

***THE GOLD KEY***

by  
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THE GOLD KEY

FADE IN:

**EXT. THE OCEAN - NIGHT**

A CANARY flies over the water and heads towards the hazy and nondescript skyline. Slowly, the bird MORPHS into a beautiful steam boat called Palais Royale.

**INT. PALAIS ROYALE/AFT CABIN**

Sitting in an opulent chair in the ornately adorned cabin, CHARLES DE VILLE WELLS, early fifties, smokes a cigar and reads a book. He lifts his eyes from the book, removes his glasses, stands and moves anxiously to the porthole.

**EXT. PALAIS ROYALE/AFT CABIN**

Charles blasts from the cabin and moves towards the bow of palais royale. Wonder fills his eyes.

CHARLES

After all these years? Is it finally over?

**INT. CASINO PARLOR (MONTE CARLO - 1891) - NIGHT**

A smoke-filled room. Spectators surround the roulette table, watching Charles play. A large stack of chips sits in front of Charles, his ever-present cigar in his lips.

Charles and the croupier exchange challenging glares. But the croupier blinks; sweat pours from his brow.

Charles smiles.

CROUPIER

Monsieur Wells, I'm afraid that we cannot accept your wager.

CHARLES

Why not?

CROUPIER

The house does not have sufficient funds to cover such an amount.

CHARLES

How much, then, is the house in the position to cover?

CROUPIER

One moment, please.

He scans the bank.

CROUPIER (CONT'D)

The bank is five hundred thousand.

CHARLES

Well, then my wager will be...  
Fourteen thousand, two hundred eighty-  
six. At thirty-five to one, that  
should just about cover it.

CROUPIER

One moment, please.

The croupier turns aside to the manager, HENRI LE CANNES, an aristocratic man in his mid-forties.

CROUPIER (CONT'D)

He's had the odds with him all week,  
Monsieur La Cannes. He's broken  
five tables tonight alone.

HENRI

True, but it's times like these where  
the house's advantage usually comes  
into play. Accept the wager.

CROUPIER

But, sir...

HENRI

Oblige me.

The Croupier nods and turns to Charles.

CROUPIER

The House has decided to accept your  
wager, Monsieur Wells.

A RUMBLE filters through the crowd.

CHARLES

Splendid. Let's play.

The croupier snatches the ball from the wheel and spins it  
as the crowd becomes more intense.

Charles and the croupier trade stares.

The ball whirls around the wheel.

Charles exudes confidence.

Sweating, the croupier glares at Charles.

The ball bounces around the wheel.

A modern-sounding phone RINGS.

**EXT. EDWARD MARTIN ACCOUNTING (E.M.A.) - DAY - MODERN DAY**

The very well landscaped building drippings of money and stands alone in an office park. Workmen change the sign as the phone continues to RING.

**INT. LESTER'S CUBICLE**

STUART LESTER, a middle-aged, nerdish, reads a book titled: *THE MAN WHO BROKE THE BANK AT MONTE CARLO*. He is oblivious the RINGING PHONE.

Lester's cubicle is cluttered with pictures of his daughter, Kelly, his late wife, but also it contains nautical items.

Lester mindlessly reaches for the phone without taking his eyes off the page.

LESTER

Yes, Mr. Martin, right away.

Lester, startled, jumps up from his desk and runs quickly away.

**E.M.A./BOARDROOM**

MR. EDWARD *EDDY* MARTIN, a Scrooge-like man in his late sixties, impeccably dressed, presides over the meeting in the expensively apportioned boardroom.

Lester enters takes a seat next to a very comely young blonde in her late twenties, early thirties, SARAH LOGAN. She flashes a coquettish smile his way as he slinks into his seat.

MARTIN

Lester, glad to see you could find the time to join us.

LESTER

Sorry, sir.

MARTIN

Well, let's get down to business.

Martin disdainfully takes off arm band off and tosses it aside.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Since the death of my dear friend and partner, Andrew Cohen -- God rest his soul -- and since he had no living relatives, ownership of Martin and Cohen goes to me.

The group REACTS a little to the announcement.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

In the future, the firm will be known as Edward Martin Accounting. That's all for now. Go to work.

They members of the firm exit the boardroom.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Lester, could I speak with you a moment?

LESTER

Of course, Mr. Martin.

MARTIN

I have a very important meeting tomorrow and I need the Avery Construction files updated before the start of business in the morning.

LESTER

Mr. Martin, that's Sarah Logan's account.

MARTIN

Ms. Logan and I have dinner plans tonight.

LESTER

But Mr. Martin, I had plans too.

MARTIN

Change them.

LESTER

It's my daughter, Kelly. She's starring in her school play. It's just for the parents tonight. It begins at 8:00.

MARTIN

I'm sorry about that, but I need this work by tomorrow.

LESTER

But, Mr. Martin...

MARTIN

Lester, I always thought that you were dedicated to your work.

LESTER

I am, sir, but this is very...

MARTIN

Lester. First thing in the morning.

LESTER

Yes, Mr. Martin.

**E.M.A./CORRIDOR OUTSIDE BOARDROOM**

Disappointed and on the verge of hyperventilation, Lester exits the boardroom as Sarah comes back.

SARAH

Hi, Lester. What's up?

Lester hides his anger.

LESTER

Nothing, Sarah.

SARAH

Is Eddy still in there?

Lester nods.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Great. See, ya. Oh, wish Kelly luck tonight for me.

Lester tries to hide his anger.

**E.M.A./LESTER'S CUBICLE**

Lester looks at Kelly's picture as he talks to her.

LESTER

I'm sorry, Kelly. I can't...

**INT. KELLY'S BEDROOM**

KELLY LESTER, lying on her bed.

KELLY

Daddy, you promised.

INTER CUT between Lester and Kelly.

LESTER

I know, but it can't be helped.  
I'll get there as soon as I can.

KELLY

Why do you let that shithead push  
you around? He is such a selfish,  
greedy, tormented old asshole.

LESTER

He's my boss, Sweetheart. And don't  
use that kind of language with me,  
young lady!

Kelly almost cries.

KELLY

I have to go, daddy.

She hangs up. END INTERCUT.

LESTER

I love you, Kelly.

Lester realizes that Kelly has hung up and looks even more  
dejected. Slowly he picks up the papers and begins to work.

**EXT. PALAIS ROYALE/DECK - NIGHT**

As Charles, a look of wonder in his eyes, exits the cabin  
and moves towards the bow.

CHARLES

What is this place?

**INT. E.M.A./LESTER'S CUBICLE**

Lester works furiously to get the work done before the play  
is over. He looks at the clock, which reads: 6:50 P.M. He  
pauses for a moment, then begins to gather up his papers.

**INT. CASINO RESTAURANT**

A lustful look in his eyes, Mr. Martin and Sarah enjoy dinner.

MARTIN

How's your dinner?

SARAH

It's fine, Mr. Martin.

MARTIN

Please, Sarah, when we're not in the  
office you can call me Eddy.

SARAH

Okay, Eddy. Y'know, I want to thank you for getting someone else to work on the Avery Construction file. I was really looking forward to dinner tonight.

MARTIN

My pleasure.

SARAH

By the way, who'd you get?

MARTIN

Lester.

SARAH

Lester?

Mr. Martin nods as he eats.

SARAH (CONT'D)

But, Mr. Martin, Lester had plans to go see...

MARTIN

Sarah, it's Eddy.

SARAH

Eddy... Lester had plans to go see his daughter in her class play tonight. It's important.

MARTIN

Sarah, Stuart Lester's work is the most important thing to him.

SARAH

But, Eddy, it's his daughter's play. She's playing Juliet.

MARTIN

Sarah, I came to dinner here to be with you, not to talk about Lester. Okay?

SARAH

Okay, Eddy.

MARTIN

More wine?



**EXT. MARTIN'S MARINA**

The harbor master, ANDREW BRODY, an old salt, ambles around the marina smoking a cigar.

With no wind in her sails, The Palais Royale sails majestically into the marina and glides slowly to a stop. Brody seems indifferent to the strange appearance. He tosses away his cigar and heads for the office.

**INT. E.M.A./LESTER'S CUBICLE**

He continues gathering his work together when the phone RINGS.

LESTER

Hello? No he's not here. He's at dinner... What?... How big is it?... Okay, I'll call him. Bye.

**EXT. MARINA MAIN GATE**

Lester waits for Mr. Martin as Mr. Martin's limousine pulls up. Fuming, Mr. Martin and Sarah get out. The three of them immediately move towards The Palais Royale.

MARTIN

Where the hell is it?

LESTER

It's amazing!

MARTIN

What kind of boat is it?

Just as he asks the question, they come up to The Palais Royale. The sight of the beautiful ship stuns Mr. Martin and Sarah.

**INT. PALAIS ROYALE/AFT CABIN - NIGHT**

Mr. Martin enters first, followed by Lester, Sarah, and Brody. They are in awe. Lester ogles Sarah for a moment, then goes to the door that leads to the main cabin. He tries the door.

LESTER

This door's locked.

MARTIN

Let me try.

Martin fails to open door.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Get a locksmith over here first thing.  
Let's go, Sarah.

As they exit the cabin, Lester looks down on one of the tables and picks up a gold key that shines in the subdued cabin lighting. He marvels at its beauty.

LESTER

Mr. Martin. I found a key.

MARTIN

Let me see that.

Curtly, Mr. Martin takes the key and inserts it in the lock. Effortlessly, the door opens. They enter the forward cabin.

**INT. PALAIS ROYALE/FORWARD CABIN**

They survey the lavishly decorated forward cabin.

SARAH

This thing is worth a fortune.

Lester examines a gilded bird cage that hangs from a stand near the wall. Inside is a small canary.

LESTER

What do we do with this?

MARTIN

Take it with you if you want.

**EXT. MARTIN'S MARINA/DOCK**

Mr. Martin, Lester, with the bird cage, Sarah and Brody exit The Palais Royale and head for the gate.

MARTIN

Brody, I want armed guards posted around the ship twenty-four hours a day.

BRODY

All right, Mr. Martin.

Brody goes to the office. Mr. Martin helps Sarah into the limousine.

MARTIN

Lester, the Avery Construction file is finished, right?

LESTER

No, sir.

MARTIN

Well get on it!

LESTER

Yes, sir. Right away.

Mr. Martin closes the door and the limousine pulls away. Lester just stands there looking even more disheartened. He looks at the bird in the cage. On a small plaque under the door is the name CHARLES.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Well, Charles, how'd you like to go to a play?

The bird CHIRPS.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Glad to hear it.

Lester walks towards his car.

LESTER (CONT'D)

By the way, my name is Stuart Lester. Good to meet you, Charles.

**EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - LATER**

Lester gets out of his car. He looks back inside.

LESTER

I'll be back in a little bit. It's warm enough in here for you.

The bird CHIRPS again. As Lester shuts the door and turns away, a FLASH of light blasts from inside the car.

**INT. HIGH SCHOOL/THEATER**

The play is in the last act. Lester slips into the back of the theater as Kelly performs on stage.

Lester pauses for a moment to adjust his eyes to the darkness. He takes a seat at the end of the row. Charles, as a man, sits next to him.

CHARLES

It's almost over.

LESTER

I was held up at the office. That's my daughter. She's Juliet.

Kelly performs the suicide scene.

CHARLES

Very pretty.

LESTER

Thank you. I've been raising her by myself since my wife died. Teenagers. Takes a lot of time.

CHARLES

I can only imagine.

Lester turns to look at Charles, but he has vanished. In his place is DAVE, another parent.

DAVE

You're late, Stu. What happened?

LESTER

Uh, I was... at the office, Dave.

DAVE

Too bad. You missed a lot. She's really good, Stu.

LESTER

Thanks.

#### **HIGH SCHOOL/BACKSTAGE**

Lester enters with a small bouquet of flowers. He sees Kelly standing with some of the other cast members.

Kelly sees him and extricates herself from her friends. She throws her arms around him.

KELLY

Daddy! I knew you'd come!

LESTER

Wouldn't have missed it.

KELLY

What'cha think?

LESTER

I thought you were magnificent.

KELLY

Thanks. Daddy, they're having a cast party tonight at Laurie Gertsson's house. Some of us are going to stay over. Is it okay?

LESTER

You have fun.

KELLY

Thanks, daddy. I love you.

LESTER

I love you too.

Kelly runs off to be with her friends.

**EXT. HIGH SCHOOL/PARKING LOT**

Lester approaches his car with his keys in his hands. He drops them accidentally. As he bend over to pick them up, there is a FLASH of light in his car. He gets into the car and drives off.

**EXT. LESTER'S DRIVEWAY**

Lester pulls into the driveway of the middle-class house. He gets out of the car and heads, homework and bird cage in hand, for the house.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/OFFICE**

Exhausted, Lester drops his work on the desk and walks to his bedroom, adjacent to, and visible from, the office.

**LESTER'S HOME/BEDROOM**

He places the bird cage on a dresser in his bedroom and then comes back into the office.

**LESTER'S HOME/OFFICE**

He goes to the liquor cabinet, pours himself a double scotch, downs it, pours another, and sits at his desk.

As he begins to wade through the mountain of work, a FLASH of light appears in his bedroom. Unaware of the light, he continues his work.

Lester stops working for a moment, and picks up on of the pictures he has on his desk. It is a picture of him and his late wife, KATIE, at their wedding. Her mass card sits in the corner of the picture.

A tear appears in Lester's eye. He quickly wipes it away. Then he places two fingers to his lips, kisses them, and touches the picture.

LESTER

I love you, Katie.

**EXT. LESTER'S STREET**

Charles, standing under a lamppost down the corner from Lester's house, a cigar hanging from his mouth, can see Lester sitting at his desk.

Charles sighs, shrugs his shoulders, shakes his head, and walks away. After a few steps, he disappears.

**INT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/ENTRANCE - NIGHT**

Charles enters the casino with a child-like smile on his face. Puffed with anticipation he descends the stairs just as a cocktail waitress passes by with a tray full of drinks.

Magically, Charles levitates one of the glasses off the tray and snatches the glass out of the air.

CHARLES

Thank you.

He takes a sips.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Scotch! Good choice.

**ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/ROULETTE**

Charles glides through the casino, checking out the games. He stops at a roulette table. Two young beautiful females are standing next to the table.

GIRL #1

Lost again.

GIRL #2

How much do we have left?

GIRL #1

Twenty dollars.

GIRL #2

Play one more time. The whole thing.

GIRL #1

You sure?

GIRL #2

Twenty-eight black.

CHARLES

Twenty-eight black?

Charles stands closer to the table as the two girls bet.

They place their money on twenty-eight black as the ROULETTE DEALER spins the ball.

ROULETTE DEALER

No more bets.

The ball spins.

The girls AD LIB cheers.

Charles makes a magical gesture at the ball.

The ball falls into twenty-eight black.

ROULETTE DEALER (CONT'D)  
Twenty-eight black is the winner.

The girls AD LIB cheers of delight over winning. The Roulette Dealer pays them off. The Girls gush over the Croupier.

GIRL #2  
Thank you... Thank you!

Charles smiles, even giggles a little as he strides off.

CHARLES  
You are quite welcome.

The girls do not hear Charles.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/OFFICE - NIGHT**

Lester looks very exhausted. The clock on his desk reads, 3:30AM.

With a long heavy sigh and rub his eyes, Lester sits back in his chair. After a moment, he stands, closes the file, turns the light and the computer off and exits the office.

**LESTER'S HOME/KITCHEN**

Dressed in his pajamas and robe, Lester wearily gets a glass of milk from the fridge and pours some in a saucepan.

**LESTER'S HOME/BEDROOM**

Lester slinks into the chair next to his bed, puts the milk on the table next to the chair, turns the light on, and pulls out the book, "THE MAN WHO BROKE THE BANK AT MONTE CARLO."

LESTER  
Ten minutes, then I'll go to bed.

As he begins to read, all signs of stress, strain and exhaustion seem to melt away from his face as he escapes into his fantasy world.

**INT. MONTE CARLO/CASINO (1891) - NIGHT**

The croupier returns to the table.

CROUPIER

The House has decided to accept your  
wager, Monsieur Wells.

A RUMBLE filters through the crowd.

CHARLES

Splendid. Let's play. Twenty-eight,  
black.

The croupier snatches the ball from the wheel and spins it  
as the crowd becomes more intense.

Charles and the croupier trade stares.

The ball whirls around the wheel.

Charles exudes confidence.

Sweating, the croupier glares at Charles.

The ball bounces around the wheel, hitting obstacle along  
the way.

The croupier glare at Charles.

Charles eyes the croupier.

A small trace of a smile appears on Charles' face.

The ball has dropped into twenty-eight black.

CROUPIER

Twenty-eight black is the winner.

Silence.

CROUPIER (CONT'D)

The bank is closed.

The room ERUPTS with celebration.

Charles in VOICE OVER.

CHARLES (V.O.)

It seems you like my story.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/BEDROOM - BACK TO SCENE**

Charles' voice startles Lester back to reality as he appears.  
Lester is frightened.

LESTER

What?



CHARLES

My story. You like my story?

LESTER

Who are you? How'd you get in here?

CHARLES

First question: Who am I?

Charles lifts the book from Lester's hands. Lester resists at first.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You should be familiar with *who* I am by now.

Charles shows Lester a picture of himself from the 1800's.

LESTER

It can't be. I didn't drink that much.

CHARLES

As for the second question, that takes a bit more story-telling.

LESTER

Am I dreaming?

CHARLES

I don't mean to startle you, but I thought it best that you go to sleep instead of reading all night.

LESTER

I was just going to read for a few minutes.

CHARLES

Your custom is to read all night long, occasionally sleeping only one or two hours.

LESTER

How do you know that?

CHARLES

I want you to sleep. Go to work in the morning. Come home. Take a nap. Then we'll start a great new adventure in the evening.

Charles helps Lester from the chair and into bed.

LESTER

I'm not tired.

CHARLES

Be a good little chap and go to sleep.

Lester falls asleep even before Charles can pull the covers up over him.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Good night, Stuart. Pleasant dreams.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/BEDROOM - DAY**

Lester wakes up with a start and checks to see where he is.

LESTER

Oh, my god. Oh, my god. It was just a dream.

He looks at the clock, which reads, 6:45AM, then jumps out of bed.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Darn it. I'm late.

**INT. E.M.A./CORRIDOR - DAY**

Mr. Martin storms into the office, startling those who are at work.

**E.M.A./MARTIN'S OFFICE**

His temperature rises as he sees that the Avery Construction file is not on his desk. He quickly exits the office.

**E.M.A./CORRIDOR**

Mr. Martin, storms down the corridor.

MARTIN

Where the hell is that son-of-a-bitch, Lester?

On his heels, Lester enters Mr. Martin's office with the Avery Construction file in hand, then almost instantly exits and blasts down the other corridor.

**E.M.A./LESTER'S CUBICLE**

Lester enters his cubicle just as Mr. Martin approaches.

MARTIN

Where the hell is it, you son-of-a-bitch?

LESTER

Where's what?

MARTIN

The Avery Construction file. Where is it?

LESTER

It's on your desk, Sir.

MARTIN

No it isn't. I looked.

LESTER

I put it there myself.

Mr. Martin glare at him for a moment, considers the situation, and without a word, turns, walks away, then turns back.

MARTIN

Oh, before I forget, get in touch with the authorities about The Palais Royale. Find out who the owns it.

LESTER

Yes, sir. Right away.

Mr. Martin heads off.

**EXT. MARTIN'S MARINA/DOCK - DAY**

Lester examines The Palais Royale with an official from the Coast Guard, COMMANDER YATES.

YATES

Well, I don't have any records of this ship in the North American files. I have someone checking the European registries, but they're having little success.

LESTER

What happens if you can't find an owner?

YATES

I'm no lawyer, but if they can't find an owner, Mr. Martin already has possession.

Mr. Martin's limousine rolls up from behind them. He jumps out and goes quickly to Lester and Yates.

MARTIN

What's going on, Lester?

LESTER

Mr. Martin, this is Commander Yates  
of the United States Coast Guard.

MARTIN

Nice to meet you, Commander.

YATES

The same, sir.

MARTIN

I was a Navy man myself.

YATES

Is that so?

MARTIN

Lieutenant Junior Grade.

Yates shows no interest.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

So, what's the word on the ?

YATES

As I was saying to Mr. Lester here,  
the ship doesn't appear on any  
registry for North America.

MARTIN

Cut to the chase, Commander.

YATES

*The* belongs to no one. If we can't  
find an owner.

MARTIN

It's mine. Thank you, Commander.

YATES

Have a good day, gentlemen.

Mr. Martin eyes The Palais Royale for a moment, then looks  
at Lester.

MARTIN

What the hell are you doing here?  
Go back to the office.

LESTER

Yes, sir.

Lester leaves meekly. Mr. Martin goes back to admiring The  
Palais Royale.

**INT. LESTER'S LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Kelly and Tim sit on the sofa watching MTV.

KELLY

He always tells me this story. About when he and my mom met. It was so romantic. He was such a dork. But, it was like they were soul mates. Do you believe in soul mates, Tim?

Tim nods slowly and smiles.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Me too.

Lester enters the house, startling Kelly and Tim. He looks worn and tired. She jumps up to greet him.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Daddy... Hi...

LESTER

Hi, sweetheart. Hi, Tim.

TIM

Hi, Mr. Lester.

KELLY

Want something to eat?

LESTER

I'm kind of tired. Gonna take a nap. I had a bad day at the office.

KELLY

The asshole on you again?

LESTER

Honey, please don't talk about Mr. Martin like that. He's really a nice... Maybe some dinner would be nice after my nap.

KELLY

No problem, daddy.

Lester goes up stairs without another word. Kelly shrugs and falls back onto the sofa with Tim.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Lester reads in bed. The phone RINGS. Lester reluctantly puts the book down and picks up the phone.

LESTER

Hello.

**INT. E.M.A./MARTIN'S OFFICE**

Mr. Martin takes a sip of wine just as Lester answers.

**INTER CUT** between Lester's home/bedroom and Mr. Martin's office.

MARTIN

Lester, I have a boat expert, Wilson McCarthy, from Massachusetts coming in first thing in the morning. I want you to take the limousine to the airport and pick him up first thing.

LESTER

What are you talking about?

MARTIN

You heard me, goddammit! First thing in the morning! Understand?

LESTER

Yes, sir. First thing in the morning.

MARTIN

Good. I'm counting on you.

**END INTERCUT**

Lester, crestfallen, hangs up.

LESTER

Yes, sir.

Charles appears behind Lester.

CHARLES

Why do you let that tired old toad lead you around like a toy poodle on a leash, Stuart?

Lester is shocked.

LESTER

Everybody calls me Lester.

CHARLES

I will call you Stuart.

Charles takes the book out of Lester's hands and looks at it disapprovingly and tosses the book aside.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Why don't I show you the real story.

Charles pulls Lester out of bed.

LESTER

I'll have to dress.

CHARLES

Don't worry about your clothes.

Charles leads Lester through the door.

**EXT. MONTE CARLO (NINETEENTH CENTURY) - DAY**

Both Charles and Lester enter from a nondescript doorway, wearing clothes of the period. Lester checks his clothes out, then looks with astonishment at the surroundings.

CHARLES

Nineteenth Century Monte Carlo. How I miss this... So very much.

LESTER

Where are we?

CHARLES

I told you. This is Monte Carlo. My Monte Carlo. Let's have fun.

**EXT. MONTE CARLO/STREET - NIGHT**

Lester follows behind as Charles goes on about his life.

CHARLES

Aside from my career as a maritime engineer, I was also an inventor. I have over two hundred patents alone attributed to me.

I invented an automatic foghorn, a new sardine tin opener, a machine for scraping the bottoms of ships, an envelope opener. Even a musical skipping rope.

LESTER

Is that so?

CHARLES

Absolutely.

LESTER

I read about sparrows and canaries.

Charles displays a wry smile as if caught in a lie.

CHARLES  
You read that?

LESTER  
Not all of it.

CHARLES  
Once, in a time of financial  
desperation mind you, I painted  
sparrows... Sold them as canaries,  
I did.

LESTER  
A con man?

CHARLES  
I prefer peddler of dreams.

Lester starts to laugh. After a moment Charles joins him,  
and they continue into a brightly lit, and incredibly opulent  
gaming house. Charles begins to sing.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
As I walk along the Bois Boulong.  
With an independent air.  
You can hear the girls declare.  
She must be a millionaire.  
You can hear them sigh and wish to  
die.

You can see them wink the other eye.  
At the man who broke the bank in  
Monte-Carlo.

**INT. MONTE CARLO / PARLOR - MOMENTS LATER**

Many people greet Charles with affection. Lester is  
mystified. Henri Le Canne greets him with a warm welcome.

HENRI  
Monsieur Wells, so good to see you  
again.

CHARLES  
So good to be seen. Henri, this is  
my good friend, Stuart Lester.  
Stuart, this is Henri La Cannes, the  
manager of this establishment.

HENRI  
Any friend of Monsieur Wells is  
welcome here. It's a pleasure to  
meet you.



LESTER

The same, sir.

HENRI

Is there anything I can get for you, gentlemen?

CHARLES

Not right now, thank you. Maybe later we can sample one of your chef's fine dishes.

HENRI

It would be my pleasure, Monsieur Wells.

CHARLES

Thank you. I'd like to take my friend for a tour.

HENRI

Very well, sir. Enjoy.

**INT. MONTE CARLO/ROULETTE PARLOR**

Charles looks at the roulette wheel with relish in his eyes.

CHARLES

I broke the bank on this wheel.

A mixture of joy and sadness appears on Charles' face as he gazes at the wheel.

LESTER

I read that part.

The game commences.

CHARLES

Pretty, isn't it? Thirty-seven delightful little numbers. Red. Black. Green. The wheel spins. The ball falls. It's the sound of money.

LESTER

Yeah, going out of your pocket and into the pockets of the casino owners.

CHARLES

High, low. Odd, even. Black, red. Even money. Two to one odds if you play in thirds or in columns.

LESTER

I know the odds, Charles.

CHARLES

House's advantage is two and three quarters percent. On the European wheels that is. On American wheels, five and one quarter percent. Want to play?

LESTER

I never gamble. I don't like taking chances.

CHARLES

I know.

**MONTE CARLO/CASINO RESTAURANT**

Charles and Lester devour dinner as the waiter serves them drinks.

CHARLES

How was your dinner?

LESTER

Incredible. I haven't had food like this before.

CHARLES

No doubt.

LESTER

It just can't be real.

CHARLES

I assure you, Stuart, this is real. I'd like to ask you a question: Are you ready to take life by the horns? Really live? Or do you want to remain a spectator while others do what you wish you could?

Lester tries to speak, but cannot get the words out.

**EXT. MONTE CARLO/STREET**

Charles and Lester exit the casino.

CHARLES

Stuart how much money would you need to be truly happy?

LESTER

I don't know. Five million dollars.  
Who knows?

CHARLES

I'll help you get your five million  
dollars.

Lester, a questioning look.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

There will be one condition: You  
may never go into a casino again.

LESTER

Can I think about it?

CHARLES

You've been thinking about it all of  
your life. You have until sundown  
tomorrow. Good night, Stuart.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/BEDROOM - DAY**

Lester wakes with a start and instantly begins checking his  
surroundings. He goes to the bird cage, stares at it for a  
moment, looks at the nameplate. The bird CHIRPS at him.

LESTER

He painted sparrows to look like  
canaries.

KELLY (O.S.)

Yo, dad! Wake up! You're gonna be  
late for work!

LESTER

Oh, my god!

He rushes out of the room.

**LESTER'S HOME/KITCHEN**

Kelly places breakfast on the table as Lester sits down.

LESTER

This looks great, honey. Thanks.

KELLY

So, was it a hot date?

Looks at her questioningly.

KELLY (CONT'D)

You weren't in your bed when I went to sleep last night.

LESTER

And what time was that, young lady?

KELLY

Don't change the subject.

LESTER

I was out with a business associate. This is very good.

KELLY

Thanks. Hey, check this out. It's a poem I wrote for you.

Lester takes the paper and reads it.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Tim's going to put it to music. What do you think?

LESTER

You really think this about me?

KELLY

Yeah. You're my dad. I love you.

Lester seems on the verge of tears.

**INT. LIMOUSINE**

Lester sits in the limousine with SEAMUS O'BRIEN. O'Brien looks remarkably like a younger Charles. Lester does not notice the resemblance.

O'BRIEN

I can't believe the plane was late.

LESTER

Mr. Martin won't either.

O'BRIEN

Tell me about this mystery The Palais Royale.

LESTER

It just appeared in Mr. Martin's marina the other night. We don't know much more than that.

O'BRIEN

Well, if it's as incredible as you say, I can't wait to see it.

**EXT. MARTIN'S MARINA/DOCK**

Mr. Martin stands impatiently near palais royale as the limousine pulls up behind him. Mr. Martin turns from looking at palais royale and walks quickly up to the side of the limousine as Lester gets out.

MARTIN

Where the hell've you been, Lester?  
I told you to get here first thing...

LESTER

The plane was...

O'Brien gets out of the limousine.

O'BRIEN

Mr. Martin, I presume?

MARTIN

You presume correctly. Good to meet you, Mr. O'Brien.

O'BRIEN

Seamus is fine. This is palais royale?

O'Brien walks off towards palais royale. Mr. Martin looks at Lester with disdain.

**INT. PALAIS ROYALE/AFT CABIN**

In a state of wonderment, O'Brien surveys the cabin.

O'BRIEN

Remarkable. I've not seen a ship like this... You say it just sailed into the marina without a crew?

LESTER

That's what the Andrew Brody the harbor master...

MARTIN

What's it worth?

O'BRIEN

Conservatively, at least fifteen, twenty million. Maybe more.

MARTIN

That much?

LESTER

Maybe more.

O'BRIEN

I'm not an expert in European designs. I've studied them, of course, but I would suggest that you get a European boat expert in to examine it.

MARTIN

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. I'll have Lester here drive you back to the airport.

O'BRIEN

Thank you, Mr. Martin.

O'Brien exits as Mr. Martin pulls Lester aside.

MARTIN

Lester, when you're done get back to the office.

Lester does not answer, just exits. Mr. Martin takes a long look around the aft cabin with a broad smile on his face.

**INT. LESTER'S LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Lester, haggard and worn, dragging his feet. He throws his brief case on the table in the foyer, then sniffs the air.

LESTER

I'm home, Kelly!

She comes bouncing out of the kitchen and gives him a big hug.

KELLY

Hi, daddy. Another bad day?

Nods and smiles meekly.

KELLY (CONT'D)

How about some dinner? Steak, mashed potatoes, corn. And chocolate chip ice cream. All your favorites.

LESTER

What would I do without you?

KELLY

Starve.

**LESTER'S HOME/OFFICE**

Lester's, trying to hold back his anger, talks on the phone.

LESTER

Yes... I did it... What did you...  
No... No... I... Oh, for Christ's  
sake!

He slams the phone down. After a second, he takes the phone off the hook. Charles appears.

CHARLES

Are you ready to take me up on my  
proposition, Stuart?

LESTER

Yes!

**INT. MARTIN'S HOME OFFICE**

Martin, enraged.

MARTIN

Lester! Lester!

Martin presses the button to hang up and re-dial when the phone RINGS.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Lester? Oh, sorry. Hi Nigel. How's  
London this time of year?... Same  
as usual... I'll try to visit soon.  
But listen, I'm glad you called...

**EXT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO**

Charles and Lester appear outside the casino. Charles leads Lester into the casino.

CHARLES

You are about to embark on the most  
exciting experience of your meager  
little life.

**INT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/SLOT AREA**

Charles and Lester walk among the rows of slot machines.

LESTER

Are you sure this is going to work,  
Charles?

CHARLES

I turned myself into a bird, I can  
certainly win five million dollars  
for you. Do you have five dollars?

Lester pulls a five dollar bill from his wallet. Charles  
snatches it from his hand. Charles hands the money to a  
change person who gives him five dollar coins. He hands  
them to Lester, and directs him to the progressive slots.

Lester inserts the money, but hesitates at pulling the handle.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Pull the handle.

He pulls the handle. Both of them watch as the wheels spin.  
Charles taps the machine with his index finger.

One by one the wheels stop on JACKPOT... JACKPOT...  
JACKPOT... BUZZERS... ALARMS... CHEERS...

Charles smiles slightly as Lester stands at the machine in  
shock as casino officials gather round him.

**INT. MARTIN'S HOME OFFICE**

Mr. Martin is on the phone.

MARTIN

What's his name?

He writes the information down.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Geoffrey Gibson... Sir Geoffrey  
Gibson. Got it... Kennedy Airport.  
I'll have someone meet him... Great.

He finishes his note, goes to reach for the phone, but it  
RINGS before he can pick it up.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Hello... Yes, Brody, it's me.

**INT. MARINA OFFICE**

Andrew Brody picks up the phone as a well dressed man, THOMAS  
JENKINS, in the b.g. sits down.

BRODY

There's a man here who wants to know  
if palais royale's for sale... Yes,  
sir, Mr. Martin.

He hangs up and turns to Jenkins.



BRODY (CONT'D)

He said to meet him here first thing  
in the morning. He'll tell you then.

Jenkins nods, rises, and exits.

**INT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/ROULETTE ROOM**

Charles brings Lester up to an empty European type table.

CHARLES

How much did you win at the slots?

LESTER

A bit over a hundred and fifty  
thousand.

CHARLES

Good. Make your bet.

LESTER

What number?

CHARLES

Pick one.

LESTER

Lucky eighteen. Kelly's age.

CHARLES

Lucky eighteen it is. Play the limit,  
Stuart.

LESTER

That's a thousand dollars.

CHARLES

The limit, Stuart. We only have a  
few days.

**INT. LESTER'S LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM**

Kelly and Tim cuddle on the sofa. The TV is on and they are  
making out. Kelly stops for a moment to look at the clock  
which reads: 11:30PM.

KELLY

I'm getting worried. I went to bed  
late last night and he wasn't home.

TIM

Maybe he's working late. Call him.

She thinks about it, then picks up the phone and dials his  
office. She waits for a moment. No answer.

KELLY

Where is he?

TIM

Maybe he's out on a date.

KELLY

He hasn't had a date since my mother died. Will you stay with me tonight, at least until my father comes home?

TIM

Sure.

KELLY

Tim, why didn't we date when you were in high school?

TIM

Because you thought I was a geek.

KELLY

I did not.

He flashes a quizzical look.

TIM

Did too.

KELLY

Yeah, I guess I did. But you have changed. Freshman year.

TIM

I'm still a geek.

KELLY

A cute geek. I love you.

He smiles, pulls her close and comforts her.

**INT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/ROULETTE PARLOR**

A roulette ball bounces around in the wheel, finally resting in eighteen red. The Roulette Dealer looks at the ball, then places the marker on eighteen red.

ROULETTE DEALER

Eighteen red is the winner.

Shock appears on Lester face. Charles smiles at him as the Roulette Dealer pays them off.

CHARLES

Now the real fun begins, my friend.

**INT. MARTIN'S HOME STUDY**

Mr. Martin is still at his desk. The phone RINGS.

MARTIN

Hello... Commander Yates. How are you? ... What news do you have for me?... You're kidding. Well that's fantastic. Thank you for the call, Commander.

After hanging up the phone, Mr. Martin goes to the liquor cabinet, giggles like a little boy who's just gotten what he wanted for Christmas, pours some brandy and takes a sip.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Mine. All mine. I'm gonna be rich. I'm already rich. I'll be richer.

After another sip, he goes back to his desk, giggling all the way.

**INT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/ROULETTE PARLOR**

An incredibly large pile of chips sits in front of Lester, who looks exhausted. Charles stands next to him with a glass of scotch in his hand and a cigar hanging from his mouth.

Exasperated as he looks at the stack of chips in front of Lester, the floor person approaches. Charles turns to the floor person.

CHARLES

Would you be so kind as to cash these in for us?

FLOOR PERSON

Of course, sir.

CHARLES

Breakfast.

**INT. LESTER'S LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Lester slips, a mixture of exhaustion and exhilaration. He sees Kelly and Tim asleep on the sofa. Kelly and Tim wake up with a start.

KELLY

Daddy! Hi!

LESTER

Good morning, kids. Sleep well?

KELLY

Yeah, Daddy.

TIM

Fine, Mr. Lester.

LESTER

I'm going to get ready for work.  
Have a nice day, kids.

Lester goes up stairs, leaving the kids bewildered.

TIM

My dad would have had a baby if he  
had seen this.

KELLY

Mine too

She looks at the clock. It reads, 6:30 AM.

KELLY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna be late for school.

**INT. E.M.A./ENTRANCE - DAY**

Mr. Martin goes storming through the office looking for Lester. He mellows when Sarah comes up to him.

MARTIN

Hello, Sarah. Good morning.

SARAH

Good morning, Mr. Martin.

MARTIN

Say, we're still on for dinner  
tonight, aren't we?

SARAH

I don't know, Mr. Martin. I'm not  
really feeling that well.

MARTIN

Maybe a good dinner is what you need.  
Besides, I have tickets for a show.

SARAH

Okay, sure.

MARTIN

Vera, get Lester on the phone, God  
dammit!

VERA

Yes, Mr. Martin.

Sarah is shocked at his behavior.

SARAH

I have to get to work, Mr. Martin.

MARTIN

Fine, fine. I'll talk to you later.

VERA

There's no answer, sir.

MARTIN

He better get his ass in here  
A.S.A.P.! He has to meet Sir Geoffrey  
Gibson at Kennedy Airport in two  
hours. Keep trying to get him!

Sarah walks by Vera's desk.

VERA

Far be it for me to judge, but I  
know he's not interested in discussing  
business with you.

SARAH

Yeah, I found that out last time.  
Vera, what's with Mr. Martin and  
Lester?

VERA

Long story. Long story. They were  
like father and son at one time.  
There wasn't a thing that Lester  
would deny Mr. Martin, or the other  
way around. He paid for Lester's  
wedding.

Vera pulls out a small album of photographs and opens it up  
for Sarah to see.

VERA (CONT'D)

That's Lester and his bride. Katie.

Sarah takes the album and looks at the picture.

SARAH

Oh, my. He was, he was handsome.  
What the hell happened?

VERA

He still is, Sarah.

SARAH

Yeah, he is. He needs to grow some balls. That would make him handsome.

VERA

You're too young to understand.

Vera dials the phone again.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/BEDROOM**

Lester in bed asleep, fully clothed. The phone RINGS, shocking Lester to consciousness as he mindlessly answers the phone.

LESTER

Hello. I'll be there right away, Vera. Thanks.

Lester jumps out of bed, and heads for the showers. As he exits the room, Charles appears in human form. He shakes his head in disgust as he lights his cigar.

**INT. E.M.A./ENTRANCE**

Lester staggers in, still very tired, and heads right for Mr. Martin's office.

**E.M.A./MARTIN'S OFFICE**

Mr. Martin on the phone with Brody. He looks up and sees Lester walk by.

MARTIN

Just hold him there, Brody! I'll be there as soon as I can!... I don't know how much to ask for! I have a European boat expert coming this afternoon! Lester!

Lester enters.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I'll call you back, Brody.

Hangs up.

LESTER

I'm sorry for being so...

MARTIN

God dammit, Lester! How the hell can I depend on you if you constantly let me down?!

LESTER

But, Mr. Martin...

MARTIN

Shut up and listen to me! Did you forget about the airport today?

LESTER

The boat expert?

MARTIN

The boat expert. His plane arrives in two hours. Be there to greet him.

LESTER

Yes, sir.

MARTIN

Oh, and Lester. You better get your phone checked. We got disconnected last night. I tried to call you back and the line was busy.

LESTER

I'll call about the phone later.

**E.M.A./HALLWAY**

Lester exits Mr. Martin's office just as Sarah is going in.

SARAH

Hi, Lester.

LESTER

Hi.

He begins to exit.

SARAH

Lester... How do you take it?

LESTER

I gotta go.

Lester exits. Reluctantly Sarah goes into Mr. Martin's office.

**E.M.A./MARTIN'S OFFICE**

When Sarah enters, Mr. Martin, who was preparing to leave, stops and his face breaks in to a smile.

SARAH

Mr. Martin...

He comes close to her, but she recoils slightly.

MARTIN

Yes, Sarah. What is it?

SARAH

I have the reports you wanted to see.

Martin smiles and makes a cursory scan.

MARTIN

Thank you, Sarah. You do such good work.

SARAH

May I ask you a question?

MARTIN

Of course.

SARAH

Why do you treat Lester that way?

MARTIN

What the hell do you care about Stuart Lester? What does he mean to you?

SARAH

He's a human being, Eddy, and you treat him like shit.

Mr. Martin is enraged and is ready to blast Sarah just as the phone RINGS. Martin answers the phone.

MARTIN

What... Just tell him I'll be there!  
I'm leaving right now!

He slams the phone down.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Now you listen to me, young lady. I don't want to hear about Stuart Lester again! Do you understand?

He leaves Sarah on the verge of tears.

**E.M.A./HALLWAY**

Lester is just leaving the building to go to the airport as Mr. Martin exits his office. When he sees Lester, he instantly becomes enraged again.



MARTIN

Aren't you gone yet, Lester!?

LESTER

I'm gone, dammit!

Lester slams the door behind him. Sarah exits Mr. Martin's office, looks at the exasperated Mr. Martin for a moment, then walks away.

**EXT. MARTIN'S MARINA/DOCK**

Thomas Jenkins, who also resembles Charles, and Mr. Martin walk along the dock, examining at palais royale.

MARTIN

What made you think this boat might be for sale, Mr. Jenkins?

JENKINS

I'm from a very old seafaring family. I grew up on the deck of a ship like this one. I can smell them a mile away. What are you asking for her?

MARTIN

What are you offering for her?

JENKINS

Round figure. Ten million.

MARTIN

Well, we can talk about ten million, but you and I both know that we haven't even touched the lines let alone untied the boat yet. Will you join me for lunch? Maybe we can find a way to untie that boat.

**INT. HIGH SCHOOL/MUSIC ROOM**

Kelly practices her piano when Tim comes enters. She jumps up into his arms.

KELLY

What are you doing here? Your reported to the office, didn't you? You'll get busted.

TIM

Of course. I have a surprise for you.

KELLY

What is it?

TIM

Well, Vanessa got a job in LA.

SARAH

Yeah?

TIM

We need someone to cover for her.  
Especially if she doesn't come back.

KELLY

And?

TIM

You want the job?

KELLY

Really?

TIM

Yeah. Really.

SARAH

Wait. I have to ask my father. But  
that's no problem. I'm sure he'll  
say yes.

TIM

Great. Oh, I finished your song  
too. Maybe you can sing it this  
weekend.

She leaps into his arms.

KELLY

Oh, Tim, I love you.

**EXT. MARTIN'S MARINA/DOCK**

A group of sightseers gathers around the dock where palais royale is moored. They take pictures and admire the ship. Mr. Martin walks from the limousine with a gleeful look on his face. He looks at his watch and he becomes anxious.

**INT. LIMOUSINE**

Lester and, SIR GEOFFREY GIBSON, who also bears a resemblance to Charles, are inside.

GEOFFREY

So, Mr. Lester, tell me about this  
mystery ship.

LESTER

You got the FAX from Mr. Martin,  
didn't you?

GEOFFREY

Yes. Yes I did. Very interesting  
story. But the photo was rather  
unclear. Fuzzy.

LESTER

We're almost there. You can see it  
up close.

**EXT. MARTIN'S MARINA/MAIN GATE**

The limousine pulls up into the marina.

**EXT. PALAIS ROYALE/FOREDECK**

Gibson surveys the exterior of the ship, remaining silent as  
he investigates. Mr. Martin and Lester follow behind him.

He Looks closely at the ship, then consults his books for  
reference. He marvels at the pristine condition of the ship.

**INT. PALAIS ROYALE/MAIN CABIN**

Gibson continues his examination.

MARTIN

Sir Geoffrey? What do you think?

GEOFFREY

As far as I can tell, the ship is of  
late Nineteenth Century design.  
British. If the name is authentic --  
which I believe it is -- the keel  
was laid in 1885; she was launched  
the next year. Her owner was a man  
named Charles De Ville Wells.

Lester reacts when he hears the name.

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

Wells was best known for being...

LESTER

The man who broke the bank at Monte  
Carlo.

GEOFFREY

You know of Mr. Wells?

Lester Nods.

MARTIN

Get on with it, please.

GEOFFREY

Yes, well, Mr. Wells...

MARTIN

Enough about Wells. Get to the boat.

GEOFFREY

She vanished in 1926 and hasn't been seen since.

With relish in his eyes, Mr. Martin stares Sir Geoffrey.

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

Until now, of course.

MARTIN

What does that mean?

GEOFFREY

Technically, that means that this ship does not exist. Hasn't existed for over sixty years.

LESTER

If it doesn't exist, how can we be standing on her deck?

GEOFFREY

I suppose that's the prime question.

MARTIN

The prime question is, if she did exist, how much would she be worth?

GEOFFREY

Well, she would be worth, if she did exist--and in this condition--conservatively, at least twenty-five million American dollars.

Mr. Martin and Lester marvel at the figure. Mr. Martin is, of course, very please.

**EXT. MARTIN'S MARINA/DOCK**

Mr. Martin and Lester lead Sir Geoffrey off palais royale and Sir Geoffrey immediately gets into the limousine. It drives away, leaving Mr. Martin and Lester standing near Mr. Martin's limousine.

MARTIN

Okay, Lester, let's get back to the office and finish work.

LESTER

I can't, sir.

MARTIN

What do you mean, you can't?

LESTER

I have plans.

MARTIN

Change them.

Mr. Martin begins to walk away.

LESTER

I don't believe I'll do that.

MARTIN

What did you say?

LESTER

You heard me. I'm not going to change my plans.

MARTIN

May I remind you that you came in late today?

LESTER

May I remind you that I worked late the last three days?

MARTIN

If you're not coming back to the office then you can find your own way home!

LESTER

Fine.

Mr. Martin gets into his limousine. It pulls away, leaving Lester in a cloud of dust.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Lester enters excitedly and heads for the stairs. Kelly enters from the kitchen.

KELLY

Hi, daddy. Got dinner ready.

LESTER

Uh, hi, honey. No dinner tonight.  
Thanks. I gotta go out.

Lester takes off up the stairs, leaving Kelly speechless.

**LESTER'S HOME/BEDROOM**

Lester has just finished dressing. Charles appears behind him and stares at him for a moment.

CHARLES

Stuart, what is this?

LESTER

What?

CHARLES

This. Your outfit. Your hair.

LESTER

What's wrong?

CHARLES

Stuart, you look like a... What is that word I just heard? A dork, I think it is. Yes, I believe that's it. A dork. You look like a dork.

LESTER

A dork?

CHARLES

Yes. A dork. We must do something about your style. It's almost, well, nonexistent. Come with me. You're a man of means now and you should look like one.

**INT. FINE MEN'S HAIR STYLING SALON**

A group of hair stylists and manicurists work Lester over. Charles stands to one side, smiling broadly.

**INT. FINE MEN'S CLOTHING STORE**

Lester models a thousand dollar silk suit. One of the salesmen helps him on with a very expensive jacket.

CHARLES

What do you think?

LESTER

I love it. But how am I going to pay for all these suits?

CHARLES

Stuart, you've won over a million dollars in one day.

Lester puts his American Express on the counter.

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE MEN'S STORE**

Lester looks like a new person. Very handsome, even looks more confident. A couple of very beautiful, young ladies walk by and make eyes at him. Lester is shocked. Charles just smiles as he puffs his cigar.

**INT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/OUTSIDE BACCARAT PIT**

Charles and Lester stand outside the Baccarat Pit.

CHARLES

We should make some real cash tonight.  
Big stakes.

A group of high stakes plays break out large wads of cash.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

High rollers.

One of the players makes a very large bet.

LESTER

This is too complex, Charles. I need more time.

CHARLES

Trust me.

**ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/BACCARAT PIT**

The only players remaining, Lester and Charles, sit at the table. A large stack of chips sits in front of Lester. Charles nods and Lester slides the chips over towards the dealer.

**ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/CASINO LOUNGE**

Charles and Lester sit at a table. Lester holds a casino receipt in his hand.

CHARLES

How much?

LESTER

Four million, twenty-five thousand.

CHARLES

Almost there. How does it feel?

LESTER

Don't know. Right now, it's just a number on a piece of paper. Tell me, you're a ghost, right?

Charles nods.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Then why is it that everyone can see you?

CHARLES

It seems that if I want them to see me, then they see me. I'm not really sure how it works.

A beautiful, sexy young lady, APRIL, sitting at another table, stares at Lester.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Appears that someone has taken an interest in you.

LESTER

She's beautiful.

CHARLES

Why don't you take some time. Meet me back here in a couple of hours.

Charles nudges Lester on. He gets up and leaves the table. April stands to greet him.

LESTER

Hi. I'm Stuart.

APRIL

I'm April.

LESTER

Nice to meet you.

**ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/HOTEL CORRIDOR**

Lester and April walk towards the elevator. Mr. Martin and Sarah walk near them. Sarah sees Lester first.

SARAH

Isn't that Lester?

MARTIN

What's he doing here?

SARAH

He's allowed to have a social life.



MARTIN

I'm going to talk to him.

SARAH

No you're not!

MARTIN

What? How dare you!

SARAH

How dare you! Why don't you just leave Lester alone? In fact, why don't you just leave me alone?

She storms away from him.

MARTIN

Sarah! Come back! God damn you, Lester!

**INT. LESTER'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Half asleep, Kelly staggers down the hallway, wiping the sleep from her eyes. She see that her father's door is open and she enters.

**LESTER'S HOME/BEDROOM**

Kelly finds the room and the bed empty. The clock reads: 12:00 A.M.

She shakes her head and sighs disapprovingly, then exits.

**INT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Lester gets out of bed, leaving April behind, and heads to the bathroom.

**ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/HOTEL BATHROOM**

Lester stares at himself in the mirror as he shakes the sleep out of his eyes.

He picks up his watch and struggles to see the time through the sleepy haze. Finally he sees the time, 1:00AM and rushes out of the bathroom.

**ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/HOTEL ROOM**

Lester runs in, grabs his clothes, dresses as quickly as possible and kisses April goodbye.

LESTER

Gotta go.

April is startled awake.

APRIL

Where?

LESTER

Look, it was really nice, but let's not complicate it. Okay?

APRIL

Yeah, sure. Have a nice life.

LESTER

I'm sorry. I have to go.

Lester exits, leaving April alone in bed.

**ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/HOTEL HALLWAY**

Charles waits outside Lester's hotel room.

CHARLES

*Let's not complicate it. Okay?*

LESTER

What?

CHARLES

You're getting more female attention than you've had in half your lifetime and you don't want to complicate it.

LESTER

She knows what she is.

CHARLES

Maybe I was wrong about what you are.

LESTER

What's that mean?

CHARLES

I *thought* you were an ethical man trapped in an unfulfilled life.

LESTER

If you feel that way, why are you here?

CHARLES

A bargain is a bargain. I still owe you nine hundred, seventy-five thousand dollars. Let's go.

**INT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/CASINO**

Charles wanders through the casino with Lester in tow. Neither one of them looks very happy.

LESTER

Charles, I'm sorry. You were right.

CHARLES

Let's get this over with.

Charles stops in front of a progressive slot machine. The figure on the sign above the machines is near nine hundred, sixty-five thousand dollars. Charles taps the machine with his index finger and smiles an unfulfilled smile.

Lester sighs and produces five one dollar coins from his pocket. He places them in the slot, pulls the handle and waits. One by one, the wheels stop on the jackpot. The buzzers go off.

People begin to gather around them, but both of them just stand there. The excitement is gone.

**EXT. ATLANTIC CITY/BOARDWALK**

Both smoking cigars, Charles and Lester saunter down the boardwalk.

LESTER

You've changed my life.

CHARLES

I just hope that you stay the good person you were before I arrived.

LESTER

Where will you go now?

CHARLES

I'll see where the winds take me.

LESTER

Will I see you again?

CHARLES

I'll never be very far away from you. Be assured of that. I have a question for you. What will you do now that you don't have to do anything?

LESTER

I've already taken care of Kelly's education. That was very important.

CHARLES

Admirable.

LESTER

I've wanted a boat. Maybe I'll sail for a while, then start my own accounting firm.

CHARLES

Stuart, please do not follow my path. It leads only to sadness. Loneliness.

**EXT. MARTIN'S MARINA - NIGHT**

The limousine pulls up to the dock near palais royale. Jenkins stands on the dock next to a Jaguar. Mr. Martin furiously jumps out of the limousine.

MARTIN

What the hell is this Jenkins? Do you have any idea what time it is?

JENKINS

Mr. Martin, I have a very busy schedule. I'm leaving for Europe in a few hours. I wanted to make my final offer before I left.

MARTIN

Make your offer.

JENKINS

Twenty-five million. Cash. Take or leave it. I don't have time to negotiate. The offer is the last.

**INT. MARTIN'S LIMOUSINE**

Mr. Martin is on the phone.

MARTIN

I know what time it is, Neal. I need you to meet with Mr. Jenkins' attorneys first thing in the morning... Neal... Neal ... I pay you a lot of money to be awake at this hour. Just be ready. He wants his people to take possession before lunch. Good night.

**EXT. MARTIN'S MARINA**

As the limousine exits the marina, Charles, the ever-present cigar hanging from his lips, shakes his head sadly, turns and walks toward palais royale.

**INT. REHEARSAL HALL - NIGHT**

Kelly rehearses with Tim and his band, ZENO and QUINT. She looks and sounds incredible as she finishes singing a cover tune.

TIM  
What do you think, guys? Zeno?

ZENO  
I think she's great.

TIM  
Quint?

QUINT  
She's in.

Everyone else in the band AD LIB their acceptance.

TIM  
You start this weekend, babe.

Kelly is ecstatic. She throws her arms around Tim and then AD LIBs thanks to the other band members. She then goes back to Tim.

KELLY  
I love you.

**EXT. MARINA DOCK - DAY**

Where palais royale was, it is not. Mr. Martin stands at the dock with, NEAL LEVIN, Mr. IVERS and Mr. POPPER.

MARTIN  
I don't know where the boat is, god dammit! It was here last night! Jenkins was here! He saw it!

NEAL  
Mr. Martin. Please calm down.

MARTIN  
Neal, it was here! I called you this morning, remember?

NEAL  
I remember. Mr. Ivers, Mr. Popper, I'm sure we can find the boat.

IVERS  
Mr. Levin, you understand?  
(MORE)

IVERS (CONT'D)

Mr. Jenkins has authorized us to deliver this check for twenty-five million dollars.

Martin looks at the check like a child looking at a new toy.

POPPER

And to take possession of Palais Royale. We have the check here. Where's palais royale?

Brody approaches.

MARTIN

Brody! Where is it?

BRODY

Boat? Gone. Been gone. All morning.

IVERS

Who took it?

BRODY

Nobody took it. Just vanished.

IVERS

Vanished?

MARTIN

Brody, call the Coast Guard! Find that god damned boat!

Nonchalantly puffing on his pipe, Brody smiles, nods and exits. Wilson and Popper also head for their car.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Where you going?

IVERS

I came here for palais royale. Palais Royale's not here.

Mr. Martin is at his wits end.

NEAL

I have to get back to the office.

MARTIN

What do I do, Neal?

NEAL

Find the boat.

Neal gets into his car and leaves. Mr. Martin just stares in disbelief at the empty water.

**INT. E.M.A./SARAH'S OFFICE**

Sarah on her cell phone.

SARAH

Yes, mother. I'll be there this weekend... Everything's going fine, mom.

Lester enters, looking tired but not ragged, still dressed the way he was the night before. Sarah waves to him. He smiles.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Yes, mother. Do you think I'd miss dad's birthday? Please. Mom, I have to go. Love you.

Sarah comes up to him and checks him out.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Hi, Lester.

LESTER

Going away this weekend?

SARAH

Yeah. Have to go back to Chicago. Big thing for dad's seventieth. Ten kids and I'm the baby.

LESTER

Must be a great guy.

SARAH

He's one of my heroes. You look like you've been up all night long.

LESTER

Something like that. Where's Eddy?

SARAH

Went to the marina.

Lester raises his eyebrows.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You're looking really good lately.

LESTER

I look like shit, Sarah.

SARAH

You look pretty good to me. Little change of style always helps.

LESTER

Thank.

SARAH

You know, if you're free for lunch, Lester...

LESTER

Sarah, my name is Stuart. It may not be the best name in the world, but it is mine.

SARAH

Okay, Stuart...

Mr. Martin storms into the office. He spies Lester standing next to Sarah.

MARTIN

Lester! God damn it! Where the hell've you...

LESTER

Will you shut the hell up!

A few people begin to gather.

MARTIN

What did you say?

More people approach.

LESTER

I said shut up. Jesus! I've been working for you for seventeen years. Longer than anyone else here, except for Vera.

Vera looks up from her desk. More people gather.

MARTIN

What the hell are...

LESTER

Shut up! I'm the last one to get a raise. Some of the people who've been here less than half the time I have are making almost twice as much. Sarah makes almost as much as I do. She's only been here three years. She has her own office with a window.



Sarah looks embarrassed.

MARTIN  
Lester, are you finished yet?

LESTER  
No. I quit.

He smiles, then turns to exit, then stops.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
Oh, and my name is Stuart, Eddy!

He exits, leaving Mr. Martin is bewildered.

MARTIN  
I can't believe Lester talked to me  
like that.

SARAH  
I do. By the way, his name is Stuart.  
Asshole.

She follows after Lester.

MARTIN  
Sarah! You can't talk to me like  
that! You get back here!

She slams the door behind her. Mr. Martin looks like he is ready to blow a fuse. He turns and sees that most of his employees are standing behind him.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
What are you all looking at?! Don't  
you have enough work to do?!

Martin heads for his office.

MARTIN (CONT'D)  
Vera, hold my calls!

**EXT. E.M.A./PARKING LOT**

Sarah runs up to Lester, who has just gotten into his car, a brand new Jaguar.

SARAH  
Stuart! Wait!

LESTER  
What, Sarah?

SARAH  
I think I just quit too.

LESTER

Have you had lunch yet?

She shakes her head. He smiles and motions for her to get into the car.

**EXT. BOARDWALK CAFE - DAY**

Lester and Sarah are in the middle of lunch. Lester tries to stop laughing.

SARAH

You know, I can't remember the last time we had a conversation like this.

LESTER

We never had a conversation like this, Sarah.

SARAH

The last couple of days, Lester -- I mean, Stuart, sorry -- you were kind of nerdish.

He seems to take offence.

SARAH (CONT'D)

But you've changed. The way you took care of Eddy. That was so incredible. I've never seen anyone talk to him like that.

LESTER

I can understand a beautiful girl like you... I was a nerd. I was a dork last night.

SARAH

I never knew you were as attractive as you are. I saw a picture of you at your wedding. You were a babe.

LESTER

I don't know if I should take that as a compliment or not.

SARAH

It is a compliment. And I saw pictures of your daughter on your desk.

LESTER

She's the spitting image of her mother.

SARAH

Stuart, she's beautiful.

LESTER

You're the first girl I've been out with since my wife died. Mary Katherine Arrington was her name. She hated her name. Everyone called her Katie. She was my soul mate.

SARAH

My mom says that you can have more than one.

Lester smiles.

SARAH (CONT'D)

How'd you meet her?

**INT. MARTIN AND COHEN AGENCY (M&CA) (1979 - FLASHBACK) - DAY**

KATIE ARRINGTON, the receptionist, a comely young blonde with dazzling blue eyes, sits behind her desk as the members of the firm file in.

Lester, his basic, clueless, nerdish self, enters, trying desperately to hide his attraction to Katie.

KATIE

Hi, Stuart. Good morning.

LESTER

Hi, Katie.

KATIE

Anything cool going on?

LESTER

Just working. I got a new car.

KATIE

What kind?

LESTER

A Nova. A Chevy Nova. It's used. Two years old. It's my first car. I mean, the first one that I bought myself. My dad bought my other car. I gave it to my cousin.

KATIE

That's really cool, Stuart. Nova's are cool cars. Maybe you can take me for a ride in it sometime.

Lester is a little nervous.

LESTER  
Yeah, sure. That would be cool.

KATIE  
Awesome. Can't wait.

LESTER  
I better get to work, Katie.

KATIE  
OK, Stuart.

Lester stops short, turns and somehow summons the courage to go back to her.

LESTER  
Listen, Katie, why don't we take that ride at lunch time?

KATIE  
Oh, I'd love to, Stuart. That would be great.

LESTER  
Yeah, we can kill two birds with one stone. I have an eight track in the dash.

KATIE  
That's great, Stuart. I just got the Fleetwood Mac 8-Track. We can listen on the way.

LESTER  
Great, Katie. I love him. That Fleetwood guy's great.

Katie smiles.

KATIE  
Cool. See ya at noon.

LESTER  
I better get to work.

**M&CA/ENTRANCE (FLASHBACK)**

Lester runs into a much younger, and nicer, Mr. Martin.

MARTIN  
Lester! Are you OK?

LESTER

Oh, yes, Mr. Martin. I'm fine.

MARTIN

Well, you look like you were hit by lightning.

LESTER

No, I'm fine. Really. Sir.

MARTIN

Is there anything I can do for you, Lester?

LESTER

Not really. No. Ah, actually, Mr. Martin, if you... If you don't mind.

MARTIN

Spit it out, boy.

LESTER

Well, um... I asked Katie Arrington to go to lunch today.

MARTIN

What did she say?

LESTER

She said yes, Mr. Martin. She really said yes!

MARTIN

Good for you, boy. She's a wonderful young lady. I'm sure you'll have a great time. Make sure you come and tell me all about the date when you get back. Oh, and Lester.

LESTER

Yes, Mr. Martin?

MARTIN

I don't mind if you take a little extra time after lunch.

LESTER

Thanks, Mr. Martin.

MARTIN

In fact...

He hands him a twenty.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Lunch is on me.

LESTER

You don't have to do that, Mr. Martin.

MARTIN

Of course I don't. I want to.

Lester is speechless.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I want my employees to think of me as more than just their boss. And I want you to know that my door is always open to you if you need something, Lester. Okay?

LESTER

Sure, Mr. Martin. Thank you so much.

MARTIN

By the way, Lester, when we're in private, you can call me Eddy.

LESTER

Okay. Eddy.

MARTIN

Good. We understand each other.

LESTER

Yes, sir, Eddy. And I think it's only fair that you call me Stuart. That's my first name anyway.

MARTIN

Okay. Stuart, it is.

LESTER

Thanks, Eddy.

MARTIN

You have a good time, Stuart.

**EXT. ATLANTIC CITY BOARDWALK (END FLASHBACK) - DAY**

Lester and Sarah walk together among the throng of vacationers and gamblers.

LESTER

I asked her to marry me that day at lunch.

SARAH

You don't waste time, do you?

LESTER

I loved her for a long time before that day.

SARAH

It must have been a wonderful wedding.

LESTER

It was. Mr. Martin paid for it.

Sarah's jaw drops.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Everything. Wedding, rings, honeymoon. It was amazing. I tried to pay, but he wouldn't hear of it.

SARAH

I can't imagine Edward Martin being that generous or magnanimous.

Sarah puts her arm around Lester's. He look a bit shocked at first, but smiles.

LESTER

He was.

They lean over the edge of the rail, and look out to sea.

SARAH

What happened to him?

LESTER

His wife died. Suddenly. He began to sour after that. It got worse over the years. I think, maybe seeing that Katie and I were so happy just...

A long silence hangs heavily in the air. There are no words, but much communication. He leans over, tentatively at first, then kisses her gently. When he pulls back, a tear drops from his eye.

**EXT. LESTER'S HOME/FRONT YARD - DAY**

Tim and Kelly pull into the driveway. They get out of the car and go into the house arm in arm.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM**

Kelly and Tim enter. She looks around.

KELLY

Daddy! He's not here.

TIM

He probably just went out.

KELLY

Tim, he didn't come home last night.  
Nothing's been moved here. Anywhere.  
This is not like him.

**INT. LESTER'S CAR - NIGHT - MOVING**

He blasts down the Parkway, windows open. Lester and Sarah laugh and carry on.

SARAH

I can't believe you're awake. You  
were up all night. You should be  
dead.

LESTER

I've slept most of my life. I want  
to have fun.

They continue partying.

**EXT. THE GARDEN STATE PARKWAY**

The car blasts down the Parkway, weaving between cars.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM**

Lester and Sarah enter. Kelly is not home.

LESTER

Kelly! I'm home!

He listens. No answer. The phone RINGS.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Hello... Hi, Kelly... Sure, sure.  
Fine. I'll see you tomorrow. Bye.

He hangs up then turns to Sarah.

LESTER (CONT'D)

She's staying over her boyfriend's  
apartment tonight.

He seems uncertain as Sarah approaches him with an amorous look in her eyes.

SARAH

Well, that's convenient.



She kisses him gently on the lips. They look deeply into each other's eyes for a moment, then begin kissing passionately.

**INT. E.M.A./MARTIN'S OFFICE**

Mr. Martin, melancholy, sits alone in his office, obviously intoxicated, a bottle of brandy and a snifter on his desk. Vera enters with some papers in her hands.

VERA

Mr. Martin. I'm sorry to disturb you. I finished the letters you wanted typed.

Vera places them on his desk.

VERA (CONT'D)

All they need is your signature.

MARTIN

Thank you, Vera. You can go now.

VERA

Thank you. Oh, Mr. Avery called again. He wants to discuss the updates with you.

MARTIN

Call Lester. He knows about... Thank you, Vera. Just get the reports for me, and then you can go home.

VERA

Thank you, Mr. Martin.

Vera exits, leaving Mr. Martin seething in anger.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/BEDROOM - DAY**

Lester and Sarah are asleep as the phone RINGS. With his eyes closed, Lester fumbles for the phone.

LESTER

Hello... Oh, hi. What?... Are you kidding me? . . . No! No! I quit, remember? Goodbye.

Lester hangs up the phone then turns to Sarah as she wakes.

SARAH

Eddy?

Lester nods sleepily.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What he want?

LESTER

He wanted me to work for him again.

Sarah's jaw drops.

LESTER (CONT'D)

He's having trouble with the Avery  
Construction File.

They both laugh.

SARAH

Y'know, I feel sorry for him.

LESTER

Why?

SARAH

With all he has, he's so unhappy.

LESTER

What about you?

SARAH

I've never been happier.

They start making out.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Kelly enters. Lester and Sarah are dressed and ready to go out.

KELLY

Hi, daddy. Who's your friend?

LESTER

Kelly, this is one of my co-workers,  
Sarah Logan; Sarah, this is my  
daughter, Kelly.

KELLY

Nice to meet you.

SARAH

You're as beautiful as your father  
said you were.

KELLY

Thanks. So are you. My dad's talked  
about you so much.

SARAH

Is that so?

LESTER

We have to go.

They head for the door.

KELLY

Oh, daddy, Tim ask me if I would  
fill in for their lead singer for a  
while. Can I?

Lester turns as he closes the door.

LESTER

Sure, honey. Have fun.

The door slams. Kelly stands alone in the lester's  
home/living room. She looks disturbed and hurt. She is on  
the verge of tears.

KELLY

Thanks, dad. Have a nice day.

She heads upstairs.

**INT. THE BANK - DAY**

Lester is with a V.P. of the bank, MR. EDWARDS. Sarah sits  
with him and seems bewildered by the amount of paperwork on  
Edwards's desk. Edwards goes over some paperwork.

EDWARDS

Well, that should take care of it,  
Mr. Lester... C.D.'s. Bonds. Et  
cetera. All I need is your signature  
in about forty or fifty places.

Lester begins signing the paperwork.

**EXT. BANK/PARKING LOT - DAY**

Lester heads for his car with Sarah in tow.

SARAH

Lester, where did you get all that  
money?

LESTER

I sort of won it.

SARAH

Won it? Where?

Lester stops at the car.

LESTER  
At the casino.

SARAH  
Stuart, that was over four million  
dollars.

LESTER  
Closer to five.

SARAH  
That's amazing! How'd you do it?

LESTER  
Some advice from a friend helped me.

SARAH  
A friend?

They get into the car.

**INT. LESTER'S CAR**

SARAH  
So, really. How'd you do it?

LESTER  
Hey, would you like to see a show  
tonight?

SARAH  
Sounds great. Answer the question.

**INT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/THEATER - NIGHT**

Lester and Sarah watch the show. They look at each other  
lustfully and lovingly.

**ATLANTIC CITY/CASINO RESTAURANT**

Lester and Sarah laugh and cajole with each other.

**ATLANTIC CITY/CASINO HALLWAY**

Lester and Sarah are near the entrance to the casino. Sarah  
stops them.

SARAH  
Stuart, do you think you could do it  
again?

LESTER  
Do what?

SARAH  
Win. At the games, I mean.

LESTER  
I guess so. I don't see why not.

SARAH  
Let's do it.

**EXT. ATLANTIC CITY/VALET PARKING**

Lester and Sarah wait for the car, and they obviously had too much to drink.

SARAH  
I can't believe you won a thousand dollars.

LESTER  
Eleven hundred, to be exact. Why don't you stay with me tonight.

SARAH  
I'd love to. You know that. But I don't think Kelly would like the idea of me moving in so soon.

LESTER  
The hell with moving in. I want you to marry me.

SARAH  
Stuart. I didn't know you felt that way about me.

LESTER  
Sarah, I've loved for so long.

They kiss passionately. The valet brings the car up.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM**

Piss drunk, Lester staggers into the darkened room and turns on the light.

LESTER  
Kelly! I'm home! Where the hell are you!

Kelly comes down stairs. She is half asleep.

KELLY  
Hi, Daddy. Daddy, you're drunk.

LESTER

Never mind what I am. Why don't you like Sarah? What's wrong with her?

KELLY

Nothing, daddy. She's a nice girl.

LESTER

She's a woman. She's the first woman who's liked me since your mother died, and you're jealous.

KELLY

What are you talking about?

LESTER

You're trying to chase her away.

KELLY

Daddy, you're just drunk. You don't know what you're talking about.

Lester slaps her.

LESTER

Don't talk back to me like that!

Kelly is shocked. Hurt. She recoils.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Kelly, I'm sorry. I didn't mean it.

He tries to move closer.

LESTER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

She heads up the stairs, crying. Kelly's door slams.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Looking like death, Lester sleeps on the sofa. Kelly comes down the stairs with a suitcase in her hands. Tears in her eyes, she glower at her father.

She takes a letter out of her purse and places it on the coffee table. Her eyes all cried out, she shakes her head and heads for the front door.

**EXT. LESTER'S HOME/FRONT YARD**

Tim stands next to his car as Kelly runs up to him. He takes her suitcase as he kisses her. They jump into the car and take off.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM**

Lester wakes up and picks up the note Kelly left for him. He reads it impassively. Finally he gets up and heads for the kitchen. As he reaches the kitchen, he mindlessly lets the note drop from his hand.

**INT. ATLANTIC CITY/ROULETTE PARLOR - NIGHT**

Lester, sweat pouring from his brow, plays roulette and is loosing miserably. He is almost out of chips.

Lester motions for the PIT BOSS, who hands him a credit slip. The DEALER passes the chips to him. Lester continues playing roulette.

**INT. E.M.A./MARTIN'S OFFICE**

A pile of work on his desk, a half empty bottle of brandy next to the papers Mr. Martin sleeps at his desk. Wearily, he wakes, looks at the work on his desk, takes a heavy sigh, then takes a big gulp from the snifter.

**INT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/ROULETTE PARLOR**

Lester continues to play. Only a few chips remain. A PIT BOSS and FLOOR PERSON speak to each other. Lester is at the roulette wheel in the b.g.

FLOOR PERSON

He's been loosing all night. Betting as much as forty thousand on a single spin.

PIT BOSS

Isn't this the guy who was on that winning streak last week?

FLOOR PERSON

Maxed out his credit.

PIT BOSS

How much did he loose?

FLOOR PERSON

At least three million.

PIT BOSS

Shit.

Tired and worn, Lester throws five one hundred dollar chips at him as he exits the pit.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/OFFICE**

Lester listens to his phone messages.

SARAH (V.O.)

Hi, love. Be back in tomorrow.  
Just wanted to know if you wanted a  
big wedding, or a little one. Ha,  
ha. I'm calling all of our friends  
to come to an engagement party.  
Pick a night. Hope you're behaving  
yourself. Love, ya. Bye.

LESTER

Oh, shit. I'm getting married.

Lester fumbles for the liquor cabinet and pours himself a  
drink as Mr. Martin's voice BOOMS from the answering machine.

MARTIN (V.O.)

Lester! Where are you?

Lester stares at the machine.

MARTIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You left me with all this god damned  
work! Get your god damned ass in...

Lester runs to the machine and shuts it off as he collapses  
into his chair.

LESTER

Asshole.

**INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - DAY**

The sun shines on Tim and Kelly as both of them awake. Tim  
kisses her.

TIM

You ready for tonight?

KELLY

Kind of. But my dad won't be there  
to see it.

Tim cuddles her understandingly.

KELLY (CONT'D)

I don't know what's happening, Tim.  
He never laid a hand on me in my  
life. He's never been drunk.

They cuddle.



**EXT. MARTIN'S MARINA**

An I.R.S. Agent, WILLIAM USHER, stands at the dock where palais royale was docked. Mr. Martin approaches with an urgent look in his eye.

MARTIN

What is this all about?

USHER

Are you Edward Martin?

MARTIN

Who are you?

Usher flashes I.D.

USHER

I'm Agent William Usher of the Internal Revenue Service. You're Edward Martin?

Mr. Martin nods.

USHER (CONT'D)

Is there some place where we can talk?

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM**

Lester dials the phone. He still looks drunk. Unkempt. Disheveled.

LESTER

Tim? This is Mr. Lester. Is Kelly there?... Yes, I know that. If she's there... Tell her that I love her.

He listens but there is no reply.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Tim? Are you there?

Dejected, he hangs up the phone.

**INT. TIM'S LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM**

Tim has his hand on the phone. Kelly sits in the b.g. on the sofa.

TIM

Are you sure you don't want to just try to talk to him?

She just curls up into a ball.

**INT. MARTIN'S MARINA/OFFICE**

Usher and Mr. Martin sit at the desk. Usher pulls some papers out of his brief case.

USHER

I understand you took possession of an antique, three-masted Palais Royale.

MARTIN

Why would the I.R.S. be interested in that?

USHER

According to I.R.S. regulations, if you did take possession of the aforementioned Palais Royale, it could be considered income.

MARTIN

That's outrageous!

**INT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/CREDIT WINDOW - NIGHT**

Lester heads directly for the credit window.

**INT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/BANDSTAND**

Tim and his band finish setting up. Kelly, Looking devastatingly beautiful, comes up to Tim.

TIM

Nervous?

KELLY

Excited.

TIM

It's show time.

Tim goes to the mike.

TIM (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, we're The Windjamers.

The band immediately breaks into an up-tempo song. Kelly comes to the mike. She looks a bit tentative, but comes on like a pro as soon as she starts to sing. The audience takes to her immediately.

**ATLANTIC CITY/ROULETTE PARLOR**

The music from Tim's band WAFTS through the air. Lester places a rather sizable wager on twenty-seven red. He looks up at the croupier wishfully.

The Roulette Dealer spins the ball. The ball bounces for a moment, then falls into twenty-eight black.

The Roulette Dealer gathers the loosing chips together. Totally dejected, Lester takes the last hundred dollar chip out of his pocket and tosses it to the croupier as he leaves the table.

**ATLANTIC CITY/CASINO LOUNGE**

Kelly has the audience eating out of the palms of her hands.

**ATLANTIC CITY/CASINO CREDIT WINDOW**

Lester attempts to acquire more cash. The clerk nod his head and motions for the credit manager. The credit manager comes to Lester.

LESTER

What's the problem? Isn't my credit good here?

CREDIT MANAGER

I'm sorry, but you've exceeded your limit, Mr. Lester.

LESTER

What do you mean?

CREDIT MANAGER

You've already borrowed almost four million dollars in the last three days, sir.

LESTER

You're kidding?

CREDIT MANAGER

I'm afraid I'm not, sir. Until this balance is cleared, your credit privileges are suspended.

**EXT. MARTIN'S MARINA/DOCK**

Palais Royale sails into the marina.

**INT. ATLANTIC CITY/CASINO LOUNGE**

As Kelly finishes the song, the lights dim and they begin playing the song that Kelly and Tim wrote.

**ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/NEAR CREDIT WINDOW**

Lester heads away from the credit window, towards the music.

**ATLANTIC CITY CASINO/THE BANDSTAND**

Kelly, radiant, performs. The audience is with her for every note.

**ATLANTIC CITY CASINO**

Lester walk/runs through the casino, urgently gaining speed as he nears the lounge.

**ATLANTIC CITY/LOUNGE**

Kelly continues singing as her Lester enters the lounge. He stops short at the entrance which is about twenty or thirty feet from the bandstand. Lester is in awe.

Kelly, finally, sees Lester. Shock at the sight of him, she comes close to stopping the song, but finds the strength to continue. Soon, tears start to flow from Kelly's eyes. It really sells the song to the audience.

Lester cannot move. He stands at the entrance to the lounge.

Full of emotion, Kelly closes the song. The music stops. The audience applauds. Kelly stands still, microphone in hand. Lester attempts to move forwards. Kelly sees that he is coming to her, and runs from the stage.

Lester is in tears but cannot move towards her. He turns and exits the lounge. Exasperated, Tim puts his guitar down and goes after Kelly. Quint goes to the microphone.

**QUINT**

We're going to take a little break.

**EXT. THE BOARDWALK**

Lester comes running out of the casino. He pauses, looks back at the casino, then runs towards the beach.

**EXT. THE BEACH**

Lester runs frantically towards the water. He stops under a pier just short of the waterline, prostrates himself and pounds the sand with his fists, crying.

He chastises himself AD LIB, and begins to call out for Charles, who appears magically behind him.

CHARLES

What sort of a predicament have you gotten yourself into now?

LESTER

Charles! Where've you been?

CHARLES

Charming little place called Las Vegas. Very pretty. Lots of lights. Stuart, what have you done?

Lester cannot speak.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You've wasted over four million dollars. And you broke our agreement.

LESTER

What do you mean?

CHARLES

Our bargain was that you would never play in a casino again if I helped you win the five million. You broke the agreement.

LESTER

That's not exactly true.

CHARLES

Why's that?

LESTER

You were ten thousand dollars short.

Charles looks at him quizzically.

LESTER (CONT'D)

The progressive slot was ten thousand dollars short.

CHARLES

So you felt that you could just blow all the money. That's a sad indictment of your character. Lester, do you have any idea why I made you agree to the terms of our bargain?

Lester shakes his head.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

My friend, you read only part of my story. That sad story of a wasted life.

LESTER

You broke the bank.

CHARLES

And the bank broke me.

LESTER

I don't understand.

Lester smiles and heads for the door.

**INT. MONTE CARLO CASINO (1895) - NIGHT**

Charles sits at the roulette table, the only player. Lester stands behind him.

LESTER

What's going on, Charles? What is this?

Charles, looking worn and haggard, does not reply. Smoke from his cigar circles his face. He takes a gulp from a glass of scotch.

CROUPIER

Would you like to place another wager, Monsieur wells?

CHARLES

Sir?

CROUPIER

Would you like to place another wager?

Charles looks at remaining chips

CHARLES

Not much left.

LESTER

Charles, is that all the money you have?

Charles cannot hear him. The manager, Henri, stands near the table. He pulls the pit boss aside. Lester comes within earshot of them.

HENRI

What is the matter with Monsieur Wells?

PIT BOSS

He has wagered enormous amounts of money in the last three days. He has consistently lost.

Lester turns to the Pit Boss.

LESTER

What are you two talking about?

They do not hear him.

HENRI

How much?

PIT BOSS

Over five hundred thousand.

HENRI

Good God. How much does he have left?

Charles is about to push the last of his money towards a spot on the roulette wheel.

CHARLES

Five hundred. Twenty-eight black.

LESTER

What the hell are you doing? That's all you have left?

The croupier helps place the wager on the appropriate number.

CROUPIER

The wager is five hundred; twenty-eight black.

The croupier spins the ball.

Lester is frantic. Charles sits impassively.

Henri and the pit boss walk up to the table. They both look concerned.

The ball falls. As the wheel slows to reveal that the ball has fallen into twenty-seven red. The Croupier places a marker on the winning number.

CROUPIER (CONT'D)

Twenty-seven red is the winner.

The Croupier gathers up the chips.

HENRI

I'm sorry, Monsieur Wells. Is there anything we can do for you?

CHARLES

A room for the night and passage back to England would be nice.

HENRI

Certainly, Monsieur. Anything.

CHARLES

Thank you.

Charles rises from the table, then dips his hand into his pocket, but only an empty hand comes out.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Sorry.

He heads for the exit. Lester follows him towards the door.

LESTER

Why the hell'd you do it?

Charles does not answer, but continues towards the door. Lester continues to question him AD LIB as they both go through the door.

**INT. OLD BAILEY'S, LONDON (CONTINUE FLASHBACK) - DAY**

Charles stands morosely in the docket. Lester frantically comes through the door into another part of the courtroom.

The judge scans some papers.

LESTER

Charles! What in the hell is this?

Charles looks over at him with a blank expression in his eyes. Judge slams gavel.

JUDGE

Order in the courtroom! We will have order!

Charles De Ville Wells, you have been found guilty of the crime of making false pretenses. This is a very serious offense, Mr. Wells. One not to be taken lightly. Before the Court pronounces sentence upon you, do you have anything say in your defense?



Charles slowly puts his head down and shakes it from side to side.

LESTER

Charles, say something!

JUDGE

Mr. Wells? Have you nothing to say to this Court?

Charles, dejected, beaten, says nothing.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Mr. Wells, being found guilty of the charges against you, and this Court finding no mitigating circumstances, We sentence you to fifteen years penal servitude.

The Judge bangs his gavel and motions for the court officers to take him away. The officers quickly take Charles through a door near the docket. Lester heads for the door through which he entered the courtroom.

**INT. CHARLES' CELL (CONTINUE FLASHBACK) - NIGHT**

Charles, Looking disheveled, emaciated and much older than before, lies on a cot. He cries and mumbles to himself as Lester enters. Charles does not hear him or see him.

LESTER

What is this? What's happening?

The door opens behind Lester. A guard enters.

GUARD

Mr. Wells. Wake up, Gov.

CHARLES

What? What is it?

GUARD

Your term is up. Fifteen years.

Charles sits up and gathers himself together.

CHARLES

Fifteen years?

GUARD

Right enough, Gov. Every last, bloody day of it. Fifteen years. Come on now, mate. Out `cha go.

Charles staggers out the door.

**EXT. STREET IN LONDON (CONTINUE FLASHBACK) - DAY**

A much older-looking, mid-eighties, Charles stands on a street corner with a tin cup in his hand. He looks near death, senile.

A dimwitted smile appears on his face as begins croaking out the tune, "The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo." Lester walks up to and stands over him. Charles does not acknowledge his presence.

LESTER

So this is the end of it. This is the moral of the story? Is that it, Charles? Why don't you talk to me?

A sober look appears in Charles' eyes.

CHARLES

I tried that. You didn't listen.

LESTER

I guess it was just too much too fast. Too easy.

CHARLES

My advice to you is to go and marry that young lady. Patch up your relationship with that fine daughter of yours. And try to find the friendship you used to have with Mr. Edward Martin.

LESTER

I don't know about Mr. Martin. I don't think he'll ever change.

CHARLES

You'd be surprised how people can change. You still have some money left. Make a life for yourself.

Charles continues singing the song.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/BEDROOM (END FLASHBACK) - DAY**

The sun shines in Lester's eyes and wakes him. A bit disoriented, he looks around the room. The bird cage is gone. Lester walks around the room trying to make sense of it all.

**LESTER'S HOME/KELLY'S ROOM**

Lester pops his head. He sees that her bed had not been slept in.

**LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM**

He comes down stairs, fully dressed.

LESTER  
Kelly? Are you home? Honey, are  
you hear?

**EXT. LESTER'S DRIVEWAY**

Lester exits the house, with an urgent look on his face, and gets into the car. He drives off.

**EXT. MARTIN'S MARINA MAIN GATE**

Lester pulls the car through the gate and right up to the where palais royale is docked. He gets out of the car and stares at palais royale.

LESTER  
Good God. It's true.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM**

Lester tentatively enters. He sniffs the air, then walks towards the kitchen.

**LESTER'S HOME/KITCHEN**

Kelly stands at the stove cooking some breakfast. Lester appears at the doorway.

KELLY  
Hi, daddy.

They both are on the verge of tears.

LESTER  
Kelly, I'm so sorry.

They quickly embrace.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
I'll never hit you again. I'm so  
sorry, sweetheart. Can you forgive  
me?

She just smiles and holds him tighter. Tears drip from both their eyes but neither of them make any attempt to wipe them away.

KELLY  
How could I not forgive you, daddy?

They embrace tightly.

LESTER

By the way, the song was fantastic.

They both begin to laugh as they try to clear the tears from their eyes.

**EXT. MARTIN'S MARINA**

Mr. Martin walks towards the dock and stares at palais royale.

MARTIN

What in God's name is this? What is going on here!? Brody!

He storms towards the office.

**INT. ATLANTIC CITY RESTAURANT**

Lester and Sarah sit at a table. The waitress serves them coffee and leaves the table. Lester looks uneasy. Sarah takes his hand.

SARAH

I've invited all the people from the office. Including Mr. Martin.

She waits for a reaction and gets the one she expected: shock.

SARAH (CONT'D)

But I don't think he'll come.

LESTER

Sarah I have to tell you something.

SARAH

What? What's wrong?

LESTER

You may not want to marry me.

SARAH

What are you talking about?

LESTER

I went to the casinos the last couple of days. I lost a lot of money. Over four million.

SARAH

I'm sorry you lost the money, Stuart. But that's not the reason I want to marry you.

LESTER

Why do you want to marry me? I'm not rich. I'm not handsome. I'm a social leper. A dork. No one respects me. No one really likes me.

SARAH

That's not true. You're rich in ways that money can't buy.

She touches his face.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You used to lack style, but you were always attractive. You're still kind of a dork.

Lester looks a bit shocked, but smiles right away, knowing she is right.

SARAH (CONT'D)

People may not have respected the way you caved into pressure all the time, but they always liked you.

LESTER

I can't believe that.

SARAH

Oh, really? All of the people from the office are coming to the party tonight. All of them. They are so happy that we're getting married.

LESTER

Shocked, probably.

SARAH

I'm not going to question what I feel for you now. I don't want to question it. I just want to feel it.

LESTER

What about the money?

SARAH

Fuck the money.

Lester is slightly shocked.

SARAH (CONT'D)

We're both competent accountants. We can make more than enough money.

LESTER

What about Mr. Martin?

SARAH

What about him?

LESTER

Maybe I should call him. Find out if he's coming.

SARAH

After all he's done to you, you don't hate him. Do you?

LESTER

I feel sorry for him. He's much sadder than I ever was.

Slowly, lovingly, she embraces him.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/OFFICE**

Lester picks up the phone and dials. The party can be HEARD in the b.g.

**INT. MARTIN'S HOME/DEN**

Mr. Martin reclines in his large, leather chair. A bottle of whiskey and a glass sit on the table in front of him. The phone RINGS. Mr. Martin gropes for the phone. He is obviously under the influence.

MARTIN

Who is this?

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/OFFICE**

LESTER

It's me, Mr. Martin, Stuart Lester.

**INTERCUT** Between Mr. Martin's and Lester's office.

MARTIN

What do you want?

LESTER

I just wanted to invite you to a party.

MARTIN

What party?

LESTER

Sarah Logan and I, we're getting married. We're having an engagement party at my house. Everyone from the office is here. We thought you might want to come.

MARTIN

What makes you think I'd want to come to a party for your engagement, you Judas?

LESTER

Mr. Martin...

MARTIN

I gave you a job when no one else would hire you!

LESTER

That's not true.

MARTIN

I was your best friend!

LESTER

When?

MARTIN

You stabbed me in the back! God damn you!

Mr. Martin slams the phone down.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/OFFICE - NIGHT**

LESTER

Mr. Martin? Are you there?

Sarah comes up from behind him and wraps her arms around him as he hangs up the phone. They exit the room arm in arm. The sounds of the party down stairs get LOUDER as the couple enters the room.

From the shadows, Charles appears. He watches the couple leave the room and listens as the crowd responds to their entrance.

**INT. MARTIN'S BEDROOM**

Mr. Martin sits in the darkened room, bathed by the light of the television set, sipping soup. He looks lost. Charles appears in front of him.

CHARLES

Are you proud of yourself?

MARTIN

Who the hell are you? How'd you get in here?

Charles ignores him and takes a seat in front of Mr. Martin.

CHARLES

Do you enjoy sitting here alone?

MARTIN

Why do you care?

CHARLES

Your life is so fulfilled that you can afford to turn away a friend who has been loyal to you for all these years?

MARTIN

What do you know about this?

CHARLES

Edward Martin, Stuart Lester loves you like a father. He is broken hearted that you cannot reciprocate. Can you not remember how you used to feel... Before your heart was hardened?

MARTIN

Why do you tell me this? Why? What's in it for you?

CHARLES

A very close friend of mine is in pain because he does not have the opportunity to share one of the happiest moments of his life with someone about whom he cares so much.

MARTIN

What am I supposed to do? I'm too old to change.

CHARLES

Search your heart. The answer is there.

Charles disappears, but Mr. Martin does not notice at first.

MARTIN

What answers are you...



Mr. Martin is frightened and disoriented when he sees that Charles is gone.

**INT. LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM**

The party is in full-swing. Kelly, Tim and his band, and all the members of the accounting firm, except for Mr. Martin, are in attendance. Gifts pile up on a table.

Lester takes an empty tray into the kitchen. He meets Kelly on the way.

KELLY

Daddy, this is the greatest party I've ever seen. I'm so happy for you.

LESTER

Thank you. Do you really like Sarah?

KELLY

Daddy, if you love her and she loves you, how could I not like her.

They kiss. Kelly holds up drinks.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Tim's waiting for his soda.

Lester continues towards the kitchen.

**LESTER'S HOME/KITCHEN**

Lester places some snacks on the tray when Charles appears.

CHARLES

Splendid party.

LESTER

Charles! I wondered where you went.

CHARLES

I had some errands to run.

LESTER

I want to introduce you to someone.

CHARLES

Delightful.

Lester exits the kitchen, but quickly returns with Sarah.

LESTER

Charles, this is Sarah Logan; Sarah, this is Charles De Ville Wells.

Sarah extends her hand.

SARAH  
It's a pleasure, Sir.

Charles kisses her hand.

CHARLES  
Indeed.

SARAH  
How long have you known Lester?

CHARLES  
A long time.

SARAH  
You'll be at the wedding?

CHARLES  
I would not miss it.

LESTER  
Why don't we join the others.

SARAH  
Would you like a drink, Mr. Wells?

CHARLES  
Scotch, please. By the way, I'd be  
very happy if you called me Charles.

SARAH  
Okay, Charles.

**LESTER'S HOME/LIVING ROOM**

The three of them enter the lester's room. Kelly stands in front of the fireplace. She has a drink in her hand.

KELLY  
Attention! Everybody, listen up!  
Quiet!

The room quiets down.

KELLY (CONT'D)  
A toast. To my father, the best guy  
in the whole world. And to my future  
step mom.

There is a moment between Kelly, Lester and Sarah. Charles smiles. The whole room toasts. Lester and Sarah embrace Kelly.

KELLY (CONT'D)

One last thing. I found something that my mom left to me. She wanted me to know how much love she had for my father.

Kelly takes out a piece of paper.

KELLY (CONT'D)

It's a poem she wrote. I'm sure she'd want me to read it now.  
*I dreamed all my life - That one day -  
this day - I could look into these  
eyes - Your eyes - my sweet spirit.  
Then I knew - That dreams are real -  
When I first saw you - Standing there.  
Like finding pebbles - Of pure gold -  
In a sea of beautiful liquid dreams -  
Your love is the key to my heart.*

She chokes back tears.

KELLY (CONT'D)

*I will never leave you - Not forever -  
No matter what hand fate deals -  
Always look for the sign - that's  
me.*

She breaks into tears of happiness as Tim, Lester and Sarah, also in tears, embrace her.

The doorbell RINGS. Lester extricates himself and heads for the door.

Mr. Martin stands on the other side dressed in a suit. He looks much better than he had before. He has a box in his hand.

LESTER

Mr. Martin.

Mr. Martin fumbles over his words and is a bit tentative.

MARTIN

Hello, I, uh, it's just that,  
Lester... Stuart. I didn't know if  
a gift was appropriate. But I brought  
one anyway.

Sarah comes to the door and stands next to Lester.

SARAH

Mr. Martin?

MARTIN

Sarah. I hope I'm not intruding.

LESTER

Not at all. Please come in.

Mr. Martin enters. Silence falls over the crowd. Mr. Martin seems uneasy as he goes to the middle of the group. Mr. Martin, Lester and Sarah are all on the verge of tears. Mr. Martin turns to them.

MARTIN

I'm not used to making apologies.  
But I have so many to make to you,  
more than I have time for.

Martin places a gift in Lester's hands.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Please accept this for all the pain  
I've caused you.

Lester pulls the gift close to his chest.

LESTER

Thank you, Mr. Martin.

MARTIN

Open it.

Lester opens the box. Inside is the golden key to palais royale. Lester lifts it and holds it to eye-level.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

It's yours, Stuart. No strings.

LESTER

I don't know what to say.

MARTIN

You've said enough. Also, and I'd  
like everyone here to hear this.

Martin looks deep into Lester's eyes.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

You may call me Eddy.

Shock fills the crowd as everyone tries to figure out what is going on.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Because partners should be on a first  
name basis.

After a moment of shock, the room breaks into applause.

LESTER

Partners?

Mr. Martins smiles and nods, holding back the tears.

SARAH

A toast! To the best boss, and the best friend anyone could have.

GATHERING

Here, here!

Sarah and Kelly embrace Lester. Then Kelly goes to Mr. Martin and puts her arms around him.

KELLY

Thank you, Mr. Martin. You made my dad the happiest person alive.

Martin tries to hold back tears, but cannot.

MARTIN

I'm so sorry.

Charles, satisfied that his mission is accomplished, quietly heads for the door.

LESTER

Get Eddy a drink.

**EXT. STREET OUTSIDE LESTER'S HOUSE**

Charles walks down the street with a great big grin on his face and a cigar in hand. After a moment, Lester comes running after him.

LESTER

Charles! Wait a minute!

They stand together.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

CHARLES

I've done what I set out to do here. There are other accomplishments ahead. For both of us.

LESTER

I'll miss you.

CHARLES

And I'll miss you, my friend.

Charles hands him a cigar.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Walk with me a while. Let's take  
some air together.

**EXT. THE BEACH**

Lester and Charles stand at the water's end.

LESTER

Why did you do it? Why me?

CHARLES

I lived a selfish life, Stuart. I  
cared for no one but myself. And no  
one cared for me. Nothing mattered  
but material gain.

He smiles sadly and looks out over the ocean.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I sailed the seas alone for almost  
fifty years, until I landed here in  
your Atlantic City.

Both of them have tears in their eyes. They embrace. They  
break the embrace.

LESTER

Will I see you again?

CHARLES

Your bride invited me to the wedding,  
didn't she?

LESTER

I'd be more than disappointed if you  
weren't there.

CHARLES

I'll be there.

Charles turns and heads for the water, singing "The Man Who  
Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo." He disappears into the night,  
but the singing can be HEARD still.

FADE OUT