

Pretty Boy
by
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List of Characters

Peter Bates (PB), young American, age 19, at first

Colonel Henry Bates (F), his father, Middle American, in his 40's

Michael (M) (unseen), American, early 20's

Lieutenant John (Jack) Greco (J), American, early 20's, at first

Wolf van Leiden (W), German Artist, late 20's, at first

Helene Kleiber (H), French Businesswoman, early 40's

The "maid" (MD), Helene's French assistant

Marianne (MR), Dutch woman, early 20's

ACT I

Berlin bedroom, afternoon, 1973. A very spare set, with a “picture window” screen in back. Film of buildings and trolleys playing on the screen. Peter Bates (Pretty Boy) is cutting out pictures from magazines. Disco music playing. After a while the phone rings. PB and F (on vignette stage above main area) answer simultaneously.

PB and F: Hello?

M (unseen): Hi. Is Peter there?

PB: Yeah, I’m here. I got it, Dad.

F: Who’s calling, please?

PB: Dad, I got it. I’m here. It’s for me.

F: Oh. Okay. No problem.

PB: Can you hang up the phone?

F: Sure. Will do. (Clicks the receiver – pretends to hang up.)

PB: Michael, are you still there?

M: I guess so. What’s happening?

PB: Oh, nothing much. Going along. I’m trying to decide who to be tonight.

M: What?

PB: For Juliet’s costume party. Aren’t you going?

M: Nobody invited me.

PB: Well, I’m inviting you. But if you want to go, you have to have a costume or, you know, come as somebody.

M: Why?

PB: Because, that's the rule tonight.

M: Well, who are you coming as?

PB: "*La spectre de la rose*" or maybe the Arab one, what's it called, you know, "*Scheherezade*." Except I don't have the right stuff. Maybe I could go as Nijinsky when he was in the mental place. You know, get some rags.

M: How will anyone know who you are?

PB: Well, I'll tell them, pretend I'm Russian. I don't know. Maybe you're right. How 'bout Nijinsky and Diaghilev arriving in Monte Carlo? You could be Diaghilev.

M: Thanks a lot. Who wants to be old and fat? Why don't you be Diaghilev and I'll be Nijinsky. After all, I'm the dancer.

PB: Did you get in?

M: Yes. Well, I think so. They haven't decided about the scholarship yet. But I think I'll get it. Janice told me that she saw my name on some list.

PB: Did Jeff get in?

M: No. He said he blew the audition really bad.

PB: I don't believe it. Why?

M: I don't know. He wanted it so much I guess he just couldn't relax and do it. He's really bummed out. And kinda mad at me for getting in.

PB: Auditions are the worst. I could never do it. But why should he be mad at you?

M: Well, you know, he's been dancing a lot longer than I have, I mean, he's the one who sort of made me start in the first place and now, I'm the one who's getting all the breaks and he's back at square one. Plus, he thinks you and me are gettin' it on.

PB: Oh no. That's the worst. Why does he think that? I'd never have sex with you. That would wreck everything. I just want to be your friend... forever. I mean it. That's the best, don't you think? It's hard enough without, well, anyway, Michael, I... never came on to him; Jeff's the one who came on to me. I would have done it, too, if what's-his-name hadn't been there --- Franz.

M: When was this?

PB: At Julie's last party. Don't you remember? You know, there was this dance at the officer's club, so her parents were out. We got there really late. Franz didn't want to go because he's afraid, you know, he didn't want to be "identified" with me, but I say fuck that, I'm always the same no matter who I'm with. So, anyway, when we finally got there, Franz was drunk, Jeff acted like he'd been waiting for me all night, lie we had some kind of date that I'd broken.

M: He says you're a cock-tease.

PB: Who said that? Jeff? I don't even know what that means. People see what they want to see. It was so weird. You should have seen Jeff when that girl he hangs around with, Marlene, said she hates fags and that Franz was the only real man there and that she was gonna prove it. I wish...

M: Jeff and I aren't having sex anymore.

(F enters.)

PB: You're kidding. Michael, I want to talk to you more. Later. I gotta go.

M: Okay. You'll call me back?

PB: Yeah. In a little while.

M: I don't know. In a while. An hour or so.

M: I'll be here.

PB: Good. Bye. Cheer up. Everything's gonna be great.

M: I hope so. Bye. (Hangs up.)

F: Hi, Pete! What're you up to?

PB: Nothing.

F: Nothing? You must be doing something.

PB: I'm thinking.

F: Thinking? About what?

PB: About how to get the fuck outta here.

F: Don't swear. Only low-class people swear.

PB: That's not true.

F: That's how we judge people, Peter. By how they look, how they talk, how they behave. Now what would I think if I'd just met you and...

PB: How can you judge me when you don't know anything about me!?!

F: I'm not judging you, I'm just saying...

PB: Yes, you are.

F: Don't interrupt. It's very rude to interrupt people, especially your elders. (Silence.) What's the music you're playing?

PB: It's Gloria Gaynor.

F: Well, I guess it's better than that Mick Jagger you used to play. All that screaming and moaning. (Turns off record.) Pete, I want to talk. Have you read those pamphlets I gave you?

PB: Yeah.

F: And?

PB: I don't want to go into the Army.

F: Well then, what do you want to do? School doesn't seem to be the answer or are you ready to try again?

PB: I don't know. Why do we have to have the same conversation over and over again?

F: Because you never give the right answer. Peter, I know you're, well... what I want to say is... You're not a child anymore. I'm not going to support you forever, you know.

PB: Mom said not to worry, you had a lot of money.

F: Your mother had some funny ideas about money. And about raising kids. But, in spite of that... Pete, you're the only thing left of her I have. What I want to say is... I'll never have another child and...

PB: Who knows? Maybe you'll get married again and...

F: (Laughs.) No, I don't think so. After you've lost somebody... Peter, are you still mad about the other night?

PB: No, I'm not mad.

F: It won't happen again, I swear.

PB: Don't swear.

F: (Laughs nervously.) I promise then. Peter, look at me when I'm talking to you! I'm trying to say I'm sorry. I mean it. (They stare at each other.) Remember when you little and you used to like me?

PB: No. I don't remember.

F: Peter, I know it was wrong but, try to understand my situation. I mean, you're a ... man now, aren't you? I mean, I'm alone now. I only have you. I know, I know I should get on with my life, but your mother and I, it's so hard and, well, there's gotta be someone. I know I won't have you here for much longer. I mean, sure, you can stay – I'd never put you out – but, why are you making it so hard for me?

PB: I'm not doing anything to you. You're the one doing stuff to me.

F: I didn't mean to. It just happened, for Christ's sake, right? It's over. Finished. I said that already. It doesn't mean anything. We're the family. We've got to keep that together. The family is the most basic, the most important element in your life, the thing that sustains you.

PB: Really? You just said you weren't going to support me anymore.

F: I never said that. I'm not talking about money. Money has nothing to do with it.

PB: That's easy for you to say. The government, the Army, supports you, keeps sending you checks forever. That's your family.

F: That's my job. I'm talking about love.

PB: Oh, so that's my job? Love's a job? What's the pay? I'd say I'm owed a lot.

F: Peter, I don't owe you a dime. And if that's what you think, you're wrong. All I owe you is an apology, and I've given it. Now, let's get on with it.

PB: It's not enough. It doesn't matter what you say. Words don't mean anything.

F: It does matter what I say. And you better start listening. Now that's enough! I've got better things to do than sit here arguing with you. Stop being ridiculous. I mean it. If you're going to act like a child, then I'll treat you like one. Come on, clean up this room and get dressed, for Christ's sake. Someone's coming over.

(Exits. PB puts on a record, perhaps Johnny Mathis' "I Married an Angel." The next two scenes happen simultaneously. F and J on the "vignette" stage. PB is in his room. W enters.)

W: Hello. I'm sorry to interrupt. But I want to show you something.

PB: No, I'm glad you came. You've never seen my room before.

W: Is your father here? He does not like me, I think.

PB: Don't worry about it. That's just his way. He thinks being cold and distant is a form of politeness. He probably doesn't even know who you are.

W: Yes, he does. He said, "Why would the artist want to see my son?" What could I say? I couldn't tell the truth.

PB: Yeah, I guess not. Did you finish? Let me see! Let me see! (W shows a drawing of PB nude.) Oh my. It certainly is... provocative.

W: I should tell him: "I am the artist and your son is the art."

PB: Oh Wolf, you're so romantic. Maybe you should cut off your ear.

W: You mean to say... castration?!?

PB: Castration? You're too much. That's not what I meant. I meant romantic with a capital R. You know, like art history.

W: But, you see, there is no history. An artist must destroy history before something new can be born.

PB: Oh, a revolutionary artist. Very butch.

W: All true art is revolutionary.

PB: If you say so. All this philosophy is making me delirious.

W: That's why I love you. You're pure, untainted by all this... culture.

PB: A noble savage. Maybe that's what I'll be tonight. I'll get some Indian feathers and old hippie beads.

W: I don't understand.

PB: That's okay. What are you going to do with that picture?

W: Of course I'm going to sell it.

PB: You're kidding. Who would buy that?

W: You would be surprised. I have ideas.

PB: Do I get any money from it?

W: Sure, why not? I want to do a whole series of drawings. You – in all different... ways. When can we have another ... sitting?

PB: You name it.

W: Good. Lie down now. On your front.

PB: Now? (Does so.) Like this?

W: Just so, but more... relaxed. (Arranges PB.) Of course, you must be naked.

PB: I know, for the real thing. But, for now, I mean, what if somebody...

W: I'll take care of that. Just allow me... (Tries to take off PB's pants.)

PB: (Resisting. Laughing.) There's a time and a place for everything, you know.

W: We live outside time. We can make our own rules.

PB: I don't know. Okay, for a little while, I guess.

(F and J on platform while W and PB are in the room below.)

F: Now, John, the reason I asked you over is to discuss some of these reassignments. Take Gallagher, for instance. Now, I know he's been something of a disciplinary problem, but to move him out of our unit, is that the answer?

J: It seemed like the best thing to do at the time, Sir.

F: You can't allow one little event to change your whole course of action. You have to look at the big picture. I believe in your report on him, you used the term "extortion." What did you mean by that?

J: He forced some of the men into giving him money, Sir.

F: By what means?

J: By threats of acts of physical violence.

F: By fear?

J: Yes, Sir.

F: Fear of what, exactly? Blackmail? You know, there's always this sort of gossip, innuendo, when there's basically nothing for the men to do.

J: I'm not sure I understand what you're getting at, Sir.

F: John, getting rid of Gallagher won't solve anything. It's the situation. Individual personalities are irrelevant. We need more information. Try to use a little psychology. Delve a little deeper. Don't be afraid. I'm behind you 100 percent. Remember, he's just a kid.

J: Yes, Sir.

F: Have you met my son, Peter?

J: No, Sir. Well, I've seen him.

F: Yes, I know. John, I'd like to ask you a favor. I think it's do Peter a world of good if you would talk to him. He needs a little, well, direction and I was thinking, maybe you could encourage him to sign up. I've always thought that, naturally, he'd want to join the service when his time came, but, you know how kids are, anything I want, he doesn't. Maybe someone nearer his own age could do the trick. I'm worried about some of the friends he's made here. I wish he could have grown up in the States. Finally becoming a man, that's the big hump. Whaddya say?

J: Okay, Sir. Sure, I'll talk to him. Anytime you want, Sir. You name it.

F: Well, how 'bout right now? He happens to be here. It's just a coincidence. Are you sure this won't inconvenience you? I don't want you to go to any trouble, but...

J: No trouble at all, Sir. Where is he?

F: I believe he's in his room.

(Lights dime on "vignette" stage. F and J enter bedroom. PB is horrified, W bemused.)

F: Excuse me. Peter, I want to introduce you to one of my best men, Lieutenant John Greco. John, my son, Peter.

J: Hi, Peter. Why don't you call me Jack?

PB: Hello. How do you do? (Extends arm.)

F: And this is... Wolf von Leiden. A German friend.

W: Hi, soldier.

J: (Salutes mockingly.) Hi.

F: Peter, John here wanted to meet you and... talk to you. Okay?

PB: Okay.

F: Well, four's a crowd, I guess. I'm going upstairs to finish some work. And the, Peter, we'll have supper. I'd love to invite you guys, but I'm afraid we've already...

J: That's okay, Sir. Thanks, anyway.

W: Ja, thanks, Pop.

F: It's a shame there's no draft in Germany.

PB: Yes, it is a little stuffy in here. It's a small room for four adults. See ya later, Dad.

F: Okay. No problem. (Starts to leave.) Say Jack! Can I fix you something?

J: No thanks, Sir, I'll be fine. Don't worry.

F: Okay. See you later, guys. (Exits.)

PB: Bye-bye.

J: I don't know what to say. What were you guys doing, schoolwork?

W: I don't go to school. I'm an artist. I'm doing drawings of Peter.

J: Like that?

W: Ja, just like that.

J: Jesus.

PB: Well, it's like school. It's called life drawing. They teach it everywhere, even in the Army. Wolf's helping me learn how to model. I mean, you get paid to do it.

J: Really? How much? I bet they don't pay very much.

PB: Whatever it is, it's enough. For not really doing anything. I mean, you just pose the way they want you to pose. And hold it. That's the hard part. Holding the pose for a long time. Hours even

W: Days. Weeks. Months. Years. To capture an image could take an artist a lifetime.

J: Sounds like slow work.

W: You have to know how to concentrate.

J: Yeah, well, I'm sure you're right. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to disturb your work. I didn't know you were busy. I mean, I didn't even know you were here. The colonel just said...

W: Ja, sure, that's okay. I must leave you now anyway. Peter, will I see you again?

PB: Yes. Alright. You got the number.

W: Ja, somewhere. What time?

PB: Uh, late, I think. Okay?

W: Okay. Goodbye, Peter. (To J.) Auf Wiedersehen, soldier. Until we meet again. (W does a curt bow and exits.)

J: See ya. (Pause.) He seems like a nice fellow. (Pause.) How long have you known him?

PB: Not too long. Not long at all. What does that have to do with anything?

J: Nothing, I guess. Sorry. Well, so, uh, how long have you been in Berlin?

PB: Three years, off and on.

J: Are you in school?

PB: I finished.

J: Right. Where'd you go?

PB: I went to the Army school here and then I went to a school in the French Zone.

J: Oh. You speak French?

PB: No. You don't have to go there. You have to take it, though. Are you some kind of psychiatrist?

J: No. Why?

PB: You sure like questions.

J: I'm just interested.

PB: How old are you?

J: 21. How old are you?

PB: 19.

J: You must have a lot of good times, being young, here in Berlin. Yeah?

PB: I don't know. I'm not that young. Yeah, sometimes, I guess.

J: It's a real wide open town. What do you do for fun? Do you like sports?

PB: I hate sports. I like to dance, though. Does that count? I mean, you move around. I bet you're a big jock, right?

J: No, I wouldn't say that. Sometimes the guys get together for touch football.

PB: That's what President Kennedy used to play, right? I mean, before he was president. Or, before he was in the PT boat, or something.

J: Or before he broke his back. Or whatever. I don't know too much history.

PB: Really? History was always my best subject. It was my favorite. (Pause.) Well, I guess I better get dressed now.

J: You want me to leave?

PB: No, you don't have to. Do you want to?

J: Whatever you want.

PB: No, whatever you want.

J: Okay, no, I mean yeah, thanks. Can I look at your records?

PB: Sure. (Getting dressed.)

J: Wow, you got a lot of records. How'd you get so many?

PB: I rip them off from the PX. It's really easy.

J: Easy for you.

PB: Yeah, I guess. Sometimes I get 3 or 4 a day. And if I don't like them, I just throw them out. Do you like this shirt?

J: Hey, that's cool. I like that. I mean, it's a little far out for me but for you... You know, you're a good-looking guy. You must make out pretty good with the frauleins. Yeah? You know many girls?

PB: Yeah, I know some.

J: Hey, maybe we could go out sometime, you know, like a double date? Only trouble is, I don't dance too good.

PB: Do you know how to Hustle?

J: What?

PB: The Hustle. It's a dance.

J: Never heard of it.

PB: God. Where've you been?

J: I've been around. Maybe you could teach me.

PB: Teach you? Yeah, well, maybe I could. All right. Come here. (Starts to dance awkwardly.)

J: Are you sure this is cool with your dad?

PB: I play music all the time. I'm not afraid. Come on. Okay? Ready?

(Puts on "Do the Hustle." They dance badly at first, then improve as if by magic, till they are perfect, happy, and seemingly in love. F comes in unobserved, shocked, then furious.)

F: What the hell are you two doing?

J: Peter's teaching me the Hustle.

F: You bet he is.

PB: Why don't you ever let me have any fun? Why?

F: Stop whining, Peter, you sound like an eight-year-old girl.

PB: Fuck you.

F: What did you say?

J: Peter, don't talk to your father like that.

PB: Fuck you. Don't tell me what to do.

J: Okay, sorry. Sir, I apologize for what happened, if it made you upset. I thought I was following your orders.

F: What orders?

PB: What orders? Hey, what is this shit?

F: Greco, report to my office at eight a.m. tomorrow.

PB: Yes, Sir. Goodbye, Sir. Peter, it was nice meeting you. Maybe later we can... talk some more. Okay?

F: DISMISSED, GRECO!

PB: Okay.

(J exits.)

F: Now you're going to get it. You get everything you want, don't you? Well, you're not going to get him. Your dancing days are over, buddy boy. I'm going to put you to work where I can keep my eyes on you. I'm not going to sit by and watch you turn into some stupid little queer.

PB: Really? Don't you want me to grow up just like my daddy?

F: Shut up, you.

PB: I won't shut up, you old fag. You're just a hypocrite. You want to keep me around here so that when you get hard up, and you can't find some drunk hick G.I. to suck off, you can come crying into my room and jack off up my asshole. You make me sick. I'm going to call the cops on you.

F: That's not even funny. You're not calling anybody.

PB: You wanna bet? My friends'll help me. I told 'em all about you.

F: Those pansies?

PB: Yeah. Them. At least it doesn't take an hour for them to get it up. You'd love it. Nice, big, smooth young dicks all over the place.

F: Shut up! You can't talk to me like this. I won't stand for it. Do you hear me? I won't stand for it.

PB: Get fucked. I can say anything I want and you can't do anything about it. (F starts chasing PB around the room, trying to attack him.) Maybe your new "assistant" John'll help you out. Maybe you could even get him to stick it up your old fat ass. Or maybe we could both fuck you. At the same time. Would you like that? I'm sure there's enough room up there. (F grabs PB.) But nobody would fuck you. You're too cheap. Fuck you, man.

(They fight. It is awkward, disorganized. After a while, PB grabs scissors and stabs F. Stunned, F falls and PB is paralyzed. He picks up the phone and dials.)

M: (Unseen.) Hello?

PB: Michael, something's happened. Can I come over?

M: What happened? Are you all right?

PB: Yea, I'm all right. Can I come over?

M: Of course you can.

PB: I'm leaving right now. (Hangs up. Looks around. Goes to the door in a panic. Opens it and J is standing there.)

J: Hi, Peter. Look, I'm sorry, but I need to talk to you. Now.

PB: I can't talk now. I gotta go. Sorry. See ya later.

(Jack looks at Peter exit, then enters stage uneasily. Lights fade as Father raises arm as Jack approaches. Film out. End of Act I.)

ACT II

(Paris bedroom, late afternoon, 1976. Film backdrop of Paris street scene – corner of Montparnasse and Raspail. Disco music playing. Marianne enters, starts looking around in room. Telephone rings. PB enters at “vignette” stage.)

PB: Allo?

M: Peter, it's Michael.

PB: Where are you? You were supposed to be here at one.

M: I couldn't make it.

PB: Well, you could've called. I just sat here. I could've had lunch with a lot of other people, you know. I set aside today. Never mind. Are you coming tonight? Alain Delon's gonna be here.

M: Who?

PB: Who's Alain Delon? Michael, he's maybe gonna put me in this movie, if I play my cards right. I met him last night at Club Sept and he said I'd be perfect for it.

M: What movie?

PB: I don't know the name of it, some *policier* thing. He's so incredible.

M: Peter, your father called me.

PB: What? How did he find you?

M: He saw my name in the newspaper. Then he came to the theater.

PB: You saw him?

M: No. He came backstage to find me, but I'd already left. The stage manager gave him my number. He said he was an old friend.

PB: That idiot. Well, what did he have to say?

M: He wants to see you.

PB: Well, I don't want to see him.

M: He's your father. You have to see him.

PB: I don't have to do anything.

M: Jesus Christ, Peter, you tried to kill him!

PB: I didn't try to kill him. It was an accident. Remember?

M: You're not sorry?

PB: I'm sorry it happened. But it's over. Right? I've gotten it together now, and I'm not gonna let him fuck this up. I don't care who he is.

M: Peter, listen to what you're saying. He's still your father.

PB: Don't give me that psychology crap. So what he's my father. Is that my fault? You can't choose your parents. What's he want to see me for, anyway?

M: I don't know. He just wants to see you. He's sorry about what happened. I think he feels guilty somehow, like it was his fault.

PB: It wasn't his fault.

M: Peter, something's happened to him. He sounds like he's ill.

PB: I'm not his nurse. Listen, I gotta go.

M: What about your father?

PB: You didn't give him my number, did you?

M: No. Maybe I should. Maybe I should invite him to your party.

PB: Are you crazy? Anyway, it's not my party. It's Helene's. Michael, relax. Just forget about him. I really have to go. I'll see you tonight, okay?

M: I don't think so.

PB: Please?

M: I'm working.

PB: Work, work, work. Everyone's always working. What is this, Russia?

M: I'm free in the mornings.

PB: I know. Goodbye, Michael. Don't be mad at me. I love you.

M: Okay. Talk to you soon.

(PB hangs up. "Vignette" stage lights out.)

(Lights up onstage. We see Helene and the Maid.)

H: Where is Peter?

MD: I don't know. I was looking for Paulette.

H: Don't you have enough work to keep your mind occupied?

(PB enters in a kimono-bathrobe, fresh from the shower, and kisses Helene on the neck.)

H: Oh, you frightened me. Did you just get up? Peter, you're getting my blouse wet. Water and silk are not friends, as Madame would always say.

PB: Sorry, so sorry. What are you wearing?

H: What? What do you mean?

PB: Your *parfum*. What is it?

H: Balenciaga, of course. I've worn it for twenty years. What, you don't like it all of a sudden?

PB: No, you look fabulous. I just meant... you look different today.

H: It must be my new suit. It's beautiful, isn't it?

PB: I love that line. And the color is perfect for you.

H: This is a very old color, you know. Before the war, my mother had a hat, a very big hat, just this color.

PB: The old colors are the best. (Goes to H.)

H: Yes, they are. Don't touch me now, please.

PB: Why? Is there something wrong?

H: No, nothing's the matter. I don't think. (Pause.) Peter, when was the last time you were at the doctor?

PB: I don't know. There's nothing wrong with me.

H: Are you certain you're not ill? Perhaps you are having some sort of... relapse.

PB: Relapse of what? Yes, I'm certain I'm not ill, Helene.

H: Then what is the matter with you?

PB: Nothing. I feel great.

H: You're wearing yourself down. You're seeing too many people.

PB: But you're always telling me to go out, to meet new people.

H: I didn't want you to sleep with them.

PB: Oh, here we go. Who've you been talking to?

H: No one. No one has to tell me. I can smell it on your body. I wouldn't care, if you still wanted to... to be with me. For someone of your age, I would think the normal is, say, once in the morning and once at night, or perhaps twice at night and...

PB: What's gotten into you?

H: At least once a day. That would be... suitable. But we never sleep two days together and now... these men. It's dangerous.

PB: It doesn't have anything to do with you.

H: Yes it does.

PB: Shit. Helene, are you sure you're all right? Maybe it's you who has some kind of disease.

H: Yes, it's called love.

PB: Oh, brother.

H: You can't understand love. You don't want to sacrifice, to give. These... people you meet, they don't love you. I love you. The rest... you're making a big mistake. You're pushing everything out, leaving only a little space, a little world to live in, but that world is a prison. Once you're in, you'll never get out.

PB: You seem to know an awful lot about it.

H: It's not so difficult to understand. I'm trying to help you. Don't you see that? Don't you see anything?

PB: I see that you're mad at me, and I don't know why.

H: I'm not mad at you, my darling. I've been thinking.

PB: You think too much.

H: Always I'm thinking or working. Time is passing, yes? When I was young, I thought: "This is not my real life. My real life will come later," but now I realize this is my life, now, and so... I used to think: "This is not perfect. When it is perfect, I won't have to..." but only in, how do you say, in stillness is there perfection, and I can't be still... ever... maybe in heaven...

PB: Helene, you are so weird. What are you talking about?

H: Nothing. I could talk to the wall just the same.

PB: Are you saying you don't want to have sex with me anymore?

H: No, I'm not saying anything about that, but more... about us. There's something wrong with us. Something banal. Something in our way. We're not progressing. It's always the same. Everything's always the same. Don't you feel that?

PB: Well, yes, but I thought you liked our arrangement.

H: But, if it goes on like this, what will become of us? I mean, I want you to want something, to make something of your life.

PB: Like what?

H: Like a career! I thought... maybe we could... I don't know... would you like to... work here?

PB: Doing what? I don't know how to do anything.

H: Of course you do. You could... I don't know... be my assistant... help me look at the clothes, perhaps... type my correspondence, manage my affairs... Well, you can't just lie around here waiting for me... you need some... some reason. Think of me, this house, this is where I entertain all my friends, my business associates, new contacts...

PB: Fuck 'em. They know why I'm here.

H: Do you? Oh Peter. Don't you see? We're just, how do you say, "going through the motions."

PB: Helene, what do you want? Do you want to get married?

H: Don't be absurd. Is that what you want?

PB: What do you want?

H: I want something... more. I want more.

PB: Join the club.

H: Don't be horrible. Why don't you ever listen to me?

PB: I'm listening to you now.

H: But you're not trying to understand me. You're just using me, living off me. (Starts to cry.)

PB: You're pathetic.

H: How dare you! I'm pathetic? I helped you. I saved you from... from what you did in Germany. I got you away from all those, those fags who ate you up and spit you out.

Maybe that's where you belong again. Is that it, my pretty one? Are you waiting for the right man to come fuck you up the *derrière* and take you away from all this? Well, answer me, you stupid little queer!

PB: You fucking bitch, I'll kill you. (Starts to choke her, pushing her down.)

H: Peter! (He lets her go.)

PB: I'm sorry. Are you all right? Helene? Are you all right?

H: Yes, I'm all right. Thank you. I have to get dressed for the party.

PB: Oh no.

H: Oh yes, *mon ange*. It's time to present you to my world.

PB: I don't have anything to wear.

H: Sometimes I worry about you, my dear. Don't you remember yesterday? All the clothes we got for you?

PB: I try not to remember anything.

H: Well, try to remember this. (Looks at watch.) It's 5:30. At six, *ils arrivent*. Try to be prepared. (She exits.)

PB: Oh God. Hmmm. *Le cocktail partie*. Very American.

(He lights a joint, looks at clothes, then discards them. Turns music on. It gets louder, then swells. Wolf enters, runs to PB, turns him around, kisses him.)

Wolf! Has the party started already?

W: No. I had a meeting near here, on Montparnasse. There is so much noise in Paris now – they're working on the roads – so I came up. Do you mind? A little before-party party?

PB: *Mach' nichts*, Wolf. *Ça ne me fait rien*. What's the dif? You can help me choose my *ensemble*. What do you think? Italian? Or Japanese?

W: I know nothing about such things. Why not ask Helene?

PB: Oh, Helene. That bitch. She can't think beyond Daniel Hechter. And anyway, I don't think I should disturb her until she's completed her *toilette*. She doesn't like me today.

W: And why not? You're more adorable than ever.

PB: Maybe that's why. I never thought of that. The better I look, the worse she feels. Sometimes I wish I were uglier than her – or rather, SHE.

W: That is not your fate.

PB: Oh, don't talk to me about fate. I don't believe in that. That's for when you're dead. (Finishes dressing.) Eh, voilà! What do you think, honestly?

W: "Pretty as a postcard."

PB: Wolf, the expression is "pretty as a picture." What's that line? Oh right. "I'm so tired of people telling me I'm pretty." Kim Novak, "Picnic." (Sings "It Must Have Been Moonglow," doing Kim Novak moves). Or something like that. I hate this shirt.

W: Try another then.

PB: Now there's an idea! What a genius you are, Wolf. Everything they say about you is true. What time is it?

W: A little before six.

PB: Good. (Turns on music.) And what else is new with you today? (PB goes to Wolf and starts unbuttoning his shirt.)

W: Oh, well, today I saw a man, an agent, who knows a publisher who could publish a book of my work. I mean, pictures of my work. But first, I must collect some more photographs and a résumé for what he called the "presentation." The publisher is an old queen who is always trying to be "modern," so I don't think it will be a problem.

(All this while PB and W are getting undressed and ready for bed.)

So, sometime next week I, or perhaps we, could go and see him. Would you like that? What about Helene?

PB: It doesn't matter. She takes forever to get dressed. And she never enters my room without knocking. And if anyone else comes, we'll hear the bell. Paulette will get it and tell Helene, so we got tons of time. Really. Okay?

W: Okay. You know best.

PB: I certainly do. About some things.

W: You're pretty confident of yourself, aren't you?

PB: Pretty much. So are you. That's what I like about you.

W: Ja? Come with me to Spain. Paris is dead. There is too much... interference here. I want you all to myself. I have some plans for you.

PB: You've always got a million plans.

W: And with luck, some of them work out. You just need the right plan at the right time.

PB: Is this part of your master plan?

W: If it will get you away from here.

PB: Why should I put my trust in you?

W: Because your future is with me.

PB: Oh, I wish I could get interested in the future. I wish it was the future right now.

W: Wait. I can feel the future coming, right now. Do you feel it? Do you feel it?

PB: Yes. Yes I do.

(Continued whispering and laughing and lovemaking, basically under the covers. Doorbell rings. MD answers it. F is at the door, looking disheveled.)

MD: *Bonjour.*

F: Uh. *Bonjour. Je cherche un jeune homme, uh, monsieur Bates, uh, Peter Bates.*

MD: Who are you?

F: *Je suis son père.* I am his father. You speak English?

MD: Yes. Enough.

F: The maid speaks English.

MD: I'm not the maid. I work for Madame Kleiber. What do you want?

F: I'm his father. I want to see my son.

MD: I don't believe you. Monsieur Bates' father died in a house for crazy people.

F: Do I look dead? (Pause.)

MD: Yes. (Pause.) *Au revoir, monsieur.*

F: Wait a minute, sister. I gotta talk to Madame Big Face, whatever. I gotta talk to her. You just tell her that it's about money.

MD: Madame does not give to beggars. She gives to the church to give to the poor. Go to them. Go to the church.

F: What church?

MD: How should I know? There's a church on every street.

F: I'm not going to no church. You listen to me. You tell her Colonel Henry Bates of the United States Army is here. Official business. Got it? Do it!

MD: I'm going to call the police.

(Leaves door. Goes to H, confers, then H goes to door. F pushes his way in. They have a murmured conversation, as if he's flirting with her, obscenely. Lights shift back to PB and W. Music swells. F leaves, shouting: "You won't get rid of me so easy next time." H crosses to PB's room and enters.)

H: *Non, how dare you!* (PB and W poke their heads from under the covers.)

What are you doing? Are you insane? You, Wolf, get out. Leave this house. This moment. Don't talk to me. I said get out now. (W quickly but defiantly gets out of bed and dresses while H and PB watch.)

H: Hurry up, you Nazi queer. I never want to see you again. Do you understand me? Never. I can't believe this. How dare you! In my house.

W: Is it your house because your husband pays the rent?

H: Jacques has nothing to do with it. It's still my house. And, in my house, he's mine.

W: No, Helene, not even here. He's mine now. He'd rather be with me.

H: He's a child. He doesn't know what he wants. He'll never see you again. I'll see to that.

W: You're just a stupid woman, Helene. You'll be dead soon enough. I see it in your eyes.

H: You see nothing. I'll live to see you both dead. You promised me. You broke your promise.

PB: What did you promise, Wolf?

W: It doesn't matter.

H: Peter, how blind can you be? Wolf and I had an arrangement, too.

W: It's over now. Peter, come with me.

H: Don't you dare. I'm warning you.

PB: Wolf, I can't right now. What was your arrangement? I don't understand. I can't go anywhere now. Don't force me to.

W: No one is forcing you to do anything. You two were made for each other. *Au revoir, mes enfants.*

H: (Spits in his face.) Leave us alone. (W exits. H sits on the bed.)
What am I going to do with you? You're as naïve as the day I found you.

PB: Yeah? This scene is fucked up. I'm getting outta here.

H: No. Don't go. Please. It's not your fault. It's my fault. I feel so stupid. Look at this. Look at me.

PB: Helene, it's not your fault. What is this thing about blaming people all the time?

H: Everything just happens. Is that it? Don't think about why. But once something happens, only so many other things can happen after that, until, at the end, only one thing can happen.

PB: What?

H: I can't bear this, feeling I have no choice, waiting, always waiting for the next thing.

PB: Don't expect so much. I don't expect anything to happen, ever. I just have to be the way I want to be and...

H: But you're only what others want you to be.

PB: Maybe. Maybe I shouldn't try to please everyone. I don't know. Why should anyone please anyone? But, there's only so many types. You keep trying to believe you're unique, and they're unique...

H: It's sad, but, this situation, and I'm afraid, this conversation, they're not unique. Not every experience leads to newer ones. Sometimes, once something happens, it hurts you. It limits you. And, instead of making you more of a person, it makes you less of one. Parts of me are slipping away, I can feel it. And nothing is coming back to replace them. (Pause.) I'm going away. For the weekend. To Marie-José's. I will leave after the party. I will come back – I don't know when I will come back. I want you to come to some decision.

PB: What's the problem? So I fucked up, that doesn't mean we can't continue.

H: We have to change.

PB: Why?

H: I'm so confused. What an old idiot I am. Perhaps it's just the weather. I can't talk anymore. Everyone's coming. I'm starving. Are you going to get dressed?

PB: Yes.

H: You'd better hurry.

PB: I'll see you out there.

H: Please don't embarrass me any more tonight.

PB: I won't. I'll be perfect.

H: Everything is so ridiculous.

(She exits, shuts door. PB get up, gets dressed, goes to door, opens it. H, F, W, MD, J, M (as a financier) are at the door with Drama masks on (Comedy and Tragedy). They bob their heads back and forth, silently)

PB: What is it? What do you want?

H: (Steps forward, removing mask.) Happy birthday, Peter!

PB: But it's not my birthday.

ALL: Surprise!

(They enter, singing "Happy Birthday," start to dance around PB, removing their masks one by one. PB sulks at first, then gladdens and begins to dance by himself. Then H joins him and they slow-dance. Lights fade out. Film out. End of Act II.)

ACT III

(Wolf's New York loft, evening 1979. Film backdrop of NYC skyline. Soft disco music. W working at desk. Phone rings.)

W: Hallo?

H: (Seen on "vignette" stage.) Allo? Who is this?

W: Wolf.

H: Oh, Wolf. It's me, Helene, calling from Paris. Is Peter there?

W: He's out.

H: Is this where he lives.

W: Yes, well, for the moment.

H: He didn't say he was living with you.

W: Who said that?

H: Alain.

W: Alain who? Why do you care where he lives?

H: I'm interested. I'll always be interested in Peter.

W: Is that so? Then why did you say you never wanted to see him again?

H: I never said that. That's a lie. Did Peter tell you that?

W: Yes, and a lot of other things.

H: Peter will say anything to hurt me. I don't have time for this. I don't blame you for what happened. We both care for him, that's all. Try to accept that. I just want to talk to him. As a friend. (MA enters from PB's room, sort of listens, sits and reads Interview magazine.)

W: He's not here.

H: Yes, I understand. You told me. How is he?

W: I told you, he's out. Do you want to leave a message?

H: Well, you see, my company, you know, the clothing store, they're opening a branch, in New York. On Madison Avenue. And I am coming there to make some arrangements.

W: When?

H: In the springtime. Will you be there then?

W: Ja, sure. Unless I go away.

H: Wolf, I might have some work for Peter.

W: What sort of work, Helene?

H: Oh, nothing very grand, I'm afraid. You know, in the store.

W: He doesn't want to work for you. And besides, he works for me now.

H: I think he should decide for whom he works, don't you? I can offer him a lot more money than you can.

W: You're wrong, as usual. Listen, Helene. He's meeting a lot of new people now, through me, people you could never know, except perhaps as your customers.

H: Wolf, a lot of my customers are also your customers. Our worlds are not so different anymore. However, there is a difference in tone. Peter understands that much. And so do you. So does everyone.

W: "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing."

H: That depends on who has the knowledge. Wolf, I cannot talk anymore; I'm not as rich as everyone thinks. I will call again. Perhaps tomorrow morning. Oh, but that would be bad for you.

W: That's okay. We go to bed very late.

H: All right then. Goodbye, Wolf. It was good to talk. We're too old to be emotional. I'm learning so much now. Everything is better. Goodbye. (Hangs up.)

W: Goodbye, Helene. (Hangs up.)

MR: I don't know which of you is worse.

W: No one is better or worse.

MR: Why didn't you tell her about me?

W: Why should I? What is there to tell?

MR: She doesn't even know I'm here.

W: So much the better.

MR: She's sure to find out sooner or later.

W: Aren't you forgetting about the money? When you're rich, you can tell her anything.

MR: When I'm rich. It doesn't look like I'm going to get rich anytime soon. Your promises aren't worth shit.

W: You're so impatient. In six months, you'll have so much money, you won't know what to do with it.

MR: I know what I'll do with it. I'm going to buy land. Get into real estate. I'm going to buy all of New Mexico.

W: (Sarcastically.) Have you ever been to New Mexico?

MR: No, but I've seen pictures. I'll be like Frieda Lawrence; communicate with the Indians.

W: I've heard Indians aren't very nice to women.

MR: You're not so nice yourself. Where's Peter? We were supposed to have dinner together.

W: Oh, is that why you're here? He's already gone out to dinner.

MR: With who?

W: A young man.

MR: It doesn't bother you?

W: No. As long as he doesn't bring them back here, it's okay.

MR: I'm okay, you're okay.

W: Something like that.

MR: Do you want to go have dinner with me?

W: No, I want to work.

MR: I could call out, for some Chinese food.

W: I'm not hungry.

MR: Some Friday night. (PB enters, rather dressed up.)

PB: Marianne!

MR: Good evening, my little prince. Did you have a good time?

PB: Fabulous. We went to the Empire Diner and I had the best hamburger.

MR: Was it big?

PB: Big enough for two!

W: You're late.

PB: Late for what?

W: You said you would be back at ten!

PB: I did? Well, what time is it now?

MR: It's not so late.

W: You're late!

PB: Well, I'm sorry, but we went to a movie. He really wanted to see it, and, so, we did.

MR: You said you wanted to have dinner with me.

PB: I did? When?

MR: This afternoon. When we were watching "One Life to Live."

PB: Wasn't it great today?

MR: It was okay. I still like "The Young and the Restless" better, though.

PB: Well, they have cuter guys, but the stories are so dumb.

W: Will you two shut up! I have to work. If I don't work, they'll take away the TV, and then you'll have nothing to talk about.

MR: Gee, Wolf, you're so gracious.

PB: And well-mannered.

W: Manners are for shit.

MR: "Art is long, life is short." And so, goodbye, my lovebirds. I'll leave you to your own devices. Peter, I'll call you tomorrow.

PB: All right. (They kiss.) Not too early.

MR: Of course. (Gets coat, gloves, etc.) Goodbye, Wolf. Have fun tonight. I guess I'll spend the evening going over my portfolio.

W: Fine. You do that.

MR: *Ciao, bambino!*

PB: Ta-ta! (She exits.)

W: (Pause.) So, what did you see?

PB: "Fox and His Friends."

W: Serves you right. And how was "Gerald"?

PB: Oh, you know actors. When I stopped talking about him, he stopped listening.

W: Oh well. And after you stopped talking...

PB: He had a hairy ass with big red pimples all over it.

W: Really? I wouldn't think it was his ass you'd be interested in.

PB: Bitch.

W: Peter, that's what men are like.

PB: Are they? That's what everyone says, but I'm not so sure. (Sees cocaine.) Can I have some? (Snorts a line.) Wanna hear a joke he told me? "How does an old queen fart?"

W: I don't know. How does an old queen fart?

PB: (Opens mouth in "O" position and blows air – no sound. They laugh. PB snorts more cocaine.) Have you been working all this time?

W: Ja. "*Arbeit macht frei.*" I must finish this by Friday. The Prince wants to take it with him on the plane.

PB: The Saudi one?

W: Ja. He has his own plane to carry home everything he has bought that week. Maybe he could take you. (They laugh.)

PB: Does he really have a billion dollars?

W: Yes, and he gambles with it every night. One night he lost 2 million. He had his man pay for it the next morning – in cash.

PB: What a way to go! Did you ever see that movie? It was with Shirley MacLaine and they go to Saudi Arabia and they teach the Prince to play baseball – I think that's it. Maybe it was golf. Anyway, it was really funny. You know, stupid but funny. I saw it on TV a million years ago. I used to watch TV all the time on the base. And I used to love reading TV Guide. I'd read every listing over and over again. Sometimes I think I've seen something because I know everything about it, but it's only because I read the description a hundred times in TV Guide. You know what I mean? Oh, I guess they don't

have TV Guide in Germany. Well, maybe they do. By now. How much is he paying for the *Kunstwerk*?

W: This is none of your business.

PB: Hmmm.

W: Your girlfriend called.

PB: Who?

W: Helene.

PB: Really? What did she want?

W: Nothing really. She wants to talk to you.

PB: Really. About what?

W: I don't know. She's coming here. In April, I think.

PB: Oh shit. Just what I need. Well, maybe I'll be gone by then.

W: She said she will call back.

PB: I can't wait. (Pause.) Did anyone else call?

W: No. Oh, yes. A man called, said he was your father. I told him your father was dead.

PB: And what did he say to that?

W: He said: "That doesn't matter. I changed my name."

PB: What does that have to do with it?

W: Why did you tell me your father is dead?

PB: Because he is dead. I saw it with my own eyes. Oh, there's so many crazy people around with too much time to waste.

W: He did sound really crazy.

PB: They're too out of it to fool anybody. I don't even think they want to fool anybody. They'd rather you become crazy, like them. This coke is making me sick. I feel like throwing up. Where did you get it?

W: From Diane. She said it was the best. Uncut.

PB: My favorite. (Pause.) Wolf, are you glad I'm here.

W: Ja, sure.

PB: Why?

W: Why what?

PB: Why do you like me around?

W: I like to watch you squirm.

PB: That's for sure. Is it just the sex?

W: This isn't sex.

PB: What do you mean this isn't sex? Of course it is. Oh, I get it. I'm trying, Wolf, but I guess I'm just not as "advanced" as you are.

W: You should try harder.

PB: I do try. I try to please you all the time, whatever that means, but sometimes it just hurts so much, and you don't even come, I don't think, so, I mean, what's the point?

W: You don't understand, that's all. I come inside my head. You Americans are so middle-class. If it's not on TV, you can't see it, it's too strange.

PB: I don't think my life is so middle-class.

W: Your mind is.

PB: So what? Is that my fault? Everything is middle-class. Even your fucking butt-plug is from Anaheim, California. I mean really.

W: That reminds me. Where is it? It's missing. You didn't sell it over at Cooper Union, did you?

PB: I sent it to the cleaners.

W: What?

PB: Well, I picked up all the clothes and stuff off the floor by the bed and I think it got in the laundry bag by mistake. I wonder if it will get ruined in the dryer.

W: I'd like to put you in the dryer, and watch you roll around. Around and around and around.

PB: (Turning up stereo.) What did you say?

W: Nothing. (Goes to PB.)

PB: Do you want to go to the Cock Ring tonight?

W: Maybe later.

PB: I'd love to go dancing. I think.

W: I'd love to fuck you first. (Starts fondling PB.)

PB: Oh no. I know you. Then you'll just read *Artforum* and fall asleep.

W: Maybe all those words will make me hot again. And some of those pictures...

PB: Ow! Wolf, you're hurting me.

W: No I'm not. Come on, baby, make your papa happy. His majesty is expecting you. Can you feel that? He doesn't like to wait.

PB: I can't. (Tries to break free.)

W: Yes, you can. Take it. You want it. Take it now. Don't play around with me.

PB: No! (Breaks free.) I don't feel good. I've got to get out of these trashy clothes.

W: Ja? Whatever you wear, you're still trash.

PB: No I'm not! Just because I'm not like you, a cheap little hustler trying to fool everybody with your phony accent and your phony art.

W: I'm phony? And what are you, Princess? A stupid little flit, that's all you ever were.

PB: No I'm not. Too bad I'm not an artist like you. You're so desperate to create something totally new, something that will astound everybody and shock them. What an idea! It's so out of date. You don't get it, do you? You're just playing the middle-class game. They love being shocked by your art, like they love being shocked by a new hair-do. It's just a momentary distraction for them, like looking out the windows of the train.

W: Peter, I don't make the rules.

PB: Only thing is, you're on the train, too. They're just looking in, but me, I'm getting off this train.

W: You're not going anywhere.

PB: Yes I am. As soon as I figure out how.

W: You don't know anything, do you?

PB: I'm tired of all this. I'm going to bed. By myself. I'll see you tomorrow. (He exits.)

W: Peter! (Kicks on wall; no response.) Listen to me! Tomorrow you won't have a bed to sleep in. You'll be living in the baths. You'll be sleeping on the floor of Helene's shop, wearing her old dresses. You're too old for this shit. You think everyone notices you, wants to fuck you, when you walk down the street. They don't. They're just laughing at you. They're not even looking at you. They're looking at somebody else right behind you or... right next to you or right in front of you, blocking you out. I can't even see you anymore. Good night, baby. You're safe from me now. (Turns off stereo. Gathers up drugs and leather jacket and exits. PB enters in new clothes – clone outfit. Looks for drugs.)

PB: Shit. That asshole. (Turns on stereo. Looks out the window, around the room. Finds address book. Dials telephone.)

M: Yeah?

PB: Michael, it's me.

M: Who is this?

PB: It's Peter. Hi! Just calling to say hello.

M: Peter, don't you know what time it is? Where are you?

PB: I'm in New York.

M: Well I'm asleep. Call me some other time, okay?

PB: No, I can't. I need to talk to you now.

M: (Pause.) Okay. (Pause.) Well?

PB: Well, I was wondering, are you coming here soon?

M: No. I'm working, remember?

PB: I know, but I thought maybe you'd be working here sometime, or could take a vacation. I don't know, it's just, I want to see my old friends, and I thought...

M: Isn't Wolf an old friend by now?

PB: Wolf? Yeah, I guess. But not like you. I'm always with these older people, and, well, I'm not so young, either, I guess, anymore, and, I don't know, I've been thinking, maybe I should go to L.A., have some fun for a change. I could probably get some kind of a job, don't you think? But wouldn't it be great if we, I mean both of us, you and me, we took a little trip out there to, you know, check things out and...

M: Peter, I'm nodding out. Can't you call me later, or better yet, write me a letter.

PB: Okay. Sure. I'm sorry. But, will you think about it? About what I said?

M: Sure, I'll think about it. Why do you only call me when you're fucked up?

PB: I'm not fucked up. Well, because... you're my friend.

M: Oh, Jesus. No I'm not. I'm not your friend. I'm just another person to call up and complain to when you've run out of everyone else.

PB: Michael...

M: Don't you remember the last time you called me like this?

PB: Who cares about the last time? What do you want from me?

M: I don't want anything from you. That's just it. Good night. (Hangs up.)

PB: Good night. (Hangs up.) Sleep tight. (Looks around the room some more, then turns off the stereo and lights and exits. Film out and blackout. Film of a walk down Christopher St. to the river. We see PB walking. After a while, F enters the shot, as a bum. F blocks PB's way.)

Excuse me. (They dodge each other back and forth.) Pardon me.

F: Hey, pretty boy. What's your hurry?

PB: Drop dead.

F: Wait a minute. Hey, Pete, it's me. Don't ya know me, Pete? Don't ya know me?

PB: (Pause.) Maybe.

F: Yeah, you know. Say who I am. Go on, say it.

PB: I don't know. You could be anybody. You're just a... a type now.

F: So are you. What are ya doin', goin' ta work?

PB: No. I don't have a job. Really. What about you?

F: Nope. That makes two of us. I guess it runs in the family. (Pause.) Wanna have a drink?

PB: Sorry, I'd love to, but I, uh, have to meet somebody.

F: Oh. Sure. I get it. Okay. Say, could you help me out? I just need a little more something. It's cold as hell out here.

PB: Sure. (Looks in pockets.) I'm sorry, but I don't have any change. I'm really sorry, but, maybe I could get you some more later. Oh, here, take this. (Gives dollars.) Are you all right, Daddy?

F: Yeah, I'm all right, baby.

PB: Really?

F: Yeah. Don't you worry about me.

PB: Okay, well then, I guess it's, uh, I guess it's goodbye. For now. (Pause.) Remember when it was different?

F: Yeah.

PB: Am I really so old now?

F: You'll never be old to me. You'll always be the same.

PB: Thanks. Umm. Gee, it is cold out here. I better be off. Bye-bye. I won't forget.

F: So long, Captain! (Salutes.)

(PB continues walking. At the end of the street, camera dollies to J's POV. J enters onstage and faces the screen, which now shows PB in giant close-up.)

J: Hi.

PB: Hi.

J: What are you doing?

PB: Looking for fun.

J: What kind of fun?

PB: Your kind. Wanna go someplace?

J: What kind of place?

PB: A loft. With a bed.

J: Who needs a bed? Don't ya want it right now?

PB: Sure. But let's wait a few minutes. It's real near here. And I have some stuff at my house.

J: What stuff?

PB: Oh, little surprises. Don't worry, you'll like it.

J: I might have some surprises, too.

PB: Great. I always like each time to be different. Are you ready?

J: You'll see how ready I am.

PB: Okay, let's go.

(Cross-fade to previous film of loft-view, NYC nightscape. Stage is black. A mix of several disco-sex songs, now louder, now softer. After a while, we hear muttering of PB and J just offstage.)

Well, I've been looking for my own place, but it's so hard to find anything nice. I mean, I can't live in one little room and everything is so expensive. I really like the Upper West Side, though. It's so pretty there and everyone seems so together. I mean, I know this is an "emerging" neighborhood but how long is it going to take? Sometimes I think it's all just getting worse. Where do you live? (Lights one tiny lamp.)

J: Brooklyn.

PB: Really? Is it nice? I've never been out of Manhattan.

J: It's okay.

PB: Is it getting better there?

J: I'd say just the same as it always was.

PB: Well, a sense of stability is important. (Laughs.) Would you like a drink?

J: Come 'ere.

PB: Oh, let's wait. Do you want to dance? I feel like dancing.

J: Dancing's just a substitute for sex.

PB: Oh really? I guess a lot of things are just a substitute for sex.

J: Maybe. (Pause.) So where are all your surprises you talk about?

PB: Oh, uh, well, let me put on my new favorite record first. I just bought it Canal Street. My mother used to play this song all the time. It's so beautiful. (Puts on Nat King Cole's "When I Fall in Love.")

J: I want to tie you up.

PB: Oh. Well, I don't know if I have anything.

J: Oh, come one. Don't give me that.

PB: Well, you see, I don't really live here and I'm not sure...

J: How 'bout this? (Grabs bootlaces and wraps PB's arms and handcuffs him behind his back.)

(Jack pushes PB down. J opens his jeans and PB starts giving him a blowjob. J leans his head back and chokes PB with the telephone cord. PB gasps and raises both arms towards J's head. J lifts PB up by the cord and kisses his mouth. Music is magically very loud. PB and J struggle, wrestle. They fall to the ground and freeze "dead." PB slowly gets up, looks down at J and around the room.)

PB: (Softly.) I don't believe this. I just don't believe this. (Walks around room.) I wonder what time it is now. (Exits.)

(Lights dim on stage. After PB has exited, J jumps up and stands motionless in front of the screen. Lights and film out simultaneously.)

THE END