

The Café du Caché

A Comedic Tragedy set to Music

Written by:
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Music by:
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Lyrics by:
René Pinnell

ACT 1:

(A film of things you'd miss if you were dead is projected upon the closed curtains. The film is accompanied by music, "Things you'd miss if you were dead," provided by the Micro-orchestra. The Film ends. A drum-roll. A symbol is crashed and a spotlight opens on Shadow Boy. He is dressed in a green suit with a red bow tie. Shadow Boy is all smiles. He has fun with the words playing around with the beat and prosody. Addressing the audience he starts...)

SHADOW BOY: I don't know who I am... I'm pretty sure I'm dead... because I don't eat... and I don't sleep... and... *(He checks his pulse in earnest and then gives a sigh when he finds none)* ...and I don't have a pulse. This all leads me to believe that I'm dead... but even so I'm not totally sure, because it seems that if I were dead I would have had to have been alive at some point and I don't remember ever being alive... I don't remember ever being anything other than a ghost... which is why I don't know who I am. I didn't come from anything. I had no mother or father. I just was. I just opened my eyes and all of a sudden there I was standing in the middle of Victory Square wearing the same handsome green suit that you see me wearing now... That was the day I first met Mr. Dubnow. He had such a pleasant disposition but that wasn't what attracted me to him. What attracted me to him was how alone he looked in the crowd. No one seemed to notice him; he didn't seem to notice anyone else. For a second I thought he was another ghost but then I saw his shadow and realized that people were walking around him instead of through him. Still I felt *this* connection because we both had our own worlds. That night I followed him home to his apartment above the Café du Caché, where I met the lovely Mrs. Dubnow. That was a long time ago and over the years I've come to care a great deal for not only Mr. and Mrs. Dubnow but for all of the wonderful people who live in the apartments above the Café. *(Sigh)* The only problem is I'm a ghost and they can't hear me when I say I love them.

(The Curtains open revealing the Café du Caché. The patrons are going about their business silently. The Micro-orchestra starts.)

SHADOW BOY:

Like a soldier needs his boots,
like a tree needs its roots,
I'd be lost without the Café du Caché.

Like a poet loves to think,
like a lush loves to drink,
I'd be lost without the Café du Caché.

I came here blue eyed and dressed in green
and watched their lives unfold
with a sock in my mouth and rock in my shoe,
but not a hand to hold.

Please come in and stay a while.
We'll be dancing off the precipice
so don't forget to smile as you fall.

The people sing strange melodies,
off-color (*band plays off color noise*) and off-key.
Their eccentricities warm my heart.

Still every now and then I get down and I get blue,
because I am completely see-through.
It's so hard not to touch the ground with your feet.
It's so hard not to make a sound when you speak.
And so my life is just an imitation there of,
cause I am invisible to the ones I love.

Like a flower needs a vase,
like a parade needs hurrahs,
I'd be lost without the Café du Caché.

Like a lady loves her tea,
like a sailor love the sea,
I'd be lost without the Café du Caché.

SHADOW BOY (*Announcing to the audience*): Mrs. and Mrs. Dubnow.

Mr. 'n Mrs. make a lovely couple,
when they tear each others hair.
Act like they can't stand each other,
but that's their way of showing they care.
She'd be sad without her man to nag.
He would cry without his wife to mortify.

MRS. DUBNOW: Izzador, stop being absurd! Of course you're not a bird!

MR. DUBNOW: But how can you be sure?

MRS. DUBNOW: Because you're a man.

MR. DUBNOW: Perhaps I'm a bird that looks like a man.

MRS. DUBNOW: Oi vey is mir! Why do I try, why do I bother?

MR. DUBNOW: If necessity's the mother of invention, who's the father?

MRS. DUBNOW: Ach, mine Got! He's impossible.

SHADOW BOY:

And then there's Madame Marceau,
star of stage and screen,
playing the role of drama-queen.
And though her glory-days are long gone,
she refuses to sing her swansong,

hoping one day,
in a wonderful way
the limelight will return.

Madame Marceau (*downing a martini*):

I've graced every stage of distinction,
and known every opulent treat.
I've broken every heart to completion,
but left every lover replete.
My name is known the world over,
from the Cinemas of California to the Cabarets of Berlin.
True my fame isn't what it used to be,
I'm afraid I've taken a rather extended vacation.
But as sure as the sun will rise again,
I swear I'll be back on top again,
the world's adoration, a super-star sensation!
But until then I'll be content to drink.

SHADOW BOY:

Next we have Jack Mulligan,
The American painter.
An honest man who says what he thinks and thinks as he please.
The type of man who'd swear like a sailor just as soon as sneeze.
He doesn't like children and he doesn't like pets,
drinks too much coffee, smokes too many cigarettes.
But underneath that coarse appearance,
He's a tender son of a bitch in disguise!

JACK MULLIGAN:

Like a preacher loves a sinner, like the devil loves a saint,
my passion and my purpose is to capture life with paint.
I've been around the block, I've seen the hearts of men,
some were filled with virtue but most were filled with sin.
I've watched the earth erupt, I've watched the sky explode.
I've watched my friends die and watched my faith erode.
But this isn't to say that I'm bitter or depressed,
but humanity's gone to shit,
and painting's how I deal with it.
Life is grand,
with a brush in your hand.

SHADOW BOY (*Announcing to the audience.*): And then we have Mr. Picket.

An upstanding citizen with a very stiff collar.
Reads in the dark just to save a dollar.
All his "I"s are dotted and all his "t"s are crossed.

His manners are spotless but his passions lost.
Except for one small vice he's perfectly fit,
and no one but me knows that dark secret.

MR. PICKET:

My mother taught me how to function in society.
I learned the value of manners and propriety.
There's a certain way things should be done,
doesn't matter if they're any fun.
A suit must be worn regardless of heat,
pain and pleasure must be kept discrete,
even your thoughts should be ordered and neat,
thank God emotions are obsolete.

SHADOW BOY (*Announcing to the audience.*): And then there's Eva, the crippled orphan.

More beautiful than an ice covered tulip,
more brilliant than a shooting star.
Her dreams are mixed with mint-julip,
Her heart is kept in a jar.
She writes obituaries for the papers,
prefers the company of *dead* neighbors.
Relies on self-reliance for strength,
wont let you get closer than arms-length.

EVA:

Clifford Downing died at 51
from cancer of the spleen.
Survived by a wife, two daughters and a son
he wrote for time magazine.
I know his life story from beginning to end,
have come to consider him a very good friend.
It's sad we never had a chance to meet
or a chance to say so long
but as long as the separation's complete
you can't lose someone who's already gone.

SHADOW BOY (*Announcing to the audience.*): And then there's Jacques, the proprietor and manager of the Café du Caché.

He is the stable one in our group,
takes life in stride.
More therapeutic than chicken soup,
reliable as the tide.

JACQUES:

I've worked here thirty years or more,
and weathered every storm.
Ten thousand lives came through this door
and here's how each was uniform.
Some were filled with love,
and others were filled with sorrow,
all were filled with idiotic complications and bravado.
Take off your coat,
take off your hat
have a seat
and remember that,
a tree'll break if it does not bend
man'll make himself miserable to no end,
until the end.

SHADOW BOY AND ENTIRE CAFÉ SING IN CHORUS:

Please come in and stay a while.
We'll be dancing off the precipice
so don't forget to smile as you fall.

The people sing strange melodies,
off-color and off-key.
Our eccentricities warm his heart.

(Starts at a whisper and is repeated until it builds to crescendo.)

The patrons are alarming,
But the atmosphere is charming.

(Reaches climax. Shadow Boy is lifted into the air by the Café. A moment passes and then Shadow Boy is let back down to his feet. The music gets very soft and melancholy. The lights fade to a spot light on the Shadow boy. He sings the next verse alone. The rest of the Café fades back into there normal position inside the Café.)

SHADOW BOY:

Still every now and then I get melancholy and I get low,
Because I'm just a shadow.
It's so hard to see someone's shoe untied and not tell them.
It's so hard to see someone hurt inside and not hold them.
And so my life is just an imitation there of,
until I can hold the ones I love,
until I can hold the ones I love.

(Shadow Boy strikes a triumphant pose with his arms in the air. The song ends. Lights inside Café are brought up and patrons resume normal behavior as if nothing has happened. Shadow Boy is holding triumphant pose. He looks over his shoulder and sees

that none of the patrons are paying any attention to him. He lifts his hands in the air again. They still don't notice him. Shadow boy crosses to Mr. Picket and strikes the triumphant pose. Without taking any notice of Shadow Boy Mr. Picket lifts up his newspaper blocking Shadow Boy. Shadow Boy drops his arms in defeat.)

MR. DUBNOW : Malka, I vas thinking. Do you remember our vedding day?

MRS. DUBNOW (*Without looking up from her knitting*): Yo.

MR. DUBNOW: Vasn't it beautiful?

MRS. DUBNOW (*without interest*): Yo. Es is geven zayer shayn.

MR. DUBNOW: And such a shayne Madel you were. And I... vas I not handsome?

MRS. DUBNOW (*warming up a little she looks up from her knitting*): Yo, you vas very handsome, Izzy.

MR. DUBNOW: And do you remember our Honey Moon night afterverds?

MRS. DUBNOW (*blushing*): Yo...

MR. DUBNOW: I vas so anxious to get you in bed, you were so beautiful... but I had a terrible headache. Do you remember?

MRS. DUBNOW: Yo, I remember. You gave me a dallar so I could buy you some Aspirin.

MR. DUBNOW: Ah, dat's right!

MRS. DUBNOW: But you couldn't wait and ve... made love anyvays... I remember you didn't have a headache afterverds.

MR. DUBNOW: Dat's right! Dat's absolutely right! You remember everything... So, I vas thinking, do you remember vhat you did vith dat dallar?

SHADOW BOY (*to the audience*): Oh! This could get nasty.

MRS. DUBNOW: Vhat do you mean, "Vhat did I do vit da dallar?"

MR. DUBNOW: I mean do ya remember vhere you put it? Because you never gave it back to me.

MRS. DUBNOW: I didn't put it anywheres! I spent it!

MR. DUBNOW: You spent it?

MRS. DUBNOW: Of course I spent it, dat's vhat you do with a dallar!

MR. DUBNOW: But it vas mine.

MRS. DUBNOW: Mine, mine, dallar, dallar, Ach! I should have known better than to talk to you!

MR. DUBNOW: Malka, Malka it's okay, I forgive you.

MRS. DUBNOW: You forgive me!?

MR. DUBNOW: Yes I forgive you. I understand you forgot. I'm always forgetting tings... Just give me a dallar aff yours and ve'll call it even.

MRS. DUBNOW: Ach! You're insane!

MR. DUBNOW: Malka, It's only a dallar?

MRS. DUBNOW: Dat's not the point. I refuse to give it to you.

MR. DUBNOW: but...

MRS. DUBNOW: I refuse!

MR. DUBNOW: Alright Malka, but really I think dat's very childish of you...

SHADOW BOY: Poor Malka, she gets herself so worked up.

MADAME MARCEAU (*to Jacques for the Martini he just fixed her*): Thank you, darling... (*She walks from the bar to where Jack is sitting. She looks over his shoulder.*) What are you scribbling?

JACK MULLIGAN: I'm *sketching* a picture of my friend Pat after he was shot in the leg.

MADAME MARCEAU: What is it with you boys and violence? I love your art, Jack, but really you should do something besides human suffering. It grows tiresome.

JACK MULLIGAN: Sorry. I only work on what interests me.

MADAME MARCEAU: Oh! You should do a study of the female body? (*She brings her leg up on the chair seductively.*) I could be your subject.

JACK MULLIGAN: *Sorry.* I only work on what interests me.

MADAME MARCEAU: Oh, so if I was shot in the leg you'd find me interesting?

JACK MULLIGAN: Maybe.

MADAME MARCEAU: Ernst Kirchner begged to paint me in the nude. (*Sitting down*) What do I care if a nobody painter like you thinks I'm interesting!

JACK MULLIGAN: It has nothing to do with me finding you interesting. I've seen too many horrible things to paint something pleasant. You can take that as a compliment. I find you too pleasant to paint.

MADAME MARCEAU: Oh, thank you.

SHADOW BOY: That was close.

EVA: Jacques, may I please have a croissant and another mint-julip?

MR. DUBNOW: Could you at least buy me a dollars worth of Aspirin?

MRS. DUBNOW: No!

MADAME MARCEAU: What is new in the world, Mr. Picket?

MR. PICKET: The usual; death and disaster. But the weather is supposed to clear up later in the week. Oh, Eva, you did a nice job on the Conrad obituary. (*He looks over at Eva. He catches eyes with Madame Marceau.*)

EVA: Thank you. It was easy to write. He's a fascinating character.

MR. PICKET: (*Mr. Picket nervously breaks eye contact with Madame, straightens himself and clears his throat.*) No doubt, no doubt.

MADAME MARCEAU (*crosses to Mr. Picket*): Mr. Picket, may I ask you a question?

MR. PICKET: (*Folds his paper.*) Madame, you may ask me any question you like.

MADAME MARCEAU (*sits at Mr. Picket's table*): How is it that you have managed to stay single all these years?

MR. PICKET (*A little flustered*): I'm a very solitary man. My life style does not lend itself to marriage.

MADAME MARCEAU: A pity. You are quite a catch. Successful, polite... *attractive*.

MR. PICKET: Too kind.

MADAME MARCEAU: I'm surprised that some intelligent girl hasn't snatched you yet.

MR. PICKET: I have often marveled at that myself. But I'm afraid that women find me rather dull.

MADAME MARCEAU: Nonsense! And besides, that's what a woman wants in a husband. Trust me. After being married to three different *very* exciting men I can speak with some authority when I say that dull is the perfect quality for a husband.

MR. PICKET: Have you consider marrying again?

MADAME MARCEAU: *You?*

MR. PICKET (*Flustered*): No, just in general.

MADAME MARCEAU: Anyone who gets married more than three times has a serious character flaw... No, I don't see myself marrying again.

MR. PICKET: A pity. You are quite a catch.

MADAME MARCEAU: Dull? Now really...

SHADOW BOY: Ladies and gentlemen I give you Mr. Picket in rare form.

(The telephone rings. Jacques picks it up.)

JACQUES: Hello. Oui he's here, un moment. Monsieur Picket a call for you on si telephone.

MR. PICKIT (*walks over to the telephone behind the bar*): Picket speaking. (*Looks at Jacques and then turns toward the audience obviously trying to keep his conversation private.*) I thought I told you to never call me here. Yes. I see. I'll be there in a moment. (*Mr. Picket hangs up the phone.*)

MADAME MARCEAU: Who was that?

MR. PICKET: What? Oh that. No one. Just someone from the office needs my help. Jacques, please don't clear my table, I'll be back soon. (*Mr. Picket gets his hat and his cane then exits. Shadow Boy follows. Madame Marceau's martini is empty. She walks to the bar to have Jacques make her another one.*)

MR. DUBNOW: Malka?

MRS. DUBNOW: Yo?

MR. DUBNOW: I've been thinking.

MRS. DUBNOW: Not again!

MR. DUBNOW: I want a divorce.

MRS. DUBNOW: What?

MR. DUBNOW: I can't live with someone who steals from me.

MRS. DUBNOW: Is der no end to your insanity!? Fine! You vin! *(She reaches into her purse and gets out a dollar.)* Here, here is YOUR dallar. *(Mr. Dubnow puts the dollar in his pocket.)* Bist du glicklich? Happy!? I shouldn't let you get to me so, it isn't good for my health. One day you'll give me a heart attack and den you'll be sarry.

MR. DUBNOW: It's no good, Malka. De' damage is already done. I want a divorce.

MRS. DUBNOW: why must you insist on tormenting me with your foolishness?

MR. DUBNOW: I'm being serious, Malka. De' dallar made me realize a lot of things about our relationship. I don't think you appreciate me.

MRS. DUBNOW: *Appreciate you!*? How can I appreciate you when you act like dis?

MR. DUBNOW: I don't know but this is who I am. I just don't think ve're right for each other.

MRS. DUBNOW: Ve've been married for 53 years and you tell me dis now?

MR. DUBNOW: I want a chance to experience other people.

MRS. DUBNOW: You're 78 years old. Who are you going to *experience*?

MR. DUBNOW: Someone who appreciates me. *(He gets up and walks over to Madame Marceau.)* Excuse me, Madame Marceau, I was hoping you could give me some advice?

MADAME MARCEAU: What is it?

MR. DUBNOW: I'm planning on divorcing my wife.

MRS. DUBNOW: Izzador, stop dis at once!

MR. DUBNOW: I've never divorced her before and thought that you might be able to help.

MADAME MARCEAU: Izzador, why are you doing this?

MR. DUBNOW: Because she doesn't appreciate me... and she stole a dallar. *(Mr. Dubnow walks to down center stage and sing "When love is new.")*

MR. DUBNOW:

When love is new,
There's nothing you can't do.
When love is new,
It's just like fireworks!
You don't have a care,
You're walking on air,
It's incredible!
But when love is gone,
You can't go on.
When love is gone,
It's time to say so long.
You wish you weren't there,
You're pulling your hair,
It's deplorable!
It's horrible!
It's upsetting,
Heart wrenching,
uncontrollable!

Please don't cry
Please don't be blue.
I'm sure you'll find someone new.

MRS. DUBNOW:

Fine, then leave!
What do I care?
I'll be happier now with you out of my hair.
You make me crazy, you make me mad
You talk too loud and your jokes are bad!
You're no fun to be with, you're crude and you're mean,
You don't smell good and you're not very clean!
Fine divorce me, do your best.
Maybe then I'll get some rest.

MR. DUBNOW:

Then we agree,
We'll escape with dignity.
Then we agree,
What works for you works for me.
We had lots of fun,
But now that's all done,
I'll begin again.
I want romance,
Like the other men.

I want romance,
take a chance again.
Getting to harass, each pretty lass,
So impudent, Magnificent!
Running through the grass,
Chasing tits and ass,
It's fabulous, I'm ravenous!
Malka, my love, this is how it ends.
Malka I hope we can still be friends.

(Mr. Dubnow takes Mrs. Dubnow's hands. Music ends and we are back to reality. There's a moment where we think that she might have been placated. Mr. Picket enters with a package in his hand. Shadow boy enters behind him.)

MRS. DUBNOW *(She throws away Mr. Dubnow's hands):* Friends!?! *(Shadow Boy and Mr. Picket both look at Mr. and Mrs. Dubnow and realize that they have missed something.)* Never! I've finally had it with you, Izzador! You have gone too far. Friends!?! HA! I never want to talk to you again as long as I live! Dis is it. Good-bye and good riddens! *(She walks back to their booth and picks up her knitting trying desperately to contain her anger. Mr. Dubnow looks a little perplexed.)*

MR. PICKET: Is everything all right?

MADAME MARCEAU: Izzador's divorcing Malka.

SHADOW BOY: Oh no!

MR. PICKET *(remembering the package in his hand crosses the stage. To Mrs. Dubnow):* My condolences. *(To Mr. Dubnow)* My condolences. *(Mr. Picket exits up stairs.)*

MR. DUBNOW: Malka, I think you're over reacting. *(No response from Malka)* I still love you, I just think we should try something new. *(No response.)*

SHADOW BOY: You're not helping.

MRS. DUBNOW: *(Mr. Dubnow sits. Mrs. Dubnow doesn't look up from her knitting.)* What are you doing here? You are not my husband anymore.

MR. DUBNOW: You seem angry.

MRS. DUBNOW: Get out! Loz mich tzu ru!

MADAME MARCEAU: Izzador, for God's sake leave the poor woman alone.

MR. DUBNOW: Alright, alright. If that's the way you want it I'll go. But just to show you that there are no hard feelings *(He reaches into his pocket and gets out the dollar and puts it on the table)* you can keep the dollar. *(Mrs. Dubnow tries her best to ignore him.)*

SHADOW BOY: Smooth, real smooth.

MR. DUBNOW (*standing*): I'll go pack my bags. (*Crosses to the stairs.*)

JACK MULLIGAN: Wait, Izzy... (*Stands*) I want to shake your hand. (*They shake hands.*) That was Goddamn life affirming.

MR. DUBNOW: Thank you.

JACK MULLIGAN: You just did what every man wishes he could do; you just totally changed your life... Listen, you need anything? A place to stay, any money?

MR. DUBNOW: No thank you. I'm fine.

JACK MULLIGAN: Where are you gonna go?

MR. DUBNOW: Where ever the vind blows me, my boy. Where ever the vind blows me. (*He playfully pats Jack on the cheek and then with difficulty due to his advanced years exits up the stairs.*)

JACK MULLIGAN: Amazing. (*Jack turns back to the room to see everyone glaring at him.*) Well, I was impressed.

MADAME MARCEAU: Izzador just threw his life away and broke his wife's heart and *you're* impressed?

JACK MULLIGAN: That takes a lot of guts.

MADAME MARCEAU: You are the most insensitive man I've ever met. You should be ashamed.

JACK MULLIGAN: Don't you get moralistic on me. I'm sorry about Malka, (*to Mrs. Dubnow*) Malka, (*crosses to Mrs. Dubnow*) I truly am sorry, I think your husband made a big mistake. He'll never find anyone else that'll tolerate him half as much as you did, but that's...

MADAME MARCEAU: (*Interrupting*) Then why on earth did you encourage him?

(*Mr. Picket hesitantly enters.*)

JACK MULLIGAN: Because I can't help but to admire his fearless abandon. He decides to change his life and without hesitation *he takes action*. To me that's Goddamn inspiring... and *you* of all people should take that to heart.

MADAME MARCEAU: Oh and why is that?

JACK MULLIGAN: The only thing keeping you from going back to show business is your own fear.

MADAME MARCEAU: Say it again.

JACK MULLIGAN: You're afraid to go back.

MADAME MARCEAU (*splashes the rest of her martini in jack's face*): If I wanted to I could walk into any theater company in Paris and get the leading role! Fear!?! You're one to talk! You're so afraid of the past that you have to idolize it in your stupid art!

JACK MULLIGAN: You don't know jack-shit about my past. Do you know what it's like to watch your best friend bleed to death? Or how it feels to cut a man open with your *fucking* boot knife?

(*Mr. Dubnow enter with suitcase in hand. He sits down at the booth with Mrs. Dubnow.*)

MR. PICKET: Watch your mouth in front of a lady.

JACK MULLIGAN: I'll say whatever the Goddamn, shit, fuck I want.

MR. PICKET: I've had just about enough of your crude manners.

JACK MULLIGAN: And I've had more than enough of your anal-retentive, pussy-whipped bullshit.

MADAME MARCEAU: Jack, you're acting like a fool.

JACK MULLIGAN: And I've had more than enough of *your* primadonna bullshit.

MR. PICKET (*steps between Madame Marceau and Jack Mulligan and raises his dukes*): Madame, I shall defend your honor.

JACK MULLIGAN: Oh, please. (*Crosses to Mr. Dubnow.*) Izzy, I've decided five years here is long enough. I'm getting the hell out...

MR. PICKET: Not before you apologize you don't...

JACK MULLIGAN: Want a travel partner?

MR. DUBNOW: That would be splendid.

JACK MULLIGAN: Just let me get my hat and coat. (*Gets his hat and coat.*)

MR. DUBNOW: Well, Malka, this is good-bye. They've been 53 *good* years.

MRS. DUBNOW (*finally looks up from her knitting*): They've been 53 years of headache and frustration, 53 years wasted on the *wrong* man.

MR. DUBNOW: If you weren't happy why did you stay?

MRS. DUBNOW (*Bubbling over with anger*): Because that's what you do when you're married. It's not about being *happy*. It's a contract between us and God... (*At this point argument between Jack Mulligan, Madame Marceau, and Mr. Picket overlaps with Mr. and Mrs. Dubnow's argument. Both arguments build in intensity until finally they are just a wall of noise.*)

MR. PICKET: Mr. Mulligan I demand an apology.

JACK MULLIGAN: I'm Sorry... (*Crosses to down stage center*) but it's not gonna happen.

MR. PICKET: Sir, this is your last chance. *Apologize!*

JACK MULLIGAN: You heard me the first time, short man, not gonna happen.

MR. PICKET: Very well then you leave me no alternative. (*He raises his dukes again.*)

MADAME MARCEAU (*Pulling on Mr. Picket's shoulder*): Please, darling, it's alright.

MR. PICKET: No this brute needs to be taught a lesson. Defend yourself.

JACK MULLIGAN: Alright, fine. (*Puts out cigarette in ashtray.*) You want me to break your face in, no sweat off my back. Here we go!

JACQUES (*jumps in between the two*): Not inside my café you don't. I ask very few things of my patrons, no fighting is one of them. Now shake it off!

MR. PICKET: Sir, you are lucky I have respect for rules or else...

JACK MULLIGAN: Or else nothing. I would have torn you to pieces.

MR. PICKET (*turns like he's leaving and then abruptly turns back and leaps with fury trying to strangle Jack Mulligan.*): Ahhhhhh. (*Jacques holds Mr. Picket back. Jack Mulligan smiles and gives Mr. Picket the bird.*)

JACQUES: That's enough! That's enough! (*He throws Mr. Picket back*) Pull yourself together. (*To both Jack Mulligan and Mr. Picket.*) There will be no fighting.

MR. PICKET: Quite right. I don't know what came over me. (*He catches eyes with Jack Mulligan. Jack Mulligan smiles then puckers up his lips and makes kissy noises. Mr. Picket leaps again with fury trying to strangle Jack. Jacques holds him back.*) Ahhhhhh.

JACQUES: Stop it! Stop It!

(This is the end of the Jack Mulligan, Mr. Picket, Madame Marceau argument.)

MRS. DUBNOW: *(continued from above)* Ve took an oath dat ve'd always be der for each other. I've always been der for you even when I didn't vant to. I took care of you for 53 years and dis is how you repay me? No go, I'm glad that you're divorcing me. My only regret is you didn't do it 50 years ago.

MR. DUBNOW: But I didn't vant to divorce you 50 years ago. I just vant to divorce you now. Look we had a good run of it I don't see vhy you have to get so upset over this. It's not like I won't visit.

MRS. DUBNOW: Visit? I don't vant to ever see you again. I vant you should get as far away from me as possible. I vant you to disappear, vanish. I don't vant to even think about you. If there vas someway to erase you from my mind I would. *(Mr. Dubnow starts coughing.)* You've ruined my life. I have nothing to look forward to except death because then, God villing, I'll forget all the misery you've caused me. *(Mr. Dubnow's coughing has become spastic and severe. He is gasping for breath.)* Vill you stop coughing I'm trying to yell at you. No, never mind, cough your head off I hope you sallow your tongue. *(She crosses her arms and looks the other way. Mr. Dubnow clutches at his heart and then falls to the ground.)*

EVA *(screaming above the ruckus)*: Everyone stop! I think Izzador's having a heart attack. *(everyone stops)*

JACQUES *(runs to Mr. Dubnow and checks his heart)*: *Sacre bleu!* Does anyone know CPR?

MR. PICKET: I do.

JACQUES: Well, give it to him! I'll go get a doctor.

(Jacques runs out the door. Mr. Picket starts to give Mr. Dubnow CPR. Everyone is gathered around Mr. Dubnow. Shadow Boy stands apart from the crowd. The stage is quiet except for the sound that Mr. Picket makes giving CPR. After a while it becomes apparent that Mr. Picket is breathing air into a dead man.)

MR. PICKET *(looking up at everyone)*: He's, he's gone.

(Mrs. Dubnow gives a shriek and starts to cry. The lighting changes to blue and red lights. There is a white spotlight on Mr. Dubnow. "Izzy dies" music starts. Mr. Dubnow gets up. The people continue to look at where his dead body lies and take no notice of his risen spirit. Mr. Dubnow looks at the people around his body and then focuses on his wife.)

MR. DUBNOW: Malka. Malka. I'm so sorry, Malka...

SHADOW BOY: She can't hear you.

MR. DUBNOW (*turns and looks at the Shadow Boy*): I'm dead aren't I?

SHADOW BOY: Yes, I think so.

MR. DUBNOW (*turns to Mrs. Dubnow*): What have I done? Malka, I'm so sorry. (*Shadow Boy crosses to behind Mr. Dubnow. Mr. Dubnow doesn't take notice.*) If I could only go back and change everything. I'd treat you right this time. I'd take you in my arms and hold you and kiss... I love you, Malka. (*Mr. Dubnow gives out a cry.*)

(*Shadow boy hesitantly reaches out to touch Mr. Dubnow's sleeve. This is the first time he's ever touched something. Mr. Dubnow stops sobbing and turns. Shadow Boy retreats to down stage left. Mr. Dubnow hesitantly crosses to Shadow Boy and then slowly, both unsure of themselves, they hug. Mr. Dubnow cries on Shadow Boy's shoulder. The curtains close behind them.*)

MR. DUBNOW (*drying his eyes*): So, you're an angel?

SHADOW BOY: No, just a ghost, though I'd like to think of myself as a guardian angel.

MR. DUBNOW: Mine?

SHADOW BOY: Yes... and *everyone* else who lives here. I've watched over all of you for the past sixteen years. I can't do much more than watch but everyday I'm there in the shadows checking in to make sure you're okay.

MR. DUBNOW: That's nice of you.

SHADOW BOY: The truth is I've come to think of you all as my family. And you, Mr. Dubnow, I've...

MR. DUBNOW: Call me Izzy.

SHADOW BOY: Izzy, you see (*"Enter Mr. Bloch" musical cue*) I've come to think of you as my father... (*Trails off as they are distracted by Mr. Bloch's arrival. Mr. Bloch is dressed in a business suit and is carrying a briefcase.*)

MR. BLOCH (*takes out a sheet of paper from his coat and reads it*): That's odd. There's only supposed to be one of you. Central office is always screwing up. So which one of you is Izzador Dubnow?

MR. DUBNOW: I am.

MR. BLOCH: Alright, we'll start with you. Welcome to the Afterlife. (*They shake hands*) My name is Peter Bloch. I'm the collection agent who'll be handling your account.

(Snaps his fingers and a chair and table are lowered from the sky.) How are you feeling Mr. Dubnow? *(He begins to inspect him like a doctor, takes a pen light out and inspects his eyes etc...)*

MR. DUBNOW: Fine, considering...

MR. BLOCH *(shoots Mr. Dubnow a severe look)*: Considering? Considering what?

MR. DUBNOW: Vell, considering I'm dead.

MR. BLOCH: Oh... *(Going back to inspection)* No nausea or headache?

MR. DUBNOW: No, why?

MR. BLOCH *(putting the penlight up and guiding the chair and table to their proper place)*: Some people have what's known as bifurcated-soul-contraction. It's where they leave little parts of their soul in their dead body. It makes it next to impossible to get an accurate karma reading. *(Notices Mr. Dubnow's worried expression)* Don't worry, though, everything checked out with you, you're fine. *(He sits down and gets out some papers from his briefcase.)* Now I'm going to ask you some simple questions to determine your level of spiritual enlightenment. All of your reactions will be graded so it is very important that you act naturally. *(Looking at his watch)* The test will begin... now. *(Reading off the paper)* Desire is the root of all human suffering. True or False?

MR. DUBNOW: True... NO FALSE! Ah which vone is it?

MR. BLOCH: If you don't know the answer I advise you to guess.

MR. DUBNOW: uhhh, true.

MR. BLOCH *(shaking his head he writes some notes)*: The correct definition of love is: a.) a deep affection for someone; b.) the fabric of God's consciousness; or c.) poisoned honey.

MR. DUBNOW: uhhh, I'll go with the first vone.

MR. BLOCH *(jots some notes down)*: What is mankind's greatest virtue?

MR. DUBNOW *(thinks for a second)*: He can laugh at himself.

MR. BLOCH *(makes a note)*: Tell me what you looked like before you were born.

MR. DUBNOW: Uhhh, I imagine I looked a lot like I do now except... smaller.

MR. BLOCH: I see. *(He writes some more notes)* And finally, what is the meaning of life?

MR. DUBNOW: That's a toughy. *(He thinks for a while.)* I remember. When I was a boy my father made me study the Talmud, and there's one passage that comes to mind right now. It said that just before a baby is born an angel comes down and tells that baby everything there is to know but just before that baby is born the angel, he touches the upper lip of the baby and the child forgets everything. I think the meaning of life is to remember what the angel told us.

MR. BLOCH: Very good. *(He finishes up the form.)*

MR. DUBNOW: Well, how did I do?

MR. BLOCH: Sorry, we're not allowed to tell. If I could just have your signature here, and here we'll be all done.

MR. DUBNOW: What is this I'm signing?

MR. BLOCH: A release form.

MR. DUBNOW: A release form for what?

MR. BLOCH: Your soul.

MR. DUBNOW: My soul?

MR. BLOCH: I'm on a very busy schedule, would you please just sign the form.

MR. DUBNOW: I'm sorry but I'm not going to sign anything until you explain exactly what's going on here.

MR. BLOCH *(agitated)*: Very well. When a person dies his soul enters the afterlife where it is first rated in terms of spiritual enlightenment. We just did that. This measurement is carefully recorded *(holding up the test he just administered)* and then added to past karma ratings. It is with this system that a soul's progress towards nirvana is tallied. After these computations have been logged and *all of the paperwork finished* the soul is wiped clean and recycled into a new body. This is the endless cycle of reincarnation and this *(holding up a pen)* is a pen and this *(holding up the form)* needs to be signed with it.

MR. DUBNOW: I'm sorry but I still don't feel comfortable...

MR. BLOCH: Perhaps if I put it in these terms: if you don't sign this form I can't recycle your soul. And if I don't recycle your soul you'll be forced to wander the earthly realm as a spirit indefinitely and that looks really bad on both of our records. *(There is a pause. He notices that he hasn't won Mr. Dubnow over so he tries a new tactic; sincerity. Stands, takes Mr. Dubnow by the shoulder leading him to down stage center.)* Look, I give you my word as a spiritually perfect being that this is in your best interest. I swear I'm not trying to take advantage of you and I'm sorry if I seem irritable or uncaring. It's just that I'm terribly

over worked right now and I don't have time to assuage all of your fears or to explain every detail. So please sign the form.

MR. DUBNOW (*thinks about it for a moment*): Vell, vhat the hell, vhat do I have to lose?

MR. BLOCH: Good man. (*They walk back to the table. Mr. Dubnow signs. Mr. Bloch shakes Mr. Dubnow's hand and then organizes his papers.*) Next. (*Shadow Boy steps forward.*) Welcome to the afterlife. (*They shake hands.*) My name is Peter Bloch. I am the collection agent you'll be handling your account. May I have your full name, last name first.

SHADOW BOY: Sorry sir but I don't think I have one.

MR. BLOCH: You don't think you have a last name or any name at all?

SHADOW BOY: Any name at all. I might have had one at some point but if I did I don't remember it now.

MR. BLOCH: Well, do you remember how you died?

SHADOW BOY: No, I mean I don't think I did die.

MR. BLOCH: Forgive me for being blunt but that's the most idiotic thing I've ever heard. Life and the afterlife are inextricably connected by death. And this, my friend, is the afterlife ergo at some point *you must have died*.

SHADOW BOY: Yes, but the thing is I don't think I ever was alive either.

MR. BLOCH (*exacerbated he says to the audience*): 87 lifetimes of spiritual refinement and this is how I'm rewarded, sometimes I wish I were a mosquito. (*To Shadow Boy in saccharine sweet tone*) Please, would you be so kind as to elucidate.

SHADOW BOY: As long as I can remember I've been a ghost. I sort of came into existence as a ghost and I've been that way ever since. I was actually hoping you'd be able to tell me what the deal was.

MR. BLOCH: Sure. The *deal* is... your crazy. There's no possible way for a soul to become a ghost without it first existing in (*as he say the next two words he remembers something*) corporal form... Wait a second, you might not be crazy after all. (*He goes into his briefcase and takes out an afterlife instruction manual and flips through it looking for something.*) Two or three centuries ago I remember a colleague of mine telling me about a case of his where the astral projection of his client's soul was off by just a hair causing it to miss reincarnation. Now you must understand this is highly unusual, so unusual that in my 800 years in the service I've never come across such a case, but apparently every now and then a soul which is assigned to be reincarnated never reaches it's intended body leaving the flesh to develop into a soulless person and the soul to wander without a home, as I'm guessing is the case with you. (*Finds the section in the manual that he was looking for.*)

Here we are, Itinerant Souls. *(He skims the page reading bits and pieces out loud.)* When a soul de, de, de, de, de, de astrally misprojected de, de, de, de, de, de exists in spirit form only de, de, de, de, de, de. Ah, to check if client is Itinerant Soul examine the de, de, de, de, de, de, de, de, de, de, de, de. Oh, of course. Were you wearing that same handsome green suit when you first *came into existence*?

SHADOW BOY: Yes.

MR. BLOCH *(goes over to Shadow Boy and checks his suit's tag)*: You, my friend, are an Itinerant Soul. The boys back at the office are never going to believe this. *(Chuckles)*

SHADOW BOY: How can you tell?

MR. BLOCH: Because your suit was made by Zachariah and Sons. Every soul is issued a new set of close when they enter the afterlife, hand tailored to their liking by Zachariah and Sons. This suit is worn until the time of reincarnation at which point it dematerializes. But since you were never reincarnated your handsome green suit never dematerialized proving beyond a shadow of a doubt that you are in fact not crazy and that you actually never did die because it would've been impossible because you were never alive in the first place! So there! Ha! HA, HA, Ha, ha, ha. *(clears his throat.)* Yes, well... *(crosses to his table, sits and orders his papers.)*

SHADOW BOY: So what happens to me now?

MR. BLOCH: Well, first your memory will be wiped clean and then you'll be recycled into a new body.

SHADOW BOY: Oh man. You got to be kidding me!

MR. BLOCH: Come now, it's not that bad.

SHADOW BOY: What are you talking about? It's terrible. Look, just because I'm not alive doesn't mean I don't have a life!

MR. BLOCH: This is the way things are. You can't fight eventuality. Now if you'd just sign here and here we'll be...

SHADOW BOY: I'm not going to sign anything!

MR. BLOCH: You really don't have a choice. If you don't sign you'll be forced to wander the earthly realm as a spirit indefinitely and...

SHADOW BOY: Fine by me...

MR. BLOCH (*Standing*): And as appealing as that may sound now after a thousand years of imprisonment inside of a world you can't touch I can guarantee you'll come to sorely regret it. And besides it'll virtually ruin your chances of reaching nirvana.

SHADOW BOY: Why should I care about reaching nirvana?

MR. BLOCH: Because that's when you finally escape the endless cycle of death and re-birth!

SHADOW BOY: Then what?

MR. BLOCH: Well, then you get to become a spiritually perfect being like me... and you also get the distinct honor of being a social worker in the afterlife... like me.

SHADOW BOY: Sounds like a scam.

MR. BLOCH: Well if it's a scam there's nothing we can do about it! (*Sitting*) It's the way things are. Now for the love of God please sign the *frigging* form!

SHADOW BOY: Why is it so important to you?

MR. BLOCH: Because if you don't sign I'll lose my job (*Shadow Boy laughs*) ...and if I lose my job I'll have to do the whole shitty thing over again! starting from the lowest form of life, a mosquito. And as much as I hate my job the idea of going back to the endless cycle of pain and suffering I hate much more.

SHADOW BOY: Sorry, but that's your problem.

MR. BLOCH: Have you no heart?

SHADOW BOY: Where were you when I first got here? How come it took you sixteen years to find me? Look, you missed your chance and I figure I've got a lot more coming to me than having my memory erased.

MR. BLOCH: Like what?

SHADOW BOY: I want a body and I don't want to be reincarnated for it. I want to be alive as the person I am right now.

Mr. Bloch: There's no way I can do that. (*Shadow Boy starts to leave. Mr. Bloch stands.*) Wait! Wait! (*Shadow Boy turns around*) I can't give you your own body (*Shadow Boy walks back to Mr. Bloch*) but I can give you life, at least temporarily. I'm really, really, not supposed to do this, I mean this is something reserved for only the most severe cases, like the Dali Lama or Jesus, but there is a way to temporarily breath life into your soul. (*He snaps his fingers and an envelop floats down.*) You'll be able to do everything that a normal, living, person can do but here's the catch; the moment you experience a

transcendent emotion, extreme hate, extreme love, extreme depression, etc., *(He grabs the envelop and opens it)* you'll revert back to as you are now. This being said there are people who go a whole lifetime without experiencing any these emotions so as long as you pay attention to your heart you ought to be fine. *(Takes out a form from the envelope.)* This is the form that once signed by you and cleared by the authorities will give you the qualified life aforementioned. *(Shadow Boy reaches for the form. Mr. Bloch pulls it out of reach.)* In exchange for this I need your word that when you return to the afterlife you'll sign away your soul for reincarnation.

SHADOW BOY: I swear on all that I hold dear that I'll sign over my soul for reincarnation. *(Mr. Bloch hand Shadow Boy the form and a pen. Shadow Boy is about to sign but then looks perplexed.)* How should I sign it?

MR. BLOCH: With your name of cour... Oh you don't have a name. Well, put an X. *(Shadow Boy signs an X, Mr. Block collects the form)* Tomorrow morning the first ray of sunlight will find you casting a shadow with blood in your veins and breath in your lungs.

MR. DUBNOW *(shaking the Shadow Boy's hand)*: Congratulations, my boy!

SHADOW BOY: Thanks.

MR. BLOCH: Come, Mr. Dubnow, it's time to go. *(Gathers his briefcase.)*

SHADOW BOY: Good luck, Izzy.

MR. DUBNOW: Same to you.

MR. BLOCH *(shutting his briefcase. To Shadow Boy...)*: I have a feeling we'll be seeing each other before too long. Enjoy your stay on earth. This way Mr. Dubnow. *(leads Izzy out.)*

MR. DUBNOW: What excitement! Onverd into the unknown.

(Shadow Boy is left on stage. He sings "Hand to Hold.")

SHADOW BOY:

Like a soldier needs his boots,
like a tree needs it's roots,
I'd be lost without the Café du Caché.

Like a poet loves to think,
like a lush loves to drink,
I'd be lost without the Café du Caché.

I came here blue eyed and dressed in green
and watched their lives unfold

with a sock in my mouth and rock in my shoe,
but not a hand,
but soon at hand,
I'll have a hand to hold.

(Shadow Boy exits. "Café Waltz" is played by the band to kick off intermission.)

ACT 2:

(Curtains open at the Café. Madame is at the Bar. Jack is at his table. Mrs. Dubnow is at her booth dressed in black for mourning. Eva is trying to write Mr. Dubnow's obituary. She is getting obviously distraught. It reaches a climax and she stops, takes a moment to herself, and then gets up and goes to where Malka is sitting.)

EVA: Excuse me Mrs. Dubnow.

MRS. DUBNOW: Please, sit down. *(Eva Sits.)* Yes dear?

EVA: I'm terribly sorry but I can't write Mr. Dubnow's obituary.

MRS. DUBNOW: That's alright, Neshomeleh. I know you vas close to Izzy.

EVA: No! No that's not it at all... it's just that I'm too busy. There was a double suicide last night that I have to cover, and four or five people died because of the power outage, not to mention the Mayor's wife finally passed away; they'll expect me to do something special for her... I'm sorry, I wish I could help.

MRS. DUBNOW *(Takes Eva's hands. Eva is uncomfortable with this)*: When the nuns first started to bring you here after Sunday mass you couldn't have been more den seven. How old vas you?

EVA: I was six.

MRS. DUBNOW: You know, Izzador and I thought about adopting you. That's right ve did. Ve had always vanted children and ve thought you ver the most beautiful Maideleh ve'd ever seen. But Izzy vas sixty-three and I sixty-two. Ve decided ve ver too old to raise children... I decided ve ver too old. And now I vish I had been more brave because since Izzy's gone I have no family left. *(She starts to cry. Eva is horrified.)* Ich vil hoben a Tochter. *(She tries to get her hands free but Malka holds on tight.)*

EVA: I'm sorry but I have a lot of work I need to *(she pulls her hands free)* do. I'm sorry.

(Eva walks back to her booth. As Eva sits Rock number begins and everyone starts moving in slow motion. Jacques is shaking martin in slow motion, Eva is typing in slow motion, Jack is drawing in slow motion, etc. The Door opens in slow motion. Shadow boy enters in slow motion and walks into the Café. Shadow Boy's white face is gone and he

looks healthy and alive. The music will abruptly stop as Shadow Boy stops just in front of Mr Picket's usual table. There's a moment where Shadow Boy stands and looks at everyone with a big grin. This is very exciting for him. He is near giddy.)

SHADOW BOY *(a little too loudly)*: Hi everybody! *(Everyone looks up at him. Pause.)*

JACQUES: May I help you?

SHADOW BOY: You can hear me?

JACQUES: Oui.

SHADOW BOY: Wow! Wow! Wow... Uhh, yes, I would like a table for one, please. *(Jacques crosses to Shadow Boy and motions with hand at the table right in front of Shadow Boy. Jacques hands Shadow boy a menu.)* Thank you. *(Shadow Boy holds eye contact with Jacques for a long time until Jacques is unnerved.)*

JACQUES *(He looks Shadow Boy over with apprehension)*: If you need anything I'll be over here.

SHADOW BOY: Okay. *(Shadow Boy is all smiles and watches Jacques as he walks away. Shadow Boy starts to read the menu. Jack is starring at Shadow Boy. Shadow Boy looks up from the menu and returns the stare with a big smile.)* Excuse me; I've never eaten before...
HERE!!! Uh, ha... What do you think I should get?

JACK: *(Pause)* I'd get a grilled cheese and a cup of coffee.

SHADOW BOY: Great! *(To Jacques)* I'm ready. *(Jacques comes back.)* I'll have a grilled cheese sandwich and a cup of coffee. Thank you. *(Jacques goes to make the order. Shadow Boy is looking around him and fidgeting with excitement. He looks at Mrs. Dubnow.)* Hello! *(Mrs. Dubnow is flustered.)*

JACK *(Gets up and goes over to Shadow Boy with his sketch book in hand.)* May I?

SHADOW BOY: Please. *(Jack sits down.)*

JACK: What's the secret?

SHADOW BOY: What do you mean?

JACK: I mean what's the deal with all of the... smiling?

SHADOW BOY: Life is *so amazing*. It's like... WOW! How the heck did they get all this great stuff jammed in here? Like this table. This table is so amazing. Just look at it! Look at how the light reflects off it's wine stained finish. Look at all of the nicks and dings and scratches that record a history of use. And look at how it lets me rest my weight on it... like an old friend. And... oh wow, it feels incredible too. *(Shadow Boy*

looks up at Jack and smiles.) When life's this good it's hard not to smile. (Jack smiles back a little. Jacques brings Shadow Boy's meal over.) Thanks. (Shadow Boy ceremoniously takes a bite of his grilled-cheese sandwich. It's obvious that he's enjoying it tremendously.) Oh wow! This is incredible. I had no idea eating was like this. (He takes a sip of the coffee and makes a scrunched up face and chokes because it's so bitter.) Oh wow! That's good too. (He goes on eating and drinking throughout the rest of the conversation.)

JACK: I have a strange feeling I've seen your face before. You from around here?

SHADOW BOY: Uhh, yes... but I've been gone for a long time so I don't think you could've seen me before.

JACK: Maybe... My name's Jack. *(They shake hands. Shadow Boy's all smiles. Jack waits expecting to get Shadow Boy's name.)* You got a name?

SHADOW BOY: Oh, yea, they call me... Shadow Boy.

JACK: Shadow Boy? *(Shadow Boy nods)* Like a *(tries to illustrate a shadow with his hands)* shadow?

SHADOW BOY: Yea, like a shadow!

JACK: Well, *Shadow Boy*, you're quite a character. *(Shadow Boy gives an enthusiastic smile back.)* Very... enthusiastic. It's... uplifting. Are you always like this?

SHADOW BOY: No, today *is* special... *(laughs)* because today's my first time to ever eat a grilled cheese sandwich... And because I finally met you, Jack Mulligan, the great American painter!

JACK: You know who I am!?

SHADOW BOY *(Enthusiastically nods head)*: And I'm a big fan. I think your work is incredible. Especially your collection of "*friends who died in December.*" They have it at the Zimbony Gallery. It's beautiful. I've only actually seen it once but I never needed to go back because those images are unforgettable. Wherever I go I carry a copy around in my head.

JACK: Jesus, you do know who I am. Shit that's crazy! I mean, thanks, thanks a lot but... Sorry, I'm just not used to this sort of thing. Hardly anybody knows my work and the few people who do don't like it... But you like it?

SHADOW BOY: I love it. You're able to condense a person's whole life into one moment, one image, and capture it all just a second before their head's blown off!

JACK *(Standing and crossing to downstage center)*: You don't know how good that is to hear. It's the first positive feedback I've gotten in... well longer than I care to remember

and damn it feels great! *This* is how I want it to be all the time. I *want* people to appreciate my art. You know I never *setout* to make my artwork inaccessible... like those Goddamn, Abstract, Duchampian Assholes! No, no, I *just* paint what's inside of me, what my *heart* and my *gut* and my *brain* tell me I need to paint. And God knows I wish it were different but the world's a seriously screwed up place and I'd be a liar and a scoundrel if I stood around painting landscapes... Yeah, that's what my art is. It's a reminder of just how *messed up* things are so that maybe someone, someday will do something about it... but who likes to be reminded of that?

SHADOW BOY (*trying to cheer Jack up he says with a weak smile*): I do.

JACK (*chuckles*): Thanks.

SHADOW BOY: I think it's great that you remind people that work needs to be done but there are lots of other things that people need to be reminded about too... like how to love one another.

JACK (jokingly serious): Would you stop being so optimistic... you little fuck! You're renewing my faith in mankind and then what? I'll have to get a new job, stop smoking...

SHADOW BOY: (*Blushing*) Sorry.

JACK: No, you're right, you're absolutely right. My problem is just that I'm way too cynical. It's easy for me to see the bad side of a situation, it's a lot harder to find the good side, especially with people... But I wish I was more like you. I *want* to see the good in things. I wanna be able to look at this table and see the same thing that you do.

SHADOW BOY: Alright, I'll teach you how.

JACK (cynically chuckle): I don't think optimism is something you can teach. Besides I'm chronically jaded... and that's tougher than tobacco stains to get rid of (*he says putting out his cigarette*).

SHADOW BOY: Well how do you know unless you try? Come on, don't be a fuddy-duddy. What do you have to lose? Except your *negativity*?

JACK: (*Pause*) Alright you crazy kid, but don't expect a miracle. What do you want me to do?

SHADOW BOY: Let's see... Okay, close your eyes. No peeking... I want you to imagine someone that you have a hard time seeing the good in... Got someone?

JACK: Oh yeah.

SHADOW BOY: Okay, I want you to think about what it is that you don't like about them.

JACK: Alright... For starters she's a pain in the ass. She's conceited. She's self-centered. She's manipulative. And she's not genuine, and that's the one that really gets me. She puts on this damn act, and parades around like an overblown peacock! God that drives me nuts.

SHADOW BOY: Good. Very good. Exhale and let out all of that negativity... *Now* I want you to concentrate on the things that you *do* like about her.

Jack: This is going to be hard... She's not bad looking... *(long pause)*

SHADOW BOY: Is that all?

JACK: I'm working on it... She's very self-reliant. I admire that... She's also very strong-willed. When she makes up her mind to do something come hell or high water she's does it. All and all she's not a terrible person, she just has a lot of terrible qualities. *(Jack struggles a little coming up with the next sentence.)* And if I'm completely honest with myself I'd have to say that I actually care about her... a lot. She's *still* a real pain in the ass.

SHADOW BOY: Her name wouldn't be Madame Marceau by any chance?

JACK: How'd you know?

SHADOW BOY: Lucky guess. *(Has a devilish smile.)* Don't go anywhere. *(He gets up and goes over to Madame Marceau.)*

JACK: Wait a minute! What are you doing!?

SHADOW BOY: Excuse me, Madame. My name's Shadow Boy and my friend, Jack, over there has something he'd like to tell you.

MADAME MARCEAU: I'm sure I have no interest in hearing it.

SHADOW BOY: Oh but you do. It's something nice I promise.

MADAME MARCEAU *(Raises an eyebrow and then walks over to Jack)*: What do you have to say?

JACK: Nothing.

SHADOW BOY: *Jack!* What's the *good* in seeing the *good* in someone if you don't tell them how *good* they are!?

JACK *(Sigh)*: I'm going to regret this. *(With mock civility)* Madame Marceau, my *good* friend, *Shadow Boy*, has made me realize some new things about how I feel towards you.

Contrary to what you might think I don't hate you. In fact I actually admire some of your characteristics a great deal. And even though there are many things about you I can't stand I... *(Madame gets huffy and turns to leave but Jack grabs her arm)* ...I care for you... a lot. *(Madame is taken aback.)*

SHADOW BOY: *(Clears throat intentionally)*

JACK: What?

SHADOW BOY: *(Makes the outlines of a woman with his hands)*

JACK: Oh you got to be kidding. *(Shadow Boy gives him a look. Jack gives in.)* And you're not that bad looking either.

MADAME MARCEAU *(Sternly)*: Is this one of your jokes? Because if it is...

JACK: No, no joke. Honest.

MADAME MARCEAU *(She melts)*: Oh Jack, why have we wasted all of this time fighting? If I had only known you cared I would have shown you how much *I* care. *Yes*, I do. Ever since you first came here dressed in those same adorable rages I've liked you. But I never said anything because I always thought you hated me.

JACK: *(Sincerely)* You think my rags are adorable? That's kind of sweet... *(Stands up)* I'm sorry I've treated you like shit all this time. I didn't mean it.

MADAME MARCEAU: Water under the bridge, darling.

JACK: I can't believe this is happening. I feel so... happy.

MADAME MARCEAU: *(She takes Jack's hands.)* I feel the same way. It's a miracle. After all these years of misguided hostility and concealed motives *(she draws Jack closer)* we finally know each other's true feelings. *(They're inches apart – a kiss is in easy striking distance. Jack looks worried.)* So many times I wanted to tell you but I didn't have the courage. I would've died if you rejected me. But what does any of that matter now? It doesn't. All that matters now is that we're finally together. *(She closes her eyes and goes in for the kiss.)*

JACK *(Jack pulls back)*: Whoa! Whoa! Hold on! I said I cared about you, I didn't say I was in love with you!

MADAME MARCEAU: *(Eyes as big as saucers, she's terribly shocked. She's made a fool of herself.)* Oh my God, what have I done?

JACK: You just tried to kiss me, that's what.

MADAME MARCEAU: No I didn't.

JACK: Yes you *did!*

MADAME MARCEAU: Well... so what if I did! It's none of your business. *(She turns away. You can tell this is very difficult for her.)*

JACK *(Trying to find soothing words)*: I'm sorry. I had no idea you felt this way. Look, it's probably just seasonal. I'm sure that when the weather changes you'll get over me.

MADAME MARCEAU *(She's trying to compose herself for the counter-attack)*: Get over you? Do you think I'm in love with you?

JACK: Well... yes.

MADAME MARCEAU: Ha! *(She builds momentum and conviction.)* Me in love with you? Ha! Ha! I'd sooner drink razor blades.

SHADOW BOY *(Jumps in between)*: Remember to look for the good...

JACK *(Pushing the Shadow Boy out of the way)*: Stay out of this.

SHADOW BOY: ...in people.

JACK: I'm sick to death of you putting on this Goddamn act. You're not fooling anyone, not even yourself.

MADAME MARCEAU: Are you done yet? Because you're boring me.

JACK: I know there's a real person in there somewhere, but none of us are ever going to meet her unless you drop this bullshit persona... Just say it... There's nothing to be ashamed of.

MADAME MARCEAU: Say what?

JACK: That you're in love with me.

MADAME MARCEAU: *(She's furious. She gets inches away from his face)* Why you stupid, impudent little son of a... *(She stops her tongue and glares at him with hate. She walks over to Mr. Picket who's been watching all of this with rapt attention and grabs him by the tie and pulls him to his feet. Madame looks back at Jack with hate and then gives Mr. Picket a long and sensual kiss.)* How's that for being in love? *(To Mr. Picket)* Let's get out of here. *(As Madame drags Mr. Picket up to her room Mr. Picket smiles and tips his hat as they pass Jack.)*

JACK *(Yelling after them)*: Well what the hell does that prove! Fine! Go ahead and make a fool of yourself, I'm through trying to help... And if you think you're making me jealous you're not! *(Jack takes a moment to himself.)* Damn it!

SHADOW BOY (*Goes to Jack*): I...

JACK: Don't say a word.

SHADOW BOY: I just...

JACK: NOT a word. (*He goes to get his hat and coat and says with suppressed anger*) I've had more than enough of your *inspirational* advice for one day. (*As he's leaving he says mocking what Shadow Boy said earlier*) But I'm still smiling, oh brother am I smiling, because when life's *this* good it's hard *not* to. (*He shoots Shadow Boy with a phony smile and then slams the door.*)

SHADOW BOY (*Looks around at Malka, Eva and Jacques*): I just wanted to help.

MRS. DUBNOW: Don't feel bad; they'd be fighting like dis even if you vasn't here. They're always fighting.

SHADOW BOY (*Weak smile*): Yea but normally it's not my fault. Oh dear, I *do* feel bad. (*Music for "I didn't know" starts.*)

Shadow Boy:
I didn't know, life was so
Unpredictable,
so insurmountable,
and complicated.

It went so well, then straight to hell
without a reason why,
makes me want to cry,
and throw the towel in.

Oh how can I live in a world this inconsistent?
Where up and down can change in just an instant.
Oh how can I, ever try
When cause has left effect so dry.
I *swear* I'll never *care* again.

It went this way and that way,
And that way then this (*blows a kiss*)
A kiss,
Ruined it all.
It went this way and that way,
And that way then bliss,
just missed,
tried to assist

Now they're awfully pissed!

I didn't know, life was so
Precarious,
So hilarious-
ly convoluted.

It goes to show, the seeds you sow,
Are doomed to be,
A different variety,
Then intended.

(The music ends.)

SHADOW BOY *(Talking to both Eva and Mrs. Dubnow)*: What if they never talk to each other again?

MRS. DUBNOW: They vill, they always do.

EVA: Even though they probably shouldn't.

SHADOW BOY: Well... what if they never talk to *me* again?

MRS. DUBNOW: Don't verry so much. They're not mad at you, they're mad at themselves.

SHADOW BOY: I hope you're right... Well, no actually, I don't. *(Walks over to Malka)* I don't want them to be mad at anyone. I want them to be *(to Mrs. Dubnow)* happy. *Happy. (To Eva)* Happy happy.

EVA: Happy?

SHADOW BOY: Yea, happy. *(Sits down at the booth with Eva.)* But instead of happy I made them angry. Learned my lesson; never meddle in other people's affairs, it's just *too* dangerous.

EVA *(Uninterested)*: Hmm. *(They hold eye contact for a second and then Eva goes back to her work.)*

SHADOW BOY *(Looks at Eva like he's only just now seeing her)*: What'cha workin on?

EVA *(Wishing he'd go away)*: An obituary.

SHADOW BOY: Do you like writing obituaries?

EVA: Yes.

SHADOW BOY: What do you like about it?

EVA: Look I don't mean to be...

SHADOW BOY: My name's Shadow Boy by the way. *(He puts his hand out to shake)*

EVA *(Hesitantly shakes his hand)*: Oh, I'm Eva.

SHADOW BOY: It's nice to meet you Eva.

EVA: Thanks... Look I don't mean to be rude but I have an awful lot of work to do

SHADOW BOY: Oh... please go ahead, I don't mind. *(Eva gives him an ambiguously exacerbated look. Shadow Boy smiles back. Eva tries to go back to work)* So what do you like about it?

EVA: About what?

SHADOW BOY: Writing obituaries.

EVA: Well *normally* it's very solitary.

Shadow Boy: Yea, I can imagine... but there *are* lots of other things that are solitary, so why obituaries?

EVA: *(She gives up trying to work. She's clearly irritated)* Because it's a job, and I needed one, and this is the one I got. Okay?

SHADOW BOY *(A little taken aback)*: Oh... *(Eva goes back to her papers.)* Hey, you want to hear something funny? *(Eva puts whatever she was working on down in an exacerbated fashion.)* I once knew a man who went fishing in his bathtub. Isn't that hilarious? He'd go to the pet store and buy a bag of fish, come home, let'em lose in his bathtub and then go fishing... with a hook and a pole and everything. *(Laughing)* He even wore rubber boots to keep his feet dry. But the really funny part was how excited he'd get when he caught one, whooping and hollering like he was Captain Ahab taking down Moby Dick. *(Laughing)* Oh golly, he was such a character.

EVA *(She wants to be angry but is having a hard time of it)*: That is pretty funny.

SHADOW BOY: There are plenty more where that came from. I've spent a large part of my life finding oddballs like that to watch.

EVA: What did you spend the other part doing?

SHADOW BOY: Oh... Uh... Nothing really. You know, just the usual: this, that and the other.

EVA: This, that and the other? Is that usual?

SHADOW BOY: Oh very usual. In fact you're probably doing it right now, because if you're not doing this (*motions with his hands*) or that (*motions with his hands*) you gotta be doing the other. (*They both laugh*) Actually I spend most of my time looking after those who are near and dear.

EVA: Your family?

SHADOW BOY: Yea, sort of. I guess you could call them my adopted family.

EVA: What happened to your real family?

SHADOW BOY: I never had one.

EVA: I'm sorry... I never had one either... (*Forced chuckle*) We should start a club.

SHADOW BOY: Yea, we should.

EVA: Do you remember anything about your parents?

SHADOW BOY: No. Do you?

EVA: I remember my mother's face.

SHADOW BOY: What was it like?

EVA: It was ugly... I'm glad she got rid of me; I know I would have hated her. I'd hate anyone who'd abandon their child just because it's spine was crooked. (*They sit there in silence for a while. Eva becomes a little self-conscious and takes a sip of her mint julip.*)

SHADOW BOY: Hey, that's a mint-julip isn't it? I've always wanted to try one; do you think I could take a sip?

EVA: Sure but they're not for everyone.

SHADOW BOY (*Takes a sip*): Wow, that's delicious.

EVA: Really? You like it? (*Shadow Boy nods.*) I'm glad, mint-julips are my favorite.

SHADOW BOY: What else do you like?

EVA: To drink?

SHADOW BOY: No, just what else do you like?

EVA (*Takes a moment to think*): I like rainy days... I like hot baths... I *love* records. That's sort of my thing, actually, collecting records. I get a new one just about every week. Have you ever heard of the Ink Spots?

SHADOW BOY: No, I haven't.

EVA: They're incredible. I just got their latest record and it's beautiful.

SHADOW BOY: Well maybe I could hear it sometime.

EVA: (*Pause*) If you want to maybe later I could play it for you.

SHADOW BOY: I'd love that.

EVA (*There's a moment where they just look at each other*): I should probably get back to work.

SHADOW BOY: Oh please don't. I'm having such a nice time talking to you.

EVA: I don't know what else to talk about.

SHADOW BOY: I could tell you some more of my funny stories.

EVA: Are they as good as the first one.

SHADOW BOY: Some are even better... I once knew a man who'd wander the city every day from nine to five telling all the people he met that he was either on his way *to* work or on his way *home* from work, but he never actually *went* to work because he didn't *actually* have a job! (*Laughing*) Isn't that crazy?

Eva: (*Laughs*) Yes.

Shadow Boy: (*Music "Good times, love is new reprise" fades in drowning out their conversation.*) He was a real oddball. Oh and there was this lady too, she was *really* an oddball. She'd spy on her neighbors with a stethoscope. She'd press it up against the walls that their apartments shared and listen for hours. I felt kind of sorry for her because you could tell that she wished she had people in life, but what can you do...

(The music's volume has over come the talking. Shadow Boy and Eva just mouth talking now, occasionally laughing out loud. The lights start to change from daylight to nighttime lighting. Mrs. Dubnow and Jacques exit. As music ends we pick up in the middle of Shadow Boy and Eva's conversation. They are laughing.)

SHADOW BOY: I can't believe you put goat dung in the priest's pipe.

EVA (*Laughing*): You don't understand how mean he was. He'd make me do hail Mary's until I thought I'd go crazy, and just for the smallest things too. No he deserved what he got and worse.

SHADOW BOY: The way you described his face taking the first few puffs... (*Laughs*) Oh my, I never would have guessed you were capable.

EVA (*Laughs*): Yes, it was rather out of character, but you can't be nice all the time.

SHADOW BOY: No, apparently not.

EVA (*Checks the time*): It's already after nine. I can't believe we spent the whole day talking.

SHADOW BOY: I'm glad we did. I can honestly say that I've never had more fun.

EVA: Yes, it was fun.

SHADOW BOY: I hope I wasn't too much of a distraction. Will you be able to finish your work?

EVA: I'll have to stay up for awhile but I don't mind.

SHADOW BOY (*Stands up*): Well, I guess I should be going. Bye (*offers hand*.)

EVA (*takes hand and shakes it*): Bye.

SHADOW BOY: Bye. (*He starts to walk away*.)

Eva (*Before Shadow Boy gets to the door she calls out*): Wait! (*Shadow Boy stops in his tracks and smiles, thankful that he doesn't have to leave yet*.) Did you want to listen to that new Ink Spots' record before you leave?

SHADOW BOY: Yes, that's right. Please.

EVA: I think you'll really like it. I don't see how anyone couldn't. (*She gets her things and then starts to lead Shadow Boy to her room*.) My room's just up the stairs. (*She leads Shadow Boy up the stairs into her apartment with slight musical accompaniment. Her room is sparsely furnished. The lights downstairs are dimmed*.) Please take a seat. (*Eva goes to the record player and takes out "I wasn't meant for love" by the Ink Spots. She cranks record player*.) When I lived at the nunnery my caretaker, Sister Margret, forbid me to listen to records because she said that Edison was in league with the devil. How else could someone trap the human voice on a shellac disc? (*Shadow Boy looks at his reflection for the first time in a*

mirror on the wall.) I believed her but I didn't care. (Jack Mulligan enters down stairs, lights a cigarette and takes a seat at a table. Eva puts the needle on the record.)

SHADOW BOY *(Stands up)*: May I have this dance?

EVA: No. I can't dance.

SHADOW BOY: Sure you can. It's easy. I'll show you how.

(Shadow Boy takes her hand and puts her cane up against the wall. They begin to slow dance. The lights are dimmed on Eva's room and raised in the café. Madame enters the Café from up stairs. She's dressed in a nightgown and robe. Her hair and her makeup is a little messed and her mascara is ruined from crying. Madame is on the verge of a major break down.)

MADAME MARCEAU: Jack...

JACK *(Looking over her disheveled appearance)*: Rough night?

MADAME MARCEAU: I can't stand it anymore, Jack. I love you.

JACK: *(Pause)* Congratulations.

MADAME MARCEAU: You were right about everything. I'm just a fake. I've spent so many years pretending to be someone I'm not *I* don't even know who I am anymore. But I do know that I love you... I love you, Jack... Say something.

JACK: Do you know why you love me?

MADAME MARCEAU: I... *(Searches for the words.)*

JACK: It's because I'm the only person you can't control, and that drives you nuts.

MADAME MARCEAU: No, no that's not true at all. I love you because you're the only person who's seen me for what I am... a stupid, plain, simple girl who's too afraid of the truth to ever be honest. I need you to love me. Please. I'm falling apart.

JACK: You don't need my love, you've got the love of your adoring public.

MADAME MARCEAU: My adoring public? *(She laughs and cries.)* Oh, Jack, I was never a star. I sang for tips in a filthy nightclub. I made the whole thing up, pure fantasy. My name isn't Maria Marceau, it's Ludmilla Urikova. I'm not even French... *(Starts to cry.)* So you see I really don't have *anything* without your love. *(She drops to her knees and clutches onto Jack.)* Please say you love me. *(Jack stands up.)* Please. *(She breaks down.)*

(The lights in the café are dimmed and the lights in Eva's room are raised. The Ink Spot's "I wasn't meant for love" is just ending. Shadow Boy and Eva keep holding each other as the record drags on the blank inside track. They slowly kiss.)

SHADOW BOY *(There is a moment after the kiss where he's tranquil but then panic comes over him.)* Oh my God! I think I'm in love. *(Eva looks confused and distressed.)* I'm sorry I have to go. I'm sorry. *(The lights in the café are raised. Shadow Boy runs down the stairs and then stops when he sees Madame Marceau crying on her knees and clutching onto Jack.)* What's the matter with you people! Don't you know how lucky you are? *(Jack and Madame look up startled at the sudden outburst. As he's walking to the door he says...)* Maybe if you thought about someone besides yourselves you'd *actually* be happy. *(He stops and turns at the door.)* Oh, and you might want to check on Mr. Picket. He's probably shooting up a quick one before bed. *(He exits slamming the door.)*

MADAME MARCEAU: *(She gets up and runs upstairs. There are a few moments of silence and then she yells...)* Jack, come quick!

(Jacques enters and Jack motions for him to go upstairs. Several moments later he carries Mr. Picket's body down to the café. They lay his body down. One of Mr. Picket's sleeves is rolled up and there is a strap tied around his upper arm. His arm has track marks.)

JACQUES: Mousier Picket, Mousier Picket! *(Jacques slaps Mr. Picket's face to revive him. Mr. Picket comes to. Madame and Jacques give a sigh of relief.)* I think he'll be fine. I'll make some coffee.

(Mr. Picket, Madame, Jack and Jacques go into soft freeze.)

ACT 3:

(Café lights fade out. Lights in Eva's room stays on. Front of stage is lit with harsh white and blue lights trying to evoke the feeling of a city square at night. Eva is sitting on her bed, looking quiet. Music Starts. Shadow Boy enters.)

SHADOW BOY:
Here I am standing,
Not understanding,
Back where I came from,
Victory Square.

Last time I walked here,
It all seemed so clear.
Now I am falling
Into despair.

Once again,
Trapped in a box,
Made out of glass

Yes once again,
Don't know the way,
too scared to ask

Oh lost again,
How can I live,
When I can't love,
How can I love you and live.

EVA:
Here I am sitting,
How unremitting,
Back to my quiet,
Lonely life.

(She stands)
Before you kissed me
Cupid had missed me
Now I am wishing
He shot to kill.

SHADOW BOY:
You are my sister.

EVA:
Burn me I blister.

SHADOW BOY:
I am your brother

EVA AND SHADOW BOY HARMONY:
Together we are...

Once again,
Trapped in a box,
Made out of glass

Yes once again,
Don't know the way,
too scared to ask.

Oh lost again,

How can I live,
When I can't love,
How can I love you and live.

(Music ends. Lights fade out in Eva's room and then curtains close with Shadow Boy in front of them. Shadow Boy sits down and then breaks down. Mr. Bloch's musical cue starts, enter Mr. Bloch. The lights change from sad, subdued blues to brighter, more office building light. Shadow Boy is startled and stops crying.)

MR. BLOCH: *(Walking across stage snaps fingers. By the time he gets to the Shadow Boy the table and chair have been lowered from the ceiling. Mr. Bloch immediately goes to work, opening his briefcase, getting papers in order, etc...)* Enjoy your stay?

SHADOW BOY *(Wide eyed and terrified)*: What are you doing here?

MR. BLOCH: I'm here to collect your soul.

SHADOW BOY: But... but ... No, I just got here.

MR. BLOCH: Sorry, not my problem. You knew the rules. Once you experience a transcendent emotion you revert back to spirit form... *(Shadow Boy puts his hands on his head and makes a groan realizing what he's done)* And I'm guessing from your disheveled appearance that it was a transcendent emotion of the lower variety... What a shame. I would have gone out with something a little more memorable. But to each his own. Now if you'll just sign here and here...

SHADOW BOY: I don't want to be reincarnated.

MR. BLOCH: *(Sternly)* Look. We've been through this. Either you sign or you wander the earthly realm as a spirit *indefinitely*... Besides, you gave me your word... And I nearly got myself fired for that stunt I pulled on your behalf so I think you owe it to me. *(Offers him the pen.)*

SHADOW BOY: I'm just going to miss my... family.

MR. BLOCH: I know. But it's for the best.

SHADOW BOY: *(Takes the pen. He leans over the contract. The pen is poised to sign but he holds it there for a while. Shadow Boy notices that his hand is casting a shadow and then that his body is also casting a shadow. He looks up at Mr. Bloch.)* I thought you said I went back to being a ghost?

MR. BLOCH: You do.

SHADOW BOY: Then why am I casting a shadow?

MR. BLOCH: (*Agitated and nervous.*) Well, because, *technically*, you don't... *actually* become a ghost until the first rays of sunlight.

SHADOW BOY: Then it's not too late!

MR. BLOCH: *It is too late!* It's at the point when a contract is breached that a soul must be collected... and that time is NOW!

SHADOW BOY (*Puts the pen down and backs away*): I'm sorry Mr. Bloch

MR. BLOCH: If you don't sign now you'll never be able to.

SHADOW BOY: I'm sorry.

MR. BLOCH: I'll lose my job! I'll have to do it all over again, starting as a mosquito.

SHADOW BOY: I'm sorry but I'm in love. I'm not ready to leave... (*laughs a little*) I'm only sixteen after all... Thanks for everything... (*He exits running*)

MR. BLOCH: (*He's left on stage for a moment digesting what just happened. He collects his papers and puts them in his briefcase. He closes his briefcase.*)

(*Speaking to the audience.*)

I'm a spiritually perfect being
and I've got an axe to grind,
about these stupid,
struck by cupid
mortals wasting all my time!

(*Singing*)

I try to tell them what is best,
But they won't listen,
They would rather suffer
Just for some kissin'
Believe me it's a blessing that we get to be reborn,
Please I really have to run just sign the friggin form.

It ain't easy being perfect,
It ain't easy being free,
It ain't easy, oh baby please believe me,
It ain't easy being me.

I work all day I work all night
Oh how it's a crime.
Collecting and rating
I'm working over time.
My nerves are cut my nerves are short like Danny Devito.
The next time that you see me I'll be a mosquito.

It ain't easy being perfect,
It ain't easy being free,
It ain't easy, oh baby please believe me,
It ain't easy being me.
Oh no,
It ain't easy being me,
I'm telling you
It ain't easy being... *(Music abruptly stops)*

I was sick of this damn job anyways. *(He straightens his tie grabs his briefcase and exits with great determination accompanied by his musical cue.)*

(The curtains are opened and the lights in the café come back up. Mr. Picket, Jack, Madame, and Jacques are all quietly sitting around a table drinking coffee. Mr. Picket has a blanket over his shoulders.)

JACK *(After some time goes by)*: How you feeling?

MR. PICKET: Much better, thank you. *(Jack smiles)*

SHADOW BOY *(Enters. He looks a little uncomfortable, like he has something to say but doesn't know how to say it)*: Hello, everyone... I know you must think I'm crazy because none of you know me, but, well, I'm leaving and before I left I wanted to let you all know that... I love you... *(He smiles at them.)* Well, so long. *(No one says anything back. They're all a bit stunned. Shadow Boy exits up the stairs)*

MR. PICKET: What a strange boy

(The lights in the café fade out. The lights on Eva's room fade in. Shadow Boy straightens his appearance at the top of the stairs before knocking on Eva's door. Eva wipes off her tears.)

SHADOW BOY *(Opens door)*: May I come in? *(Eva stands up from her bed. They look at each other, unsure of what to say or what to do. Then slowly they walk to each other. Very hesitantly they take each other's hands. Eva is on the verge of tears. They kiss. Eva starts to cry. Shadow Boy holds her.)* It's alright, Eva, don't cry. I promise I'm never going to leave you again. I'll always be with you, forever and ever and ever. *(There are tears in Shadow boy's eyes but he isn't sobbing. Shadow Boy takes Eva by the shoulders and looks at her.)* Remember that. Okay?

(Eva nods. She wipes her tears away and smiles at Shadow Boy. They kiss again. Shadow Boy leads Eva to the bed. They lie down and hold one another. The lights in Eva's room slowly fade out as "Eva's Theme" music starts. On some wall of the café a film is projected. It is a recycling of the images in the movie that accompanied the overture, however the progression from death to life is reversed. The film ends and the lights of Eva's room are brought up. We see the sun rise. The music is just dying out as the light pours in. Eva and Shadow Boy are still in bed, holding each other but now Shadow Boy's

face is white like it was in the beginning. Shadow Boy wakes up. He gets out of bed and examines his body to see if indeed he is a ghost. He is. He sits down and waits for Eva to wake up. She yawns and then turns reaching for Shadow Boy in bed. She wakes up when she doesn't find him. She sits up in bed and looks around the room. She realizes he's gone and takes a quiet moment to herself then stands up with strength and purpose, walks to the typewriter, and starts to type. The lights of the café are brought up while simultaneously the lights of Eva's room are faded out. Malka is sitting in her normal booth knitting. Jack and Madame are sitting at a table together. Jack is sketching her portrait. Jacques is behind the bar.)

MADAME MARCEAU: Can I see it yet? *(She leans over trying to catch a peek.)*

JACK *(Pulls his sketch pad away from her)*: Hey, keep your eyes to yourself. It's not finished... Move your head. No, back like it was. Yea there. Now stay like that until I say other wise.

MADAME MARCEAU: You're not drawing me with a knife in my head or anything like that are you?

JACK: Yes. Now keep still. And stop making so much noise; you're breaking my concentration.

MADAME MARCEAU: Oh, do pardon. The artist must have quiet.

JACK *(Spends a few more moments adding finishing touches. He holds it up, examines it, and then nods in approval. He hands it to Madame)*: A Jack Mulligan original!

MADAME MARCEAU: Oh, Jack, it's beautiful. It's not violent or gruesome at all; it's just... beautiful. Do I get to keep it?

JACK: If you like.

MADAME MARCEAU: Oh thank you. I know just the place for it.

MR. PICKET *(Enters with suitcase and over coat on)*: Well, everyone, I'm off. *(Jack and Madame stand up.)*

MADAME MARCEAU: Where are you going?

MR. PICKET: Somewhere where I can get the help I need.

MADAME MARCEAU: Oh. *(Stands)*

JACQUES *(Comes over from behind the bar and shakes hands with Mr. Picket.)*: I'll take good care of your gold fish while your gone.

MR. PICKET: Thank you... Madame, it has been a pleasure. *(He takes her hand and kisses it)*

MADAME MARCEAU: Oh Mr. Picket I will miss you. *(She kisses him on the cheek.)* Take care of yourself.

MR. PICKET: I will... Jack. *(Warmly shakes hands with him.)*

JACK: You need anything just telephone and I'll make sure you get it.

EVA *(Enters with a piece of paper in her hand. Shadow Boy is just behind her)*: Mr. Picket, are you leaving?

MR. PICKET: Yes, I'm afraid so. But I'll be back soon enough.

EVA: Oh good.

MR. PICKET *(He picks up his suitcase)*: Well, goodbye. *(As he passes Malka he tips his hat.)* Malka. *(He exits.)*

JACK *(He and Madame sit back down)*: Remarkable man.

EVA *(Sits down with Malka)*: Good morning Malka.

MALKA: Good morning, Neshomeleh. How are you feeling?

EVA: Very good, thank you... How are *you* feeling?

MALKA: Oh I've been better, I've been better, but I've been varse too.

EVA: I have something for you. *(She hands her the piece of paper she's been holding.)* It's Izzy's obituary.

MALKA: *(She's very touched.)* Oh. Oh my. *(She takes Eva's hand.)* Thank you so much. *(She wipes a tear away and sighs and smiles.)* Thank you. *(Eva smiles back.)*

JACK: *(Notices something. Slowly puts his sketch pad down. To Madame...)* Don't move.

MADAME MARCEAU: What is it?

JACK *(He slaps Madame on the back of the neck)*: Ah, got him!

MADAME MARCEAU: What was it?

JACK: Goddamn mosquito. *(Goes back to sketching.)*

(Shadow Boy has been watching. He starts to laugh uncontrollably. A few bars of Mr. Bloch's theme is played. Curtain closes. Café Waltz is played for curtain call.)

The End