

SUPERNOVA

By Lindsay Price

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CHARACTERS

Star:(also known as Katie Barendrick) 24 years old. Pop singer. The best way to describe her is that she was fluffy in high school and now her fluff has an edge. She's not smart, but she's not stupid.

DD Jones: mid/late twenties. Star's ever present body guard. He should look threatening and physical. At first should come across as if he has very little to say. For example, he should speak very slowly. He is very protective of Star.

Frankie Messenger: 24 years old. Pre-med student. Small town boy with an edge.

Ryan Balice: mid/late twenties. Star's over organized, over efficient, over scheduled assistant. She has many secrets that are starting to overwhelm her.

SETTING

A hotel suite. There is a large living room area with at least a mini-bar, couch, coffee table, chairs and television. Upstage right there is a door that leads to the bathroom. Downstage right there is an open door, which leads to the bedroom.

FRANKIE stands in a spotlight. He has a burlap sack over his head. His wrists are taped together in front of him.

FRANKIE: Despite all appearances to the contrary, this is not in a tragedy.

Yesterday I was on my way home. I'm from a small town in Oregon; 6,000 people. I like it. I miss it. I miss the mountains. The east side of the country just doesn't fit right. Sometimes I feel like the whole country is tilted and when I'm on the east side I'm always slipping around and sliding; I never have a good grip. But in the west there's always mountains to grab. The coast to hook my fingers around. I love being near my family. I've got my parents and my grandparents and two aunts. Even my sister and her family are thinking of moving back to Talent. I've always been a small town boy and as soon as I become a doctor that's what I'm going to be again. So. This is what been going through my mind as I lay here in the trunk of my car. I'm pretty sure this isn't a tragedy. Would I ever be surprised if it was.

The lights fade on FRANKIE and come up on STAR. She is decked out to the nines: Make up, heels, low cut, high cut.

STAR: Pure Tragedy. That is the only way to describe what I have to do. Ok, maybe not tragic. Not lose all your belongings in a fire tragic. Not cancer tragic. Not dying kids in Africa tragic. But it's bad enough. "Live with it." People say that all the time. You got what you wanted. You got what you deserve. You're a Star. So you can't go to the supermarket. Live with it. I don't want to do this. I don't have any other choice. And I'll tell you this for nothing. I'm burning all my thongs. I hate those nasty things. I hate that stupid little piece of dental floss. I've bought four packs of white cotton grannies and there's nothing anyone can do to stop me from wearing them.

The lights fade on STAR and come up on RYAN.

RYAN: Comedy, tragedy, I have no idea and I don't care. I'm busy. Ask me how to get room service to make steamed organic veggies in an array of attractive colours, making sure there's some green but not too much and no broccoli, with a sprinkling - not a dash, not a pinch not a handful - a sprinkling of parmesan, and not from the can even though the can says one hundred percent parmesan, ask me how to do that when it's three o'clock in the morning and they say the kitchen is closed and they don't make exceptions. On second thought don't. Don't bother me. I'm busy.

The lights fade on RYAN and come up on DD.

DD: I know. But I won't say. I never say. Anything. The National Enquirer called me the silent shadow once. That's all right. They write about Star a lot. They say things. Lately they've been saying she has a schizoid personality. The superstar sweetie with a sour puss. A vicious temper so bad she beat up her boyfriend and kicked him of the house. Naked. Kicked him out on his naked bony ass. Apparently when the cops showed up she was throwing condoms at him from a second story window. That's not what happened. But I'm not saying. You can keep those lights on as long as you like. It don't matter to me.

The lights fade on DD.

SCENE ONE

The lights come up full on a hotel suite. The main space looks like a living room area. Upstage right there is a door to the bathroom. Downstage right is an opening where the bedroom can be seen. It's a very swanky set up.

There is the sound of music and singing coming from

the bathroom. DD knocks on the door. He lets himself in with a key. He peeks his head in, sees that no one is there. He disappears for a second and then drags a hooded and bound FRANKIE into the room.

DD: Stand.

DD gets a chair and places it in the centre of the room. He pulls FRANKIE to the chair.

DD: Sit.

FRANKIE does so. DD goes over to the bathroom. He gives the door a complicated knock. The music and singing stops instantly.

STAR: *(offstage)* DD?

DD: Uh huh.

STAR: *(offstage)* Did you?

DD: Come see.

STAR dashes out of the bathroom. She is wearing a bathrobe and her hair is wet. She is the opposite of when she last appeared, no make up, no star quality. She starts to run towards FRANKIE but stops halfway.

STAR: This is so great I can't...Oh my God. DD. What did you do to him?

DD: Nothing.

STAR: Nothing? This is nothing?

DD: He's fine.

STAR: He's wearing a bag on his head.

DD: He's fine underneath the bag.

STAR: When I said I wanted him here without anyone knowing this isn't what I had in mind.

DD: If I did it any other way he would have asked too many questions.

STAR: Ok but –

DD: A bag on the head is a great deterrent.

STAR: A bag on the head is not -

DD: He might even have refused to come.

STAR: Oh.

DD: So.

STAR: I didn't think of that.

DD: I did.

STAR: Still did you - Oh shit.

STAR runs over to FRANKIE and rips the bag off his head. FRANKIE is somewhat dazed.

STAR: Sorry. I'm so sorry. Are you ok? You look amazing. Relatively speaking. This wasn't what I had in mind. Hi! How are you? *(she gives him a fierce hug)* It is so good to see you. Long time no see! *(FRANKIE says nothing, just looks at her. STAR turns to DD)* He's not talking. Why isn't he talking? What did you do to him?

DD: Nothing.

STAR: Did you drug him?

DD: No.

STAR: Did you drug him? You said you wouldn't –

DD: I didn't.

STAR: Did you?

DD: I didn't.

STAR: Did you?

DD: I didn't. Would I do that?

STAR: Yes.

DD: Ok I would. But I didn't. You told me not to. I didn't.

STAR: If you didn't drug him then why won't he say anything?

FRANKIE: I think I'm in shock.

DD: He's in shock.

STAR: Shock. Why didn't I think of that? A bag on the head is - Frankie! You talked! Hi! How are you? Long time no see! *(she gives him a hug)*

FRANKIE: Katie? Katie Barendrick?

STAR: He remembers me! I was really worried you might not remember me. I mean seven years is a long time. Everybody calls me Star now.

FRANKIE: I know.

STAR: *(to DD)* We went to the prom together. VH1 keeps playing this awful video of me in this poofy dress. I hated that dress. My mother made me wear it. But you looked so good in a tux Frankie. You looked so handsome. This isn't what I had in mind.

FRANKIE: This is somewhat better than I had in mind. The things in my mind were not so good.

STAR: What things?

FRANKIE: Oh, murder, maiming, mayhem. All the bad things that begin with M.
Is it really bright in here?

STAR: *(to DD)* Did you put him in the trunk?

DD: No.

STAR: You did.

DD: No....

STAR: DD.

DD: Ok I did. What else was I going to do with him? He had a bag on his head.

STAR: You made him uncomfortable.

DD: His trunk is very comfortable. It's spotless.

FRANKIE: I vacuum it.

DD: He vacuums it. I put a pillow in there and a little blanket. It's the Park Plaza
of trunks.

STAR: *(to FRANKIE)* Was it very bad?

FRANKIE: I did appreciate the pillow.

DD: See.

FRANKIE: But it was a cramped. And dark. And a trunk.

STAR: See! You could have hung twinkly lights and put in a stereo system. He
was still in a trunk!

FRANKIE: With a bag on my head.

STAR: With a – *(she groans and puts her face in her hands)* This isn't what I had in mind.

FRANKIE: Perhaps you could fill me in on that. And since it looks like I'm not going to be maimed... *(he holds up his wrists)*

STAR: DD!

DD: What?

STAR: Duct tape?

DD: I forgot my cuffs. *(he picks them up off of a side table)*

STAR: And you thought duct tape was a viable option?

DD: It's a style thing.

STAR: *(to DD)* Mr. Comedian. Get my nail scissors out of the bathroom.

DD: *(going to the bathroom)* I can use my knife.

FRANKIE: I'll take my chances with the nail scissors.

DD: Suit yourself.

STAR: *(to FRANKIE)* I just want you to know: there's nothing to worry about. No maiming. No murder. No mayhem. Nothing bad that begins with M. Or any other letter.

FRANKIE: Good.

STAR: You're completely safe.

FRANKIE: *(not really believing)* Ok.

STAR: You sound unsure.

FRANKIE: That's because I am.

STAR: That's not good. You don't believe me? You can you know. Be sure, be sure!

FRANKIE: It's just...well....

STAR: What?

FRANKIE: There are a number of communication devices out there that don't require kidnapping.

STAR: We didn't kidnap you.

FRANKIE: Close enough. If you wanted a high school reunion all you had to do is pick up the phone. I would have said yes. Probably.

STAR: This isn't as bad as it looks.

FRANKIE: You mean there's something worse than being accosted in the middle of nowhere, shoved in the trunk of my car with a bag on my head and duct tape on my wrists, with no explanation, no food and no washroom? What. Why are you looking at me like that?

STAR: You never used to be sarcastic.

FRANKIE: I'm going to school in Chicago. I can't help it.

STAR: DD where are those nail scissors?

DD: (*from bathroom*) Hell if I know. It's a minefield in here.

STAR: I'll get them. I'll get them. Don't touch anything! Everything is in a specific place.

DD: (*coming out of the bathroom*) A specific messy place.

STAR: Shut up. You order room service. The menu's beside the bed. Lots of everything. (*to FRANKIE*) Do you need to pee? We could work something out until –

FRANKIE: I can wait. Fear is a great dehydrator.

STAR: *(she hugs him again)* I can't believe you're here! This is exciting! I've been doing all this planning and it's been so long and I've been having imaginary conversations with you for weeks now. Oh Frankie all things we've been doing in my head! That doesn't sound good does it. I'm getting ahead of myself. I'm going to start again. *(she gets up and paces the room doing deep breathing exercises)*

FRANKIE: What are you doing?

STAR: My starting again exercises. My therapist says I get all worked up and rush head long into things without breathing or thinking. Just because my brain isn't overly taxed at times doesn't mean I can't stop and think for a moment. That's my problem I don't think for a moment. DD says that if I thought for a moment then you wouldn't be here. But that's not true. I've thought long and hard about this. I'm not getting sleep thinking about this, which is not good. When I don't sleep I get cranky and I don't sing well and everyone gets all in a tizzy. When the meal ticket goes dry people get itchy trigger fingers and I don't like being a target. Ok. I'm ready.

STAR comes back to sit down beside FRANKIE. She begins again and speaks cheerfully as if everything previous hasn't taken place.

STAR: Hello Frankie. It's so nice to see you. Thank you for coming. I'm sorry the trip wasn't exactly comfortable. My associate and I had a miscommunication as to your mode of transportation.

DD snorts.

STAR: *(to DD)* Shut up! *(to FRANKIE)* I'm glad you're here - I have something very exciting to share with you. It's not something I could talk about in a letter or on the phone so I had to be a little underhanded in getting you here. I'm in a bit of a frenzy focus right now. It's hard enough to go to the bathroom without someone snapping a picture and ever since...well. I hope you're not mad. Please tell me you're not mad.

FRANKIE: I'm not mad. I'm confused. Concerned. Maybe a little irritated – my wrists hurt.

STAR: Oh shit the scissors.

FRANKIE: And I've never been inside the trunk of my car, let alone with a bag

on my head.

STAR: Let me tell you the whole story.

There is a brisk knock at the door. STAR freezes. DD pokes his head out of the bedroom.

DD: Who's that?

STAR: *(calling out)* Hello?

RYAN: *(offstage)* It's me.

DD: Oh shit.

STAR: *(whispering to DD)* Hide him. *(calling out)* Coming!

DD grabs FRANKIE and throws him in the closet.

FRANKIE: Hey!

STAR: You don't have to be rough with him. We like him. We want him to stay.

DD: It's instinctual. I can't help it.

STAR: Just play nice. *(throwing open the door)* Hello Ryan.

RYAN walks in. She's in the middle of a phone call. She's carrying a huge day timer. She's the definition of no-nonsense.

RYAN: *(on the phone)* No. No. No. I don't think so. No. Pastorelli, listen to me. She doesn't eat kiwis. She doesn't eat.....She. Does. Not. Eat. Kiwis. You're not listening. I don't care... *(she pulls the phone away from her ear as the person on the other end goes into a long explanation)* Pastorelli. How many times do I have to say this before youElle ne mange pas kiwis. French you moron. Eshay oesn'tday atey iwikay! She can't eat

them because she's highly allergic. Don't you care?

STAR: It's not that big a deal, I can pick them off.

RYAN: *(holding out her hand to stop STAR)* She's standing right here, right in front of me and she's telling me, emphatically, that she doesn't eat kiwi. No you cannot. It gives her hives. Hives. Big fat hairy hives all over her body. If you want a multimillion dollar concert tour to go up in flames with the headlines all saying that you, Pastorelli, you gave Star big fat hairy hives then go ahead and put kiwi on your fruit platter. No. Yes. Fine. 2:00? Great. Thank you. *(she hangs up and makes notes in her book)* Asshole. *(imitating Pastorelli)* But the kiwi is essential. The kiwi is a balancing fruit. If I don't have a balancing fruit then she won't get the full experience of the other flavours and textures. A whole hour on fucking kiwi fruit. You've got a hair cut at 2:00 tomorrow and then The Tonight Show and then we're flying to New York. *(she actually looks at STAR)* Wha - wha - what is this?

STAR: What is what?

RYAN: You're in a bathrobe. Your hair is wet. It's 7:30. We're going to dinner in fifteen minutes.

STAR: Oh shit. I forgot.

RYAN: *(to DD)* You're supposed to be working with me. Coordinating with me. We have to be on the same wave length so showers don't happen out of context! Why didn't you tell me this was happening?

DD: Oops.

RYAN: Great. Perfect. Peach-fucking-y. Are you two purposefully trying to push me over the edge. I'm on the edge. I'm on it. I'm ready to phfft – right over!

STAR: No one's pushing you phfft anywhere.

RYAN: Jesus. There's no way you're going to be ready. Why did you shower? I didn't know you were going to shower. Why didn't you tell me to schedule a shower? I have to get Anya back here to re-face you. You washed your hair too? That's definitely not in the schedule.

DD: *(to himself)* She's the one who should go in the trunk.

STAR: Actually Ri, I'd like to cancel dinner.

RYAN: Cancel? Dinner? Tonight?

STAR: Yes.

RYAN: Why? Why do you want to cancel? Why?

STAR: Actually, I'm feeling a little off. That's all.

RYAN: Off? How off? Off how?

STAR: Just off.

RYAN: *(to DD)* Why didn't you tell me she was off? You're supposed to inform me when she goes off.

STAR: It's not a big deal.

RYAN: Do you need a doctor? I'll get a doctor. Jesus the press'll be all over this. Is that a good thing or a bad thing – could be good, you could get the post-Lex sympathy story.

STAR: Ri! I don't need a doctor. I just don't want to go out.

RYAN: Why?

STAR: Because.

RYAN: Because why?

STAR: Just because.

RYAN: Do you know where we're going tonight?

STAR: No.

RYAN: Do you?

STAR: No.

RYAN: Does the name Bambi O'Connell mean anything to you? How about Chicken for a Cure? \$500 a plate? Any of this ring a bell?

STAR: Oh shit. The breast cancer dinner.

RYAN: You can't just "because" breast cancer. What else am I going to have to cancel? (*she pulls open the daytimer*) I don't like the sound of this at all. The sound of this stinks.

STAR: There's no need to get in a tizzy.

RYAN: Are you overtired? (*she grabs STAR by the chin*) Stick out your tongue.

STAR: I'm not going to –

RYAN: Stick out your tongue. (*STAR does so*) You know what happens when you're overtired. Do I have to rearrange the schedule? Jesus, why didn't you tell me before? I'm going to be up all night.

STAR: (*pulling away*) Ryan, I'm fine. I'll be ready in twenty minutes.

RYAN: We're leaving in fifteen.

STAR: So we'll be five minutes late. We can be five minutes late for breast cancer can't we?

RYAN: I'll have to fiddle with the schedule.

STAR: You do that.

RYAN: What about your face?

STAR: I'll do it.

RYAN: Are you sure?

STAR: I do know how. I've done it before.

RYAN: Are you sure?

STAR: Yes.

RYAN: Positive?

STAR: Ryan.

RYAN: Don't Ryan me. I'm the one who's going to hear about it if bad pics get out because you had a shower.

STAR: I haven't lost the ability to put on make up. It's just like riding a bike.

RYAN: And you're not overtired. The schedule....

STAR: I'm fine.

RYAN: All right. *(she starts to exit)* Why is there a chair in the middle of the room?

DD: I put it there.

RYAN: Why?

DD: To bug you.

RYAN: Gorilla.

RYAN stalks out of the room. STAR moves into a flurry.

STAR: Shit. Shit. Shit! I forgot I had to eat dinner! For breast cancer! Why do I have to eat! Why is eating in the schedule! I can't believe I have to eat for a cause! Stupid Ryan with her stupid schedule! I can't wait till this is over

and I don't have to deal with her anymore.

DD: I told you – fire her.

STAR: Are you kidding? I don't know when I'm supposed to eat dinner. Can you imagine if I tried to run my life? I would have let that guy put kiwi on my fruit plate and then when he made a fuss I would have eaten it and then we'd have a tizzy tornado around here. Fire her? The army isn't as organized as Ryan. What the hell am I going to wear? Oh shit. Frankie!

DD runs over to the closet and pulls out FRANKIE. He puts FRANKIE in a chair. If it's possible, FRANKIE looks even more dazed.

STAR: I am so sorry. I am so so sorry. This is not going the way it went in my head. You're so not getting a good impression of me. Are you ok? Tell me you're ok. Tell me you're not mad. (*FRANKIE looks really stunned*) He's not talking again. What if he hit his head driving around in the trunk? What if you damaged him?

DD: If you had left him where he was we wouldn't be having this conversation.

STAR: Shupt! It's my money I can do what I want.

DD: It's my reputation.

STAR: I trust him. I wouldn't have done it if I – oh shit he's still got the duct tape on his wrists. (*She tries to take off the duct tape with her fingers.*)

FRANKIE: Katie I -

STAR: Good you're not damaged!

FRANKIE: I guess not.

STAR: You sound unsure. Do you feel damaged?

FRANKIE: No. I don't know. I don't know what damaged feels like.

STAR: DD I can't get it off. Where are my nail scissors?

DD: I'll do it. You have to get ready.

STAR: Shit I gotta - shit. *(she stands stock still and takes a couple of deep cleansing breaths.)* Face first. And... I'll wear a hat. DD when you're done pick something out for me will you? There's new stuff in the corner.

STAR runs into the bathroom and slams the door. DD takes out a Swiss army knife and approaches FRANKIE.

FRANKIE: Whoa, whoa, whoa. Whoa.

DD: Relax there Lone Ranger. Duct Tape. Hold still I don't want to cut you. Now. When I get this off don't wig out on me ok?

FRANKIE: Wig out. Wouldn't dream of it. Stuff like this happens every day. I'm used to it. I get kidnapped by singers all the time.

DD: We didn't kidnap you.

FRANKIE: Close enough.

DD: Are you sure you're not gonna wig out? You sound funny.

FRANKIE: My wig is securely in place.

DD: Good. I wouldn't want to have to subdue you.

FRANKIE: More than you have already?

DD: You are sarcastic.

FRANKIE: It's not my fault. Chicago is really cold. You need a layer of sarcasm just to keep warm. Once I move back to Oregon then I'll be fine. I'll be my old self again.

DD: That's the plan?

FRANKIE: That's the plan.

DD: Well let me give you a piece of advice. Don't hurt her.

FRANKIE: Who her? Katie her? Hurt her? Look at my wrists! I was in a trunk!

DD: Yes, yes, we're all aware. You were in a trunk. Your life is one tragedy after another.

FRANKIE: You put me in that trunk on purpose.

DD: Don't be ridiculous.

FRANKIE: You did.

DD: I didn't.

FRANKIE: You did.

DD: Frankie, would I do that?

FRANKIE: Yes.

DD: Ok I would. I didn't want you to come. But she's the boss. What she says goes.

STAR runs into the room.

STAR: Outfit, outfit, outfit!

She runs back into the bathroom. DD abandons FRANKIE and starts looking for clothes.

DD: *(calling out)* Didn't you show me something stripy? You look good in stripes.

STAR: *(offstage)* Look in the bags.

DD: Are you gonna wear mules or those new sling backs?

STAR: (*offstage*) The strappy sandals.

DD: That'll look good. (*he knocks on the bathroom door*) Here.

STAR: (*poking her head out*) Perfect. (*she goes back in*)

DD: What about those hoop earrings? They'll pick up the gold in the dress.

FRANKIE: Hey! Is someone going to tell me why I'm here before the fashion show? Before I get shoved in a closet or dangled out a window? I have seen my life flash before my eyes and I think that entitles me to a little insider information. I demand to know what's going on. I want to know where I am and what the heck I'm doing here.

DD: It's all going to -

FRANKIE: Katie! Katie!

DD: She's putting her face on.

FRANKIE: Katie come out here right now!

STAR comes out of the bathroom. She looks like a star.

FRANKIE: Gee whiz.

STAR: What's the matter. Do I look all right?

DD: He's wiggling out.

FRANKIE: You look beautiful. You look like a million bucks.

STAR: Just like riding a bike. DD would you mind going in the bathroom?

DD: Yes.

STAR: I need to talk to Frankie.

DD: Don't you -

STAR: I won't. Don't worry.

DD: I worry.

STAR: Don't.

DD: Fine. Gimme me something to read.

STAR: *Even Cowgirls Get The Blues* is beside the tub.

DD: You probably got five minutes before the Terminator comes back.

DD goes into the bathroom.

FRANKIE: Tom Robbins? You're reading Tom Robbins?

STAR: Yes. You sound surprised.

FRANKIE: Can you blame me? You used to do those fat flower doodles in English class. All over your notebook. All through Shakespeare. A fat flower doodle by any other name is still a fat flower doodle.

STAR: DD's been expanding my horizons. Slowly. I like reading. Now I do. When I have time I do. *(she takes a deep breath)* First question. Where are you? Answer. You are in LA. Ok?

FRANKIE: Ok.

STAR: Next question. Where specifically are you? This is a hotel. Bedroom over there...mini bar over there.... bathroom back there. Ok?

FRANKIE: Ok.

STAR: Do you want to know which hotel this is?

FRANKIE: No. Yes. No. Not right now. Give me a general location.

STAR: Ten minutes from Rodeo Drive.

FRANKIE: A swanky hotel.

STAR: Only the best. That's what...everybody says..

FRANKIE: How did you know where I was? How did you know I was going home for the summer? How did DD know to ...ah...intercept me?

STAR: DD knows some people. Who...check on other people.

FRANKIE: You spied on me?

STAR: I found you. I didn't know where you were. I didn't know how to reach you without people finding out. I couldn't call your mother; Hi Mrs Messenger this is Katie Barendrick? I used to live across the street? I'd like to kidnap your son and bring him to LA, can you tell me where he is?

FRANKIE: Ah ha! So you do admit this is a kidnapping!

STAR: It's a friendly one though. Don't you think?

FRANKIE: Duct tape is not my definition of friendly.

STAR: But you see my point about your mother.

FRANKIE: Your point is the understatement of the century.

STAR: Why?

FRANKIE: Katie, my mother goes on cable TV every spring to outline in detail our prom date. "My son dated Star." She's turned all the photos into slides so that she has visual aides. She has a scrapbook of all your news clipping. She goes through the stories, on air, telling Oregon how if I had had my act together I could be married to "Star." I get a call whenever there's a story about you on Entertainment Tonight so I can watch. If I even mention that I might have a date she leaves me messages where she plays your CD's over the phone.

STAR: What songs does she play?

FRANKIE: *(singing)* “Our love will carry on, even though we’re apart. Our love will carry on. You’re always in my heart...”

STAR: You know the words.

FRANKIE: She calls a lot. Ever since you and...the break up she’s been making a daily vigil with my answering machine. *(he looks startled)* My mother calls me. My mother - my mother’s expecting me. I’m here in LA and my mother’s expecting me in Oregon. Tonight.

STAR: Oh shit.

FRANKIE: It’s night. It’s tonight. She’s expecting me to walk through the door any second. What am I going to do? What’s she going to do when I don’t walk through the door? I have to call her.

FRANKIE goes to pick up the phone. STAR grabs it from him and slams it down.

STAR: You can’t call her. You can’t tell her where you are.

FRANKIE: I have to call her. You know I do.

He picks up the phone again and STAR grabs it from him.

STAR: You can’t!

FRANKE: Katie. Do you remember when we were ten years old and we were bored and we decided to take the long way home just for something to do and it took a little longer than we thought it would but nothing that out of the ordinary; not hours and hours late. But when we got to my house, there were policemen with dogs and helicopters ready to take off in search for our dead and broken bodies?

STAR: DD! Help!

DD comes barreling out of the bathroom.

DD: What! What did he do?

STAR: He has to call his mother.

DD: He can't.

STAR: He has to. When we were ten she sicked a helicopter on us!

FRANKIE: She worries.

DD: And she let you live in Chicago?

FRANKIE: She used to watch Chicago Hope. She's a big Mandy Patinkin fan. She thinks any city Mandy Patinkin lives in must be ok for me.

STAR: But he –

FRANKIE: It doesn't really matter does it? She's expecting me and if I don't either show up or call she's going to get worried and God help you if she gets worried.

DD: I think I can handle it.

STAR: You don't know his mother.

FRANKIE: Your biggest worry if she gets worried is that she'll turn heaven and earth to find me and believe you me she's going to find me and if she finds me here she's...well she'll probably have a heart attack cause it's her life long dream to have you and me together again even though we're not but I can tell you this: if she lives through her heart attack, it's gonna be bad.

DD: So call her.

STAR: And say what?

DD: Play it simple. Tell her you had car trouble. Nothing more, nothing less. If she needs verification I'll play a mechanic.

FRANKIE: Can you do that? She's very suspicious.

DD: I can play the tooth fairy.

STAR: Use the phone in the bedroom, Ryan'll be here any minute.

DD and FRANKIE exit to the bedroom.

STAR: *(calling after them)* There we go. Crisis averted! No problem! Everything's under control!

STAR runs over to the mini-bar. She opens a bottle of soda. She takes a few drinks, continuing to scrutinize the level of the drink. She stares at herself in the mirror.

STAR: This is not going to work out. This is not going to work out. This is not going the way I thought it would at all. How come in my head this was perfect? Shut up Katie. Stop talking to yourself. And stop calling yourself Katie! *(she shakes her head and tears herself away from the mirror. She takes a deep breath)* Everything's going to be fine.

After a few sips, STAR pulls out a mini bottle of rum from the mini bar and dumps it in the soda bottle. She gives it a little shake to mix it.

STAR: Thank God for travelers.

There is a knock at the door. STAR takes a huge pull on her mixed drink. She runs across the stage.

STAR: *(calling out)* Coming.

Instead of going to the door she goes to the bedroom and closes that door.

STAR: *(whispering)* She's here! Be quiet!

STAR runs back to the centre of the room, thinking hard. She runs back towards the mini bar and takes the phone there off the hook. Then she runs back across the stage to the door and opens it. RYAN strides in. STAR runs back to the mini-bar to pick up the phone.

RYAN: Are you ready? We have to leave pronto.

STAR: All set, I'm just on the phone with my mom. She is so loving San Francisco. Wanna say hi? *(she holds out the receiver)*

RYAN: No, no that's ok. We have to talk about tomorrow -

STAR: Oh! Mom met this guy at her grocery store and she says he would be perfect for you. His cart was full of gluten-free products. Sounds like a match! *(she holds out the receiver again)*

RYAN: I'll be in the car. *(indicating that they are short on time)* Tick, tick tick. *(she exits on the run)*

STAR: *(hanging up the receiver)* Ha. Ha. *(calling out)* Ok she's gone!

DD comes out.

STAR: Where is he?

DD: Saying good-bye. "I wove you mommy."

STAR: Shut up. You like it when people are nice to their mothers.

DD: I do not.

STAR: Do too.

DD: Do not.

STAR: DD woves his mommy.

DD: Shut up.

FRANKIE comes out.

DD: *(to STAR)* And what were you doing with the extension? We just about had her sold and then you start yapping about your mother and gluten-free.

STAR: I had to get rid of Ryan. *(to FRANKIE)* My mother doesn't understand why Ryan is single so she's always calling up with "perfect matches." Ryan hates it.

DD: That's because she's a lesbian.

STAR: You don't know that.

DD: I told you I saw her going into Oscar Wilde's.

STAR: You followed her.

DD: Accidentally.

STAR: Accident or not, she's not a lesbian until she tells us she's a lesbian and if she's not telling us she's a lesbian it's none of our business.

FRANKIE: Excuse me.

STAR: Right. Your mother. Did it work? Please tell me she's not going to send a helicopter after us.

FRANKIE: It worked. I think. I think it worked.

DD: Mrs. Messinger is one tough cookie.

FRANKIE: You're telling me.

DD: You know, if your mother *(pointing at STAR)* and your mother *(pointing at FRANKIE)* got together more often when you were young I think the two of you would be married and up to your armpits in babies by now. Either that, or they'd have come up with a solution for World Peace.

STAR: Whatever. Crisis averted. Everything's going to be fine. Let's go eat Chicken for a cure.

FRANKIE: Excuse me...

STAR: Oh shit. Frankie.

FRANKIE: Yes. Frankie.

STAR: I don't suppose you'd be willing to just wait in the comfort and splendor of this fabulous suite until I get back.

FRANKIE: No.

STAR: I won't be long. I promise.

FRANKIE: No.

STAR: I swear I won't be long. Then I can explain -

FRANKIE: Katie this is not acceptable. I don't know how you do things in your rock and roll world but in my world this is not the way people behave!

DD: He's not going to wait in the comfort and the splendor.

STAR: You're right. You're right. This is not how people in the real world behave. I do not live in the real world.

DD: You live in the "rock and roll" world.

STAR: You're right to be angry with me. *(she looks at DD)* And I don't think this is going to make you feel any happier. But I can't have you wandering around.

By now DD has grabbed FRANKIE. He plunks FRANKIE down on the couch and handcuffs one of FRANKIE's ankles to the coffee table.

FRANKIE: Hey!

STAR: This is so not what I had in mind.

FRANKIE: You've already kidnapped me once. Isn't that enough?

DD: Don't squirm. Just sit back and relax. They've got satellite here. Watch some porn.

FRANKIE: Katie, you can't do this.

STAR: Here's the remote. And here's a whole bunch of stuff from the mini bar. Eat all you want, I get it for free. If you have to pee, just do it on the couch the hotel doesn't care.

FRANKIE: Oh I feel so much better now. I get to pee on a couch!

DD: Dude, you don't wear sarcasm well at all.

FRANKIE: Tough cookies.

STAR: It's ok. They see weird shit all the time.

FRANKIE: I am not going to pee on a couch! I'm going to become a doctor! Doctors do not pee on the furniture!

STAR: And when I get back the universe will be revealed. Please don't start to hate me. I'll be really upset if you do that.

FRANKIE: You'll be upset!

DD: That coffee table's bolted to the floor so don't bother trying to get out. And don't wreck anything either.

FRANKIE: This has got to be a dream. I have to be asleep. Maybe I'm still in the trunk of the car.

STAR: You're the best Frankie. I knew you were the right one.

STAR grabs her traveler. She and DD leave.

FRANKIE: The right one for what? For what?

Blackout.

A spotlight comes up on RYAN. She looks suspiciously around.

RYAN: I don't know why I'm here. Lack of creativity must be painful to

watch. I know I'm not creative. It's not insecurity. It's a fact. I am organized. Efficient. Methodical. The National Enquirer called me a robot once. Robot Ryan. That's all right. I have proof I'm not creative. Listen.

RYAN makes a gesture and we hear the sound of a young girl who is obviously in a commercial.

CHILD VOICE: Mum can I have Merry Dairy cheddar on my sandwich? Merry Dairy makes the best cheese in the whole world! So creamy. Mmmmmm. It just melts in my mouth!

MOM VOICE: And so good for you too!

CHILD VOICE: Mum, why do you think Merry Dairy makes the best cheese in the whole world? Is it because their cows are happier than all the other cows in the world?

MOM: That must be it Suzy. Happy cows help make happy cheese!

RYAN makes a gesture and the voice cuts off.

RYAN: Cheese does not require creativity. Cheese is very logical. Just like me. I've always been organized and logical. Even as a kid. That's what made me a good child actor. Stand on your mark. Turn your head. Smile. Frown. Cry. Pout. Surprise! I was never a child star though. More like child space garbage. A child asteroid. An uninspiring rock. Something that floats through space, doing commercials, hitting its mark, being in the background, until it turns ten and grows a foot in every direction over night. Then the rock hits the atmosphere and breaks up into a million smithereens. Disappears into nothing. When you grow up in LA in a single parent household there's a certain gravitational pull....Pull's not the right word. A black hole that sucks a parent and their child into the business. And when that child is cute and logical LA is your oyster. And when that child becomes space sand, LA gets food poisoning. LA's got diarrhea, cramping, and she's vomiting all over the living room rug. My mother currently lives on a commune in rural British Columbia. She makes pots and is, I believe, very happy. I don't want to say my lack of creativity and LA's stomach troubles drove her out of the country but it's something to consider.

The lights go out on RYAN

SCENE TWO

The lights come up on the hotel room. It is several hours later. FRANKIE is sprawled on the couch, except for the leg that is attached to the coffee table.

The table is covered in empty candy and chip wrappers. FRANKIE is watching MTV which is playing one of STAR's videos

FRANKIE: *(singing along with the video)* " Love is just an emotion. I won't get carried away by the rocking of the ocean. You may think you have the magic touch but baby you're too much, can't you see. It's time to start believing in me. Believing in me.....believing in me....."

STAR enters. She looks exhausted. She sinks into a chair and takes off her shoes.

FRANKIE: Hello honey! You're home!

STAR: I'm sorry it took so long. What's that?

FRANKIE: MTV. *(singing)* "Believing in me....."

STAR: I hate that video. Turn it off.

FRANKIE: *(turning off the tv)* But why? It rocks. It's number one with a bullet!

STAR: The director kept after me to wear a white tank top in the rain scene.
"Come on lovey, nothing will show."

FRANKIE: Where's your thug?

STAR: DD's not a thug.

FRANKIE: He's very thug-like though. He's got a thug's mug.

STAR: What's the matter with you?

FRANKIE: I've eaten everything in your mini-bar. How about that? Ha. Ha. Sure showed you! I am on a sugar high like you would not believe. Whooooooo!
There's no telling what I'll do.

STAR: *(looking at the mini bar bottles)* You didn't drink anything.

FRANKIE: I don't drink. You look tired.

STAR: Breast cancer is very exhausting. Not that it shouldn't be. It should. I asked DD to leave us alone so we could talk without any interruptions. Let me just get changed.

FRANKIE: Before everything happens, is your thug coming back with the key for the handcuffs?

STAR: Oh shit.

FRANKIE: I now need to pee and I steadfastly refuse to do it on your couch. You have about five minutes before my bladder does an Alien out of my body.

STAR goes over to the mini-bar and uses the phone.

STAR: *(on phone)* I knew you gave in too easily. I need the handcuff key. No. No. He's not going to wig out. I can handle it. Dexter. He doesn't want to pee on the couch and I'm not going to make him! I'm coming over there and you better give me the key. *(she hangs up the phone)* He thinks this is funny. This is not funny. Am I laughing? Is this a happy face?

FRANKIE: Your forehead's all crinkly.

STAR: It is? *(she runs to look at herself)* See. See! This is not funny. I'm gonna get forehead wrinkles and then I'll have to get botox injections so people don't call me prune face. I'm gonna kill him if one person uses the words prune and face and me in the same sentence. I'll be right back.

FRANKIE: I'll be here.

STAR storms out of the room, neglecting to close the door all the way.

FRANKIE: This has got to be a dream. I'm going to wake up in my own bed and you'll be doing whatever you're doing and everything will be back to normal. Maybe I should go to sleep right now. *(he closes his eyes)* The next time I open my eyes everything is going to be exactly as it should be.

The half open door creaks open. It's RYAN. She's a little bit tipsy.

RYAN: Yoo hoo. Yoo hoo. Why is the door open?

FRANKIE: Oh shit.

RYAN: *(stumbling into the room)* Star. Staaaaaar. Come out come out wherever you are. I wanna talk to you. *(the end of "you" turns into a squeal of surprise when she sees FRANKIE in the room)*

FRANKIE: No screaming! No screaming! No need for screaming!

RYAN runs around the room without being particularly helpful.

RYAN: Security! Security! Don't you do anything cause I am a black belt. I am a black belt black belt and I can squash your head like a tomato.

FRANKIE: Whatever you say. No squashing necessary.

RYAN: Security! Don't you go anywhere either. I've seen you. I have a clear picture of you in my mind. If you try to go anywhere I'll have the cops on you're ass. Right on your ass.

FRANKIE: I can't go anywhere and I can't do anything even if I wanted to.

FRANKIE rattles his handcuffed foot. This completely stops RYAN in mid panic. She comes over to the table and rattles the foot for herself. She stares at FRANKIE.

RYAN: You handcuffed yourself to the coffee table? What kind of sicko are you?
Security!

STAR and DD enter on the run.

DD: What's all the yelling – aw this aint good.

STAR: Ryan!

RYAN: *(to DD)* Where were you? I walked in here and this maniac -

DD: He doesn't look like a maniac.

STAR: Not at all like a maniac.

RYAN: He handcuffed himself to your coffee table. Do you not find that manic?

DD: Nope.

STAR: Happens every day.

FRANKIE: I swear I'm not a maniac.

RYAN: Pinkie swear?

FRANKIE: Pinkie swear. Absolutely.

RYAN: Only maniacs give pinkie swears. Security!

STAR: Shh. Shh. I can explain.

RYAN: How did he know what room you were staying in? How is it this maniac found his way into your room without any trouble and handcuffed himself to the coffee table?

DD: How much did she drink?

STAR: I didn't see her drink anything.

RYAN: Hey! I wasn't drinking for me. I was drinking for breast cancer.

STAR: Ri, how much did you drink for breast cancer?

RYAN: Oh I don't know. Hardly anything. You left that soda in the limo but it tasted funny and it was so hot and the champagne was so cold. Hot, cold, hot, cold and so on and so on and you got me all in a (*she demonstrates her feelings by flustering her hands in a rapid up and down motion*) over that shower thing.

DD: (*aside to STAR*) People who have closeted secrets drink a lot.

STAR: Shupt!

RYAN: And now there's a man in here. I'm a complete failure because a man has found his way in here. This has never happened to me before.

STAR: Ri, it's not your fault. I can explain everything.

RYAN: You can? How? How can you explain?

DD: Yeah, how can you explain?

RYAN: It looks like my fault so how can you explain this so it isn't my fault?

FRANKIE: One minute to Alien bladder time.

STAR: Just give me a moment. I just need a moment where everybody isn't badgering me! *(she takes a deep breath in and out)* This is Frankie Messenger. He's staying in the hotel. In fact he's staying right on this floor. We happened to meet in the hallway just now. Frankie and I are old, old friends. We grew up in the same town in Oregon.

FRANKIE: Talent.

STAR: Talent, Oregon.

RYAN starts to laugh.

STAR: What? What? What's funny about my explanation?

RYAN: You grew up in a town called Talent. That's freaking ironic. There are so many people who tell me day in and day out how little talent you actually have. It's just freaking ironic that -

STAR: I get it. I get it. Frankie and I are very old friends. We went to the prom together.

FRANKIE: She wore a poofy dress.

STAR: We went to school together. We worked at the Dairy Queen. So that's who he is. He's not a maniac. He's an old friend. He's one of the best friends I ever had.

RYAN: Ok. Fair enough. And why is he handcuffed to the coffee table?

STAR: Oh. Right. Well, I came into the room.....it's a really big joke. Very funny don't you...Frankie and DD were thinking of a way to... *(to DD)* I can't explain it.

DD: Done.

DD touches his hand to RYAN's neck. She crumples into his arms, unconscious.

FRANKIE: Wow! Was that a Vulcan neck grip?

STAR: That wasn't exactly what I had in mind.

DD: She's in the way. I was thinking she'd probably get in the way.

FRANKIE: You can really do that? For real? A real honest to goodness Vulcan neck grip?

STAR: She means well.

DD: She'll try to stop you.

STAR: I know.

FRANKIE: You just hold someone's neck and pfft they're out like a light?

STAR: Is the alcohol going to affect the drugs at all, she asked knowing they probably will.

DD: Probably.

STAR: Great.

FRANKIE: That is so cool. That is very very cool. Not that I condone Vulcan neck grips or that I'm a scary obsessive fan of the original Star Trek, even though it is the original and therefore -

DD: *(to STAR)* Excuse me. *(to FRANKIE)* What are you babbling about?

FRANKIE: Vulcan neck grip. You knocked her out without knocking her out.

DD: It's the ring. There's a little needle. See?

FRANKIE: Oh.

DD: Drugs. No Vulcans.

FRANKIE: Oh.

STAR: You sound disappointed.

FRANKIE: *(with a disappointed sigh)* No, No. I have about ten seconds here.

STAR: Unlock him DD.

DD: You're not going to wig out once I let you out, right.

FRANKIE: I'll be lucky if I can walk a straight line.

DD: Do what you can. *(undoing the cuffs)* There you go. Fly be free.

FRANKIE stands but it is very difficult.

FRANKIE: Whoa.

STAR: You ok?

FRANKIE: Oh sure. *(he takes a step. It is more than difficult)* Whoa. I've never had a full to the point of exploding bladder before. Scientifically it's quite interesting. But I don't recommend it. And I don't want you to get the impression that I'd wish a Vulcan neck grip on anyone. *(he takes another step)* Whoa.

STAR: None taken.

DD: You've been to a few conventions haven't you Frankie.

FRANKIE: No.

DD: Thought so.

FRANKIE: If I didn't have so much pee in me, I'd have a comeback. That's the only reason I don't have one.

FRANKIE limps to the bathroom.

STAR: Shit.

DD: Yes.

STAR: Shut up.

DD: Ok.

STAR: It's fine.

DD: Yes.

STAR: Shut up.

DD: Ok.

STAR: Everything's going to be fine.

DD: He's going to wig out on you.

STAR: He is not. He's a rational human being. He's going to be a doctor.

DD: He's going to wig out on you.

STAR: Stop saying that. What do we do with her?

DD: The closet.

STAR: But what if she comes to? I don't want her to wig out on me. I think she's capable of a five-alarm wig out.

DD: She won't wake up for hours. You'll be long finished and we can put her in

her own bed nice and cosy. She'll have a doozy of a hangover in the morning and she'll write the whole thing off as a dream. If she challenges us, we'll pretend we have no idea what's she's talking about.

STAR: That'll do wonders for her psyche.

The two of them drag RYAN to the closet.

DD: Wait a sec. *(he puts the bag on her head)*

STAR: DD....

DD: It's a good look.

STAR: No.

DD: Come on, I never get to have any fun.

STAR: No!

DD: For my benefit, she'll never feel it.

STAR: Fine. Fine. Whatever.

They put RYAN into the closet with a bag on her head.

DD: What are you going to do?

STAR: Tell him.

DD: Don't you ruin this.

STAR: I'm won't.

DD: Don 't let him talk you out of it either.

STAR: I'm not. I don't want to be talked out of it. I'm ready to go.

DD: Really? You were doing some fancy talking to Ryan tonight. All about the future....

STAR: Well I have to don't I? I have to put up the front.

DD: Are you sure it's a front?

STAR: Yes.

DD: There's no going back.

STAR: I know. Page one of the manual. No going back. It's tattooed on my forehead. No going back. I can say it in fourteen different languages. No going – Hi! (*FRANKIE comes out of the bathroom*) Feel better now?

FRANKIE: Much.

DD: Where's my comeback?

FRANKIE: Up your ass.

DD: Chicago's doing great things for you.

STAR: I don't like Chicago Frankie.

FRANKIE: Me either.

STAR: (*to FRANKIE*) Let's start again. Without the bag or the handcuffs. Or that kidnapping cloud over our heads.

FRANKIE: All right.

STAR: Would you like to sit down?

FRANKIE: Actually I'd rather stand. I've been sitting for a while.

STAR: Oh. Is it ok if I sit?

FRANKIE: Sure.

STAR: Maybe I should stand.

DD: I'll be in the bathroom. Hollar if you need me.

DD goes into the bathroom.

STAR: Let's start all over.

FRANKIE: Do you need to do those exercises again?

STAR: No I think I'm ok. *(she clears her throat)* I am going to sit down though.

FRANKIE: Be my guest.

STAR: Thank you. *(she sits on the couch)* I'm glad you didn't pee on the couch.

FRANKIE: My mother would kill me if I had.

STAR: She'd never have known.

FRANKIE: Oh she'd know.

STAR: I'm ready now. Here goes. You may know that I have reached a certain level of popularity. In my career and in my life.

FRANKIE: I'll say.

STAR: You could say I have reached a certain status. Level of status. It has been suggested -

FRANKIE: Where's Ryan?

STAR: In the closet.

FRANKIE: You put her in the closet? What did you do that for? You already knocked her out; she wasn't doing you any harm.

STAR: Frankie this is very difficult for me! Ryan is just fine. She's out like a light and as soon as you let me finish you'll understand why. It's better this way.

(she takes a deep breath) Where was I?

FRANKIE: Level of popularity.

STAR: I have reached a level of status and popularity. Makes it hard to know who your friends are and who wants your money and who gets their kicks out of doing you harm.

FRANKIE: I'd never do that.

STAR: I know. God do I know. You never talked about me. You never sold your story. You never went on tv and talked about the prom. You never tried to contact me when I made it.

FRANKIE: Well... it was your thing. You always made it clear that Talent was going to eat your dust. And it did, metaphorically speaking. And to be perfectly honest, it's not always been my favourite thing in the world being known as your prom date. I get dates with girls and all they want is for me to get you to sign their CD's. They never believe me when I say I haven't seen you in seven years. And guys at school tend to get a bit excited when they find out. They want to know how many times we baptized the waters. Only their phrases are somewhat more colourful. And graphic. Sometimes they draw pictures.

STAR: What do you say?

FRANKIE: What do you think?

STAR: It's hard to know who's a phony and who's not. I kind of stopped talking to everyone cause I kept getting the short end of the stick. I don't like being made a fool of. But I have thought a lot about you. You were always a true friend. Frankie. This is it.

STAR takes another deep breath. She gets up and begins to pace.

FRANKIE: What.

STAR: The moment. I'm ready.

FRANKIE: Should we light candles or something?

STAR: Oh God. Oh God. I'm ready to say it. The next words out of my mouth are right there and it's hard. It's hard. I knew it was going to be hard but this is so much harder. The Grammys' weren't this hard. Not that the Grammys' are really hard. You smile if you win. You smile if you lose. I think I'm going to faint.

FRANKIE: Don't do that. Put your head between your knees.

STAR: No I'm ok. It just passed. I'm going to get this out. Frankie I'm tired of my life. I'm tired of being popular and having people claw after me and I'm tired of not knowing who my friends are. I'm tired of having some one like DD around all the time. I'm tired of being known for who I date and what I'm wearing when I have worked so hard my whole life. I worked to get here. I made it and now all people care about is my clothes? Who my boyfriend is? Whether or not I'm going to marry him? When's the big day? When's the day? You've been together so long when's the day? And gee you're looking thin. Who cares if I'm thin? Or too thin. Or too fat. Or too tall. Or too short. Or too lax. Or too harsh. Or too much. Or not enough. Now I'm going to faint.

FRANKIE: Sit down.

FRANKIE helps her into a chair. She puts her head between her knees.

STAR: I want something more out of life. What do you think of that?

FRANKIE: I'm shocked. I'm amazed. I'm flabbergasted. I'm floored. I'm out of adjectives.

STAR: This isn't what you expected?

FRANKIE: Are you kidding? I thought I was going to be chopped up into little pieces and thrown into the ocean for fish food. This is great!

STAR: You think so? You really think so? I so wanted you to think this was great.

FRANKIE: I do. I think it's great. Tell me more.

STAR: I want to start over again. Wipe the slate clean. Things have been

getting so out of control. My latest CD's not doing so hot so the death bell is ringing and the vultures are circling. My mother's calling me every day asking after the numbers. How are the numbers? What are the numbers? Are the numbers any better? Why aren't the numbers better? She forgot my birthday but she's right there to remind me about the numbers.

FRANKIE: Breathe. Take another breath.

STAR: And every paper, every magazine, every tv shows – they're all happy as clams. They want me to fail. They want to be able to say I'm on the skids. They want to say – oh that Star. She on the top of the Ferris wheel and on her way down. And you know what?

FRANKIE: What?

STAR: Who cares? So what if this is the end of my career. I'm not too happy with my career. There are so many people out there who want a say in what I do so that if it goes well they can take credit. It's exhausting. There's no one else I can tell Frankie. I can't tell Ryan or my mother. I don't have any friends. Everyone I know would want to talk me out of it. There are a lot of people around here who are good at talking me into doing things they want done. I don't want to be talked out of this. I want a new life.

FRANKIE: It takes a lot of guts to walk away from a career. I'm proud of you Katie.

STAR: You don't know how much it means to hear you say that.

FRANKIE: You sound like you've really thought this through.

STAR: I have. I've done so much thinking my head hurts.

FRANKIE: Anything I can do to help I'll do. You can count on me.

STAR: I knew I could trust you. I knew I could do it.

FRANKIE: So. What do you want to do?

STAR: Right. The plan. Ok. This is not usual. This is not a usual path I have chosen. It's costing a crap load of money but it is going to be so worth it.

FRANKIE: This is so exciting!

STAR: Here it is. I'm going to make a new life for myself. I'm going to disappear. Vanish. Poof.

FRANKIE: That's a good idea. Go away for a while.

STAR: No, no. The disappearance is the new path. I'm going away.

FRANKIE: On a trip?

STAR: No. Well yes. But not the kind you're thinking of. I'm going to disappear. Forever. I'm going to have an accident and it's going to look like I'm dead and they'll find a body and there'll be a funeral and I'll be on an island living unbothered for the rest of my life! Isn't that great!

FRANKIE stands up. He is speechless. He goes to the mini bar cracks open one of the bottles and drains it.

STAR: Frankie? What do you -

FRANKIE holds up his hand to stop her from talking. He takes another bottle out of the mini bar and drains it.

STAR: Frankie say something!

FRANKIE turns to STAR.

FRANKIE: Are you out of your mind?

Blackout.

ACT TWO

Lights come up on FRANKIE

FRANKIE: Ok. This might be a tragedy. A big old whopping tragedy. I might have to do something drastic and unfunny. I know that's not what you want. I'm sorry. The stakes are high. I have to find the stealth mode inside of me. Good thing I'm in LA. I don't think I have a stealth mode in Oregon. Nothing stealthy happens in Oregon. I would have been in my Oregon mellow mode. It's hard to look stealthy when you're feeling mellow. Not that I've ever had to be stealthy. Anyway it's a new look for me from here on in. You might not recognize me. You might not even like it. But a man's got to do what a man's got to do. *(he stops for a moment and smiles. He looks around)* I can't believe I got to say that. I never do anything where the sentence might apply. If this were a movie I might have a sunset and the wind blowing in my hair. *(a sunset rolls into place behind him.)* A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do. That's much better.

The lights fade on FRANKIE and come up on STAR.

STAR: Frankie's going to be ok. He's just in shock. I was in shock too, at first. It is shocking. Hi! I'm going to fake my death. That sentence does not lack for shock value. Who can blame him if he goes off the deep end? Fake your death? What? Where? Why? *(as one falling off a cliff)* Ahhhhhhh! I've been thinking about this for more than a year, Frankie's only had a few seconds. I didn't think about how this would be for someone like Frankie. Typical me. Rush head long in without thinking or breathing. Frankie hasn't been exposed to the same level of shock as I have. I should have thought of that. I'm pretty much shock proof now. You can zap me with electricity and I won't even blink. I see what's behind closed doors. I see behind the scenes. I read what people write and they have no

idea what's really going on.. I read that stupid condom story. It's ridiculous. Why would I kick Lex out of the house and then run upstairs to throw condoms out of an upstairs window. Who thought of that? It's all about secrets. How many can I keep? Minimize the shock of what gets out. I didn't throw condoms at Lex. I stuffed them down his throat till he choked and nearly died. Ha. Ha. Just kidding. I'd never do something so shocking as that would I? That wouldn't be like me. Super Star. They can say whatever they like in the papers. It'll never reach the high voltage of the truth.

Lights out on STAR. They come up on RYAN. She has a bag on her head. She weaves slightly from side to side.

RYAN: I wasn't really drinking for breast cancer. It's a good excuse. Around here you can make it fit almost anything. I'm drinking for Lou Gerrig's disease. I'm drinking for Aids. I'm drinking for the democrats. Take your pick. People will forgive you, all you have to say is "I'm here for the cause" and that look in their eyes wafts away. That "who is this peon and why is she drinking my liquor" look. I didn't used to drink. It's hard to be organized, logical and efficient when your splayed in front of a toilet bowl puking up the crème brule. I don't think I have as problem. Not yet. Soon, but not yet. I can see it coming. Another one of those black holes. Right now it's sitting on my back porch. Just sitting, having a cigarette, watching the grass grow. Pretty soon it's going to move into my kitchen and start eating the takeout leftovers. Then it'll move into my front hall, the living room and then when I'm sleeping it'll burst through the bedroom door and drag me down. I haven't decided if I want to be sucked through and smashed to smithereens or if I should turn the hose on the black hole. Get it off the property. I don't know. It's a bit frightening – not knowing. Scum Plumber was on TV this afternoon. Scum Plumber – he was very nice; he made

faces at me from behind his chain saw. I was five years old. Girl with ice cream. The week before I had been girl on bus in a MOW. The Scum Plumber took away my ice cream. Five years old. Teeny tiny fingers. Little button nose. Eating an ice cream with no idea what the future holds. No idea that twenty some years later I'm sucking back JD in the afternoon watching myself and there's nothing I can say. I can't warn her. Or snatch her away. It doesn't matter; even if I could she'd never believe me. Why can't we be five years old forever? Why can't that happen?

Lights go down on RYAN and up on DD.

DD: " O villains, Chiron and Demetrius! Here stands the spring whom you have stained with mud, this goodly summer with your winter mixed. You killed her husband and for that vile fault two of her brothers were condemned to death, my hand cut off and made a merry jest; both her sweet hands, her tongue, and that more dear than hands or tongue her spotless chastity. Inhuman traitors, you constrained and forced. What would you say if I should let you speak? Villians, for shame you could not beg for grace. Hark, wretches, how I mean to martyr you. This one hand yet is left to cut your throats. Whiles that Lavinia 'tween her stumps doth hold the basin that receives your guilty blood. " Something to chew on.

Lights go down on DD

SCENE ONE

Lights come up on the hotel room. FRANKIE and STAR are in the same position as the end of Act One.

FRANKIE: Are you out of your mind?

STAR: You don't like the path.

FRANKIE: Don't like it? Don't like it? Are you out of your fucking mind?

STAR: You never used to swear.

FRANKIE: You never used to be a lunatic. I guess that makes us even.

STAR: I am not a lunatic.

FRANKIE: If the strappy sandal fits...

STAR: You're jumping to conclusions. You don't understand.

FRANKIE: Oh I think I do.

STAR: Obviously you don't cause you're acting like an idiot.

FRANKIE: Well we wouldn't want that would we.

STAR: And stop being sarcastic! I hate it!

FRANKIE: Maybe I should fake my death then.

STAR: Don't you dare make fun of me. Don't you dare.

FRANKIE: Or what, you'll kidnap me and throw me in a trunk? Too late!

STAR: I didn't kidnap you!

FRANKIE: Did too!

STAR: Did not!

FRANKIE: Did too, did too!

STAR: Did not! Did not! Did – *(she stops suddenly and takes a huge breath in. She does her starting again exercises)*

FRANKIE: That'll help.

STAR: Be quiet.

FRANKIE: And why can't I swear? You swear all the time.

STAR: I do not.

FRANKIE: You say shit all the time.

STAR: You've only been here a couple of hours. How do you know if I swear all the time?

FRANKIE: Are you saying you don't say shit all the time?

STAR: Shit is different. Shit is not fuck. Shit. Fuck. Completely different. Completely different planets in the swear universe. Shit is warm. Fuck is cold. Shit is soft. Fuck is harsh. Shit is sensitive. Fuck is ruthless. It's fun to say shit. It rolls off the tongue. Shit shit shit shit shit shit shit. Shhhhhhit. You can draw it out like taffy. Fuck come barreling out from the back of your throat. Fuck. You can't say Fuuuuuuuck. Doesn't work. Shit is affectionate. People use fuck when they want to hurt someone. It's a punch. It's angry. I could call you an asshole and leave it at that. If I really want to punch you in the gut I'd call you a fucking asshole.

FRANKIE: Are you?

STAR: No I'm just making a point. Shit is not swearing and fuck is.

FRANKIE: Bullshit. You can't determine -

STAR: *(she has finished her exercises)* Ok I'm ready.

FRANKIE: No. No, no, no, no, no, no.

STAR: *(she starts again, speaking in a pleasant voice)* Frankie. I don't want to fight with you.

FRANKIE: No. You don't get to say how this goes.

STAR: Frankie. I don't want to fight with you.

FRANKIE: You can take your fucking starting again -

STAR: *(losing her cool)* Frankie I don't want to fight with you!

FRANKIE: Fight! Fight! Fight!

STAR: No. NO. NO! You're not going to - *(she stops and takes a deep breath)*
No. We're going to discuss this calmly and rationally.

FRANKIE: I don't want to be calm.

STAR: You don't understand and I'm going to further explain my situation.

FRANKIE: I'm not one of your minions. You can't tell me what to do.

STAR: Frankie, please sit down. Let's be adults. Let's start again.

FRANKIE: I don't -

STAR: Sit down or I'll get DD and he'll make you sit and you won't get up for a week!

FRANKIE: You want to start again. Fine.

He stalks over to a chair and sits down. He rolls his neck a couple of times and punches the air. He does a variety of stretching exercises.

STAR: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. I didn't mean to - what are you doing?

FRANKIE: I have my own starting again exercises.

STAR: Those aren't real starting again exercises.

FRANKIE: Who says?

STAR: They're not certified.

FRANKIE: How do you know?

STAR: You can only get them from my doctor and you have to pay a lot of money.

FRANKIE: Sounds like you got screwed.

STAR: I did not get screwed!

FRANKIE: Ok I'm ready. *(he also starts again speaking in the same pleasant voice that STAR used)* Katie. I'm afraid I don't agree with this new path you have chosen. I think it's insane.

STAR: Call me Star. My name is Star.

FRANKIE: I've always known you as Katie and that's what I'm going to call you.

STAR: I hate the name Katie. That's why I changed it.

FRANKIE: Like legally? When you sign checks and stuff you just write "Star." That's pretentious.

STAR: Well no, on those I sign Katie Barendrick. But publicly I'm Star.

FRANKIE: We're not in public.

STAR: You're splitting hairs.

FRANKIE: You're avoiding issue.

STAR: I am not, I – *(she takes a deep breath in)* It's fine. Call me whatever you like. It doesn't matter to me in the slightest. Now. The reason you don't agree with my new path is because you don't understand it.

FRANKIE: Perhaps I could lay out the path as I see it and you can tell me where I'm veering off. Would that be acceptable?

STAR: That is acceptable yes.

FRANKIE: As I understand it...from the facts you have laid out in front of me...

you're going to start a new life. Is that correct?

STAR: That is correct.

FRANKIE: You are going to appear to disappear. Vanish from the planet. Is that correct?

STAR: That is correct.

FRANKIE: In order to accomplish this disappearing act you have to do something pretty drastic. You can't just hide in Canada or Iceland, though I don't see why not.

STAR: People know who I am in Canada and Iceland. I can't go anywhere because I am known everywhere. There's nowhere for me to hide.

FRANKIE: So in order to disappear you're going to fake your death. You're going to disappear and fake your death; only everyone is going to actually think you're dead. Your friends, your fans, and family they're all going to think that you're dead. Really dead. Absolutely no doubt about it dead. It's the stupidest idea I have ever heard in my whole life.

STAR: Veering. You're veering.

FRANKIE: *(starting to lose pleasant voice)* You're going to do this to your mother? You're going to make your mother think you're dead? Are you out of your fucking mind?

STAR: You don't understand.

FRANKIE: *(completely losing calm)* You're going to make everyone think you're dead but instead you're going to be living somewhere on a deserted island sucking on a coconut and living the life of riley. That's your path? That's you're new life plan? That's what you've been thinking about?

STAR: Yes.

FRANKIE: This is not happening. I have got to still be in the trunk of my car because this is not happening. I am not standing in a hotel room ten minutes from Rodeo drive having a conversation about faking one's death with the biggest singing superstar in the western world. This is not real!

(he starts to pinch himself) Ow! Ow! Ow! Stop hurting this isn't real! Ow!
Ow!

STAR marches over to the bathroom door and flings it open.

STAR: He doesn't understand.

DD: *(coming out)* I told you he wouldn't.

FRANKIE: And that, that! How can you do that! Don't you people follow any rules whatsoever?

STAR: What's the matter?

FRANKIE: You just opened the bathroom door without knocking. What if he had been on the can?

STAR: He's never on the can. That's why I hired him.

FRANKIE: You don't know that.

STAR: I do.

FRANKIE: You gotta pee. Everyone has to pee.

DD: If you must know, I pee twice a day. Once in the morning when I get up and once when I go to sleep.

FRANKIE: What about number 2?

DD: Number 2? You mean bowel movements Dr Messenger? If you must know, those are in the morning.

FRANKIE: It's not humanly possible to only pee twice a day. What do you drink?

DD: I don't.

FRANKIE: What if you get dehydrated?

DD: I don't.

FRANKE: So you drink?

DD: No.

FRANKIE: Ahhhhhhh! This is ridiculous! I can't believe I'm having this conversation! I'm supposed to be safe and sound at home and instead I'm discussing bowel movements with a thug who is standing next to a multi million, multi-platinum, multi, multi what ever you are. *(he pinches himself a couple of times)* Ow! Ow!

DD: Wiggling out....

STAR: He's not a thug.

FRANKIE: I am not wiggling out. When I wig out you'll know baby. You will freaking know! *(he takes a deep breath)* I don't know what you paid for your starting again exercises but they don't do a thing for me.

STAR: Why don't we sit down and I can -

FRANKIE: Star, please go into the bathroom.

STAR: What?

FRANKIE: I wish to speak with DD alone.

STAR: You can't do that.

FRANKIE: You have two choices. I walk out that door right now or you get in the bathroom.

STAR: This is my room you can't just tell me what to do.

FRANKIE: True enough. *(he starts to walk out the door)*

STAR: DD!

DD: I am not getting involved. This was your idea, you deal with it.

STAR: Frankie, you can't talk me out of this. You can't get DD to talk me out of this. My mind is made up.

FRANKIE: I'm not listening. I'm just walking. No matter how hard you hold on I can probably still get out of the room and then someone might see me....

STAR: All right, all right. You want me to go to the bathroom. I'll go to the bathroom.

*STAR goes into the bathroom and slams the door.
FRANKIE starts to pace angrily.*

DD: She's pissed.

FRANKIE: She's pissed? She's pissed. That's funny. Ha, ha, ha. She's pissed.

DD: You look pretty pissed.

FRANKIE: Goddamned right I'm pissed! I've got the right here. I'm the one in the right in terms of who gets to feel pissy. I'm the one who wins hands down. I've got the royal flush aces high and I'm pissed! *(DD starts to move towards FRANKIE)* Whoa-oh. Don't you touch me.

DD: You're a little unstable there Frankie.

FRANKIE: Uh uh. No Vulcan grip for me. You just keep your distance. Stay on that side of the room. *(he runs to the mini-bar and picks up one of the empty bottles)*

DD: And what are you going to do with that?

FRANKIE: I don't know. And you don't want to find out. *(he tries to do something fancy with the bottle and ends up dropping it. He quickly scoops it up)* Don't be fooled. I can be pretty deadly when I want to be. I haven't lived in Chicago for nothing.

DD: You got spunk. She said you were just a small town boy.

FRANKIE: Excuse me for saying so, but Star seems to be a little whacked.

DD: I don't think you should say that.

FRANKIE: Somebody should. She has delusions. Big time delusions. She's crackers. The music business has not done well by her at all. All that hairspray she's wears has obviously done some damage to her brain. She's brain damaged.

DD: She's not brain damaged.

FRANKIE: She is not right in the head at all. She's loopy. I mean, she was loopy in high school but in a nice, gentle, fluffy kind of way. This is jagged edge loopy and someone is going to get hurt. You and me we have to stop her.

DD: You and I.

FRANKIE: What?

DD: You and I. Me and you.

FRANKIE: You're correcting my grammar? This is a time to be correcting my grammar? We're in a crisis situation, defcom four, red sirens and you want me to speak properly? DD, she has got to be stopped! We have to form a coalition, put a bag on her head and get her to a hospital. How do we do that?

DD: I don't want to stop her.

FRANKIE: Do you know what she wants to do? Do you know what she told me she wants to do?

DD: Yes.

FRANKIE: Yes? Yes? And you're just going to stand by and let her think she's going to go through with this? You're going to let her think it's ok to fake her death which has got to be impossible – how is she ever going to coordinate something like -

DD: It was my idea.

FRANKIE: Say again?

DD: It was my idea. My plan. My execution. I'm going to take care of everything.

FRANKIE: I thought Chicago was full of nut jobs. This is definitely home of the wackos. I'm surrounded by wackos. Cuckoo. Cuckoo.

DD: Frankie, don't wig out on me.

FRANKIE: I am not wiggling out! (*he takes a deep breath*) I am going to faint though.

DD: Come and sit down. Put your head between your legs.

FRANKIE: Don't you touch me.

DD: Oh for Pete's sake. Here I'll put my ring on the table. See? No Vulcan grip.

FRANKIE: I'm sure you could break my neck in two anyway.

DD: Yes I could but let's not think about that right now shall we? Put your head between your legs and breathe. Just breathe. Clear your mind. I suspect we have a long night ahead of us and you need to have a clear head. Think about Shakespeare.

FRANKIE: Shakespeare?

DD: Sure, he's good for a clear mind. When I'm out with Star, it's no good having a mind that's cluttered with thinking: bills, my dad's back, the problems I'm having with my pipes - stuff like that. But you start thinking "Now is the winter of our discontent, made glorious summer by this sun of York; And all the clouds that loured upon our house in the deep bosom of the ocean buried." Your mind just gets clear and it's easy to watch for freaks. Richard the Third. I used that at the Billboard Music Awards.

FRANKIE: My mind always fell asleep when we did Shakespeare in school.

DD: Well your teacher probably sucked. My teacher made us get up and act out the scenes and he got these bags full of fake blood so we could do the sword fights and bleed all over the place. It was a riot. He's the only teacher who's tires I didn't slash. What? Why are you looking at me like that?

FRANKIE: You're passionate. You're a passionate thug.

DD: I am not.

FRANKIE: You are too. You're passionate about Shakespeare.

DD: You shut up. Unless you want me to break your neck.

FRANKIE: Ok. Ok I will. But you were. I saw it.

DD: If I have to hurt you I won't feel too bad. I can make it look like an accident.

FRANKIE: Ok. Ok. Ok. Subject closed. And speaking of subjects, don't you think this whole fake death slash clean slate idea is just the tiniest bit stupid? That it's absolutely not feasible? You do know it can't work don't you?

DD: It worked for JFK Junior.

FRANKIE: What? Him? And her? No. Noooooooo.

DD: Living the life of Riley, sucking on a coconut.

FRANKIE: And you? Your plan? Your idea?

DD: Yep.

FRANKIE: Nooooooooooooo.

DD: It's true.

FRANKIE: Why would you do something like this?

DD: I like to help people. It's the gift I have to give.

FRANKIE: Noooooooo. I don't believe it.

DD: I don't care if you do. You don't know nothing about what goes on around here. Not that you should.

FRANKIE: Who are you?

DD: Just a thug.

FRANKIE: You are not what you present yourself to be.

DD: I don't have a lot of time to present myself when I'm pushing freaks out of the way.

The bathroom door creaks open. STAR sticks her head out.

STAR: Is it ok to come out yet? I didn't hear furniture flying.

FRANKIE: I don't know. I - sure I guess.

STAR: Are we cool?

FRANKIE: No.

STAR: Should I go back in the bathroom?

FRANKIE: No.

STAR: Does DD have to go in the bathroom?

FRANKIE: Do you?

DD: No I'm good.

FRANKIE: That is not human.

STAR: I wasn't talking about peeing.

DD: If it'll make you feel better I'll go in there and pretend.

FRANKIE: It's not the same. *(he gives a big sigh and turns his back on the two of them)*

STAR: *(to DD)* Why don't you check on Ryan. Make sure she's ok with the....thing *(she doesn't want to say bag on her head)*

DD: She's just sleeping. I can hear her snoring from here.

STAR: Please.....

DD: Whatever you say boss.

DD goes over to the closet. RYAN flops out and DD hurriedly stuffs her back in so that FRANKIE doesn't see the bag on her head.

FRANKIE: How long have you two been planning this?

STAR: A year or so. My life....there are things....things are not right in my life.

FRANKIE: It looks pretty good to me.

FRANKIE goes over to the table. He picks up DD's ring. NOTE: at this point he is not being covert, just curious. DD must not see him pick up the ring.

STAR: I know it does. From the outside it looks like I'm a complainy puss pants.

FRANKIE: I don't know who you are. You're not the same person.

STAR: We can't be from Oregon forever.

FRANKIE: Why not? There's nothing wrong with being from a small town. Nothing at all.

STAR: You're not the same person either.

FRANKIE: I know. I hate it. I hate that things inside of me aren't what they used to be.

STAR: Then why did you go away to school? Why didn't you stay home?

FRANKIE: It was a stupid idea. See some of the country. Stupid idea. Go to a

good school. Stupid, stupid idea! Who cares about learning from the best? Who cares that it's fascinating work. Who cares that I can't wait for the next semester? It doesn't make any sense!

STAR: You like Chicago....

FRANKIE: I do not.

STAR: You do a little.

FRANKIE: No I don't. You're changing the subject! This is not about me; this is about you and your stupid idea! You're just trying to wear me down. Run circles round my brain so I'll get dizzy and I'll forget where I am and what I have to do.

STAR: What do you have to do?

FRANKIE: Something. I have to do something.

DD: There's a brilliant plan.

FRANKIE: Don't you underestimate me mister. My something is going to be big. Huge!

DD: You can't do anything.

STAR: Can't you just be happy for me?

FRANKIE: You two think you've got this all figured out. You think you're going to get away with this. But you didn't figure on the Frankie Factor. The Frankie Factor is going to throw a wrench into your plans.

By now DD has finished with the closet.

DD: *(choking off a laugh)* The Frankie factor? What's that?

FRANKIE: Never you mind.

DD: Sounds like a disease.

FRANKIE: It does not. The Frankie Factor is very powerful.

DD: What power do you have? Huh?

FRANKIE: I don't know. Something. Some power.

DD: You've got nothing. This isn't a movie. The answers not going to come to you out of the blue. No one is going to come through the door at the last minute. You're not going to be able to whisk Star back to Oregon where she'll see the error of her ways. Life doesn't work like that.

FRANKIE: I know how life works. I know you're supposed to live your life and not cop out.

STAR: I'm not coping out.

FRANKIE: Faking your death is the biggest cop out I've ever heard. If you want to start over again that's fine. If you want to be a farmer or a taxidermist, or you want to go to square dancing school or live in the woods and pee in an outhouse then I'm there for you. I support you one hundred million billion percent. But this plan, this path, this is not what people do in real life.

DD: So. What are you going to do?

FRANKIE: I don't know.

DD: You think you can be a big hero? Save the day? Knock me out, handcuff Star to the coffee table and show her the power of your wisdom so that she'll change her mind?

FRANKIE: That wasn't what I was thinking no. But it's a pretty good idea.

By now FRANKIE is standing right beside DD. He whips the ring out and clamps it to DD's neck before DD can stop him.

DD: Oh shit.

DD goes rigid and falls over.

STAR: DD!

STAR starts to run over to DD but FRANKIE swoops her up, dumps her on the couch and handcuffs her ankle to the coffee table. FRANKIE stands up; he seems a bit amazed by what has just happened.

STAR: You let me go. Let me go right now!

FRANKIE: Who knew that was going to happen?

STAR: Frankie! This is not acceptable!

FRANKIE: *(to STAR)* Never underestimate the power of the Frankie Factor.

Blackout.

Lights come up on DD. He has a bag on his head.

DD: I don't like surprises. I've only been surprised once in my life. I had a pretty suspicious childhood – gotta watch your back cause when your mother's working three jobs and your fathers a lay about slob, there's no one to do it for you. I hated him. So what if he hurt himself and couldn't work. He didn't do anything to help himself. He just lay on the couch. Day after day after day. I watched my mother get thinner and thinner and he'd want to know where dinner is? Make it yourself you bastard! Why don't you do something for her for a change! Why don't you get off your lazy ass and do something! I'm standing in front of him in the family room, shaking, I'm so angry. He's shocked, furious, humiliated. He brings up a hand like he's going to teach me a lesson and I just shove it away. It doesn't take any effort at all. I'm fifteen. I'm stronger than him. I'm a man and he can't teach me a lesson anymore. I can hurt him and he knows it. I can see it in his eyes. I can hurt him and boy do I want to. He's so scared he has to leave the house. His back can't be that bad. He has to get away from me.

Have you ever seen that change in your parent's eyes? When they go from being Gods to lowly hurttable human beings? I'm ecstatic. I'm a man. I can take care of my mother. We don't need him. I wait until mom comes home from job number two and before she goes to job number three and I lay it on the table. I'm a man. I can take care of things. We don't need him. We don't need him. She just sits there. Thin and tired. She's quiet. So quiet for so long but then she looks me in the eye and says, "But I love him. We had good times before the accident and I love him. We're not going to leave him. And that is the last thing I'm ever going to say about it." I love him? She loves him? This sad sack man who never did anything for himself or her or us? She loves him? How can she? How can she love him? How can she do that to me? How could she do that do me? Huh. I wasn't expecting all that to come out of my mouth. Surprise. I guess you never realize how enlightening a bag on the head is until you've got a bag on your head.

Lights go down on DD. They come up on STAR.

STAR: I don't care how enlightening a bag on the head is. I don't want it. I don't want you people to see inside of my head. It's the only place I've got left. *(she takes a pause and smiles at the audience)* Not that you're not nice people. I'm sure you are. I'm nice too. Under different circumstances, I'm sure we'd all get along. You could come over to my house and we'd sit by the pool and drink fru-fru drinks and someone would jump in with all their clothes on and we'd laugh like this: HAHAHAHAHAHAAAA. But that bag is going nowhere near my head so you can just forget it.

Lights go down. Lights come up on RYAN.

RYAN: *(singing in a kid voice)* I love my baby Bindy. And baby Bindy she loves me. She's a perfect baby. As perfect as she can be. Ten little fingers and ten toes. Two eyes, two ears and a perfect nose. She can even use a

garden hose. I love my baby Bindy.

Lights go down on RYAN.

SCENE TWO

Lights come up on the hotel room. RYAN is sitting on a chair by the mini bar. She is hardly sitting in place, clearly feeling the effects of the alcohol and drug. STAR is pouting on the couch. She is mad as a wet hen. DD is lying in the middle of the room. He is wrapped like a mummy in the bedroom sheets and blankets. FRANKIE is finishing off the bandaging by wrapping duct tape around DD's body. NOTE: DD should be wrapped so that he can sit up. The bag is now on DD's head.

STAR: You are so dead. When he wakes up you are so dead.

RYAN: *(talking to no one in particular)* Gee officer, is Old Lady Bailey gonna be ok?

STAR: You are so dead. He is going to kill you dead. People don't do this to DD.

RYAN: I don't know Suzy. She took quite a nasty fall.

STAR: And that bag on his head is so not funny.

FRANKIE: You did it to Ryan. And to me.

STAR: That was different.

RYAN: It's a good thing we had Rufus with us. Good dog! Good dog!

STAR: You think a few sheets and some duct tape is going to hold him?

FRANKIE: It'll hold him long enough.

STAR: Not as long as you think.

FRANKIE: *(standing up)* That should do.

STAR: He's going to get free eventually. And then you're dead.

FRANKIE: I'll write that down. *(he turns to RYAN)* How are you doing?

RYAN: Gee officer, is Old Lady Bailey gonna be ok?

FRANKIE: I'll take that as not too good. How many fingers am I holding up?

RYAN: Seventeen. *(she laughs as if she sees something the rest of us can't see)* Ooooooh, pretty.

FRANKIE: Come on. Let's walk around a bit. Maybe we can get the effects to wear off. *(to STAR)* I can't believe you're not more concerned about her.

FRANKIE helps RYAN to her feet. They walk rather unstably around the room.

STAR: It's Ryan. She's Wonder Woman. Nothing ever happens to Wonder Woman.

FRANKIE: Wonder Woman never had a bag on her head.

STAR: How do you know? Besides, I didn't do that, it was DD.

RYAN: *(holding out her arm)* Look! The dirt came right off! *(reverting to adult RYAN)* Do you have anything for a blinding headache? *(her head lolls onto FRANKIE's shoulder)*

FRANKIE: Too bad there isn't any coffee.

STAR: What kind of doctor are you?

FRANKIE: One who cares about their patients.

STAR: I care about Ryan. I just know her better than you do.

FRANKIE: What's her last name.

STAR: Balice. Don't ask me stupid questions. And don't stereotype me. I know the names of the people who work for me.

FRANKIE: How many people do work for you.

STAR: Seven. Eight. Twelve. I don't know, Ryan knows, she takes care of that stuff.

FRANKIE: You better do your starting again exercises. Cause we're going to start again and I don't want to talk to Missy Pussy-face.

STAR: I am not being a pussy face. I am cuffed to a fucking coffee table!

FRANKIE: You're right. Fuck is very harsh.

RYAN: Bad man took my ice cream. *(she looks at STAR)* What are you doing here? Why aren't you on your way to New York? Where's the schedule? *(her head lolls again)*

FRANKIE: What kind of drugs did you give her anyway?

STAR: I didn't do anything. It was DD.

FRANKIE: On your orders.

STAR: Why don't you just let her sleep it off? That's what she really needs.

FRANKIE: Since you and your thug are clearly living in loony-tune land, she might be of some help.

STAR: Only if you don't want kiwi on your fruit plate.

FRANKIE: She seems to have a good head on her shoulders.

RYAN: Gee officer, is Old Lady Kiwi gonna be ok?

FRANKIE: Maybe rest is what she needs. Come on Ryan.

FRANKIE starts to take RYAN towards the bedroom.

RYAN: Where we going?

FRANKIE: La-la land.

RYAN: I don't want to go to La La land. I hate La La land.

FRANKIE: Well give it your best shot.

RYAN passes out on the bed. FRANKIE comes in to sit next to STAR.

FRANKIE: That face doesn't look any less pussy.

STAR: Get used to it.

FRANKIE: You're just pissed because this isn't going exactly the way you planned it. You had a plan, a conversation in your head, and I was supposed to follow along no matter how warped and demented it may be.

STAR: It's not demented.

FRANKIE: What did you expect I would do? I haven't changed that much. If you had told me the same story seven years ago I still would have freaked out.

STAR: I know...

FRANKIE: Then why am I here? Why did you go to all this trouble?

STAR: I don't know.

FRANKIE: Yes you do. You didn't do this on a whim.

STAR: I might of. I have pretty big whims.

FRANKIE: So you disrupted my life on a whim?

STAR: No! I wouldn't do that. I didn't do that. I wanted to share... when I think about leaving there aren't too many people who...I didn't want to leave without... This wasn't what I had in mind.

FRANKIE: What was supposed to happen? Did you think that I'd just accept your idea with no questions asked? That I'd give you my blessing? That I'd drop everything and go with you?

STAR looks up suddenly at that and looks down again. She starts tugging at her ankle.

FRANKIE: Oh shit.

STAR: Would you take these cuffs off?

FRANKIE: You wanted me to come with you?

STAR: This isn't fair! I'm supposed to get up and walk away.

FRANKIE: You wanted me to come with you.

STAR: I'm supposed to walk away. That's what the drama of the moment calls for!

FRANKIE: Katie – I – I don't know –

STAR: Don't say anything. Just don't. The moment is ruined. It doesn't matter.

FRANKIE: What made you think -

STAR: I said don't say anything! There are things....there's an unspoken code around here of things that are not to be talked about. I'm not as frivolous as you think. I'm not a bimbo making up a dream world in my head. I already live in a dream world! What would I make one up for? (*she gets up as if she's going to storm away but can't*) Oh for – would you please take this off.

FRANKIE: If you live in a dream world, then why this? And why would you want me to come with you?

STAR: Why did we go to the prom together?

FRANKIE: Because we didn't have dates.

STAR: Because we wanted to have fun. No pressure. No heartache. You're the only one who never broke my heart. You made me feel so normal. And as much as I say I hated living in Talent, I really didn't because of you. You were the only person in my life who treated me as a normal human being. That's why I wanted you to come with me. You'd treat me as a human being, even today, even though we haven't seen each other in so long, you'd treat me just like everyone else.

FRANKIE: I would I guess. It's bizarre though. You're Katie. And you're Star.

STAR: I guess that's the problem. I'm not a human being anymore. If you're going to go, you should probably leave before DD wakes up. I won't tell him where you went.

FRANKE: But what about -

STAR: Just forget it. You should go.

FRANKIE: Now? After all this?

STAR: You've made up your mind. There's not much point in me saying anything.

FRANKIE: Katie -

STAR: Go ok? Before I embarrass myself any further.

FRANKIE: All right. I'll go if that's what you want.

STAR: Yes. Please.

FRANKIE gets up to go.

FRANKIE: DD's got the handcuff key in his pocket. I'm sure Ryan will be up soon, she can help you out.

STAR: Ok.

FRANKIE: Goodbye Star. It's been quite a night.

STAR: Take care of yourself Frankie. Don't let too much Chicago get inside of you.

FRANKIE: I won't. I'm going to pray I don't hear any accident stories.

STAR: Don't read the papers.

FRANKIE: I probably won't. *(he kisses her on the forehead)* Bye.

STAR: Bye.

FRANKIE starts to leave. As he's leaving he pats his pockets. He stops and turns back towards STAR.

FRANKIE: Um, you don't know - do you happen to know where my keys are?

STAR: What?

FRANKIE: My car keys.

STAR: Oh shit.

FRANKIE: Oh no. Don't tell me.

They both look at DD.

STAR: I'll give you three guesses and the first two are free.

FRANKIE: I don't know whether to say shit or fuck here. What do you think?

STAR: It's a shitfuck moment.

FRANKIE: Shitfuck. So much for my big exit. *(he starts to giggle)*

STAR This isn't funny. *(she starts to giggle too)*

FRANKIE: Not at all. It's very serious.

STAR: It's very shitfuck.

FRANKIE: I've duct taped the man who holds my only way out of here.

STAR: And put a bag on his head.

FRANKIE: And put a bag on his head. This is very very serious. *(full out laughing)*

STAR: *(laughing)* He's gonna kill you!

FRANKIE: *(laughing)* I know.

STAR: *(laughing)* You'll never get those keys. You're never leaving!

FRANKIE: *(laughing)* How am I going to explain that to my mother? She's going to kill me too!

STAR: *(laughing)* You're dead meat! DD's got you coming and your mother's got you going!

FRANKIE: If this were the movies, I'd be able to use one of the bottles from the mini-bar and some chewing gum to extract the keys.

STAR: Oh, oh! You could call room service and get them to make you new car keys!

FRANKIE: I could find out to hot wire a car on the internet!

STAR: You could blow up the hotel! Then it wouldn't matter!

FRANKIE: Not in the least!

There is a pause as their laughter runs its course.

STAR: If you want to go I'll pay for a cab.

FRANKIE: All the way to Oregon?

STAR: Why not. I won't need the money soon anyway.

FRANKIE stares at STAR for a moment. He then moves over to a chair and sits down.

FRANKIE: Ok. Tell me.

STAR: Tell you what?

FRANKIE: The real reason you're doing this.

STAR: I told you my reasons.

FRANKIE: No you didn't. You told me some reasons but there's something else.

STAR: There's nothing -

FRANKIE: You're playing a part. You're playing the part of Katie Barendrick playing Star. There's another reason. Not the one you've been practicing in your head. Ok you're tired. You're fed up. You can't go to Canada. What else?

STAR: There are things we don't speak about...

FRANKIE: So what? Who am I going to tell?

STAR: Your mother, those girls who want to date you, those boys who want to know how many times we've baptized the waters.

FRANKIE: You're making excuses. You know I wouldn't tell anyone if you didn't want me to. Besides, what will it matter – you'll be dead, right?

STAR: Ha. Ha. Mr. Comedian. *(she goes to talk and then stops herself)* I'm not prepared for this.

FRANKIE: So make it up as you go along.

STAR: Make it up? Have you met my assistant? We do not make anything up. We plan everything down to the last millisecond.

FRANKIE: You're stalling.

STAR: I'm not stalling. I just haven't had this particular conversation in my head. *(she takes a deep breath)* My manager wanted me to do this movie. Not a great movie, but not a bad one either. A pretty good part. If all the pieces fell into place it could be a pretty good movie. A career starting movie. But there's nudity and I didn't want to do it. I really wanted to do the part and I could do it. I just didn't want to be nude. Well, she got really angry with me. I thought, I thought we were going to have lunch and she'd have a Caesar and I'd have something with goat cheese and I was going to say "I don't want to be nude" and she'd be ok with that and we'd eat our lunch and we'd move on. "Come on Star," she said to me. "It's the only thing left for you. You're practically nude half the time anyway. You act like you want to be nude, so what's the problem? You're not getting any younger. Every man on the planet has imagined you naked. Why not give them what they want. There are a million girls out there younger than you and they'll do this part a million times better than you. If you want me to work for you, you have to do what I say. And I'm saying you're a minute away from times up. Take off your clothes and be done with it." I thought she was my friend. She's been my agent since I started. When her mother died she stayed at my house, my home for weeks. So I left and I talked to Lex and I called my mother and I told them I didn't want to be nude. This is my support staff. My family. My love. My rock.

"Think of your career" they said. "Think of your career." Why is my naked body my career? Why is this arm and this knee and this breast and all the rest of it my career? And I talked to people I thought were my friends and I couldn't find one person, not one...I felt like I was on top of a building and everyone is at my back and I can feel them – jump. Just jump. Just jump!

FRANKIE: And you did the movie.

STAR: I did. It's coming out in a couple of months.

FRANKIE: What about DD or Ryan?

STAR: I didn't...It's only in the past year that DD and I have really....talked I guess. I used to think differently of him.

FRANKIE: Like a thug.

STAR: The first day on set was awful. I couldn't hide it. It all came rushing out the back of the limo and DD said I should quit. Walk off the movie. I tried. They threatened to sue me, threatened to bankrupt me and I did the movie. And all I've been thinking about is, what happens next. What happens when it's not enough for me to be nude? What will I have to do next? And I know I'll give in. I always do. What's going to be next Frankie?

FRANKIE: You don't have to do anything.

STAR: Easy to say. Easy for you to say. But you won't be there when I have to say it. Why can't I say no? No. Two letters. No. No. No I won't do the nudity. No Mom I don't want to practice. No I don't want to do another contest. No I don't want to wear make up. No I don't want a white t-shirt in the video. No Ryan I don't want to do another benefit. No Lex I don't want to - No, no I won't do it I won't do it! Don't you touch me, No! No! No! Why can't I do anything for myself? I feel so....I feel so sick. All the time I feel so... I just – I just – I just.....

STAR bursts into tears. FRANKIE holds her.

FRANKIE: It's ok. It's ok. It's ok. It's ok.

STAR: It's not ok. That's why I have to do this. Everyone has me right where they want me. They got me and nobody's letting go.

FRANKIE: So why don't you go to Canada. Canada's nice. Why can't you just say to everyone – Fuck off, I'm going to Canada.

STAR: There are people who spend their lives trying to figure out where I am every minute of the day. I can't compete. I want a house. I want to be alone. I want to stop working. I want to stop everything. I know it's selfish. I know people are going to be hurt. I just don't know what else to do.

FRANKIE: Ok. Let's say you like being alone for 5 years. Then let's say you like reading for five years. that's ten years. You're 35 years old and you can never come back. What do you do for the next 50 years?

STAR: That's my problem, not anyone else's.

There is a pause. FRANKIE gets down on one knee in front of STAR.

STAR: Frankie. What are you doing?

FRANKIE: Come home with me.

STAR: Frankie.....

FRANKIE: Just for a week. Just for a day.

STAR: No.

FRANKIE: You wanted me to come with you. Why don't you come with me first? Just try it out. Try it. You'll like it.

STAR: And what about your mother and her slides and her heart attack.

FRANKIE: We won't tell her.

STAR: There's only 6000 people Frankie, where exactly would I hide?

FRANKIE: My grandparents. They're deaf. They never listen to music. Come on.

DD: I'm gonna kill somebody.

FRANKIE leaps up and gets himself as far away from DD as possible.

FRANKIE: That was fast.

DD: Get this bag off my head.

FRANKIE: You do it.

DD: Star! Get this bag off my head.

STAR: I can't I'm cuffed to the coffee table.

DD sits up. He starts moving in a rolling shuffle towards FRANKIE.

FRANKIE: Whoa, whoa, whoa. What'cha doing there DD.

DD: You better be a fast runner cowboy.

FRANKIE: Katie. He's gonna kill me.

STAR: Now DD. Don't do anything hasty.

RYAN: What the hell is going on here?

During the previous RYAN has gotten up. She stands in the doorway to the bedroom.

STAR: Oh shit.

RYAN: I don't know who you think you -

In mid-sentence RYAN grabs her head and passes out again. FRANKIE leaps towards her to catch her before she hits the ground. As he reaches her RYAN comes to and grabs FRANKIE by the neck. She does a funky kung-fu move and at the end has FRANKIE with one arm behind his back. She has her other arm around his throat.

FRANKIE: Ack!

STAR: Frankie!

DD: What's going on!

RYAN: Call the police!

FRANKIE: Ack!

STAR: Ryan let him go!

RYAN: Call the police.

DD: Star!

STAR: I can't call the police. I'm cuffed to the coffee table.

RYAN: So lift it up.

FRANKIE: She can't. It's bolted to the floor.

RYAN: No it's not who told you that?

FRANKIE: DD did.

DD: Guess you can't believe everything you hear.

RYAN: DD, what the hell is on your head?

STAR: I can lift the table up?

During the following STAR lifts the table and slips the cuff off.

FRANKIE: Can you stop choking me?

DD: Ryan are you choking Frankie?

RYAN: Is that your name?

FRANKIE: Yes.

RYAN: Yes I am.

DD: Keep at it. When I get there, I'm gonna kill him.

FRANKIE: Katie!

STAR jumps on RYAN's back.

RYAN: Get off of me!

STAR: Let him go.

RYAN: I'm not letting him go. He's a maniac. Look what he did to DD.

By now DD is at the struggling threesome he throws his body into them with a yell.

FRANKIE: Ahhh! *(he flails his arms about and gets a hold of STAR's hair.*

STAR: Ahhh!

DD: Ryan take the bag off my head.

RYAN: I'm busy.

DD: Help me and I'll help you.

RYAN: I'm not letting go of this punk.

DD: Do I have to do everything my self? *(he flings his head about to get the bag off)*

FRANKIE: Stop choking me!

STAR: Let go of my hair.

FRANKIE: Tell her to let go first.

STAR: Ryan if you don't let go, you're fired.

RYAN: Fine by me.

FRANKIE: Ryan! Ryan! Katie's going to fake her death. That's why I'm here. I'm not a maniac. You have to help her. You can't let her out of your sight.

STAR: Frankie!

DD: See! I knew he'd rat you out! I told you he'd tell!

Hopefully DD has the bag off by now. He gives a war cry and starts biting FRANKIE on the legs.

DD: Ahhhhh!

FRANKIE: Ahhhh! He's biting me!

DD: Rat fink! Stupid rat fink!

STAR: Wait a second. Why is it fine by you if I fire you?

RYAN: I was going to quit anyway.

FRANKIE: I can't breathe!

STAR: Why do you want to quit?

RYAN: I hate this job.

STAR: I knew it! I knew you hated me. *(in response to FRANKIE pulling)* Ow!!

RYAN: Get off me!

STAR: Let go of me!

FRANKIE: Stop biting me!

DD: Stupid rat fink!

There is a moment of silence and heavy breathing.

RYAN: You're going to fake your death?

STAR: Don't listen to him. He doesn't know what he's talking about. He's a lunatic.

RYAN: Maniac.

STAR: Same diff.

DD: Doesn't matter what he is. When I get out of this I'm gonna kill him.

RYAN: Why would he say you're going to fake your death. That's bizarre. Why would you say that?

STAR: Frankie!

FRANKIE: I can't breathe.

RYAN: Isn't there some whacked out theory that Princess Di faked her death. And JFK Jr.

DD: Don't be ridiculous.

STAR: Something like that could never work. Ow! Stop pulling my hair!

FRANKIE: Let go! DD won't have to kill me if I can't breathe!

DD: Don't get your hopes up.

FRANKIE: Ow! Stop biting me!

RYAN: Call the police!

STAR: No!

There is another moment of heavy breathing.

FRANKIE: We seem to be at an impasse. Is anyone going to let go?

RYAN: No.

STAR: Uh uh.

DD: Nope.

FRANKIE: We could be here forever.

RYAN: We can't do that. There's a schedule.

FRANKIE: Ok. We could all let go at the same time. That way we could talk like civilized people.

DD: Civilized? Huh?

FRANKIE: Katie?

STAR: DD.

DD: Star.

STAR: Swear you'll be good. Swear.

DD: Whatever you say boss.

FRANKIE: Ok. Why don't we let go on the count of three. Is that all right?
(*everyone agrees*) Ready? One. Two Three. Go. (*no one lets go*) Let's try that again. One. Two Three. Go. (*no one lets go*) I think we have a problem here.

RYAN: We can't stay like this.

STAR: Then let go.

RYAN: You let go first.

STAR: You let go.

FRANKIE: Let's try again. One. Two. Three. Go. (*no one lets go*) Go. Go.

DD: This aint good.

STAR: I guess we'll be here for a while.

RYAN: We can't stay here. You have a hair cut. We're going to New York.

STAR: What do you care? You're going to quit anyway.

RYAN: I wasn't going to do it today.

FRANKIE: Did you have any conversations in your head to cover this?

STAR: Bite him harder DD.

FRANKIE: Ow!!!

STAR: If this were a movie, someone would come through the door and help us out.

DD: This aint a movie.

STAR: I know that. If it were though, we wouldn't be in this mess. Frankie would have said "Fake your death, what a great idea!"

RYAN: You are going to fake your death?

STAR: Of course not.

DD: So. What do we do now?

*As the four freeze in their tableaux, the lights change.
FRANKIE turns towards the audience.*

FRANKIE: We're going to be here for a while. Not the best way to end a story but your times up. You've had your night. Laughed a bit. I can see your starting to think about your children, your husbands, your wives, your parents, your lovers. Don't you think it's time you got back to them?

FRANKIE goes back into his position. RYAN turns to the audience.

RYAN: One of two things is going to happen to me. Either I'll end up in the black

hole or I'm going to move to Maine and open a bed and breakfast. Too bad you'll never find out which.

RYAN goes back into her position. DD turns to the audience.

DD: I want to go back to the beginning. I want to go back to the moment right before I proposed this plan and then I want to keep my mouth shut. I'm going back to heavy metal bands. They play, they eat, they sleep, they sleep around, they play again. They don't have conversations in their heads. I can recite Shakespeare in peace.

DD goes back into his position. STAR turns to the audience.

STAR: If I had my way the play would have ended with the sound of a car crash. And the last scene would be a beach. Frankie and me staring into a sunset sipping on coconuts. Happy. Alone. Not caring whether it's a cop out or whatever else you're going to think. Oh! And DD and Ryan would have had a torrid love affair maybe she even got pregnant and he'd propose and they'd live happily ever after. That's all I ever wanted.

STAR goes back to her position. The lights return to normal. No one has moved.

FRANKIE: If this were a movie this whole mess would be instantly solved. Someone's going to come through that door, right now. Now. Now. Now. And.....now!

There is a moment while everyone waits expectantly. Nothing happens.

DD: Oh shit. I have to pee.

Black out.

THE END

