—

She turns to the counter and arranges some papers.

ALICE

I was cleaning some of the closets, I uh, I found this—

She hands him STEVE's cigar box. FRANK opens it and takes out...a piece of canvas. It's a small hand-painted portrait of STEVE. He looks young and gentle in the painting. FRANK stares at the portrait of his son.

ALICE

Who did the painting?

FRANK

I don't know. *God*, he looks like Irene; when she was young? Looks just like 'er.

ALICE

He looks lovely.

FRANK

Yeah; he does.

ALICE

Gently teasing:
Makes the room move, huh.

FRANK

Yeh.

FRANK stares down at the painting.

ALICE

He looks real nice. Well; I'll see y' tomorrow—

FRANK

Wait; just—just for a minute—

ALICE turns to leave. The phone rings, and continues throughout.

FRANK

Listen with me? To a song, just—

ALICE

I really—I can't, I should get home t'my daughter— Phone's ringing, Frank.

FRANK

—don't leave; please. Just one song; then...if you wanna go...

The phone continues to ring; FRANK looks at the phone, then back at the canvas. ALICE watches him; she puts on a record and opera plays. She lights a cigarette. The phone rings and rings, but FRANK can't seem to move.

ALICE

You're gonna miss it, Frank.

Just as the ringing is about to stop...ALICE picks up, and offers the receiver to FRANK:

ALICE

So?

FRANK looks up at her. Blackout. End of Act I.

Act II, Scene One
Puppets of God...

The next morning. The Kitchen. A small platform stage has been set up with the curtains drawn. We catch FRANK and STEVE mid conversation. FRANK sits in his wheelchair; he holds the cloth painting in his hand:

STEVE
You fucking *what*—?

FRANK
I called David—

STEVE
Jesus Christ—

FRANK
I found that picture, the—painting thing—

STEVE
Gimme that! Fuck, Dad you can't *do* that—

FRANK
Well, I did, so. His wife Susan, she was the one kept calling back; she was nervous, she uh...she didn't want David t'know, or—I dunno. You kept picking up and screaming, so—

STEVE
Fuck—

FRANK
He did it; the painting—?

STEVE
Yeah; couple years ago.

FRANK
It's a good painting; it's very good.

Slight moment.

FRANK
I arranged it with her, that you and David would meet up at a bar—t'talk or—

STEVE
Dad; *please*—

FRANK

On Friday. You gotta put the ghost t'bed, Steve.

STEVE

I'm not doing that; I'm—

FRANK

You see David—I'll go back on treatments—

STEVE

I'm not gonna *do* that, Dad; you can't just—

FRANK

Chemo, radiation; everything. That's the deal. I'll do it, but...you gotta go see this guy.

STEVE

*Why?!—*why can't I just—go see him later, or—just—I'll do it later—!

FRANK

'Cause you won't; if I didn't I call him—? You're not gonna do that; you know it, I know it—
You gotta see him, put an end t'all this.

STEVE goes to the kitchen counter and begins putting things away, slamming them into their spots. We hear MARTY outside:

MARTY

“I am the very model of a modern Major-General—”

STEVE

Fuck; goddammit—

He enters carrying a kiddie pool.

MARTY

“I've information vegetable, animal, and mineral!”

STEVE

Shut the fuck up!!

MARTY gently places the kiddie pool by the stage:

MARTY

Rough morning, okay; well I just brought the pool?—for the baptism?

FRANK

Fucking hell, Martin—

MARTY

We had a deal; Frank?

STEVE

What deal. *What's the deal*, pop.

FRANK

He...Marty helped me find David, and I said—I'd let him do the show and baptism.

STEVE

You *what*—

FRANK

Honestly, I was hoping I wouldn't live this long.

STEVE

Aw, that's just *perfect*. *Fill 'er up, Marty!*

FRANK

Wait; you—what? *Steve*—

STEVE

We'll all do it, right Marty?! *I can make deals too, Dad*. All of us; we'll all get baptized, every last *son-of-a-bitch* here—

FRANK

You can't—you can't do this t'me; *Steven*—!

STEVE

You wanna turn my life into a shit-storm, fine; but if you think you're just gonna call David *and his pregnant wife*—and then *waltz* your bitter, dying ass away, you got another thing coming—! Let's get *saved*, Marty!

FRANK

I was being *nice!!*

STEVE

Stop! Stop being nice! You have [*Insert actor's age here*] years of no practice!

FRANK

I was helping—!

STEVE

Calling David is not helping!!

FRANK

Naw, I know you Steve; *I know you, y'sneaky li'l fuck!* You rather just sit around moping like a fucking child! A fucking man-baby! Y'little *fucking maybe*; you're a *maybe*—!

STEVE

Aw, fuck you!! God; I can't wait for this to be fucking over!!

FRANK

Yeah, well me neither!

STEVE

*To MARTY:
You baptize this motherfucker, you hear me!*

MARTY

That's not a sentence I've ever heard—

STEVE

Do it.

MARTY

O-kay. Well, there's one—uh, *slight thing*—you should probably—

KATHY enters: bright and bubbly, puppeteer extraordinaire.

KATHY

Hey—*hi*—sorry I'm late, it's so wonderful to be here; thank you—

STEVE

So good to have you; this is great, isn't this great, Dad? You ready for a show?

FRANK

Fucking fantastic.

KATHY

Ah—language!—ha-ha! I'm just gonna put on my “invisible ear-muffs,” okay?

KATHY puts on imaginary “ear-muffs:”

KATHY

Marty warned me, he said you'd be a bit...*bristly*, so... That's why we're here—

FRANK

You've gotta be *fucking kidding*—

STEVE

Oh, this is gonna be *good*.

MARTY

Now, Frank here has made a very brave choice, and is on his journey—home.

FRANK

To MARTY:

Stop touching my shoulder like we have a bond; we do not have a bond—

KATHY

We usually like t'begin our presentations with a group warm up: Marty, why don't you start.

FRANK

No; no fucking way—

FRANK tries to leave; STEVE unplugs the battery to the wheelchair. It stops.

STEVE

Just sit back and enjoy, Pop.

MARTY gets up and begins to clearly mime "fishing."

FRANK

You're an asshole.

MARTY

Laughing nervously:

I am not being a "behind," I am *fishing*—he's just being silly, he's—

FRANK

You're fishing. Like an asshole.

KATHY

Okay, why don't we just—

FRANK

Fishing for fellow assholes, I guess. Jesus was a fisherman.

KATHY

Wow, this is gonna be a tough one; okay, alright “ear-muffs!” Martin, wanna try another?

MARTY begins to clearly mime skiing.

FRANK

You're an asshole.

MARTY

Laughing nervously:

So—so funny! Frank!!

KATHY

That's not—you can't just guess the same thing, Mr. DeLune—

FRANK

I wasn't guessing, I was telling you. I'm stuck here with Jesus and Joseph and the Virgin Marty, over here—

MARTY

Mary, you mean the Virgin Mary.

FRANK

I know what I said.

KATHY

Yanno, I think we'll just jump into the show; Martin, *places!* Take a seat wherever you like—

MARTY

Whispered to STEVE:

Steve, there's one thing, uh, we should talk about—before the puppet show, see—

STEVE

I want this to hurt him, do you understand— Baptize the *shit* out of 'im.

MARTY

Uh, well—

KATHY

Martin!

MARTY goes to places. Lights shift. The curtains to the platform open, to reveal... An intricate biblical scene: A manger. There are puppets for Jesus,

Mary, and Joseph, the three wise men, the animals of the manger, etc. MARTY plays an electric synthesizer. STEVE and FRANK sit stunned. KATHY and MARTY sing:

KATHY & MARTY

“Here upon a humble hearth,
There lays a child of Virgin birth—”

FRANK

Well, “virgin” I mean—

MARTY

*Whispers:
Be respectful!!*

KATHY & MARTY

“Who’ll rise to be the King of Earth!
Here upon a humble hearth.”

Musical interlude.

KATHY & MARTY

“The Virgin Mary and the Virgin Joe,”

STEVE

Wow—

KATHY & MARTY

“They had no other children, this we know—
And so they lay on a humble hearth,
And with their child of a Virgin birth—!”

MARTY brings out the puppet of the FIRST WISE MAN:

MARTY (FIRST WISE MAN)

Come! There is a star in Bethlehem—!

FRANK

I can’t do this—

Lights shift: The Last Supper. JESUS and the TWELVE DISCIPLES are seen. JUDAS enters with a mob of soldiers behind him. KATHY narrates as the voice of God—probably in a faux British accent.

KATHY (VOICE OF GOD)

And lo, Judas kissed the man he would betray...

JUDAS kisses JESUS. They sing to the audience in a duet:

MARTY (JESUS)

"Oh, it was the Judas kiss,"

KATHY (JUDAS)

"I felt a touch of dread,"

MARTY (JESUS)

"A touch of bliss!"

MARTY (JESUS) & KATHY (JUDAS)

"What oh what can we do about this?
Oh it was the Judas kiss!"

MARTY (JESUS)

"He kissed me; I thought he missed me."

KATHY (JUDAS)

"I kissed him; have I dismissed him?
For thirty pieces of silver!
My lips began to quiver!"

MARTY (JESUS)

"A crown of thorns is what I wear!"

KATHY (JUDAS)

"I've sent him to the Devil's lair!"
Jesus, I—

MARTY (JESUS)

Putting his finger to JUDAS' lips:

Shh.

FRANK

These...these are my last days?

MARTY

Whispers:
It's almost over!!

Lights shift: The end of the show. Armageddon: the end of days. The LAMB of GOD sits on a cloud above the biblical scene. COMMONERS wail and moan. The FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE roam, wreaking havoc.

KATHY & MARTY

“It’s the fury of the lamb
Pestilence, War, and Fam-ine!
Behold, a pale white horse!
Who rides it, why Death of course!
It’s the fury of the lamb!”

MARTY (LAMB)

“Bah-bah!”

KATHY & MARTY

“Fury of the lamb!
And in those days shall men seek death,
But they shall not find it!
As we stand with baited breath,
Of death you are reminded!
And the sky will blacken from the smoke of the pit,
Goodness, gracious, holy *shh*—!
It’s the fury of the Lamb!”

MARTY (LAMB)

“Bah-bah!”

KATHY & MARTY

“Fury of the lamb!”

MARTY continues playing the synthesizer in a musical break; KATHY addresses FRANK and STEVE:

KATHY

And now...is where our work really begins. We’re searching...for someone ready to heed the call—

FRANK

Ah, *fuck*—

KATHY

Keep the music going, brother. We’re looking for a volunteer; any volunteers.

FRANK

Jesus Christ—

STEVE

C'mon, dad—you had a deal—

KATHY

Any volunteers at all. The song doesn't end 'til we get a volunteer—

*FRANK raises his hand. MARTY loops the music so that it continues to play.
MARTY and STEVE help FRANK into the kiddie pool.*

MARTY

You don't have to be scared, Frank—

FRANK

I'm not scared, Martin.

MARTY

You do not have to be afraid, Francis! It's like...a waterslide, but we don't go anywhere—!

MARTY, FRANK, and STEVE sit in the kiddie pool. KATHY holds up a pitcher of water.

KATHY

I baptize you—in the name of fellowship—in brotherhood and love—

MARTY

Amen—

FRANK

Get fucked.

KATHY jumps back into the song:

KATHY

*“And so I stand and pose to you:
What-oh-what will you do
When the wrath, it comes for you?”*

KATHY & MARTY

“It's the fu-ry...of...the...laaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaamb!”

KATHY baptizes the three men.

MARTY (LAMB)

“Bahh!”

The End. MARTY and KATHY bow. FRANK and STEVE sit stunned. STEVE eventually gives a few slow obligatory claps.

STEVE

It was like...a Mel Gibson movie. With puppets.

KATHY

Martin, I am *so proud* of you—

FRANK

There, y'fuckin' happy?

STEVE

Yes; yes I am.

MARTY helps FRANK get seated back in his wheelchair, while STEVE plugs the battery back in.

FRANK

Alright, well; thank you for coming, now please leave. *Steven*, get the door—

KATHY

Now, for our talk-back—

MARTY

Uh, actually I was thinking—?

KATHY

This is the best part, so: you've been saved—

FRANK

I have not been *saved*—

KATHY

Well, *actually* you were; I know 'cause I was there, and I did it. You've been blessed with a new beginning, so: what are *you* gonna do when the Revelation comes?

FRANK

Listen lady, I'm a divorced atheist, and my son's a fag, so—

STEVE

Dad—

MARTY

Frank—

FRANK

Gay, my son's gay. So, if the revelation comes, I think we're good. Now please; get out.

KATHY

Oh. I didn't...oh...

MARTY

Kathy, now just wait, okay, so—

KATHY

I didn't realize...that Steve, that uh—you and your father, um—

FRANK

What—

KATHY

You didn't say anything; *Martin*—

MARTY

No, just—just hold on, I mean—

KATHY

I don't...agree with that sort of thing?—I uh, I think I should go—

FRANK

What? What're you—?

KATHY begins to collect her purse, coat, and things:

KATHY

To STEVE:

What you *do*...with your life... I just want you to think about the kind of...man you want to be. I mean—what kind of man do you want to be, Steven?

STEVE

I—

FRANK

What did you just say?

KATHY

Are you even happy? Steven? 'Cause, t'look at you—you don't look happy. My work asks that you take a good look at yourself, Steve, and—when you're ready— It can help; but—until then.

FRANK

Martin, what the fuck—

MARTY

I tried t'say something, I—really, I *did*, but—

KATHY

Excuse me, I'm gonna have t'leave now—

FRANK

You're gonna fuckin' apologize, is what you're gonna do—

KATHY

I just ask that you think about it, about the kind of life you want to have. Now, if you could just—move from the door—

All eyes on STEVE by the door.

STEVE

I—uh; I—

They watch him, waiting to see what he'll do. Tense silence. He decides it isn't worth the bullshit, and goes to open the door:

STEVE

Fine; sure.

FRANK

You stay right there Steven; don't move.

STEVE

You told them to leave and they're leaving, so, can we just—

FRANK

Keep that door shut. And Marty, I'm fuckin' talkin' to you after this. Now Steve here, he may be a homo; and his life may be in *absolute* tatters—

STEVE

That's—you don't have t'—

FRANK

Forced to moved back home with his Dad like a—*fucking child*—

STEVE

I'm *right here*...

FRANK

And he may have sucked every dick in town—

STEVE

Please stop talking—

FRANK

A plethora of dicks—an uncomfortable number of dicks—and I'll be honest with you, I don't like it, I really don't—I wish he wasn't gay—*but* he's brave enough t'suck those dicks—

FRANK gestures to MARTY:

FRANK

This guy over here looks like the kinda fella that dreams of a dick, then wakes up in a cold sweat—

MARTY

Alright, Frank that's just—

KATHY

We do *not* associate with—with that kind of behavior—!

FRANK

Lady, you have the face of a lesbian in despair—

KATHY

Excuse me; *that is a deeply offensive remark, and I—!*

FRANK

Aw, go weep t'your little pink Jesus, y'filthy puppet fucks—! I gave you two hours of a dying man's last days t'watch your little Jesus-dog-and-pony show, and you're not leaving this house, until you give a proper fucking apology—

MARTY

Frank, why don't we just—

FRANK

Die in a fire, Marty!!

KATHY

Mr. DeLune, you need to move from the door—!

STEVE

Dad, just let them go—

STEVE takes hold of FRANK's wheelchair, ready to move him out of their way.

FRANK

Hands off; *hands off!*

STEVE lets go. FRANK takes up one of the pillows on the sofa, unzips it, and takes out a cigarette.

STEVE

Damnit. I checked the couch.

FRANK lights up and wheels himself to the little stage.

FRANK

This little—Jesus-ville of yours...it's what?—made of cardboard? Paper mache? Looks old. Dusty. Flammable.

KATHY

What are you doing—?

FRANK takes out his lighter; he lights it up and holds it over the puppetry stage.

FRANK

Apologize.

KATHY

Mr. DeLune, now—

FRANK

Apologize or I burn it.

KATHY

You're not gonna do that; in your own home? No, I—

FRANK

Lady, I'm dying, I'll burn down this whole fucking house. So: apologize.

Moment.

KATHY

I'm...I'm sorry if...I offended you, or—

FRANK

No, no, no, no—look him in the eyes—

STEVE

Dad—

FRANK

Into his eyes. And apologize.

Small moment. KATHY looks STEVE in the eyes:

KATHY

I'm sorry. I'm—I'm very sorry.

FRANK

Say you were wrong. Say he's a good man.

KATHY

I, uh— I was wrong. You're...a fine man.

Small moment.

FRANK

Marty. Say puppets are dumb.

MARTY

I will not—

FRANK

Say it!

KATHY

It took me years to build this—!

MARTY

I— Puppets are dumb.

Another small moment.

FRANK

Both a' you: say there's no God.

STEVE

Alright—

FRANK

Say it, or it burns!

KATHY

I'm not saying that, I—

STEVE

Dad, that's enough.

FRANK

You're lucky he's nice.

FRANK puts the lighter away. He takes up one of the puppets: an angel or cherub...and stubs out his cigarette on the puppet's face. He tosses it to KATHY.

FRANK

Puppets are for children. Now get the fuck outta my house.

STEVE opens the door. KATHY stands flabbergasted. Lights shift.

Act II, Scene Two

Alice & Frank: A Late Night...

The Kitchen; night. ALICE stands in the kitchen; she sings softly to herself while doing paperwork. FRANK watches her from his wheelchair.

FRANK

Haven't heard that song in years.

ALICE

Passes the time—

FRANK

My mother, used t'sing that; with the radio? Inna' kitchen with the laundry anna' cigarette... I always liked that; smell a' the cigarettes an' laundry—

She smiles and tries to hide it.

FRANK

What? Whattayou smilin' at?

ALICE

Still buried in her paperwork:

Your mother; y'wife Irene; me. You got funny ideas about women, Frank—

FRANK

Well; at least lemme die with that, I guess.

ALICE

Simply, without judgement:

You will.

She offers her cigarette to him:

ALICE

Can't sleep?

FRANK

Steve, he went out t'see that guy, David—? I dunno.

He takes the cigarette and they share throughout the scene.

FRANK

You didn't come; the other night, I thought—maybe you were gone, or—

ALICE

Danielle?—my daughter?—she had a date with a boy— I took the night off.

Moment.

ALICE

My daughter went on a *date*—

FRANK

Ah, you're young.

ALICE

She's applyin' t'schools now? Ready t'kill each other, but—she's funny; and smart, and she makes me *laugh*— Yanno, you keep smokin' these, y'gonna ruin y'pretty singin' voice, Frank.

FRANK

Ah, everything ruins; it'll be alright.

ALICE

Yeah, I guess.

ALICE smiles, then turns back to her paperwork. He watches her for a small moment.

FRANK

What's...the best thing you remember? Your best day, or...would you tell me—about your best day?

ALICE stays silent for a moment, focused on her paperwork. She begins:

ALICE

Danielle—my Danni—she was maybe two or three; little, yanno? And we were driving out t'see my parents, I had the radio on. That song, it started t'play, yanno the—

ALICE begins to sing a bit of the chorus of an old pop tune from the 50's or 60's. It's the tune she was singing before. Something akin to "Having a Party" by Sam Cooke. She finishes the bit of chorus and smiles:

ALICE

Yanno? And Danni, God, she fell in *love* with that song; she's sitting in the back, dancin' in her car seat, yanno, t'the tune? I mean she was givin' it *everything*. Danni just—

ALICE imitates her daughter, dancing to the song.

ALICE

And she was all sassy and proud about it. I saw that in the rearview mirror, and I just—I burst out laughing, I mean; I almost had t'pull over. And Danni saw *me* laugh, and that made *her* start t'laugh; and we're both, we're just falling apart, yanno trying t'get through the song. About ready t'pee ourselves.

She made me sing it *every* car ride, over and over and over; wouldn't stop. I'd sing t'her; night times. She had trouble sleeping—for a long time; and I'd just sit with her. Holding her in the living room, late nights—just me and her, the...the smell of her hair? All clean. And that—stupid song.

She smiles.

ALICE

Singing t'my daughter; that was always good—

FRANK smiles; ALICE goes back to the paperwork.

ALICE

She's a good kid; she's smart, yanno, uh. I'm proud a' her. This job; I just answered this ad...little extra money. Just gotta make it through the next five, six years. I dunno.

She smiles, soft and tired.

FRANK

Sit down.

ALICE

I gotta finish this paperwork, I—

FRANK

Siddown, don't worry about it. I made some coffee earlier, you want—?

ALICE

I'm alright; I should really—

FRANK

So; have a cup a' coffee with an old man who can't sleep. C'mon. Take a break.

FRANK pours coffee for them both; he rolls to ALICE and gives her a cup.

FRANK

Irene and me?—we used t'go out dancing; God we danced like motherfuckers. We did; before Steve, before—all of it. Dancing was wonderful; always. Would...would you dance with me?

ALICE

I don't dance, Frank—

FRANK

Aw, everybody dances, c'mon—

He takes hold of her hand and sings snatches of DANIELLE's song, dancing playfully from his chair. ALICE smiles in spite of herself.

ALICE

You're a fool, you know that?

FRANK

Yeah; maybe. Just a li'l dance with an old man, huh?

ALICE

You don't even know my name, Frank.

They share a grin, and his hand lingers with hers; she lets him hold her hand.

ALICE

I'm gonna need my hand back. Okay?

Small moment; he smiles, and lets her fingers slip out of his hand. She returns to her work.

FRANK

Maybe next time, huh? One dance?

ALICE

Maybe next time.

FRANK looks out the window into the night:

FRANK

Nice night out; moon's up, full.

ALICE

Yeah.

FRANK stares out the window; he begins to sing DANIELLE's song softly, to himself. ALICE continues with the paperwork, and joins in, singing softly. They sing the chorus of the song to themselves—two people, alone—as the lights shift.

Act II, Scene Three
The Cemetery...

Lights Rise: The next day. Dusk. A cemetery. FRANK and STEVE stare out into the audience at the graves. STEVE cleans a marble grave, pruning the weeds and polishing the stone. FRANK sits in his wheelchair.

FRANK

Y'still gotta call in—t'the insurance—the radiologist lady; everyone—

STEVE

Yeah, naw, I already called. You go see 'em Monday morning.

Small moment.

FRANK

Your grandfather, we used t'come here—t'the cemetery. He picked that stone. Y'missed a spot.

STEVE

I know Dad, I'm doin' it.

Small moment.

FRANK

How, uh—how was it? With David—

STEVE

It was fine; we gotta beer, yanno—talked for a while, or—

STEVE continues to clean the grave.

STEVE

I asked him—yanno—if he always felt like that, or, if—if when we were together, if he always, uh—

FRANK

Yeah?

STEVE

Said he didn't know; he wasn't sure but—this is how he feels now, so. Said if I'm ever up near them, t'give 'im a call; be good to catch up, grab a beer. Baby's due March 15th, so—

Small moment.

FRANK

I hope his kid's gay.

STEVE

Me too.

STEVE continues cleaning the grave.

STEVE

We used t'go t'this diner—this shitty little place, on Sunday mornings. We'd been dating for a month?—month and a half?—and...David leaned over; he kissed me. In front of everyone, in front— I mean, no one said anything, no one noticed, or—they didn't care— But just right there, right in the diner.

Small moment.

STEVE

I'd never been kissed in public before.

Small moment.

STEVE

Yanno, I—I didn't think I was gonna...—

FRANK

Yeah.

STEVE

—gonna find...that, or—t'have that, yanno?

FRANK

Steve.

STEVE

Just—just sleeping next t'someone? Yanno, I— So. I told David—yanno I still have it, the...piece he did. The painting. Stupid, or—I dunno. He still paints. I'm glad, he's uh...he's a beautiful painter. He was always really good.

But. It's finished. It's done. [*Gently:*] I mean—what'd you think was gonna happen, Pop—?

FRANK

It doesn't—doesn't matter.

FRANK looks out at the graves. Silence.

FRANK

I, uh...

STEVE

What?

FRANK

I don't...I don't know if I can, uh, if— I mean I know what we said, but—I'm tired, Steve; I'm just—

STEVE

Dad—

FRANK

I'm *tired*? And—

STEVE

Dad, I—

FRANK

Please? I'm askin' y' Steve, I'm... Please, Steven?

He trails off, looking at the grave.

FRANK

But; well. I guess Monday, then...

He looks at his father's grave:

FRANK

We can bury it here; if y'want. The urn. It's just ashes, you can do what you like. But I always liked it here—in the autumn...

FRANK stares out at the graves; the idea of going back to chemo is exhausting. STEVE watches his father, sitting by the gravestone. Long moment. Eventually:

STEVE

I'll uh—cancel the appointment—it's— I'll tell them you changed your mind; I gotta email the oncologist—tell them to cancel—

FRANK

I, uh—

STEVE

It's alright; don't worry about it—

FRANK

Steve—

STEVE

I'll let 'em know you're stickin' with hospice. We gotta get the rest of the arrangements figured out—for the funeral, and—everything, so—

FRANK

Small:

Okay.

Small moment.

STEVE

C'mon, let's go home; we'll do something fun. Go on ebay, and pick out an urn.

FRANK

I'm not getting a *used* urn—

STEVE

I thought it didn't matter, I thought it was all yanno, “darkness and ash and nothingness—”

FRANK

It's not a pair of fucking *bowling shoes*—

STEVE

Alright, c'mon, we'll look at the prices—

FRANK

Nah, let's—let's just wait— S'a nice night. The graves are pretty.

STEVE

Yeah; they are.

They stand together, watching the night sky and the graves, as the lights shift.

Act II, Scene Four
Steve's Confession & Some Fatherly Advice...

The Kitchen: The next evening—Christmas Eve. STEVE makes dinner. FRANK sits in his wheelchair by the window, looking for ALICE. He sings DANIELLE's song softly to himself, almost inaudible. He's more tired than before—it's all starting to catch up—and he speaks slower, as though always a breath behind:

FRANK

Where's...where's Marty?

STEVE

It's Christmas, Dad. I gave him the night off.

FRANK

Fan-tastic.

STEVE

He didn't want it; he's coming back after a church function.

FRANK

God-damnit.

FRANK peers out the window.

FRANK

Is she—is—the woman—

STEVE

What? I can't hear y'Pop; y'gotta speak up—

FRANK

I usually see her, she...

But STEVE's not listening.

STEVE

C'mon Dad, we gotta eat. I thought we could do spaghetti tonight; salad.

FRANK

I'm not—I'm not hungry. I'm—I'm tired...

STEVE

Well, I made spaghetti, so—

FRANK

You finish it; the eulogy, or—

STEVE gestures to a folder of papers on the table.

STEVE

Yeah, naw, I'm gonna work on it.

FRANK

Well just...make sure y'finish it.

STEVE nods and continues making food. Moment.

FRANK

When you...uh, when you—

STEVE

What?

FRANK

When it happened; yanno...when that happened? I mean, I *know*, but uh, but we never really—talked about it; y'never...said.

Slight moment; STEVE just keeps working on the food.

FRANK

I don't—I don't think I understand, uh...to be honest—

Small moment.

FRANK

I mean—if you want...t'talk. About it. We can. So. But—whatever... Whatever you want.

Long moment. STEVE speaks simply, as he continues with the food. Any emotion that comes is small and guarded.

STEVE

I uh, I was drunk, I was...in the bathroom... And, uh...

Moment.

STEVE

I just, I couldn't—I couldn't breathe; I can't breathe sometimes— I didn't want my eyes—in the mirror; I didn't want to see my eyes.

Moment.

STEVE

I uh, I strung it up from the door—and kicked the chair out. I just—I blacked out.

Woke up the next morning... The rope, it'd snapped. I don't know how long I was there, but uh—the rope broke. So. So—I made coffee; and I went to work. They put me on administrative leave; so...

FRANK

Steve—

STEVE

I think about it...everyday. I think about it—all the time. I can't...I can't drop it. And it's not...David, or you, or this, or...anything, it was... It was just—sometimes I don't know how t'*breathe*, and—I was—I'm *tired*, and—I just...I wanted it to stop, I just wanted the engine to *stop*— And...hanging there; alone. Untouched, just—dangling there... Like windchimes, or...

STEVE stops himself.

STEVE

I'm not gonna do it again I won't...do it again— it was just a bad night.

Small moment.

STEVE

I gotta finish the food.

FRANK

Come here—

STEVE

I should make some—garlic bread, or—

FRANK

Shut up; just...come here—

FRANK takes hold of STEVE's hand.

FRANK

Okay.

They stay that way.

FRANK

There are uh, people, there... Yanno, whether it's a man, or—

Dad— STEVE

Or woman; I... FRANK

Dad, I— STEVE

FRANK
I don't...I don't care; it doesn't matter—there are people—and they...they will get under your bones— And they're gonna bruise you; and...an' it'll hurt, an' some of it—I'm not going to lie t'ya and say that...that, that they—they leave, or that...or—it gets better, or it stops, because— Because sometimes it doesn't. An,' an,' an,' an,' an' you'll have good things, an' great things; but some....some of those people—they stay.

I'm not gonna lie; I don't know if...if you'll be happy or—if you're gonna meet someone who— I dunno. I hope so; but... Sometimes y'...y'get lucky, an' sometimes y'don't. It can still...still be good, yanno? It's all just—hard; but—it's good too. It's beautiful too.

Moment; they sit there. FRANK just holds his son's hand. Then:

FRANK
Thank God you were always a little chubby, huh—

What? STEVE

FRANK
I mean...the rope broke, so; thank God you're a li'l—

FRANK
—overweight.

STEVE
—I am not—

STEVE
I am *not* a little chubby, I—

FRANK
Alright, I mean—but...but weren't you?

STEVE
It was a good rope, it was a very high quality rope! *I got it from Lowes!*

FRANK
Okay, fine—what...what kinda rope was it?

STEVE
What?!

FRANK
What kinda rope did you use, or—

STEVE
Twine, okay?! I used twine, old man!! What does it matter?!

Small moment.

FRANK
Twine is for arts and crafts.

STEVE
Jesus Christ—

FRANK
Listen, I'm thrilled it broke, believe me, I'm just—

STEVE
Would you just shut up, can you just shut up?! *God.*

STEVE returns the counter, and goes back to making food.

STEVE
Did it ever occur to you that yanno maybe, that *actually*—I mean *actually*—muscle weighs more than body fat? So—maybe yanno I'm in just too *good* shape? That ever occur to you?

FRANK
How much d'ya weigh?

STEVE
No, that's not—

STEVE
That's not the point, Dad—

FRANK
Just a...a guess—

FRANK
Ballpark—

STEVE
[Insert the actors weight here, minus 15-30 pounds]? Maybe? I dunno.

Small moment. FRANK stares at STEVE.

FRANK

How much do you weigh, Steve.

Slight moment.

STEVE

[*Insert the actors actual weight*]; probably. If I haven't had pizza.

FRANK

An' y'used twine. That wasn't gonna hold; I—I coulda' told you that—

STEVE

Oh my *God*, you are fucking—

FRANK

Listen, no; I'm—

STEVE

—you're fucking *relentless!!*

FRANK

Look, you're smart Steven; huh? You're smart, so...if y'tried t'do that—with a rope that...that you sorta knew, yanno, wasn't...wasn't gonna hold, I mean...you knew it wasn't gonna work. That's a good thing. Right?

Small moment.

STEVE

See, this—this is why I don't tell you things.

FRANK

Well; if you ever wanna...lose weight...cancer is definitely the express lane.

STEVE

I'll keep that in mind.

MARTY knocks on the door, and calls from outside:

MARTY

Merry Christmas—!!

FRANK

Goddamnit.

MARTY enters. He sings a "cool" version of "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."

MARTY

“God rest ye merry gentlemen
Let nothing you dismay (*ay-ay!*)
Remember Christ our Savior
Was born on Christmas Day (*ay-ay!*)

FRANK
I don't celebr...we don't celebrate.
Please stop. *Martin*—

MARTY
Merry Christmas! I'm just here t'pick up the pool?

MARTY goes to the kiddie pool—he picks it up, revealing: the bottom has been slashed to pieces.

FRANK
Oops.

MARTY
Right; well, um listen, Steve? I uh, I wanted to apologize?—for everything with Kathy? Steve, I'm, I'm so sorry—

STEVE
Marty, I—

MARTY
I hope you don't think that...that I think anything like that, I just—I wanted t'say I'm sorry; Kathy was wrong, and I'm—I'm sorry. So; Steve?

Moment: MARTY waits to hear STEVE's decision:

STEVE
Listen I, uh—

FRANK
Un-fucking-forgiven—

STEVE
Alright dad, *that's enough*. Marty; it's alright—

FRANK
You an' Kathy, that puppet Nazi—

STEVE
We need the help, okay; with the house, the funeral. I don't have time—

STEVE
I'm too tired to find someone else—

FRANK
I'm'a shove a muppet up your ass...

STEVE
He knows how everything works, alright? I'd like you to stay, Marty. We'll all just...get t'be miserable. Together. 'Til Dad dies.

Wonderful.

FRANK

May I give you a hug?

MARTY

No you may not.

STEVE

I respect that. But! I did get you guys a li'l something—for the holiday—

MARTY

MARTY hands FRANK and STEVE two packages. They open them: they are "Fury of the Lamb" T-shirts. MARTY opens his coat to reveal his own "Fury of the Lamb" T-Shirt.

I...I don't have words.

FRANK

You're welcome. I still—I have a lot of merchandise, so.

MARTY

I'm...tired—I'm not—feelin' well. Puppet boy...I wanna go...lie down— Steve, you goin' t'bed?

FRANK

I'll be up in a bit—I just gotta—work on the eulogy—

STEVE

'Kay. G'night Steve.

FRANK

FRANK exits with MARTY. STEVE watches, to make sure they've really left...he pulls out a pack of cigarettes and lights one. He pours a drink and sits at the kitchen table with the papers, fiddling with the pen. He looks up at the ceiling, as though the eulogy might be written on the rafters. He takes in the emptiness of the house. Silence. He begins to write.

Lights shift.

Act II, Scene Five
The Eulogy...

The Kitchen: later that same night. It's late; STEVE has a drink in one hand, and a crumpled bunch of papers in the other. He's several drinks in. He uses the back of a kitchen chair as though it were a podium. He practices his father's eulogy.

STEVE

So we're here—'cause a' my father; 'cause a' my *dad*. Mom's here; good to see you— With her husband, Tim; *second husband!* First off, and my father would want me to say this: fuck you Tim, y'motherless animal. Listen, I—just listen. Listen, Tim. *Tim, listen.* These are his words, not mine, okay? But I do wanna say a big thank you to my Mom, for putting up with Dad's shit for twenty-seven years. Here's t'you, Ma—

He takes a sip. FRANK enters in his wheelchair. He watches STEVE.

STEVE

Um, so—what to say, I guess about Frank DeLune. Uh, to begin, if anyone here has the urge t'cry, or yanno—

MARTY enters behind FRANK.

STEVE

—express yourselves, just...bury that shit, let it turn into an ulcer. Also, drinks are free tonight; except for you, Tim. That is actually stipulated in Dad's will. Everyone else; enjoy the party.

FRANK smiles, despite himself.

STEVE

My dad, uh, was not an easy guy. He was a difficult guy; he—often made things very difficult, um— But; that's how it goes—

MARTY

Frank; hey, you wanna go t'sleep? C'mon—

MARTY begins to wheel FRANK back into the bedroom; FRANK waves him away and rolls himself closer to his son, to continue watching. MARTY just stands and watches, along with FRANK.

STEVE

He fucked up. A lot. But he was funny, and, uh... He never said he was sorry; he'd just buy you something or take you out t'make up for it. When I was a kid that meant, yanno ice cream, or pizza. Aaaaand that is how I ended up with type one diabetes. So, cheers.

FRANK begins to laugh to himself, quietly.

STEVE

Yeah, laugh it up, giggles. Try the veal, best in the city—

When I was seven he sat me down and told me birthdays didn't mean anything; and only homos cared about that shit, after about eight or nine years old. He wanted me to be ahead of the curve, so. There I was. On my birthday. Jokes on him though, 'cause I'm gay, so I guess there's that!

Oh! *Shit*, uh—for anyone in the family who didn't know—aunt Janice? I'm lookin' at you, sweetie—uh, I'm gay?—I sleep with men—and I enjoy it. So; I'm sure my dad would *love* for me to make this announcement at his funeral. You're welcome, Dad! Cheers!

He takes another sip. FRANK continues laughing.

STEVE

My father would flirt—*mercilessly; brazenly*. He just; he loved women. He didn't *understand* women, but he loved women. He liked whiskey; cigarettes. Coffee in the morning time. Runny eggs and bacon. He wasn't supposed t'eat that stuff, but—he used t'make me promise not t'tell mom, but—he always said, yanno, doctors aren't gods.

He was always very proud—of his father, my grandfather—and this house; he always spoke highly of it. My grandfather used t'always say, you take all the “coulda,” “woulda,” “shoulda's,” you put 'em in a hat, you know what you got? Hatfull a' shit. Dad said that a lot. Well; lotta woulda' coulda' shoulda's, I guess—

STEVE drunkenly fiddles with his drink, muttering:

STEVE

Frankie DeLune, Frankie the Moon, Frankie's just...laughin' at the moon— You laughin' at the moon, Frank? G'head kid, laugh it up—

STEVEN smiles in spite of himself, and FRANK follows suit.

STEVE

Um— I've lived much of my life in reflection—in the opposite of his— Just what happens, I guess. So; but— My father, he was not...always a kind man; he didn't...do the right thing—a lot of the time. But; some of the time—sometimes he did. He was...he was okay; we're all—okay. I guess.

So. To Frankie Moon.

STEVE raises his glass in a toast; FRANK watches.

Lights shift.

Act II, Scene Six
Steve & Marty & Frank's Suit...

Lights Rise: A week later: New Year's Eve. The Kitchen. MARTY stands by the sink washing dishes—he sings quietly to himself.² STEVE enters, and stands by the door, unseen by MARTY. MARTY finishes his song.

STEVE

That was nice; that—you have a nice voice.

MARTY

Thank you.

STEVE

I didn't really think you'd listen—t' that sort of music; I mean, it's not religious, or—I dunno.

MARTY

My first choir teacher—Ms. Jolliff?—she let us listen to her records— I was in third grade, and—I'd never heard anything like it. The music? It's beautiful.

STEVE nods; he pours himself a glass of wine and glances out the window.

STEVE

Well; Happy New Year's. He's gonna do it; few hours?—Dad'll make it t' next year— He's sleeping?

MARTY

Fell asleep in the other room. Pretty tired; but—yeah, he'll make it t' next year—

MARTY gives a small sad smile.

MARTY

I uh, I don't have t' stay— When your father passes— A lot of people...prefer to be alone.

STEVE

No; I'd—I'd rather you stay. I'd like you t' stay.

MARTY

Sure; whatever you like.

STEVE

Why—why are y' doin' this? With us, I mean— Yanno?

² See Note on Production. Some possible options by the Beatles: *Let it Be*; *Blackbird*; *Eleanor Rigby*; *A Day In The Life*; etc...

MARTY

Well, I— I do my work in the Devil's mouth.

He gives another small, tired smile; MARTY goes back to his dishes, humming. STEVE looks over at the rack where FRANK's burial suit and shoes hang neatly. MARTY notices STEVE looking at it.

MARTY

I'm going t'take your dad's suit in to a shop tomorrow; get it taken in—

STEVE

Oh; um—

MARTY

He's gonna look small—in the suit—they always look small. But he's gotten thinner, so—it's gonna show. I'll take it t'the shop in the morning.

STEVE

Nah, it's alright, I'll—I can do it; I was gonna—do those alterations anyway—

MARTY

You, uh—?

STEVE

My grandfather, he taught me all the stitches an' everything... He was the first person in the family—t'work for himself. I told my dad, I said I'd do them; the alterations—

MARTY

Okay.

STEVE

I just—I haven't done it.

MARTY

Yeah; sure.

Small moment. STEVE takes in the house.

STEVE

This house? First house in the family.

MARTY

It's a nice place.

STEVE

Yeah; it used t'be.

Slight moment. MARTY hands him the suit.

MARTY

So; go ahead.

MARTY starts to shine the shoes, humming the same song from before. STEVE stands with his father's suit. He goes to the Singer sewing machine, sits, and gets to work.

The lights shift as they work, and MARTY hums.

Later that night. The radio blares—some fun pop song.³ STEVE is fairly tipsy. He sits at his grandfather's Singer sewing machine, altering the suit, while MARTY irons the shirt. They sing along as they work.

FRANK enters in his chair. He's much weaker now, and speaks slowly and deliberately.

FRANK

The fuck—

STEVE and MARTY sing the chorus together—they're having a blast.

FRANK

The hell...?

MARTY

It's a great song, Frank!

STEVE takes up the suit jacket and dances with it, as though it were a partner.

FRANK

Morons...I'm...surrounded by...goddamn morons...

MARTY puts the shoes on his hands, and "dances" them on the table.

³ See Note on Production. Some options: "Say You Love Me" by Fleetwood Mac; "Boogie Shoes" by KC and the Sunshine Band; etc.

MARTY

Yeah! Huh! Looka' that!

FRANK

Put down that suit—!!

STEVE sings out the chorus, and stands up on the table.

FRANK

...Jesus!

STEVE hops down and takes hold of the wheelchair; he zooms FRANK around the room. He sings to his father while he wheels him around.

FRANK

You be careful...you...y...

STEVE

S'done; I finished it.

He hands FRANK the suit. FRANK inspects it.

MARTY

It's a nice suit, Frank. Happy New Year; it's passed midnight.

STEVE

Happy New Year, Pop.

FRANK

Wann...I wanna put it on; I wanna...wear it...

STEVE

Sure; yeah, we can do that—whatever you want—

FRANK spots something through the window, and rolls his wheelchair to the window.

FRANK

Look— *Look*— She's—she uh, she...

STEVE

What? What's wrong? Hey; what's wrong, Pop—?

FRANK

Is she...is...?

But STEVE doesn't see anyone.

STEVE

Dad, I... It's dark out, Pop. It's alright; you're alright. C'mon.

FRANK looks at STEVE, and it re-grounds him in the room.

FRANK

Y'gotta call...tomorrow; Steve—

STEVE

Yeah, I know—

FRANK

Talk...t' the funeral home; did...did y'talk t'—

STEVE

Yeah, Dad I got it—don't worry—

FRANK

I wa...I was gonna—I—

FRANK stops short; he looks down: his pants are wet. He's peed himself.

FRANK

I— Fuck; goddamnit—

STEVE

It's alright, I'll—

FRANK

Goddamnit...

STEVE

It's okay; you're—you're fine— Marty? You go get some extra pants?

MARTY

Sure. We'll need t'set up a catheter; that's—the next step—

FRANK

I—

STEVE

It's okay, Dad. C'mon, we'll get y'cleaned and uh, I'll put you in bed—

FRANK

No, I— I don't...I don't wanna die...in a...a bed; I wanna...stay in the chair—

STEVE

Dad—

MARTY

We can put the catheter in, in the wheelchair; a colostomy bag—if he wants, we can—

FRANK

I don't wanna...die—in bed; please.

MARTY

It's your choice, Steven.

STEVE stares at his father.

STEVE

Alright; okay. Sure.

MARTY

I'll go get the pants—

MARTY exits. Small silence.

FRANK

I need—I have...t'take a bath.

STEVE

Sure—

FRANK

No puppets...

STEVE

Right. I, uh I can do it, if y'want.

Small moment.

FRANK

Simply; softly:
Okay.

STEVE

Okay. Lemme just...hang all this up—

STEVE goes to hang up the suit.

FRANK

Steve?

STEVE stops and looks at his father. Small moment. FRANK speaks in a small voice:

FRANK

I'm sorry, Steve; I'm—

STEVE

It's okay—

FRANK

I'm sorry...

STEVE

It's alright, Pop. You're okay. C'mon.

Lights shift as STEVE takes FRANK into the bathroom.

Lights rise: FRANK is in the tub. STEVE helps him wash:

STEVE

Is that alright?

FRANK

Yeh...

STEVE gently washes his father.

STEVE

Your hair came back in nice; after the chemo. It's coming in again.

FRANK

I always...had good hair—

STEVE

Yeah—

FRANK

Y'mother...liked my hair...

STEVE

Teasing:

Well; she had t'like something.

FRANK smiles.

STEVE

Here—

STEVE takes up some shampoo and begins to wash his father's hair.

The lights shift.

Act II, Scene Seven

Frank at Midnight...

A night or two later. Kitchen: Late. FRANK stands on shaky legs, propping himself up on the stand to his IV drip; he's drunk and muttering. He wears his father's suit, with the left arm rolled up, where the IV is injected. He wanders the empty house.

FRANK

An'—an' m' father—he danced...with Irene at our wedding—she...she was... beautiful; he was a tailor—for *thirty-five years*, f'—an,'an,' an,' an,' an'...an' he made suits an' gowns an' dresses, an'...the lace run up the sleeves and collars like...bits of frost, and...my...my father, he—he was...he was...?

He looks around; he's suddenly a bit lost. He looks down at his suit, and tries to remove the shirt, fumbling softly with the buttons. ALICE enters, unseen by FRANK.

FRANK

Steve; *Steven*—? Steve, whe—where are you? I was; I don't—I'm— 'Ey—*Steve*—!

ALICE

Frank—?

He stops with his shirt, and turns to her, startled

FRANK

M—my father wa'; he—who—who a'you—?

ALICE

Let's sit down, Frank—

FRANK

Who a'you?—who's—

ALICE

Mr. DeLune—

FRANK

—who's—who is—

ALICE

Y'gonna ruin y'suit, Frank—

FRANK

Who's scared a' dyin'—*who's scared a' dyin'*—

ALICE

Frank...

FRANK

Who's dyin' here—?

He looks down at the tubes and IV's sticking from his arms. He plucks them out, casting them aside.

FRANK

I don't wan' this; I don't—*want* that—

ALICE

It's just t'help you sleep—it's nothing—

FRANK

I don't—I don' want...any...of this, I...

He tears the last one loose.

ALICE

Go t'bed; it'll be better in the morning—

FRANK

I—I have...so many things...I never—I haven't...

ALICE

It's okay. Get on t'bed.

FRANK

I'm—I'm drunk.

ALICE

I know—

FRANK

What's your name? Do you...have a name?

ALICE

Go t'bed, Frank.

FRANK

My father was a tailor, and...my wife...Irene—she, she left, she...

ALICE

Yeah...

FRANK

She's gone, and; we danced in Venice, and I don't— My...my father...

ALICE

Okay; alright.

FRANK

Will you...dance with me? I'd like...to dance—with a woman—just...one more time. Y'...you dance with me?

She watches him; then goes to him. FRANK takes her in his arms as they slowly begin to dance. FRANK looks at ALICE, peering at her.

FRANK

I wanna die...with a mouthful of song—

ALICE

Okay—

FRANK

I want...

ALICE

Alright. You're alright...

They dance as the lights shift.

Act II, Scene Eight
The Last Cigarette...

The Kitchen: night time. FRANK sits in his suit in his wheelchair. The light burns in the kitchen, like a night light. FRANK wheels himself to the fridge. He's weak and frail and dying. He opens the refrigerator door and takes out a box of baking soda. He plucks out a single cigarette.

FRANK

Weakly:
Ha-ha!

He lights it up. He goes to the window; he tries to pour himself a glass of whiskey but he's too weak, and he knocks it over. He's winded from the effort. FRANK takes a moment, composes himself, then tries to put the arm of the record player onto the record...but again, he can't quite make it. STEVE enters silently at the staircase. He sees his father.

STEVE

Dad. I gotcha—hey, I gotcha— You're alright—

He goes to FRANK and helps him put the record on. Opera music plays softly.

STEVE

Here—

STEVE wheels FRANK to face the window, with his back to the audience.

STEVE

Sun's gonna come up soon. Be a nice view.

FRANK remains staring out the window, (his back to the audience, and his cigarette smoldering) for the rest of the scene. He does not move. STEVE goes to the kitchen and begins making coffee.

STEVE

Can't sleep? Yeah; me neither— You want coffee, or—?

STEVE takes out a single cigarette:

STEVE

I found this? Up one of Marty's puppets?

He lights it up.

STEVE

Figure, what the hell, right? Few won't hurt.

He takes the coffee, and looks up at the quiet, empty house.

STEVE

The realtor—she's gonna be here tomorrow; we're gonna put the house up—officially. A few coats a' paint, and that'll be it. She said...we should get a buyer pretty quick.

STEVE stands next to his father, looking out the window at the sun rise.

STEVE

S'almost dawn— It's beautiful...watching the sun rise—?

He watches the sun. Moment. He looks at FRANK.

STEVE

Dad—

FRANK sits motionless, the cigarette pluming. Maybe he's passed away; maybe he just fell asleep—we can't tell. STEVE watches his father for a moment; then gently turns the volume of the record player up. STEVE stares out the window, watching the sun rise, burning through the window. He holds his coffee and cigarette. The music plays.

Moment.

Then...Black out.

Lights Rise: The pop song from Act II, Scene Six plays, as the actors take their bows. A director may handle this however they wish, but the last image the audience sees is FRANK and STEVE dancing alone together—goofy and fun, silly and playful. FRANK and STEVE dance and dance, like kids, until...

Final Black out.

End of Play.