

The ABCs of SELLING

A DRAMA IN TWO ACTS

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

ELUSIVE

Male in his mid twenties

He is handsome, but not overly. Nor are his looks immediate. It is more something that you notice over time. His look is honest, real and genuine. It is comforting in its consistency.

FINISHER

Female in her early thirties

She is natural, unwashed beauty. An earth mother of such awesome force as if standing before Niagara Falls. Yet, she has accessibility in attitude and demeanor.

BILLY

Bartender

A mid-forties gruff, but lovable type of the trusty Irish-American sort.

STUD

Late twenties male in a suit

He has the GAP ad look. Perfect black hair, slicked back to his head, a thin yet muscular frame and a gleaming white smile. Most guys hate him before they have even met him. He can talk to any woman; his looks are his password.

BOYS 1 & 2

Two other males in suits

They are essentially the same in their look and averageness. Boys 2 is younger version of Boys 1.

GOV’NOR

Man in his seventies

ACT 1

PLACE

McManus Pub

TIME

A night just a few years ago at 9:00 p.m.

ACT 2

PLACE

Elusive's Apartment

TIME

Later that night

ACT I, SCENE 1

(Before the lights come up, the bar is full of noise. There is music on the jukebox and the loud incoherent din of a bar. FINISHER, STUD and The BOYS are talking at the bar. ELUSIVE sits at the table, staring at an imaginary t.v. The group is animated, laughing and shouting. ELUSIVE sits and watches the t.v. as if he doesn't notice the group at all. BILLY delivers beers to the group. Everything goes silent and the lights fade down and a spotlight is trained on ELUSIVE. Whenever ELUSIVE speaks to the audience, all other actors are silent, but moving)

ELUSIVE

(to the audience)

I always called her Finisher. That's what she was always doing. It helps that she worked in a Finishing plant, painting these little wooden balls that became bases on tables and lamp stands. But I think I would have called her that anyway. It just seemed so fitting. That's the way names are when they describe someone perfectly....She had paint on her everywhere. It was on her clothes, it was in her hair. It was all over her hands and under her fingernails. She reminded me of one of those flywheel paintings that kids make in elementary school, with those futuristic shapes and stripes just poured over the page. Spilled and splattered, but somehow—cool. Wicked. Different from serious paintings. Distinct. Impudent....Distinct and impudent. That was Finisher.

(The lights come up showing the bar scene. Everyone is animated, but still in silence. FINISHER is talking to STUD and the Boys)

ELUSIVE

I met her a year ago at McManus while I was watching the Knicks. But I noticed her long before we spoke. It wasn't hard. She was the prettiest thing in the place. That isn't saying much here but—look at her.—I was out of my league.

(pause, he looks around the place)

McManus is a great place for nights like that. An old wooden bar with soft florescent lights. A painted tin ceiling browned by years of smoke and bull. It's best described as a

ELUSIVE - con't

place for men. Beers and ball games, backgammon and black tales. Boys being boys, men being children. And she was there playing with them. They didn't know it yet. *I* didn't even know it yet. But we were her playthings.

(a loud burst of laughter come from the Boys, Stud, and Finisher. ELUSIVE smiles when reminded)

ELUSIVE

Boys being boys and men being children. They did the usual guy mating rituals. Sang songs, beat imaginary drums. They told dirty jokes and laughed at double entendres. Eventually someone would suggest shots. Someone always did.

BOYS 1 & 2

(they sing loudly, arms moving wildly with the drum beats)

A complete unknown! Dum dum dum dum dum. Like a Rolling Stone!

STUD

Wait wait!

(waves for silence, waits till he gets it)

How, how can you tell when a women's had an orgasm?

BOYS 1

(laughing wildly)

Woah.

BOYS 2

Yeah, woah.

BOYS 1 & 2

How?! How?! How?! How?!

STUD

(again, waving for silence)

Who cares! What a stupid question!

(BOYS and STUD punch and laugh themselves silly)

BOYS 1 & 2

Yeah, wooo!

STUD

I love that joke! I always love that fucking joke!

ELUSIVE

She smiled in response. It was some smile. Like a lioness in one of those nature films eyeing a lame Zebra on the Serengeti Plains. Coiled and stalking. Calculating. The kill—inevitable.

BOYS 1

TEQUILA!

BOYS 2

Yeah, TEQUILA!

(ELUSIVE reacts mockingly as BOYS 1 & 2 do the Pee Wee Herman dance and sing the Tequila song)

STUD

You up for a little tequila.

FINISHER

I'm up for anything.

STUD

Okay. *Okay!*

BOYS 1

Oh yeah!

BOYS 2

Yes sir!

STUD

Billy?!

BOYS 1 & 2

BILLY! BILLY! BILLY! BILLY!

STUD

Billy my good man, four tequila shots! Pronto!

BOYS 1 & 2

Dum dum dum dum dum Like a Rolling Stone!

ELUSIVE

It is the inalienable right of men make asses of themselves in front of women. *Sure* it's pathetic. And degrading. But when you think about how rare a thing like this is. Something so absolute and assured in a world so random.—I can't understand why don't women appreciate this?

STUD

(he lifts FINISHER on the bar)

Why don't we put you up here?

BOYS 1

Woah.

BOYS 2

Uh oh.

FINISHER

Should I dance for you?

BOYS 1

Oh yeah!

BOYS 2

All right!

FINISHER

(kicking up her legs)

A little strip tease.

BOYS 1

Oh yeah baby!

BOYS 2

Oh yeah!

BOYS 1

Take it off!

FINISHER

(slyly with a look to STUD)

Not yet boys. Maybe later.

BOYS 1 & 2

Wooooaahhh!

(Billy returns with four fingers in four shot glasses)

STUD

Here we go! Salt and lemon?

BILLY

No thank you, I've already eaten.

(STUD puts a twenty on the bar and waves Billy away)

BILLY

A two dollar tip. Gee, thanks.

BILLY - cont'd

(loud to offstage as he walks off)

Call Gates at Microsoft Mother. Tell him we're taking over!

STUD

(to FINISHER)

Ready?

BOYS 1

I am!

BOYS 2

Me, too!

(they throw theirs back as STUD and FINISHER watch. Sounds consistent with the pain of Tequila Shots)

FINISHER

Come here.

(she grabs STUD, licks his neck, pours salt on it, then licks the salt off his neck showing him her tongue. This occurs to the general howling of the Boys as they punch each other. STUD and FINISHER do their shots, suck on the lemon provided, and then stare with desire at each other)

BOYS 1

Woah, yeah. High fives, baby.

BOYS 2

Yeah, high fives.

(They slap high fives then FINISHER lets out a squeal the whole bar including ELUSIVE turns around to)

FINISHER

(loud, then softer realizing the scene she has made)

Sorry....sorry.

ELUSIVE

A pro amusing herself with amateurs—I almost felt sorry for them.

BOYS 1

Darts!

BOYS 2

Let's throw some fucking darts.

ELUSIVE

Scratch that.

STUD

(to FINISHER:)

Wanna come play some darts with us?

FINISHER

No Sugar, you go ahead. I'm gonna stay here awhile.

STUD

Are you going to be all right?

FINISHER

Without you, you mean?—I'll survive somehow.

STUD

Yeah?—All right.

(announcing to BOYS)

Let's throw 'em!

(STUD rises with a wink to FINISHER and leads the gang off. As they leave we hear the following)

BOYS 2

I'm up first.

BOYS 1

I am.

BOYS 2

No I am!

STUD

(pointing with authority at BOYS 1)

He and I am first.

BOYS 2

But you guys always go first.

ELUSIVE

(pause)

Like I said: Finishing—it's what she was always doing.

(ELUSIVE waves for another beer and moves to the bar as BILLY returns with it)

BILLY

Two.

ELUSIVE

(reaching into his wallet, handing him three singles)

Three.

BILLY

Thanks.

(BILLY looks at ELUSIVE as he moves back to his seat, then at FINISHER, then smiles shaking his head)

BILLY

(to FINISHER, about the shot glasses)

These done?

FINISHER

Very.

BILLY

(he picks up the shot glasses in one hand and begins off)

Look Mother, Psychic friends money!

(They sit for awhile in silence watching the t.v. together. ELUSIVE tries to ignore FINISHER. It is obvious. She sees it. She knows it. Then after a moment, he shakes his head about something on the t.v.)

FINISHER

Oakley. I love that mean bastard. He is New York. Always thinking. Always trying to do too much.

(no response from ELUSIVE)

You know it's going to be close. It's never easy with them. Starks becomes a loose cannon from behind the arc. And Patrick, god love him, but he can't hit from the line down the stretch.

ELUSIVE

Third best record in the league. Must be doing something right.

FINISHER

Nah, the Knicks just have a will to win and the other team knows it. Eventually, the other team gives in to their will. The irresistible force always conquers the immovable object....Anyway, it's only the first half.

ELUSIVE

My father always told me not to trust women. He said they make lousy left fielders. Me, I always think when a woman knows sports, she's compensating for a lack of paternal attention growing up.

(he looks directly at her for the first time)

But what do I know?

FINISHER

Right....Yeah well anyway, they don't have much talent.

ELUSIVE

Not like your boys back there. They could be contenders.

FINISHER

Ach, boys will be boys.

ELUSIVE

Especially around women.

FINISHER

Apparently not all men.

ELUSIVE

Maybe then you should be in there *throwin' em*.

FINISHER

I ain't the *throwin'* kind.

ELUSIVE

Are you really the Suit kind?

FINISHER

They're brokers on the street. I needed some advice.

ELUSIVE

We're all brokers on the street. Every schmo's pedaling something.

FINISHER

Some of us don't need to sell so hard.

ELUSIVE

It must be nice to occupy to that station.

FINISHER

(she turns on her stool to face ELUSIVE)

You're not making this easy.

ELUSIVE

Am I suppose to?

FINISHER

Yes!

ELUSIVE

Sorry. I prefer to make a more difficult target.

FINISHER

But that's not the way I like the game played.

ELUSIVE

What's an immovable object to do?

FINISHER

Ah ha ha, you were listening.

ELUSIVE

There were no songs playing.

FINISHER

Mmmn.

ELUSIVE

And the secret to true immovability?

FINISHER

What's that?

ELUSIVE

(pause)

Frequent movement.

FINISHER

(nodding, pleased)

I've been waiting for you to arrive.

ELUSIVE

How long?

FINISHER

All my life.

ELUSIVE

No. Too clichéd. You can do better than that.

FINISHER

Yeah, a little rusty.

ELUSIVE

Metal needs moisture for rust, my dear. You don't look wet.

FINISHER

Hmm well, the current's picking up. Got a feeling it's gonna wash all the rust away.

ELUSIVE

Maybe I should get a lifeboat.

FINISHER

No Ishmael, I think you're a survivor.

ELUSIVE

Feel like Jonah's a more apt analogy.

FINISHER

A leviathan is the thought I bring to mind?

ELUSIVE

No ma'am. Not to my mind.

FINISHER

Good.

(she turns for her beer on the bar)

Either case, you're a survivor all the same.

ELUSIVE

But a tough lesson to learn.

FINISHER

I don't get paid to teach.

ELUSIVE

(hostile)

And I'm not buying goods.

FINISHER

(pause)

Fair enough....What *do* you get paid for?

ELUSIVE

Let's just say I analyze things.

FINISHER

I think I could guess that much.

ELUSIVE

Then let's just say that's all I'm comfortable with right now.

FINISHER

Scared?

ELUSIVE

You're *goddamn* right I am!

FINISHER

Smart boy.

ELUSIVE

And on my guard.

FINISHER

I'll never lay a glove on you.

ELUSIVE

Not your glove I'm worried about.

FINISHER

(PAUSE)

Cheers, mate.

(She lifts out her glass and ELUSIVE rises to meet it)

ELUSIVE

Where's the rowdy Party gal gone?

FINISHER

Bored with this one?

ELUSIVE

Curious.

FINISHER

Just changing my position.

ELUSIVE

Uncomfortable?

FINISHER

Adjusting.

ELUSIVE

Yes, I'm sure. Good with the gun, good with the knife.

FINISHER

How's that?

ELUSIVE

You know what they say about the perfect Hitman?

FINISHER

No. What *do* they say about the perfect Hitman?

ELUSIVE

He isn't one.

FINISHER

He isn't what?

ELUSIVE

A man.

(they stare penetratingly at each other)

FINISHER

You flatter me.

ELUSIVE

I merely acknowledge what you are.

FINISHER

A Hitman?

ELUSIVE

A competitor.

FINISHER

You think this is a competition?

ELUSIVE

No....I think *you* think it is.

(noticing her hands)

Tragic Maybelline accident?

FINISHER

Oh, thanks. Men never notice how we women accessorize. I work in a Finishing plant on the East side.

ELUSIVE

Remunerative.

FINISHER

Lately we've been working on these wooden bases for tables and lamp stands. Wait. I think I....See!

(she reaches into her pants pocket and pulls out two wooden balls about an inch in diameter).

ELUSIVE

(chuckling)

Two?

FINISHER

Yes. What?

ELUSIVE

I don't know, I uh—there's must be *some* Freudian joke here.

FINISHER

(the balls in one hand, she starts massaging them)

Jealous?

ELUSIVE

Hardly.

FINISHER

Disappointed?

(ELUSIVE just stares as his response. She keeps rubbing. Billy enters, wipes down the bar with a rag)

FINISHER

There's something about working with my hands. I don't know. It's the sensitivity, the response I get.

ELUSIVE

Tactile.

FINISHER

Yeah. It's just that—

ELUSIVE

Would you *stop* that?!

FINISHER

What?

(she holds them, squeezing them noticeably hard)

ELUSIVE

Don't over do it.

(she nods and puts them back in her pants, theatrically)

ELUSIVE

You were saying....

FINISHER

What?

(GOV'NOR begin to walk across the stage. His face has the redness of a habitual drinker. He is dressed in a old tattered three piece suit, brown from years or dirt, we're not sure. His steps are tiny, more shuffling than steps as his body jerks forward straining for each movement. His hands, slightly out in front of him, are there perhaps to catch him if he falls, but seem more poised for the grasping of a highball than for protection. It takes a good while for him to even to reach ELUSIVE and FINISHER)

BILLY

(overlapping)

Hey, Gov'nor.

ELUSIVE

Something about sensitivity?

GOV'NOR

(as he looks at ELUSIVE and FINISHER)

Billy?

FINISHER

Yeah. That earthy feel. Something natural, organic. Not plastic like a keyboard or a telephone, but permanent, alive.

(By now GOV'NOR has reached them. He stops to look at them, seemingly confused by their presence. They turn to him and everyone stares quietly for a moment)

FINISHER

Hello.

GOV'NOR

Billy?

BILLY

(indicating offstage)

Your stool's over here tonight, Gov'nor.

GOV'NOR

Billy!?

BILLY

Gov'nor, I put it over here tonight!—Gov'nor!

GOV'NOR

All right!

(GOV'NOR turns and begins to walk back, stops suddenly and quickly looks back at FINISHER as if remembering something. Then shaking his head, begins walking offstage, mumbling, mostly unintelligible as he walks out)

GOV'NOR

Been sitting in the same damn seat for seventeen years. The hell do they think they are?

(as GOV'NOR enters the back room, we hear the BOYS cheer and scream, "Gov'nor, Hey Gov'nor!")

ELUSIVE

An admirer.

FINISHER

How 'bout that? What's your name Cassius?

ELUSIVE

What do you want it to be?

FINISHER

No really?

(ELUSIVE nods as if to say he's serious)

Okay. Well, let's see. Something old. Something mysterious. A biblical name.

ELUSIVE

Ezekial?

FINISHER

Too common.

ELUSIVE

Joshua.

FINISHER

Too nineties. Something more—prophetic.

ELUSIVE

Elijah?

FINISHER

(pause)

Elusive, aren't we? That's it. That's what I'll call you.

(she picks up a swizzle stick, touches him on the shoulders)

I dub thee, Elusive, The Immovable Object. Patron Saint of the Knickerbockers. And I, I am....

ELUSIVE

You are Finisher.

FINISHER

Finisher? I'm not sure how you mean that?

ELUSIVE

Good.

FINISHER

Tell me.

ELUSIVE

No.

FINISHER

All right....Finisher. I like that. So let it be written....

ELUSIVE

So let it be done.

(their mugs meet)

FINISHER

(out of nowhere, towards the television)

Yes! There it is!

(ELUSIVE quickly turns to the television)

ELUSIVE

(with appreciation)

Oakley.

FINISHER

I love that mean bastard. No talent. All heart.

ELUSIVE

Charles Oakley, or you?

FINISHER

(pause)

You want to shoot some stick?

ELUSIVE

Some stick?

FINISHER

Pool.

ELUSIVE

Yeah, I know what stick is.

FINISHER

What?

ELUSIVE

What about the game?

FINISHER

Already told you how it's going to end.

ELUSIVE

Oh that's right....We betting?

FINISHER

Absolutely.

ELUSIVE

On what?

FINISHER

(letting it hang, she stands and looks around)

I'll get the table. You get another round.

ELUSIVE

Done.

(FINISHER leaves and ELUSIVE watches her as she goes)

Two more, Billy!

(ELUSIVE goes into his wallet to pay and is drawn to a picture there. BILLY returns with the beers and waits momentarily as ELUSIVE is lost in revelry)

BILLY

Your girl?

ELUSIVE

(pause)

My sister?

BILLY

(takes a look)

How sweet. Sixteen?

ELUSIVE

(pause)

She would've been in May.

BILLY

(awkward pause)

Four.

(ELUSIVE hands him a five)

Thanks.—You're a Knick fan, right?

ELUSIVE

When I can catch the games.

BILLY

Me too. Been tough all these years with Chicago and Jordan?

ELUSIVE

Yes it has.

BILLY

You know sometimes when they're playing Chicago, and it's late in the fourth quarter and it's close—I'll turn off the t.v. in here.

ELUSIVE

Why's that?

BILLY

(pause, meaningfully)

Because I've seen that movie before. Too many times.—And I don't like the way it ends.

ELUSIVE

(pause, apprehensive)

No worry then. They're not playing Jordan tonight.

BILLY

No—*they* aren't.

(ELUSIVE nods, grasping his meaning, then reaches into his wallet and throws another buck on the bar)

BILLY

Much obliged.

(ELUSIVE walks off. BILLY wipes down the bar. Then as he's going off, he lifts the tip up high)

BILLY

Get the kidney ready Mother. Another two minutes of dialysis.

Fade to Black

ACT I, SCENE 2

(ELUSIVE and FINISHER come in from offstage, jocular and playful, and move to their seats at the bar)

FINISHER

Not bad.

ELUSIVE

I played a bit in college.

FINISHER

You could have warned me.

ELUSIVE

You didn't ask.

FINISHER

I think I was hustled.

ELUSIVE

Nah, you're the better player. I just got lucky tonight.

FINISHER

(pause, with meaning)

Don't worry, I pay my bets.

ELUSIVE

(pause)

I'm not worried in the least.

(they settle on their stools and FINISHER surveys the bar)

FINISHER

My family owned a tavern like this when I grew up. It was the downstairs of our two floor townhouse. Smaller, but about this shape. Like an alcove studio, with a pool table

FINISHER - cont'd

around the right in the alcove and tables up front.—Just outside of Franklin, Pennsylvania. Dingman's Ferry?

ELUSIVE

I've never heard of it.

FINISHER

(pause, sadly)

No one ever has.—It's just across the Gap, due east. My brothers and I used to work there after school and on weekends.

ELUSIVE

Sounds like fun.

FINISHER

Yeah it was.—The special thing was, we only had twelve customers.

ELUSIVE

Not a thriving concern, I gather.

FINISHER

We owned that place over thirty years and in all that time, that's all there ever was.—I can name them. The Kirks, Mr. and Elizabeth his wife, the boys Sigurd and Matthew. Mr. & Mrs. Tappen. Old Sally Hampton and her aunt Nell. We never knew Nell's last name. She just went by Aunt Nell. Tom Stampel and Mr. Perlman—

(her voice lowers for emphasis of some sacred secret)

Hank. Mr. Koob, the butcher next door. We traded him meats and poultry for his bar tab and we always got the better of that deal. I think he was sweet on my mom. Who else?

(almost silently to herself)

Mr. Kirk, Elizabeth, the boys, Sally, Aunt Nell, Tom and Mr. Perlman, Mr. Koob....

ELUSIVE

It really doesn't mat—

FINISHER

Oh! How could I forget? Lisa Brittner. The town tramp.

ELUSIVE

Every town has one.

FINISHER

Tattoo on her left shoulder. Two interlocking cherubs straddling a big red heart. A *loose* woman. Or our version of it anyway.

ELUSIVE

But very popular, I'm sure.

FINISHER

In all those years, no one else ever entered. Some days just one or two. Other days, Saturday night, all twelve.—My whole life, they're all I remember. They were there for the Apollo mission. They were there when Nixon resigned and Reagan was shot. They were there when Franco caught the Immaculate Reception.

(ELUSIVE reacts demonstrably)

What?

ELUSIVE

(pause)

I prefer fall weddings.

FINISHER

(smiling warmly at the inference)

It's incredible how full a life you can live off just twelve people. It makes you wonder how really little you need in this world.

ELUSIVE

Quite a jury.

FINISHER

My father died when I was nine. The bar was originally his.

ELUSIVE

I'm sorry.

FINISHER

Don't sweat it. It was a long time ago.—After that, my mother ran the place with no other help than us kids. Not that she needed any. Chin up, chest out, hands on her hips. Like Barbara Stanwyck in Big Valley. Lifting kegs, pouring ice. Beautiful, majestic—strong. When one of them became a little too rowdy, you know, had had their fill, my mother would tell them, "It's time." That's all she'd say.

(faint sound of a distant bar, clinking bottles, chattering, adds a dream-like quality to FINISHER's tale)

FINISHER

I remember the time when Mr. Perlman, *Hank*, lost his mother. He drank for three straight days. And I don't mean just at night. He drank morning, noon, and night.

ELUSIVE

My hero.

FINISHER

On the third night, around eight o'clock, just after my mother had served him dinner there, *again*, she cleared away his plates, wiped down the bar, and said "Hank—it's time."...He looked up so slow. Up to that point, he hadn't cried. He hadn't done anything except sit there and drink.—He looked up at my mother and I could see them in his eyes.—Then my mother did the most amazing thing. He had his hands wrapped around a whiskey glass, real tight like—and just ever so slightly, she touched him.

(she touches ELUSIVE's hand)

And then she whispered again—"Hank."

ELUSIVE

(pause)

And?

FINISHER

And he shot up like he was shot. I mean like *bang!* He's standing. And all I remember is his face. It was bright red and he had this huge vein bulging down the side of his forehead.

(she touches the side of ELUSIVE face. A brief pause follows as they stare at each other)

FINISHER

I thought he was going to kill her. Everyone did. I wanted to run, but I couldn't. I was just stood there frozen, watching them stare at each other....Then he cleared his throat, nodded once, and went without another word.

(pauses as the bar noise stops)

We didn't see him for two weeks after that. Not once. Maybe he was sore, I don't know. When he came back, nobody mentioned it....*That* is strength....*That* is my mother.

ELUSIVE

She sounds wonderful.

FINISHER

Yeah. She is....Another round Bill?—Billy?!

BILLY

Yeah, yeah.

ELUSIVE

That explains certain things. You growing up in a bar?

FINISHER

I guess that's why I always feel comfortable in bars like this. Pubs, dives, holes in the wall. The lamest, loneliest places on Earth. It's the drunks and the losers. They make me feel at home. They're so—

ELUSIVE

Pathetic.

FINISHER

(nodding in agreement)

Sad—exquisitely pathetic.

ELUSIVE

Present company included?

FINISHER

Present company especially.

ELUSIVE

Danke shoun, Frauleine.

FINISHER

Don't mention it.

(BILLY arrives carrying two mugs of beer)

GOV'NOR

(from offstage)

Hey Billy!

BILLY

(to offstage)

One second, Gov'nor!—Four.

FINISHER

Take it out of this.

ELUSIVE

No, let me.

FINISHER

That's okay, Elusive.

(she touches his arm to stop him)

GOV'NOR

HEY BILLY!

BILLY

One second, Gov'nor!

ELUSIVE

All right.

(they stare at each other evocatively as BILLY swipes the money off the bar, then as he walks off stage)

BILLY

Gov'nor! Don't be screaming at me when I'm talking to other customers!

GOV'NOR

(offstage)

Ah, blow it out your ass!

BILLY

(offstage)

Cram it, you old fuck!

ELUSIVE

(PAUSE)

I'll get the next one.

FINISHER

Trying to get me drunk?

ELUSIVE

Absolutely.

FINISHER

Then what?

ELUSIVE

Then I'll take advantage of you, of course.

FINISHER

Cool.

(BOYS 1 & 2 enter smoking cigars. It is clear from their coughing, they are beginners. They come on so loud and ridiculous, FINISHER and ELUSIVE have to watch)

BOYS 1

(choking, meaning the cigar)

Great.

BOYS 2

(choking throughout)

Yeah. Great.

BOYS 1

I'm really enjoying this.

BOYS 2

(barely able to speak)

This is the best.

BOYS 1

Yeah. You're buying this round.

BOYS 2

(pause, catching his breath)

I thought you were.

BOYS 1

No, you are.

BOYS 2

I am? I thought I bought the last one.

BOYS 1

You thought wrong.

BOYS 2

I did?

BOYS 1

Yes.

BOYS 2

(pause)

Okay.

STUD

(coming in, smoking a cigar appropriately, to Boys 2)

Buy me a beer.

(he looks over at FINISHER and ELUSIVE)

Hey?

FINISHER

Hey!

(she gets up to separate them from ELUSIVE. FINISHER and STUD talk privately as ELUSIVE speaks)

ELUSIVE

They moved off slightly as if I wasn't there any longer. As if his presence alone could reclaim her.

(he looks at them)

Have to admit, they did look damn good together.—Like a *fucking* Gap ad.

STUD

Miss me?

FINISHER

How could I not.

STUD

What's up with uh—you're not....

FINISHER

Noooo. Just being neighborly. You understand.

STUD

Yeah, sure. I understand.

FINISHER

Of course you do.

*(BILLY brings three new beers to the BOYS at the bar as
STUD moves in close to FINISHER with a seductive lean)*

STUD

Okay. But I'll be back for you later.

(to ELUSIVE)

How's it going *Champ?*

ELUSIVE

Pretty good *Sport.*

STUD

Yeah?

ELUSIVE

Yeah.

STUD

(pause, nodding haughtily)

Yeah, all right.

STUD - cont'd
(turning to the Boys 2)

You got my beer.

BOYS 1

Right here.

STUD

Good. Who's up?

BOYS 2
(as they all start walking off)

Me and you.

BOYS 1

I'm up this game.

BOYS 2

No you're not!

BOYS 1

Yes I am.

BOYS 2

No you're not!

STUD
(pointing to BOYS 1)

He and I am up.

BOYS 2

But you played last game!

STUD and BOYS 1

Shut up!

(Both slap BOYS 2 on the back of the head as ELUSIVE and FINISHER watch them leave and settle apart)

ELUSIVE

Don't let me keep you from anything?

FINISHER

I won't.

ELUSIVE

I didn't think so.

FINISHER

Be nice.

ELUSIVE

What? You make a lovely couple. For Christmas, you can give the gift of syllables.

FINISHER

Cute. Very cute.

ELUSIVE

When you get married, you can exchange wedding *vowels*. When you—

FINISHER

Don't over do it....A little jealous, I think.

ELUSIVE

Ah, no. Not quite.

FINISHER

I don't know—I think maybe.

ELUSIVE

Knicks down by eight, midway through the third.

(ELUSIVE indicates towards the t.v. FINISHER glances briefly in that direction, then back to him, confidently)

FINISHER

Sometimes I can sit here for hours. And say nothing. Nothing to nobody. Watch ball games, movies, cartoons, whatever. Think or think nothing at all. I think I prefer that better. Sitting here, drinking, thoughtless without destination. It's very illuminating. You should try it sometime.

ELUSIVE

What makes you think I don't.

FINISHER

(her condescending smile answers)

The people in here. And the heres everywhere. They're lost or trying to get lost. Or maybe they want to lose, but they can't. That's the trouble today. Winning, it's attached to too many people. Like a smell. Or a stench. Clothes can't hide it. Showering can't wash it away. When you have it, you can't get rid of it. But now it's hip to lose. It's cool to be out. This James Dean, Kerouac bullshit! They think it's romantic and, and I guess it is. But they're not real. They all have their cause. *They* are their cause. These black T-Shirt, Euro-trash types.

(ELUSIVE touches his black T-Shirt and smiles)

My point exactly. But it's the ones who don't look right at it. The ones who can't pull it off. They're the real deal. They truly are—exquisite. Navy blue sweaters, a baseball hat, a little beer belly paunch. They don't look right in "*cool*" places because they look *too* normal. Too right you don't even notice them. They don't play at the beautiful loser. It's not an act for them. It's not being them that makes *them* more "*them*" than anything else.—You following me? What I'm saying?

ELUSIVE

I think you need to get over yourself.

FINISHER

HA!....No you don't.

ELUSIVE

Yeah, so what?

(GOV’NOR begins inching his way by)

FINISHER

That's the best you can come back with? “Yeah, so what?”

ELUSIVE

How's *that* for pathetic?

FINISHER

Pretty fucking exquisite.

(GOV’NOR reaches FINISHER & ELUSIVE, stops and stares at them again)

FINISHER

He’s back again?

ELUSIVE

You must be too irresistible.

FINISHER

(to GOV’NOR)

Are we in your spot?

(GOV’NOR mumbles something incoherently, then takes FINISHER's hand and kisses it)

FINISHER

Why, thank you.

(He grabs ELUSIVE’s hand and shakes it as not to offend)

ELUSIVE

Pleasure to meet you.

GOV'NOR

Ah, who cares?

(waving off ELUSIVE, he smiles at FINISHER as if they are sharing a private joke at ELUSIVE's expense)

GOV'NOR

She's beautiful.

ELUSIVE

Yes she is.

GOV'NOR

What the hell do you know?

ELUSIVE

Oooh-kay.

(GOV'NOR takes her hand and begins with a firm voice)

GOV'NOR:

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day
Thou, though I....we, though....I....ah....

(GOV'NOR shakes his head, angry at his forgetting)

FINISHER

Thank you. That was great.

ELUSIVE

Indeed.

GOV'NOR

I can't—I can't remember how it ends.

FINISHER

That's all right.

GOV'NOR

No it's not! It's not at all!....You two married?

FINISHER

No.

ELUSIVE

Oh, no!

(ELUSIVE shrugs to FINISHER as if to say "sorry")

GOV'NOR

You should marry her.

ELUSIVE

I just met her.

GOV'NOR

You just met. Then what the hell am I talking to you for? Get out of my way.

(he moves in between ELUSIVE and FINISHER. They look at each other around him, confused)

ELUSIVE

Listen, we were just—

GOV'NOR

I met my wife in this bar in 1946, and we was married for 46 years. Ain't that funny, the two 46s?...I had just come back from the war in Italy and the first thing I did when I got back to New York was to come to this bar with some boys from my company. There was this little lass sittin' there at the tables with this other fella.—Oh, she was beautiful....Well, after havin' one or two, or maybe one or two more than that, I went over told that fella that he was drinking with my future wife.

(he chuckles)

Oh boy, he got a little upset at that. Me speaking out that way in front of her. And he and I got into quite a row right then. Ooow weee.

(he chuckles hard then coughs to calm)

Ahhhh. Eventually the boys broke us up and we patched it up. And then me, them, and the boys, we had ourselves many more drinks together that night. I remember she just sat there and drank with us—but we never said nothing. Not a word. We just sat staring into each other's eyes like we knew. We just knew....Turns out that fella wasn't going with her. He's her cousin and he's just giving me a hard time to see if I's worth her. HA!

(he laughs loudly)

Well she's so flattered by me being willin' to fights for her that she agrees to meet me the next day. Here! In this very bar. Her parents didn't want to let her go, so she snuck out and came to meet me anyways.—She had spunk, that one....We was married two months later in the fall of 1946. And we was married for the next 46 years. Ain't that funny, how that happened? The two 46s.

FINISHER

Yes it is.

GOV'NOR

(pause)

My wife's been gone nearly ten years now....I've done a lot a things in my life. I's fought in wars and I's fought in many lines of business. They's both pretty brutal.—But when ever anyone asks me what I's most proudest of in my life, I always say the same. I always say I was Jenny Duffy's husband for forty-six years.

(pause, then to ELUSIVE)

You remember that, young fella. When you find a good women, you fights for her. You fights for her and when you get her, you never let go.

GOV’NOR - cont’d

(he sings in a deep baritone voice)

"Once you have found her, never let her go. Once you have found her"—

BILLY

(just coming into view)

Gov'nor! What am I always telling you? Don't be bothering the other customers....

Gov'nor!

GOV’NOR

What!

BILLY

Leave them kids alone and come sit down over here. Okay, Gov'nor?—Okay?!

GOV’NOR

Yeah, yeah.

BILLY

OKAY GOV’NOR!

GOV’NOR

OKAY!

(pause, to ELUSIVE and FINISHER, embarrassed)

I'm being called.

(They nod, understanding. He starts to walk in that direction, stops, slowly turns around to FINISHER and ELUSIVE and speaks clearly with great solemnity)

GOV’NOR

Jenny kissed me when we met,
 Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
 Sweets into your list, put that in!
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,

GOV'NOR - cont'd

Say that health and wealth have miss'd me,
Say I'm growing old, but add....
Jenny kiss'd me

(He waves a finger at ELUSIVE as if to say remember)

ELUSIVE

Yes sir.

GOV'NOR

(moving off stage, singing)

"Once you have found her, never let her go. Once you have found her, never let her go."

(the BOYS join in offstage. We here everyone singing the beginning to "Some Enchanted Evening" ELUSIVE and FINISHER laugh to themselves quietly)

ELUSIVE

I just came in here for a beer and suddenly everybody's lecturing me.

FINISHER

(pause)

What's a guy like you doing in a dump like this?

ELUSIVE

Oh, just slumming with the common folk, I guess.

FINISHER

Come on Elusive. What's your story?

ELUSIVE

What story?

FINISHER

Everybody in a place like this has a story.

ELUSIVE

I don't.

FINISHER

C'mon, let's have it. Lost your job, down on your luck. Broken hearted. Last girl let you down while you were still hard.

ELUSIVE

Me?

FINISHER

Nah, you're too nice. Let me guess, this time you did the letting down. What was she? Five-six, nut brown hair? Accountant? Real estate appraiser?

ELUSIVE

Something like that.

(BILLY enters and fiddles with something under the bar slightly away from them. He is oblivious to the scene)

FINISHER

Aw, come on big fella, you can tell me. She was a good woman. Dependable. Loving. Make a good wife. But only two holes, huh? All suck, no swallow.

ELUSIVE

All girls swallow my dear Finisher.—It's just a matter of what and what time.

FINISHER

(pause, nodding)

So true, Elusive. So true....What's your sto—

ELUSIVE

Hey Billy—why do you call him Gov'nor?

BILLY

What? Is he bothering you again?

ELUSIVE

No. I'm just curious why you call him that.

BILLY

Oh, I don't know. I guess it's the way he dresses. Always wearing that same suit with the bow tie. I like to watch old movies when it's real late in here. One night we were watching, "*All The Kings Men*," with Broderick Crawford, I think.—Anyway, the main character is this guy all dressed up like the Gov'nor here. Started calling him that that night and the nickname just kind of stuck. They have a funny way of doing that sometimes when they describe someone so perfectly.—And well, he don't seem to mind. I think he's taken to it quite nicely.

ELUSIVE

Kissing hands and reciting poetry.

BILLY

(to FINISHER)

He got you, too, huh? Yeah sure, you're his type. I keep telling him not to annoy the other customers. He's always telling this tale about how he met his wife in this bar a long time ago. I don't know if it's true or not. Don't think the math quite works out.

FINISHER

Don't you believe him?

BILLY

(pause)

I believe he believes it.—But it's easy to believe a lie when it's something you want to believe. Funny, I'm always wondering whether he comes back looking to replace something he lost, or just trying to be closer to something he once had....But what do I know? Nobody takes my advice anyways. And it ain't no crime telling tall tales in here. You need another?

ELUSIVE

No, I think we're okay for now.

BILLY

(as he starts to leave)

Sorry to hear it.

ELUSIVE

Break it to Mother gently.

BILLY

(he stops, turns, smiles)

I always do.—I always do.

(BILLY walks off. FINISHER studies ELUSIVE again)

FINISHER

You can't keep your distance forever.

ELUSIVE

Why not?

FINISHER

No one gets to play for free.

ELUSIVE

No. You don't.—Pick your topic.

FINISHER

Ooooh, what are my choices?

ELUSIVE

(very fast)

Religion, family, sexual proclivities—

FINISHER

One at a time.

ELUSIVE

Sexual proclivities?!

FINISHER

Too revealing.

ELUSIVE

Religion?

FINISHER

Too obvious.

ELUSIVE

Family?

FINISHER

Family?—Yes family. That'll be fine.

ELUSIVE

Where would you like me to begin?

FINISHER

The stats.

ELUSIVE

S'cuse me?

FINISHER

The stats! All games have 'em. Siblings?

ELUSIVE

(pause, becoming grave)

I was not an only child.

FINISHER

How many?

ELUSIVE

One.

FINISHER

The baby?

ELUSIVE

I am the first sired product of my parents.—My sister was born after.

FINISHER

How very Family Affair. And the details.

ELUSIVE

Abridged or full length?

FINISHER

Does it matter?

ELUSIVE

The shorter it is, the easier it is to make up.

FINISHER

You just start. I'll give direction.

ELUSIVE

(with a nod, then hesitantly)

Not much to tell. Midwest family, midwest family values. Midwest family disenchantment. Never quite fit into any particular role. Rebellious youth, popular jock, boys room stoner. My parents divorced amicably when I was fourteen. Or least as amicably as I've ever heard of. Dinner one night a week with Dad. Visits every other weekend. S.O.S. Thanksgiving with dad's family, the Holidays with mom's.

FINISHER

Passover?

(she smiles, confident of her choice which he answers with an approving nod)

ELUSIVE

Passover was always a little tricky. It generally went to who needed it more. Mom's loneliness or dad's mother's heart ailment. "The woman's been dying of the same heart attack for twenty years."

FINISHER

I hear US Steel is coming out with a new line of hearts.

ELUSIVE

You bought the demo?

FINISHER

Ouch, Fredo!

ELUSIVE

Yeah, I wish you were that easy to hurt.

FINISHER

Continue.

ELUSIVE

Continuing. Uh, my parents went on with their lives. I went on with mine.

FINISHER

You sound disappointed?

ELUSIVE

In a way I am. No borne-out aggressions or drug abuse. No random and unaccounted for acts of violence.

FINISHER

Then why all this disenchantment?

ELUSIVE and FINISHER

(he starts, she joins in)

No random and unaccounted acts of violence.

ELUSIVE

It's true! I always imagined otherwise, you know. Next door neighbors being interviewed. "He was a quiet child. We never suspected this."...But I'm not built that way. That's what *I* love about this town. It's not the glamour or the money. That's just a scorecard telling us who the winners and losers are. And let me tell you, I've known my share of losers. They're rather common everywhere. But the losses. The blow outs! *God*, what clarity.—When I grew up we were happy. A year-end bonus and two weeks vacation at Disney World. But it was a nice happy. Comfortable. Sensible. That *ennui*. Always drop a little French. Chicks dig that.

FINISHER

Nice touch.

ELUSIVE

Thank you.

(FINISHER "roll camera" signs him to continue)

Yeah well, now I want crash and burns. Great, big Shakespearean deaths. People die so nicely in the Midwest. Calm, sane. With dignity and purpose. But there's no purpose to it. Nothing gained or comprehended. It's just an end. And everything that came before it—meaningless.

FINISHER

Not a Buddhist, I gather?

ELUSIVE

No....I can never figure out what's worse. Dying from explosions—or dying from the want of explosions....Well lately I say give me the senseless. The senseless loss, the senseless death. That fits this world. That feels right.

FINISHER

And that's what you came here for?

ELUSIVE

And that's what I came here for.

FINISHER

To see the senselessness?

ELUSIVE

Yes, ma'am. To feel that. To feel what that's like.

FINISHER

And you think this is the Land of the Lost?

ELUSIVE

And I'm a Sleestack.

FINISHER

(pause, nodding)

Have you gotten your share of it?

ELUSIVE

I've gotten a taste—but I still hunger.

FINISHER

(pause)

Don't be so eager, Elusive. Many a slap-happy Midwestern boy has been sent back to bumfuck Kansas with his—

ELUSIVE

It's Ohio actually.

FINISHER

What?—Ohio?

ELUSIVE

Cleveland to be specific.

FINISHER

(pause)

Sent back to *bumfuck* Ohio with his tail between his ass and his wallet empty.

ELUSIVE

Yes well Finisher, that'd be exactly what I was looking for, now wouldn't it?

FINISHER

(pause)

Suffering isn't so romantic. Tragedy—tragedy's everywhere. In the streets, in the homes. It's in the *bedrooms*.—Tragedy's nothing special. Survival—survival is glamorous.

ELUSIVE

You seem to know of what you speak.

(she smiles distractedly. The jukebox suddenly begins to play "Box of Rain" by The Grateful Dead. The music is low so that we can hear the following. They both turn to it at first, then back to each other)

FINISHER

Saved by the bell. "*Box of Rain*."

ELUSIVE

The Dead—gratefully.

(she smiles and they listen for a moment)

FINISHER

The juke plays a song every half hour, if no one's playing it. Like a reminder.

ELUSIVE

Good for business.

FINISHER

Yeah...I always loved this song. My father and I used to dance to it when I was little girl.
I'd stand on his feet and he'd reach down and hold me from behind.

ELUSIVE

(pause, cautious)

Maybe I can make a poor substitute this one time.

FINISHER

(pause as she studies him)

Why not.

ELUSIVE

No standing on my feet, though.

FINISHER

Sissy.

(they come together awkwardly at first, dancing slowly)

ELUSIVE

You think anybody'll notice.

FINISHER

I think everybody'll be jealous

ELUSIVE

Good.

*(they to dance as true lovers would: Cheek to cheek, as
ELUSIVE whispers the words into her ear, very romantic)*

Fade to Black

ACT 1, SCENE 3

(Lights come up as ELUSIVE is dipping FINISHER. BILLY and GOV'NOR clap and cheer. Both bow formally in acknowledgment, then move towards their seats)

FINISHER

Quite a dancer.

ELUSIVE

Took ballroom dancing in college. My one required P-E class.

(ELUSIVE retakes his seat at the table as FINISHER remains standing)

FINISHER

How cute.

ELUSIVE

Aw shucks. Actually, it's one of the few things I've always been very proud of.

FINISHER

As well you should be.

ELUSIVE

I really only took it because I thought it might get me *laid* some day.

FINISHER

A fine motivation.

ELUSIVE

A friend of mine says—

FINISHER

A friend of yours....

FINISHER - cont'd
(ELUSIVE raises his hand as if to say I swear)

Go on.

ELUSIVE

A friend of mine says 90% of the men he knows, think with the wrong head 100% of the time. Every decision they make, what they do, where they live, who their friends are.

FINISHER

And the other 10% percent?

ELUSIVE

The top 10% mind you, they think with the wrong head 50% of the time.

(STUD and the BOYS enter. They stare at the pair suspiciously. STUD waits for a moment to break in)

FINISHER

Very comforting.

ELUSIVE

Yes. I'm sure it is to you.

(FINISHER moves to the bar, waves in an attempt to get another beer. The Boys mull around in the background. STUD moves next to FINISHER at the bar. He leans up against the bar seductively)

STUD

Hey there.

FINISHER

(not particularly warm)

Hey.

ELUSIVE

(to Audience)

Here's how it ended. The good looking one saddled up real close. He was going to show *me*, the girl, everyone, who was boss here. The line, a classic. Time-tested effective. It was followed with a slight lean, a small rejoinder and then—*violá*. Easy money.

STUD

So....What's up?

(ELUSIVE gives a thumbs up to the audience. STUD leans into FINISHER, slowly)

STUD

Huh?....What'd'ya say?

ELUSIVE

Millions of years of evolution leading to that.—He didn't see it coming and it serves him right. Cause when it hit, the line came out of him just like in the movie. She set it up so perfectly. You could almost hear Brando's lisp.

FINISHER

It's not you're night, kid.

STUD

(pause)

Wha? Not my night.—Not *my* night. Puleez. You must be kidding.

(FINISHER looks at STUD resolutely, then away)

But I thought—

FINISHER

You thought wrong.

ELUSIVE

(gleeful)

This was too much for even me to ask for....But there was something more there. You could see it in his face. It was—“Not in front of the boys.”

STUD

(looking back at the Boys, a little nervous)

But I just thought you and I'd make a little—

FINISHER

No. Not likely.

(FINISHER turns from STUD as he studies her back, incredulously)

STUD

What are you some sort of tease?....You're probably lousy anyway.

FINISHER

I'm sure you think that.

STUD

I *have* a girlfriend.

FINISHER

Then go home to her.

(he stares at her a moment longer. Then turning to BOYS)

STUD

Alright boys, let's blow this joint. On to The Meet Market.

ELUSIVE

The boys didn't understand. This couldn't happen. Not to their man. Not to their champion.

(as the BOYS and STUD dress and leave the stage)

BOYS 1

Wha? Wha' happened?

BOYS 2

Yeah, wha' happened?

STUD

Phuff. Nothing. Not interested.

BOYS 1

(looking at FINISHER)

Not interested?

BOYS 2

Not interested?

STUD

Phuff, yeah.

FINISHER

(with a wave over her shoulder)

Thanks for the drinks, boys.

BOYS 1

(pause)

Wow.

BOYS 2

Yeah. Wow.

BOYS 1

You're my god, man.

BOYS 2

Mine too.

STUD

Let's roll.

(they all exit as ELUSIVE watches them go)

ELUSIVE

A quick clean kill. No more than was necessary. No less than what got the job done.—
She was something, this Finisher.

(BILLY arrives, carrying two more mugs of beer)

BILLY

These are on the house. Mother thought you might be needing them.

FINISHER

Thank you.

(BILLY wipes down the bar as ELUSIVE moves to it)

ELUSIVE

I guess you didn't—

FINISHER

The game's over.

ELUSIVE

(pause)

Well—can't say it hasn't been interest—

FINISHER

I mean The Knicks.

ELUSIVE

What?

(He turns to the t.v. She does not. He looks down, defeated. There is a long pause. BILLY starts off. They study each other as she speaks)

FINISHER

Hey Billy? You think it's possible to meet that one person you're meant for, your soul mate, in a bar?

BILLY

What? You mean like the Gov'nor here. Oh, I don't know. I always hear people complaining they can't meet anybody *good* in bars. When I ask them if they go to bars and they say, "Sure, all the time." I say I guess I see their point.

FINISHER

You're a charmer, Billy.

BILLY

You've noticed that, huh? Mother says I was dropped on my head a lot as a child. She always says it with pride.

FINISHER

How could she not?

(BILLY leaves taking the empties. ELUSIVE looks down, now angry, hurt)

ELUSIVE

You had to, didn't you?.....Just something inside.

FINISHER

You don't you know me.

ELUSIVE

I know you better than you think.

FINISHER

(with this, she pushes him slightly)

You don't even know my real name.

ELUSIVE

No, I don't.

(he pushes back)

And I don't think I want to.

(She resists and then pushes him back. Now both start pushing each other to see if they can knock the other off their stool. It is playful, but still with a hint of something else. As this is going on, we hear the following)

ELUSIVE

Hey!

FINISHER

Hey what?

ELUSIVE

Stop!

FINISHER

No.

ELUSIVE

This isn't a game.

FINISHER

Are you sure?

ELUSIVE

STOP!

(ELUSIVE grabs her hands forcibly and stops the pushing. They stare very seriously for a long moment. Then FINISHER slowly removes her hands from his grip, smiles deviously, stands and begins putting on her coat. ELUSIVE stares watching her)

FINISHER

We good Billy.

BILLY

(offstage)

Yeah.

(She nods and waves to him offstage. She begins to dress, pulling out of her coat sleeve, a scarf, a cap, and gloves. ELUSIVE notices her extensive preparation)

ELUSIVE

Preparing for the Iditirod.

FINISHER

What?

ELUSIVE

It's an Alaskan sled—never mind.

FINISHER

(She ignores the comment and finishes putting on the outer wear. When done, she look at him)

Well?

ELUSIVE

Well, what?!

FINISHER

(fierce)

Don't.

(ELUSIVE pauses, then nods and dresses hurriedly in silence. Without speaking, they barely notice each other's

*presence as they begin to move towards the door.
GOV'NOR enters just before they reach the door)*

GOV'NOR

Hey, hey. Where you going?

FINISHER

We're uh...

ELUSIVE

I'm walking her home. I'll be right back.

GOV'NOR

Good, good. That's a good boy.

(to FINISHER)

He's a good boy.

FINISHER

Yes I know.

GOV'NOR

Yes, you take her home. And then you came back and have a drink with me. Okay? You can buy and I'll tell you a story of love and romance.

ELUSIVE

Okay, sure. I'll do that.

(they start to move off and GOV'NOR grabs his arm)

GOV'NOR

Uh uh—you mind if I take that seat there. That's always been my lucky seat.

ELUSIVE

No. Go ahead. It's all yours.

GOV'NOR

Yes yes.

(They leave as the GOV'NOR makes his way over to the bar stool he likes. He sits down slowly and seems at peace with the world when he does)

GOV'NOR

Hey, one more time Billy!

(BILLY comes out carrying a bottle and two shot glasses, looking towards where ELUSIVE and FINISHER have just exited. He pours one for GOV'NOR and one for himself)

GOV'NOR

This one's on that young fella. He says he's coming back.

BILLY

This one's on Mother, Gov'nor. I don't think he's coming back....You wanna watch an old movie?

GOV'NOR

All right.

(BILLY grabs the remote, changes the channels once or twice, and then we hear the sound of the movie "Harvey" near it's end. We hear the last line, "What's that...well I rather like you too, Harvey." They watch captivated as the ending music comes up)

Fade to Black

ACT 2, SCENE 1

(ELUSIVE and FINISHER enter his apartment. The bed is center stage, coming out from the back wall. There is a t.v., a stereo entertainment center and several shelves of books. FINISHER takes off her winter wear and piles it high on a chair and walks around, checking out the scene. ELUSIVE suddenly embarrassed by the mess he has lived in for so long, begins to pick up certain things off the floor. Underwear, papers, food wrappers. He throws things into a closet, under the bed, anywhere that can help. But when he realizes nothing will, he just gives up)

FINISHER

Neat.

ELUSIVE

Sorry.

(FINISHER waves forgivingly in response)

TV?

FINISHER

Music.

(a long pause as he watches her move)

ELUSIVE

Wanna beer?

FINISHER

Yeah. Thanks.

(ELUSIVE moves offstage to get the beer. FINISHER crouches down to look at the bookshelf. As he returns, she rises and turns to him to receive the beer)

FINISHER

Kafka, Sartre and Nietzsche? Happy Boy.

ELUSIVE

Offsets the Prozac.

(FINISHER moves over to the CD collection and checks it out)

ELUSIVE

(to Audience)

When we got to my apartment there was such an odd silence. This overwhelming, complete quiet. We hadn't spoken the whole way over. There was this kind of a fearful anticipation. It just stole the voices from our throats. Finally, we spoke in some hushed tones. Tried for the same banter, but it was gone. There were some words, some pointing—but not much else.

FINISHER

Not bad.

ELUSIVE

Thanks.

(FINISHER picks a CD and hands it to him)

FINISHER

Put this on.

(he moves towards the CD player)

FINISHER

(pointing to the bathroom)

Mind if I uh...

ELUSIVE

Hm? Oh no, go ahead.—Hope you have a strong stomach?

FINISHER

I'll manage.

(FINISHER steps off stage as ELUSIVE puts on a jazz piece, down low)

ELUSIVE

(to Audience)

That awkwardness seemed to last forever. I don't know about her, but it scared the shit out of me. Maybe she knew what was coming. She had done this before. I don't like to think about it much. I'd like to feel I was different.—It's easy to believe a lie when it's something you want to believe.

(he looks around the apartment)

But it all seemed so classless. So base. I seemed base as compared with her. As compared with what I wanted to be. Here she was. Right beside me. As close as any two people could be. I could smell her. I could feel her breathing...I don't think I've ever been that alone.

(FINISHER returns from the bathroom as the music begins barely audible. ELUSIVE stands by watching FINISHER as she moves around the apartment turning off the lights. First, the bathroom, then the reading light, then the halogen by the bed. The light from the street lamps shines brightly through the bad blinds.)

FINISHER walks up to ELUSIVE, who is standing center stage holding a piece of clothing he picked up off the floor. She takes the clothing from his hands and throws it to the floor. They stand for moment staring at each other. As he leans to kiss her, she moves her face, craning her neck away. Confused, he tries again. This time she moves away, putting her hand on his chest, motioning him to stop. They stare a moment; him in confusion, her in control)

FINISHER

Sit down.

(ELUSIVE follows her command and takes a seat, deep in the bed. He is still wearing his shoes. She notices the shoes as his feet hang clumsily at the bar)

Take them off.

(He follows her command. After which, he just stares up at her like a child. They just stare at each other for a long, hard moment. FINISHER, facing ELUSIVE with her back to the audience, begins to undress. The scene is not sexual in the least. It is cold. She is not doing this with him or for him, but to him. After taking off her shirt and her pants, FINISHER stands before ELUSIVE who is staring up at her. He is lost. FINISHER reaches back and unsnaps her bra and it drops to the floor. With FINISHER standing in her underpants alone, again they stare at each other. As she begins to remove them, ELUSIVE begins to fumble for himself, hurriedly undressing. She stands naked watching as his shirt and pants come off quickly, awkwardly, down to his underwear. They stare at each other until ELUSIVE, embarrassed, drops his head downward. She motions to him and he moves over. They lie next to each other for a second and then she moves on top of him)

Fade to Black

ACT 2, SCENE 2

(Both FINISHER and ELUSIVE are sitting up against the bed board facing front. FINISHER is wearing a T-shirt and underwear and ELUSIVE his black T-shirt again. They are not touching and do not seem rather close. It is as if they are back at the bar, at the time before they first spoke. Both stare absently ahead, inexplicably cold)

ELUSIVE

You want something to drink?

FINISHER

Whatever.

ELUSIVE

What does that mean?

FINISHER

That means if you're going fine, if not....

ELUSIVE

(pause)

Think I'll pass....Are you all right?

FINISHER

I'm fine.

ELUSIVE

I mean—

FINISHER

I know what you mean. I'm fine.—You're a good lover.

(she sits up at the end of the bed)

ELUSIVE

Cold?

FINISHER

A little.

ELUSIVE

I'll close the—

FINISHER

No—it's okay. I like it.

(long pause, looking around)

I don't mean to be impolitic or anything—but this place's fucking sty.

ELUSIVE

Yes it is. Be it ever so humble....

FINISHER

There's no place like a fucking sty?

ELUSIVE

Something like that.

(FINISHER gets up, puts on her pants as ELUSIVE struggles for a subject)

ELUSIVE

Which state school did you say you went to? Nitany Lions?

FINISHER

I didn't....That wasn't were I got my education.

ELUSIVE

One of the other ones. Pennsylvania must have a bunch. Ohio does. Doesn't matter, there'll all the same. Colleges, that is. Public, private. All you learn is your drinking limits and that you're not going to die when so pass them.

FINISHER

Sounds like I didn't miss much.

ELUSIVE

What's that?

FINISHER

The joy of having my Mother spend a Chevy a year on a private college.

ELUSIVE

A *Chevy*. I was a divorced child. That's *prime* guilt. I wasn't selling out cheap. No American make was gonna cover my annual tuition.

FINISHER

Get yours while the getting's good.

FINISHER

Amen!

ELUSIVE

Damn straight!

(they both smile at themselves and FINISHER moves back to sit down on the bed)

ELUSIVE

Yeah well.—Drinking and napping is all I did.

FINISHER

I bet.

ELUSIVE

(pause, smiling at the reminiscence)

There was this one night when three friends and I went for Chinese food. Now where I went to school, if you're going for Chinese food, you're not going for the Chinese food. You're going for the Buddha bowls.

FINISHER

The what?

ELUSIVE

The Buddha bowls. Those big ceramic drinks on the last page of every Chinese food menu.

FINISHER

People order those.

ELUSIVE

We did. And this place we went to had this one drink, "The Suffering Bastard."

FINISHER

How fitting.

ELUSIVE

It served four people in this *huge* bowl shaped with the likeness of a fat Buddha on the side.

FINISHER

Like there's ever been a thin one.

ELUSIVE

Do you not want me to tell you this story?

FINISHER

What, after the great set-up so far?!

(ELUSIVE reacts)

I'm sorry. Please continue.

ELUSIVE

Are you sure?

FINISHER

Go ahead!

ELUSIVE

(pause)

It's this pink punch and it's got a flaming shot of 151 in the water spout center piece.

FINISHER

Now we're talking.

(ELUSIVE makes a face at her comment)

I'm sorry. I'll be good.

ELUSIVE

(pause)

We started drinking when the fried noodles hit the table and we didn't stop till five of those Buddha bowls were killed. One plus per man.—And I mean we were gone. Gone goodbye.—When the check comes, Marty isn't looking too good. His face's gone pale and he's sucking in air trying to hold it down.

(he imitates)

But that's not going to work. So he chucks us his wallet, no pun intended, and runs for the front door of the restaurant.

(he begins to laugh at his story)

And were hysterical. We're just about falling out of our chairs

FINISHER

Of course.

ELUSIVE

And—

FINISHER

There's more.

ELUSIVE

When we're paying the bill, Marty comes back to the table and his eyes are all red and tearing and he's got this shit-eating grin and he says it's just outside the front door.

(he laughs)

Now none of us can breathe we're laughing so hard.

FINISHER

(warming to the humor)

I can imagine.

ELUSIVE

So *I* tell them I better not see it because I'm one of those who if I see it, I'm gone too.

FINISHER

Delicate.

ELUSIVE

That was a mistake. I knew it as soon as I said it. Because Dirk and Michael were just that type and about ten feet from the front door they grab me and I'm struggling, but I'm laughing so hard I'm not putting up much of a fight. They literally carry me to it and sure enough it's right there by the door and as if on cue....

FINISHER

(begin to laugh herself)

Oh dear.

ELUSIVE

Maybe three feet at most from Marty's.

FINISHER

Hope there wasn't a welcome mat.

ELUSIVE

And—and Dirk and Marty are laughing their asses off. And I don't know if it was just the drinking or the laughing or what but me going starts a chain reaction. Right there at the

ELUSIVE - con't

door! Dirk, who *never* threw up, just starts heaving and chucking and this starts Michael doing the same.

FINISHER

No.

ELUSIVE

(pause, laughing hard)

And I'm just starting to recover but I look up and I see them and this makes me start all over again.

FINISHER

(chuckling slightly her self now)

No.

ELUSIVE

And then seeing me, Marty went again. And then Dirk and Michael and then me again, it just kept going and going, one after another. Four guys chain vomiting up the street.

FINISHER

Stop.

(they are both laughing hysterically now)

ELUSIVE

The Chinese restaurant had this, this big bay window that runs like the length of the place up that one side.

FINSIHER

Please stop—

ELUSIVE

And I can still remember the faces of the people in the booths—

FINISHER

Please—

ELUSIVE

As we go leap frog vomiting up the street!

FINISHER

(she is doubled up on the bed)

I mean it, I'm gonna pee!

ELUSIVE

The people, their mouths open, looks of horror on their faces.

FINISHER

I'm going to pee!

ELUSIVE

Everybody thinking it was food poisoning!

FINISHER

STOP!

*(a long pause as they settle down, both exhausted,
breathing heavily)*

FINISHER

Oh. Oh.

ELUSIVE

Oh god, it was funny. It was so fucking funny.

(another long pause to settle further)

It's the truth. Every last word of it.

FINISHER

Do you tell this story to every woman you sleep with?

ELUSIVE

I uh—no. I don't sleep with that many.

FINISHER

There may be a reason for this.

ELUSIVE

Yeah, I guess so....We refer to that night as "Barf-a-rama."

FINISHER

Barf-a-rama?

ELUSIVE

Yeah....And I never run into one of those guys when we don't mention it. It's just one of those moments in your life that you share—and can never be repeated.—They're worth the price of living.

FINISHER

If not the price of college.

ELUSIVE

Yeah.

(a long pause as the happy mood begins to evaporate)

FINISHER

Doesn't sound too different from what I imagine that stud in the bar and his two douche bag flunkies had.

ELUSIVE

It is.

FINISHER

You sure?

ELUSIVE

He probably went to some rich, WASPy private school in Vermont or New Hampshire that Daddy pulled strings to get him into.

FINISHER

Those Ivy League types.

ELUSIVE

(nodding)

So full of themselves, so full of shit. They can't *wait* to burst forth and tell you their pedigree. As if they have such absolute faith in their name or their college or their daddies.

FINISHER

The smarter they think they are, the easier it is for me.

ELUSIVE

Right, right! They never take the time to learn what the fuck they're talking about....And it gets me. When I'm talking to them, I'm thinking, I'm just so fucking ready to just....

FINISHER

Ready to what?

ELUSIVE

To call them on it! To whatever, you know.

FINISHER

I do. Do you?

ELUSIVE

I do!

FINISHER

(pause)

I wonder.

ELUSIVE

What's that?

FINISHER

(pause)

Would you ever do something about it Elusive?

ELUSIVE

I do. I have.

FINISHER

Have you really?

ELUSIVE

Yes!

FINISHER

(caustic)

Yeah. I'm sure.

(ELUSIVE gets up and puts on his pants)

ELUSIVE

So what's this? Is this what you do? Is this your thing?

FINISHER

Hey man, just asking a question.

ELUSIVE

(pause)

Yeah, right. Just asking a question.

FINISHER

Forget it.

(he finishes with his pants and turns to stare at her)

ELUSIVE

Do we have to go through this alone.

FINISHER

We don't have to go through this at all.

(she moves to the window)

ELUSIVE

Yes we do. You know that.—Somehow you knew that all along....But it doesn't have to be alone.

FINISHER

(pause)

Why not alone? You get use to living alone.—At first, it's a preference. But with time, with time it gets to be a proper habit.

ELUSIVE

What's the difference?

FINISHER

An element of choice....But there comes a point where a habit isn't so much a habit anymore. It's way of life. And there isn't any choice, that disappeared without a trace. Without you even noticing. Somewhere in the hours. Somewhere in the hours of the dark nights.

ELUSIVE

I'm still here.

FINISHER

Thank heaven for small favors.

ELUSIVE

(pause)

How does someone get to be someone like you?

FINISHER

I've always been like this.

ELUSIVE

No. I don't believe that. People like you are formed, sculpted. God didn't make you. He would have, he just didn't have the mold.—This is a human accomplishment.

FINISHER

And what am I like?

ELUSIVE

(pause)

You're like some kind of *Venus* Fly trap or—

FINISHER

Flattery again.

ELUSIVE

Or like some old Star Trek alien, that opens wide with all its insides showing. And you're just there, exposed, daring someone to stick their hands in there.

FINISHER

Pretty risky.

ELUSIVE

Not for you.

FINISHER

You always talk this much after sex? Most men just roll over and go to sleep.

ELUSIVE

I only talk this much before I kill someone.

FINISHER

Yeah.

ELUSIVE

(pause)

Tell me.

FINISHER

Has the hunted become the hunter?

ELUSIVE

No more games. There's only just the two of us now.

FINISHER

That's where you're wrong. There's always a game. A winner and a loser. And sometimes the difference is just the smallest measure of commitment. How far you've come. How far you're still willing to go.—And sometimes you realize you've already gone too far.

ELUSIVE

And when you reach that point, you figure it's best to just keep on going.—Don't you Finisher?

FINISHER

(pause)

And what are you like Elusive? Huh? *Proper* boy like you. How do you analyze you? Is it just like in the movies for you?

ELUSIVE

No.

FINISHER

No?

ELUSIVE

No!—

FINISHER

Because it's real easy to sit back and analyze things. Talking about getting in the game, but never really doing it.

ELUSIVE

I know—

FINISHER

You want life Sunshine, well come out here in the middle of the street. Get off the sidewalk where it's nice and comfortable and all your plans and your theories keep you safe and warm because out here they're just fucking theories—

ELUSIVE

(overlapping)

I know that—

FINISHER

And they aren't worth shit! They aren't worth the toilet paper you write them on!

ELUSIVE

I know—

FINISHER

Because out here we play for real! And it's painful! And it's mean! And people get hurt!—

ELUSIVE

I know that! I KNOW THAT! DON'T YOU THINK I FUCKING KNOW THAT?!

(he stalks around the apartment, picking a stray piece of clothing near his sister's picture which rests on the table)

ELUSIVE

My little sister didn't take to the divorce very well. When you're nine, you don't really understand those things. When you're *thirty*, you don't really understand those things.— How do you explain to a little girl, that her whole world's broke, and it isn't ever going to

ELUSIVE - con't

be the same again....In my family, you just ignore it and move on. And you cover it with gifts and parties. And you *don't* listen and you *don't* see, and you keep ignoring it, long past the point where the *problem*—She was a quiet child. We never suspected it....I'm your perfect fly Finisher. People who can't help themselves. Defenseless. Blind people you see on the subway. A handicapped child on the street. What did they do? Why did they deserve that?!....And I've become such a crier lately, it's embarrassing.

FINISHER

At movies?

ELUSIVE

Real life. Little incidents. A boy with his dog. A father with his daughter.

FINISHER

Those are blithe.

ELUSIVE

I know....But they're temporary. A short recess in the school day.

FINISHER

And then the lessons begin again.

ELUSIVE

They sure do. And you get plenty of opportunities to make up missed classes.

FINISHER

I learned to cut classes a long time ago.

ELUSIVE

(pause)

There's this friend I work with—

FINISHER

You've got a lot of friends—

ELUSIVE

This *acquaintance* I work with. Twerpy, little guy. Five foot nine, hundred and seventy pounds. Glasses. Black stringy hair, draped over his head like a wet mat. Perfect salesman cliché. One day he and I are sitting in the company's cafeteria and we're talking, shooting the shit. And he tells me there's only one rule to sales. He calls it the "ABCs of Selling." Now—I've got to admit, I'm a little intrigued by this. You know, maybe here's an answer to what's driving all those smarmy bastards selling stocks or cable or whatever. So when he offers this, I want to know.

FINISHER

Go ahead.

ELUSIVE

(pause)

With this serious as shit face, he looks me dead in the eyes and says—"The ABCs of Selling. ABC. Always. Be. Closing."

FINISHER

Pretty. Fucking. Stupid.

ELUSIVE

Yeah. That's what I thought....But now I meet you—and I'm not so sure.

FINISHER

(pause, then as she heads for the rest of her clothes)

Forget me. Forget this—

ELUSIVE

I can't!—

FINISHER

Forget *all* of this shit!—

ELUSIVE

I won't.

FINISHER

Too. *Fucking*. Bad.

ELUSIVE

I don't want to!

FINISHER

Wants have nothing to do with it. *Needs*, Elusive. Needs are the only thing that matter and right now I have—

ELUSIVE

Keep on going Finisher, is that it?!

(she stops)

You just keep on going. Long past the point....

*(a long pause as she stands stuck to her spot near the door
debating the decision of leaving)*

FINISHER

You never told me which you were Elusive. The 90% or the 10?

ELUSIVE

(pause)

I'm in that .01% that doesn't even register. We're worst of all. We know we think that way. And we don't do a damn thing about it....Tell me.

FINISHER

I don't know what you're—

ELUSIVE

YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN!—What is this? Why are you like this?!

FINISHER

Let it go.

ELUSIVE

No.

FINISHER

Let it go!

ELUSIVE

I can help. Maybe I can help. I want to—

FINISHER

Help! Look in the fucking mirror! You can't even help yourself!

ELUSIVE

(pause)

No—I can't. But maybe together....These are some high stakes you play for Finisher. Okay. Here. Here are my hands.—I want to touch inside there.

FINISHER

(pause)

Watch out Elusive. You might get what you're after. You might not like what you find.

ELUSIVE

I don't like this already....It's time.

(FINISHER nods resolutely and speaks as she moves around the apartment)

FINISHER

We had just those twelve. Someone should have thought of that. We *all* should have thought of that. Thirteen is such an unlucky number. Everyone knows that. We could have just paid someone, begged them to come in. Just to get by it on our own terms. But it just seemed so natural. Like a family.—No one can build their world on just twelve

customers. I guess we couldn't either....He came in one day out of the blue. Just another Wednesday in April. No different from any other. The 24th, I think. As if I didn't know for sure.—All the bars, in all the world and he walked into mine.

ELUSIVE

Listen, if this is something that you don't—

FINISHER

TOUGH SHIT ELUSIVE! DON'T YOU HEAR THE CLOCK TICKING!....It's the fourth quarter—and I am committed.

*(Again, the faint, audible sound of the bar is heard:
Bustling, indiscernible talk, clinking of beer bottles)*

FINISHER

I remember it so clearly. At first, we were all a little stunned, you know. It *had* been like thirty years. It happens thousands of times a day, everywhere else. But not here. *Here*, he was our thirteenth customer....Immediately, we knew he was different. And I don't mean just different in not being one of our regulars, but I mean *different*. Different from Dingman's Ferry, different from Pennsylvania. At least, our part of Pennsylvania. He was worldly, sophisticated, an *homme du Monde*.

(she clicks twice and winks to ELUSIVE)

Beautifully dressed, beautifully built, just—striking. His hair, his shoes. He talked of the world. The fountains in Rome, the street lamps in Gay Paree, the pyramids. He had been to the pyramids. What the hell was he doing here?....And we were all mesmerized, you know. All of us. Not just me. Richie was behind the bar. And Mr. Kirk was there, Sally Hampton, *Hank*....You grow up so slow in a small town. Or at least we used to. There wasn't much of anything to do. No one went anywhere. No one did anything. Just a small fucking town in the middle of nowhere that gets so goddamn impressed by someone who's been somewhere and done something. And he *had* been places and he *had* done things!—He was just so damn cool, you know....And I admit it, I was out of my league....We spent hours listening to him. All of us. That night, most of the others came in. Lisa Brittner tried to flirt with him but he wouldn't have none of that. He was above that kind of trash....The incredible thing was, he made us feel at home. Imagine that? We had spent our whole lives in that bar and *he* made *us* feel at home....In a short time, he was one of us. *We all* thought so. And we became one of him, you know. Like all of

a sudden, we had been to Rome and to Paris and Cairo. We had traveled and we had drunk, and we had lived. We were all a little more than we ever were before....Around nine-thirty, he says he needs some antifreeze for his car. That's why he stopped in. He just

FINISHER - con't

came in to ask for directions to a gas station. He's got a leaky radiator or something.—I remember how he talked.

(imitating a highbrow, patrician accent)

“Almost forgot, I'm having such a grand time. This place is so darn convivial, I had to just sit right down and have myself a libation.”—He's on some cross-country trip. Going to see the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, the Badlands. Everything this country has to offer....His car's got a busted radiator and he's going to take *that* across the country! How *fucking* stupid we were. “Smokes up like California brush fire, heh, heh, heh.”

(ELUSIVE smiles nervously as she turns to see it)

Yeah, I know. But this is small town Pennsylvania. A lot passes for a sense of humor.—And we don't exactly live right next door to a green grocer, you know. The only place to get antifreeze at that time of the night is down at Al's Exxon near the highway. And that's three miles away! You can't walk that and back in an hour. You can't walk it in two. At that time of night?! When it's cold like it was?! No way! This is a small town. We're neighborly people. And I was going home then to do some homework. I had to pass right by there! What difference did it make?! No one thought anything of it. Why would they? The guy's already dropped about eighty bucks buying rounds and shots for everyone. He was one of us. He was part of our family. I WAS GOING THAT WAY! HE WAS ONE OF US AND I WAS GOING THAT WAY!

(long pause)

You know what the clincher was?

ELUSIVE

No.

FINISHER

(pause)

He left another fifty on the bar as we were walking out. “Don't want the party stopping on my account. Richard my good man, make sure all my friends are well taken care of.” Fuck, I mean *fifty bucks*, you know. That's a lot of security....What a small fucking town.

(FINISHER moves up to stage left as far as she can go from ELUSIVE, the sounds of the bar disappears)

FINISHER

They found the car in Shreveport, Louisiana. They found me in the woods behind Wilson School. I had lost a lot of blood, but I was okay. They grow us tough out there in the sticks. A broken right arm, a broken nose. Some other cuts and bruises. Nothing that didn't heal, right?—Right.

(she turns directly to him)

Everything heals. It just takes time....And in that town, time was all we had. It's all anyone has....I turned 18 that fall. Took my college savings and came here to complete my education....I was 18 then. I'm not 18 anymore.

ELUSIVE

You probably weren't then.

FINISHER

No.—Probably not.

(FINISHER stands there, no longer part of the scene)

ELUSIVE

(to the Audience)

Those were the last words we ever spoke. She got back into my bed, curled up next to me, and I held her. I didn't know what else to do. There was nothing I could say. So I just held her close. As close as I could ever....I woke up alone that next morning. There wasn't a trace of her. Not a note or a number or good-bye. I went back to McManus a couple of times that next week just to see if—no. After another month or so, I never went back again....Always Be Closing.

(FINISHER moves to the bed and lies down curls up in a ball in the middle. ELUSIVE picks up a piece of FINISHER's clothing)

ELUSIVE

Sometimes it dawns on you, what you need to survive in the big town when you weren't born here. It's a conversion scale. A guideline to the relativity. It translates what they mean here, to what something means in the real world. In Dingman's Ferry, fifty bucks

ELUSIVE - con't

buys a lot of security. It makes me wonder how cheap a lot of things come these days. Trust. Innocence—love. Love comes pretty cheaply, and I don't think—

(The apartment buzzer goes. It must be loud, abrasive, and unexpected. ELUSIVE moves to it warily. He looks at it, then pushes the button)

ELUSIVE

Yeah.

FEMALE VOICE

It's me, Stuart.

ELUSIVE

(pausing briefly at the mention of his name)

I'll be down in a minute.

FEMALE VOICE

Are Benn and Linda there?

ELUSIVE

No. We're meeting them at the restaurant.

FEMALE VOICE

All right.

ELUSIVE

I'll be down in a second.

FEMALE VOICE

Okay.

ELUSIVE

(pause)

Dana and I got engaged two months ago after a "whirlwind" six month romance. We haven't set a date yet. She won't live with me. She doesn't even want a set of keys to my apartment. It's enough for her that we're engaged.—I always marvel at how she trusts so completely....Sometimes things happen. You don't go looking for them, but they come at you, unexpected, and you're changed forever. It's been a year since I met Finisher, and still I feel her. I don't want to, but I do....But I don't know. A part of me wants this. A part of me needs this. It has the sting of real life. Of real loss—of her.

(putting on his coat, getting ready to go)

And I'm surviving it. That's what she said to do. And she was right. Everything heals with time....I should've known. I see it all so clearly now.—It's what she does. It's what she was always doing.

*(ELUSIVE walks off. As he does, the music comes up.
FINISHER remains there, curled up in the bed, unmoving.
The lights come down on her until only one spot remains
transfixed on her)*

Fade to Black