A Sentimental Journey:
Rejuvenating Great American Soundscapes in a New Film Musical

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

Connor Fak

Thesis Advisor
Vanessa Theme Ament, Ph.D.

Signed

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

March 2015

Expected Date of Graduation

July 2015
Abstract

The United States of America has had a long and rich musical history, but a significant portion of its popular music remains inaccessible to, unknown to, and overlooked by modern audiences. In particular, songs from the early “Tin Pan Alley” era, roughly 1890-1925, not only represent one of the nation’s most prolific songwriting periods, but many contain lyrics and messages still relevant to life today. In order to re-introduce this period of musical heritage in a manner accessible to and appreciable by present-day audiences I have written the script for an original feature-length film musical using songs from 1893 to 1921 as musical numbers. In addition to the script I have also created supplemental artwork and supervised sheet music song arrangements that help bring this bygone period back to life.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Vanessa Theme Ament-Gjenvick for her enormous enthusiasm and guidance as my project advisor. Her wisdom allowed me to transition from being my own worst obstacle to a genuinely productive artist. It has been a pleasure to work with her these past five months.

I would secondarily like to thank my peer Mr. Stephen Weigel, whose musical talent and expertise far surpasses my own and without whom I would not have been able to present my vision. Katie, Kyle, and Kelly, also deserve thanks for lending their voices to some of the demo tracks.

I would like to indirectly acknowledge and thank the Library of Congress and other such research libraries for preserving and making publicly available vast amounts of original sheet music from this often overlooked era.

Lastly my sincerest thanks go out to Bill, Donna, Kyra, and Drew for their fervent support throughout the creative process.
Table of Contents

1. Author’s Statement .......................................................... 4
2. Character Descriptions ...................................................... 10
3. Film Script: Mister Slick draft 5.2 ........................................ 11
4. The Art of Mister Slick .................................................. 123
5. Sheet Music Overview .................................................. 129
6. Sheet Music: “Gasoline arrangement” ................................... 130
7. Sheet Music: “I’ve Been Floating Down the Old Green River arrangement” ...................................................... 146
8. Sheet Music: “They Didn’t Believe Me arrangement” ................... 160
10. Supplemental CD Overview .......................................... 188
11. Works Cited (research) ................................................ 189
12. Works Cited (music) ................................................... 191
Author's Statement

It is impossible to make a good movie out of a bad script. I know. I've tried.

Of course, a million other little pieces factor into making a good movie, from casting, to lighting, to costuming, to line delivery, to editing, to the underlying soundtrack, just to name a few. All of these elements in fact contribute to my firm belief that motion pictures are the ultimate storytelling medium, a medium capable of combining photography, literature, graphic arts, theatre, music, dance, and more.

But it all starts with the writing. So many things can go wrong with a good script, but with a bad script very little can ever go right.

So I thought I'd give the former a try.

Back in the fall of 2013 I had convinced myself that my Senior Honors Project would be to write and direct a black and white short film shot in the style of an Alfred Hitchcock suspense thriller. It seemed like the perfect project because I could utilize so much of my accumulated knowledge as a Telecommunications major, such as lighting techniques, camera focal lengths, how to use background lines to direct the eye, proper editing, and so on. I felt that I could really show off what I'd learned. Yet I slowly began to realize that to accomplish this plan effectively and entertainingly would take several thousand dollars and a crew of about twenty unpaid peers, neither of which would be easy to obtain. I could have scaled back my ambitions and lowered my proposed production values, but I chose to focus on a different concept entirely. I reasoned that if I wanted a job post-graduation as a screenwriter that the impressive thing to do would be to write a feature-length script, one incorporating not only the lessons and theories from my Telecommunications major but those from my Theatre minor as well. I would write a script integrating all the possibilities that movies could offer: the photography, the literature, the graphic arts, the theatre, the music, the dance.

In short, I decided to write a musical.

Rather, I would create a complete film prospectus such as one that might get presented to an actual film studio, a packet comprised of a script, art book, and song demos. The supplements would help sketch out exactly what I envisioned, a difficult enough task for a regular film, but necessary additions if I wanted to tackle filmed musical theatre. Luckily I already had an idea, and even more importantly it was an idea where I didn't actually have to write the music.

For that I can thank United States copyright law. Under normal circumstances copyright law protects artists and inventors from having others steal or profit from their work by designating a period of exclusivity to the author wherein he or she must grant permission for others to use copies of the work. In the United States this is a right granted by Article 17 of the Constitution. This period of exclusivity is limited, however, and after a defined period of time all creative work falls into the public domain. Once in public domain anyone can perform, copy, adapt, or alter it for their personal use or gain. The tune to "Jingle Bells," for example, written in 1850, can be
used by anybody free of charge. Congress has extended this period of exclusivity several times, most recently in 1998 with the Copyright Term Extension Act (CTEA).

The CTEA set copyright two terms: the life of the author plus 70 years for individually authored works, and 95 years after first publication or 120 years after creation (whichever comes first) for corporately authored works. The CTEA was not retroactive though, and under the previous term limits established by the Copyright Act of 1976 all works created before January 1, 1923 would still be allowed to fall into public domain and would not have their copyrights reestablished. On the other hand, under the CTEA term lengths no new material would fall automatically into public domain until 2019.

Legally, therefore, I could craft a musical around any songs published in 1922 or earlier without having to worry about paying anyone royalties. I saw this as a great opportunity for three reasons. First, there was the historical angle. I knew that the Tin Pan Alley era was one of the first great periods of American songwriting, the period at the very dawn of the recording industry that first introduced the likes of Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Cole Porter, and other great pillars of American popular music. Secondly, focusing on that era alone, roughly from 1895 to 1922 (my legal cutoff) gave me a defined set of songs to work with similar enough in scope, tone, and rhythm to feasibly sound like they might belong together in a single musical. I likened the idea to the film musical Singin’ in the Rain using only preexisting Nacio Herb Brown songs, or the stage musical 42nd Street using only preexisting Al Dubin and Harry Warren songs, both to great effect. Thirdly, I connected numerous historical parallels between life then in the early 20th century and life now in the early 21st century. By highlighting these connections in my story I knew I could create something that could resonate with modern audiences. For example, the “robber barons” of the Progressive Era, who amassed staggering industrial wealth in contrast to their impoverished employees, strike a very similar chord to the “one-percenters” who hold most of the nation’s wealth today. With such connections in place it would make sense to use songs from the 1910s to illustrate the same sort of problems and situations still common in the 2010s.

My new musical would use old songs to both raise awareness of this often-overlooked period of music, as well as to serve as a reminder that although history may repeat itself to an extent we can overcome the challenges we now face. Not that the story would be overtly political, patriotic, or idealistic; that would be uncomfortable to write and patronizing to watch. In fact, these are precisely the reasons why I threw out the first two versions of the script.

In those earliest drafts of the project the musical was simply titled Tin Pan Alley and followed a “journey” framework. Set during the turn of the century, it featured two musician best friends as they travelled from New Orleans to New York in order to “make it big” and become successful. Along the way they would encounter numerous characters and situations named after and featuring notable Tin Pan Alley and Dixieland songs, such as running into Alexander’s Ragtime Band (after Irving Berlin’s 1911 hit) and a big production number before intermission where our heroes would embark on a steamboat up the Mississippi while singing “Waiting for the Robert E. Lee” (1912). It was meant to showcase the best that the era had to offer. There was a girl too, who one of the friends would fall in love with, but
the story felt flat. Moving the whole thing to the present day in the second draft didn’t help, and in fact felt even more out of place. It simply felt too convenient to have a musical where the main characters are a singer and his pianist pal, and so too with the journey structure where any new song could be justified by a change in location. Most importantly the songs I was finding to fit that progression of action felt like they could have worked in any “lost love” situation, not being particular to the 1910s/2010s parallel I believed was so central to the project.

With all of this in mind I made the most meaningful change when I threw out the journey plot entirely and went back to musical theatre fundamentals. Foremost among these unofficial “rules” is the idea that a character sings when he no longer express himself through dialogue, and dances when he can longer express himself through song. Under this imperative it is not necessary for characters in a musical to possess inherent musical talent. That is, they don’t have to be musicians in the world of the story, indeed most are not. They are gangsters, teachers, townsfolk, street gangs, sailors, lumberjacks, and more. Characters in musicals are merely regular people that break into song and dance. And since most musicals are love stories at heart, another good “rule” is to have a male lead and a female lead that are “natural opposites.” This ensures that the two that will fall in love have a strong sense of conflict, and actually gives them differences to overcome in the process of falling for one another. In The Music Man it’s pairing a librarian with a con man. In Guys & Dolls it’s pairing a gangster with a Salvation Army worker. In My Fair Lady it’s pairing an educated professor with a lowly flower girl. Really it’s as simple as pairing a Beauty with a Beast.

For my “natural opposites” I eventually decided to pair an oil tycoon with an environmentalist leader. He wants to save his oil company; she wants to save the wetlands. Natural opposites with a natural conflict. Moreover, the idea of an “oil baron” resonates just as much today in the era of BP oil spills and fluctuating gas prices as it did back in the era of John D. Rockefeller’s Standard Oil and cutthroat competition. Railroads, copper, and steal may not be the “trusts” worth “busting” that they once were, but oil is still definitely still on top. In fact, I named my main character John D. Hickenlooper to strengthen the comparison. Once I discovered a song from 1913 titled “Gasoline,” which bemoans the high price of gas (even back then), I knew I was on to something.

“Gasoline” was the first of a few happy coincidences, as well as my first luck using an online database to find music. For the first two drafts I had relied mostly on printed reference anthologies listing song titles and publication dates. Occasionally these sources would give blurbs about the song’s composers and what inspired the lyrics. An interesting feature about a large number of Tin Pan Alley songs is how many would simply use the first line of the refrain as a title. Therefore, you might end up with a title as short as “Swanee” (1919) or as long as “Would You Rather Be a Colonel with an Eagle on Your Shoulder or a Private with a Chicken on Your Knee?” (also 1919). I simply combed through lists of song titles looking for words that might work in particular situations, and could then check the rest of the song if the title seemed like a good fit first. However, I quickly grew tired of doing so manually through book indexes. A much-improved method was to keyword search through the online databases of the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress not only has
lists of American popular songs and their publication dates, but also physical scans of
ten of thousands of copies of period sheet music, for free. To have so many songs
and their sheet music right at my fingertips was immensely helpful.

For example, once I decided that I wanted to set a majority of the modern day
plot’s action in a Floridian seaside resort (burgeoningly popular in the 1910s as well),
I knew I needed a song to establish the setting. So I searched the Library of Congress
sheet music collection with words such as, “Florida,” “shore,” “sand,” “palms,” and
“waves,” looking for any song that might contain those words as the title or lyrics that
I could then fit the plot around. When I searched the word “beach,” one of the results
was a song called “You’re Not the Only Pebble on the Beach” (1896), where the title
is a metaphor for a man telling a woman to value his love more since he has a wide
range of other girls to choose from. This was perfect for a number early in the
musical, since it not only reinforces the Floridian setting but also sets up our leading
man John as something of a womanizer. Later drafts unfortunately made this number
unfeasible when I rewrote John’s character motivation, but the general process
continued to work wonders.

Using the online database method I located eleven separate musical numbers
to structure the plot around, a plot that follows thusly: John D. Hickenlooper is
hosting a company retreat for the investors of his brand new company, Medallion Oil.
But when their oil tanker ship crashes just off shore, he has to pretend to seduce the
leader of a passionately anti-oil environmentalist group in order to keep her from
noticing and ruining the new company with bad press. Needless to say he accidentally
falls in love with her for real. I titled it Mister Slick as a double-meaning title, where
John is “Mr. Slick” since he’s smooth with woman, and also “Mr. Slick” since it’s his
fault that his company causes an oil spill.

Once I had finished this whole third draft of the script I staged a very limited
table reading with friends from the theatre department reading the lines. This gave me
some indication of where my writing was weak and what I needed to fix. The most
glaring problem that needed fixing was that John’s philandering was both uneven and
ill-motivated throughout. To increase the comedic potential I have him in a love­
triangle between him and three other women: Katherine, the environmentalist; and
Danica, an heiress. In that version the motivation for him choosing Katherine, his
natural opposite, didn’t feel natural enough. In fact, it didn’t even happen on screen.
They fell for each other during a conversation we only saw the last tenth of, if that.
As an audience member you never could tell if you really liked John or not.

The solution, as often happens, came when I wasn’t looking for it. I had
recently watched the Howard Hawk’s 1952 film Monkey Business starring Cary
Grant, and realized that while I was definitely writing a musical I was also writing a
screwball comedy. Screwball comedy is a film genre that was particularly popular in
the 1930s and ‘40s. As a satirization of the traditional love story they feature a
rational unassertive male lead tormented by an eccentric and dominating female. She
believes they are meant for each other and he believes, at first, that she is slightly
insane. Over the course of the picture, however, she invariably helps him out of his
“shell,” so to speak, and they end up falling in love. Screwball comedies delight in the
humor of opposites. Philosophically they assert that we reside in an ultimately crazy,
irrational world, and the best way to cope with it is to embrace some of the craziness.
Therefore, the final great development in my script came with molding John not as a smarmy womanizer, but as an earnest businessman. Seeing beautiful women turns him into a complete klutz. He gets a “tingly feeling” and ruins the day several times over by trying to impress girls, since things inevitably go amiss. His relationships never go anywhere because he makes a fool of himself before any feelings can blossom. Twice, actually, a beautiful body driving him to distraction causes major setbacks for his company. Yet his character grows when Katherine, the environmentalist leader, almost witnesses one of these setbacks and John tries to seduce her to keep her from finding out. He thinks he’s completely safe since Katherine, a fairly plain-looking young woman, doesn’t give him that “tingly feeling” which precedes catastrophe. After spending time with her, however, (and dodging the sexual advances of Danica, the other woman) the “tingly feeling” comes back stronger than ever. He learns to appreciate someone for her inner beauty as well as her outer beauty, and this time it all works out in the end. This creates a strong moral message, and in the end, a better movie.

At the same time that I introduced the “tingly feeling” idea, I realized too that I was missing a great opportunity for humor within the setting. When I first created it I imagined the seaside resort where the story takes place as a grand and luxurious throwback to the hotel palaces of yesteryear. I envisioned the hotel as gleaming, glittering, and glamorous, a place where real millionaires, even today, would be happy to stay. And yet a central point of the plot uncovers the fact that John and his uncle, even though they founded this new oil company, they aren’t rich at all. They are in fact drowning in debt. Their entire livelihoods rest with the safe delivery of their company’s first shipment of crude oil, and until then they must simply pretend to have money in order to bolster their image. In that case they would not book their stay at a ritzy, fabulous, expensive hotel, but at a cheap hotel that merely looks somewhat posh.

This again works on two levels. In the current draft the Tangeray Palms Hotel is a hotel frozen in time, built in 1922… and not updated since. This provides ample comic fodder since as John’s life starts to fall apart around him, so does the hotel. Doorknobs break, fuses blow, the antique manually-operated elevator plummets three stories, etc. More importantly the setting now reflects the music. A majority of the songs featured have not been recorded by any artist in close to a hundred years, if they were ever recorded at all. Many people today would look at them as old, worn-out, and not worth a second look, let alone revival. The hotel too looks old, worn-out, and not worth a second look to many. But when the characters emotions become so pitched that they can only express them through song, they take these tired old songs and breathe life back into them. Similarly, when true and honest love blossoms there this tired old building has new life breathed back into it. Now that I’ve decided it, I don’t believe that any other setting would be as appropriate as a building from the same period of the songs. Sure the building isn’t perfect, and neither are the songs, but each have their one unique sense of fun and wonder from an age gone by.

Reinvigorating this Tin Pan Alley, ragtime, Dixieland, wonderful music makes this project so much more of a joy than a chore. These century-old tunes can be just as clever, catchy, and toe-tapping as modern hits today, but many of them remain locked in sheet music notation or in scratchy vintage gramophone recordings,
neither of which are readily accessible or appealing to the casual listener. I wanted to free this music by arranging re-recording it with a slightly more modern sound, just as it would be featured in *Mister Slick*. I would need outside help for this, though, since music theory does not come easily to me. With Dr. Ament-Gjenvick's guidance I enlisted the help of Stephen Weigel, a music composition major. At an initial meeting where we discussed the project and he impressed me with his ideas and musical talent on the piano. He agreed to fully arrange five of the musical numbers in the script, some with up to four simultaneous vocal parts. Recording the demo tracks in a sound studio was an adventure all its own, which only reinforced the value of planning ahead. Because of his talent and enthusiasm Stephen has been a joy to work with.

In fact, working with Stephen has only increased by desire to work collaboratively in the future. He has supplied me with better results than I ever could have attained working individually, which I am beginning to see would have been useful with the art book portion of the project as well. I am not a professional visual artist of any kind, yet I attempted scenic painting, costume design, and graphic design. Professional guidance at the very least would have made each of these several times better than I have created on my own.

This project really has been a fantastic learning experience. I thought I could go into it just using what I had learned in college up to this semester, but probably learned just as much in this short time span, at least in terms of creating such a large-scale project. I am proud of what I have made. Hopefully it will prove a boon when searching for jobs as a screenwriter in the near future. Perhaps in the future I will have gained enough experience, connections, and clout to turn these paper ideas and demos into a real movie on the big screen. I don't see why it couldn't happen.

I think I have written a good script.
Character Descriptions

The following is a summary of the principal characters in the film script for *Mister Slick*.

- John D. Hickenlooper – 29, the dashing master planner behind the newly-minted Medallion Oil Company, who has an incurable fixation with beautiful women.

- Andrew Hickenlooper – 53, John’s nervous maternal uncle and the figurehead president of Medallion Oil.

- Katherine Seward – 27, an uptight biology professor at the Oread Women’s Institute.

- Danica Nobel – 23, the vampy heiress to the Nobel dynamite fortune.

- Darren “Daddy” Nobel – 62, Danica’s father, an ironfisted business mogul and president of the Nobel Dynamite Company.

- Roscoe Martinez – 33, a general employee of the Tangeray Palms Hotel, who seems to do just about everything.

- Carol Wieneke – 26, a freshman at the Oread Woman’s Institute, warm-hearted and naïve

- Sheryl Zimmerman – 22, a senior at the Oread Woman’s Institute, suspicious, cynical, and the unofficial ringleader of the bunch

- Dr. Charles “Walden” Pond – 47, the absent-minded senior biology professor of the Oread Women’s Institute.
Film Script: *Mister Slick* draft 5.2

The following is a 112-page draft of the original musical *Mister Slick*, complete in its story arc from beginning to end. It is formatted to preferred film industry standards and reproduced here in its entirety.

MISTER SLICK

by

Connor Fak

1200 W Bethel Ave
Apt C101
Muncie, IN 47303
812/350-9094
FADE IN

EXT. STREET - DAY

Present day. A gray downpour tramples the streets of Mobile, Alabama. Among the people scrambling to stay dry, a man clutching a newspaper as a makeshift umbrella hails a taxicab and tosses it aside as he clambers inside. The paper flutters to the ground as the cab drives off.

The day’s headline of the Mobile Press-Register reads: “More Drilling a Chance for More Spilling,” but it quickly melts into an inky mess, trickling away and pooling into black swirls in a sidewalk puddle. From those swirls emerge the title of the picture:

“Mister Slick”

Lightning flashes and as thunder claps as a short MONTAGE depicts a dozen or so construction sites, each one the locale of new gas stations in various states of completion. Some sport the shell of a main building, while others merely boast holes in the ground. Piles of construction materials and equipment abound. At the last of these the rain tapers away to a cloudy day.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A sign affixed to the outside of the chain link fence surrounding the site proclaims “Coming Soon” above a picture of a gleaming modern filling station. A group of construction workers arrives by foot and pickup truck and quickly sets about building. To the accelerating rhythm of their labor they begin to sing GASOLINE.

WORKERS

“What is it keeps this world of ours a-going?
What is it makes us happy night and day?
What is the precious thing for which we’re blowing every blessed dollar of our weekly pay?
Gasoline!
Gasoline!
Everywhere you go you smell it,
every motor seems to yell it.
Gasoline!
Gasoline!
That’s the cry that echoes through
our dreams!
Gasoline!
Gasoline!
In this land of milk and honey,
’tisn’t love, isn’t money rules
the world now ain’t it funny?
Gasoline! Gasoline!”

To the accompaniment of the first half of the chorus a
large crane lowers an giant gas tank into a hole in the
ground, which workers then set about securing in place.

**WORKERS**

“Gasoline!
Gasoline!
In this land of milk and honey,
’tisn’t love, isn’t money rules
the world now ain’t it funny?
Gasoline! Gasoline!”

**INT. BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY**

With no break in the underlying music an emphatic
**PREACHER** in black robes addresses his congregation
assembled for a special meeting. Behind him a sign asks
“Are Fossil Fuels the Lord God’s Tools?” a subject
clearly in doubt among those present. Raising his arms
toward the heavens he invokes the old Christian spiritual
**GIVE ME OIL IN MY LAMP,** only jazzier than normal.

**PREACHER**

“Give me oil in my lamp,
keep me burning!
Give me oil in my lamp,
I pray!
Give me oil in my lamp,
keep me burning!
Keep me burning ‘til the
light of day!”
The empowered congregation springs to their feet.

CONGREGATION

"Give us oil in our lamps,
keep us burning! (Burning, burning!)
Give us oil in our lamps,
we pray! (Hallelujah!)
Give us oil in our lamps,
keep us burning! (Burning, burning!)
Keep us burning 'til the
light of day!"

EXT. CHURCH STEPS - DAY

The doors of the church burst open and the congregation and preacher, still singing, march militarily down toward the construction site, which is just across the street.

CONGREGATION

"Give us oil in our lamps,
keep us yearning, churning
burning!
Give us oil in our lamps,
we pray! (Hallelujah!)
Give us oil in our lamps,
keep us burning!
Keep us burning 'til the
light of day!"

They collect in front of the fence protecting the site, and the number really takes off, with the congregation and construction workers singing in counterpoint.

CONGREGATION

"Sing Hosanna!
Sing Hosanna!
Sing Hosanna
to the King
of Kings!

Sing Hosanna!
Sing Hosanna!
Sing Hosanna
to the King!"

WORKERS

"Gasoline!
Gasoline!
Everywhere you
go you smell it,
every motor
seems to yell it.
Gasoline!
Gasoline!
That's the cry
that echoes
to our dreams!"
Under the melodic line to GASOLINE the congregation raises a rabble that earns the notice of the construction FOREMAN. He dispatches men with pamphlets to confront them. Those men pass out pamphlets promising “25% Off” to part of the congregation, “50% Off” to the other part, and to the preacher one reading “Free!” In response the congregation changes their proverbial tune.

CONGREGATION
"Gasoline!
Gasoline!
Gasoline
will get us
everything!"

WORKERS
"Gasoline!
Gasoline!
Everywhere you
goose you smell it,
every motor
seems to yell
it.

Gasoline!
Gasoline!
Gasoline!
That’s the cry
that echoes
through our
dreams!”

CONGREGATION & WORKERS
"Gasoline!
Gasoline!
In this land of milk and honey,
’tisn’t love, isn’t money rules the
world now ain’t it funny? Gasoline!
Gasoline!”

The workers not preoccupied with assuaging the congregation now begin using the crane to lift the large circular sign onto the pole in front of the station.

CONGREGATION
“Give us oil!”

WORKERS
“Gasoline!”

CONGREGATION
“Give us oil!”
WORKERS
"Gasoline!"

CONGREGATION & WORKERS
"Give us G-A-S,
it's gas-O-line!!!"

The sign rotates as it's lowered atop the pole, revealing the logo of a yellow rearing horse on a blue background, framed by the words "Medallion Oil."

End of song.

CROSS DISSOLVE TO
A BEACHBALL

similarly colored to the Medallion logo, which has just come to a stop rolling along the sand.

EXT. SARASOTA BEACH - DAY

The white powdery beach of Sarasota, Florida. A young TODDLER chases after the ball, which the wind has blown to a deserted stretch of sand. Far down the shoreline a crush of sunbathers and beachgoers crowd the sands in front of an endless line of high-rise apartments, hotels and condominiums. But this section is empty.

The toddler grabs his ball and stands up, and in so doing sets eyes on the shock of forebodingly overgrown jungle that buttresses this portion of the beach. A path leads in, but its depths recede into mysterious blackness. Through the treeline, however, he can just glimpse a derelict Spanish tower far beyond.

The toddler's MOTHER rushes up to him.

MOTHER
Jimmy, come away from there!

As she scoops him into her arms we rise above the trees for a first reveal of the entire once-splendid TANGERAY PALMS HOTEL
The Tangeray is a hotel in denial, a hotel that hasn’t seen a major renovation since before the war. World War II, that is. Having catered in the past to the likes of Rockefellers and Kennedys she now stands on the brink of both financial and structural collapse, looking as though she could barely withstand a light breeze let alone a hurricane.

Her rounded ballroom juts out the back of the property toward the sea.

EXT. BALLROOM VERANDA - DAY

A flock of millionaires and moguls, all in vacation attire, mill about on the balcony surrounding the ballroom. It overlooks the overgrown grounds, and they can just see the sea as they lean on the ramparts, sipping complimentary drinks and chatting idly.

INVESTOR 1
What a dump.

INVESTOR 2
Of all the places in Sarasota-

INVESTOR 3
Here?

INVESTOR 1
Nobody who’s anybody’s stayed at the Tangeray Palms in fifty years.

INVESTOR 3
I mean, really.

INVESTOR 4
First all the protest business, and now this!

INVESTOR 5
Sometimes I wonder if Hickenlooper knows what he’s doing.

INVESTOR 2
Here, here.
INVESTOR 5
I mean, I couldn’t have pulled it off
but still-

INVESTOR 3
This?

INVESTOR 4
Right!

Et cetera. And who should be listening on the other side of
an enormous decorative palm bush but Andrew Hickenlooper
himself, UNCLE ANDREW, that is. A nervous-looking man in
his fifties, he swallows hard. He then sidles over to the
refreshments table and downs a flute of champagne.

JOHN
There you are! Ready, Uncle Andrew?

He is met by JOHN D. HICKENLOOPER, his nephew. John is a
dashing young man, of the sort people are always saying are
bound to “go places.” He looks about as excited as Uncle
Andrew looks nauseous.

UNCLE ANDREW
No, not yet.

He downs another champagne.

UNCLE ANDREW (CONT’D)
Maybe.

And another.

UNCLE ANDREW (CONT’D)
Just one more...

JOHN
(grabbing the drink)
Stop that! Come on.

He puts an arm around his Uncle and leads him in through
one of the many open large glass doors leading inside the
ballroom. A sign on the outside of the wall reads “Ballroom
& Indoor Pool.” Once inside he nods toward ROSCOE MARTINEZ,
the hotel’s jack-of-all trades, complete with bellhop
uniform, who has been roping off a section of floor in front of a mechanical control panel embedded in the wall.

Roscoe nods back, steps out to the veranda, and produces a miniature gong from inside his uniform. He rings it.

ROSCOE
(announcing)
Ladies and gentlemen! Will you please take your seats; the meeting is about to begin!

INT. BALLROOM - DAY

The crowd of eighty or so millionaires has taken their seats at a pack of white linen-topped tables overlooking a makeshift stage. At one end the stage is a long table seating six men: John, Uncle Andrew, three other members of the Board of Directors, and an empty chair. At the other end of the stage is a podium. Behind, a banner reads “Medallion Oil Company - First Annual Retreat.”

BOARD MEMBER
(at podium)
...Here he is, the founder and president of Medallion Oil, Mr. Andrew Hickenlooper.

To light applause Uncle Andrew rises from the stage table and slinks up to the podium while the Board Member sits down.

UNCLE ANDREW

Friends-!

Horrible audio feedback screeches through the hall, making the crowd wince. Uncle Andrew jerks back from the microphone. The noise ceases.

UNCLE ANDREW (CONT’D)
(almost shaking)
F-Friends. Entrepreneurs. Benefactors. Welcome to the first annual company retreat of the Medallion Oil Company...

A harrumph of appreciation from the crowd.
UNCLE ANDREW (CONT’D)
...a company you all made possible!

Two harrumphs.

UNCLE ANDREW (CONT’D)
Thanks to your c-c-combined interests our beloved conglomerate is now the fifty-second largest oil concern in the United States!

Three harrumphs. And a stray hiccup.

Uncle Andrew glances over to John, who flashes him a reassuring smile. It doesn’t help much, and Uncle Andrew fiddles with the paper that he’s reading verbatim from.

UNCLE ANDREW (CONT’D)
Ah-hem. When I founded Medallion just three years ago I had no idea my little venture would reach s-such heights. To see you all here in sunny Florida brings such joy and warmth to my horse- I mean, “heart”! -- There will be time for business later. At two o’clock we have arranged for our flagship oil tanker the Petroleum Princess, to sail through Sarasota harbor for us. But first, some fun! And for that I’d like to introduce my diligent nephew, and your vice president of affairs, John D. Hickenlooper.

He steps away from the podium as John bounds up to it and claps him on the back.

JOHN
Thank you, Uncle Andrew! We actually have quite a lot of awfully fun activities planned for this weekend, but we thought we’d start off with something a little more dignified. Right?
UNCLE ANDREW
Um, right.

JOHN
We’re going to start out by crowning a Miss Medallion! And for that we’ll need the prettiest girl in the room!

John unclips the microphone from its holster and hops down into the crowd. He makes his way among the tables as the crowd murmurs with interest.

JOHN (CONT’D)
Now let’s see, how about... Mrs. Spaulding! Let’s hear some noise if you think Mrs. Spaulding here is the prettiest girl in the room!

He holds his hand above the head of MRS. SPAULDING, a middle aged woman. Some light applause. John moves on.

JOHN (CONT’D)
Hmm, I dunno about that. How about... Mrs. Macready? Hmm? Or who’s this?

MRS. MACREADY
My niece.

JOHN (CONT’D)
Your niece? Fantastic. All right, how about Mrs. Macready’s niece, everybody?

He holds his hand above NIECE MACREADY, a buck-toothed young woman. Louder applause. John moves on.

JOHN (CONT’D)
No? Ah ha! Now I’ve got it! How about Mrs. Amelia Muntz! What do you think?

He holds his hand above MRS. MUNTZ, an extremely obese older woman, who looks tickled pink that John would even consider her. MR. MUNTZ next to her, however, does not look pleased. Even louder applause.
At that point John notices DANICA NOBEL sneak into the side of the room. A drop-dead beauty with a model’s smile-free face she wears a bathing suit, skirt, and sunhat.

Not only can John not help but stare, but all audio fades away to what shall henceforth be called his inner-mind’s “tingle music,” a sumptuous blend of high violin tremolo and chimes running up and down arpeggios. His vision goes a bit fuzzy, but he blinks a few times and the sounds of reality return just as Danica turns to leave again.

JOHN (CONT’D)
Just a minute! Just a minute folks, I think we found her! We’ve found our most beautiful girl!

He runs up and catches Danica by the arm. She seems surprised by the attention.

JOHN (CONT’D)
Yes, I’m awfully certain. Although, I’m sorry I don’t know your name.

DANICA
Um, Danica-

JOHN
Danica, everybody! How about this girl!

John leads her onstage accompanied by applause quieter than those for Mrs. Muntz. Uncle Andrew looks at him quizzically but hands him a sash and tiara anyway.

UNCLE ANDREW
Well, it certainly looks like you’ve found the prettiest girl in the room, Johnny.

DANICA
Really, what is this all-

JOHN
Without further ado then, I crown you Miss Medallion!
John removes her sunhat, drapes the sash over her shoulder, and places the tiara on her head.

DANICA
Well now-

JOHN
Uncle Andrew, the champagne, please!

UNCLE ANDREW
A toast! To Medallion Oil!

He hands John an uncorked bottle of champagne. John begins working to open it.

PHOTOGRAPHER
(from the crowd)
How about a picture?

JOHN
Oh, sure!

He stops fiddling with the champagne cork and puts his arm around Danica to pose for a picture. Right before the photographer takes it, however, Danica turns to give him a kiss on the cheek.

As if in response to this, the bottle at that moment “pops its cork” and sends it rocketing across the room... right into the roped-off control panel, where it presses the exact wrong button.

A blue light starts flashing, a shrill bell rings out... and the floor starts to split down the middle.

The hotel’s indoor swimming pool is hidden beneath a retractable floor in the ballroom, which is obviously the pool house when not in use for formal occasions. But the investors get up and scramble out of the way as the gap widens.

JOHN
Yikes!
John leaps down and over to the roped-off control panel as the Board of Directors, Uncle Andrew, and Danica scramble off of the stage, the middle of which has started to collapse into the water.

UNCLE ANDREW
Do something!

JOHN
I'm trying!

He presses several buttons but nothing happens as the pool continues to swallow tables and chairs.

MRS. MUNTZ (OS)
Help! Help!

The enormity of MRS. MUNTZ has fallen down and is having tables and chairs crush around her as the floor continues to pull back. John abandons the control panel to help her.

JOHN
Oh dear. Just a moment, Mrs. Muntz!

He tugs at her with minimal success.

MRS. MUNTZ
Ouch, you're hurting me!

JOHN
I'm awfully sorry!

But he does eventually get her up and toward safety just as MR. MUNTZ rushes up to John.

MR. MUNTZ
Get your hands off my wife!

He winds up and socks John in the jaw. John stumbles backwards to the edge of the pool, teeters on the edge, and then falls in with a splash.
INT. JOHN AND UNCLE ANDREW'S ROOM - DAY

The Hickenlooper’s miniscule and sparse hotel room, in the old days meant not for guests but as staff quarters. John reclines on the single twin bed, fully dressed but with an ice pack to his jaw. Uncle Andrew sits at the tiny writing desk, fidgeting and staring out of the open window. John’s ruined suit hangs in a corner.

JOHN
I admit again, it could have gone better.

UNCLE ANDREW
Better! It’s bad enough we’re booked in this old ruin, but you practically wrecked your own meeting! I mean, look!

He tosses a smartphone onto the bed and John picks it up. It’s an online trade journal article, headlined “Oil and Water Don’t Mix.” John scrolls down and hits an animated gif picture someone snapped of John toppling backwards into the pool... over and over and over and over. He sets it aside with a grimace.

JOHN
It might be a blessing in disguise, you know. Any publicity is good publicity.

UNCLE ANDREW
Well while you were up here counting blessings, I’ve been calming investors all morning. Me! I’m not a people person, Johnny. Luckily no one’s pulled out after yesterday’s fiasco.

JOHN
I said I was awfully sorry. Is the bruising down?

Uncle Andrew inspects his chin.
UNCLE ANDREW
Yes, it’s fine. But you drive me to
drink sometimes. You know that?
Speaking of...

Uncle Andrew rummages through the desk drawer. Then through
their luggage, then under the bed.

JOHN
Quit looking. I poured it out.

UNCLE ANDREW
What! What kind of a no-good nephew
are you?

JOHN
The sobering kind.

Uncle Andrew slumps down in the desk chair.

UNCLE ANDREW
You’re a good kid. You are, but when
you go girl crazy you go off the deep
end.

JOHN
I can’t help it! It’s not like I mean
to. I just see a beautiful girl and
things go -- fuzzy.

UNCLE ANDREW
It’s amazing how much fuzz your
eyeballs can pick up.

JOHN
You say that like it happens all the
time.

UNCLE ANDREW
It does happen all the time!

JOHN
Oh yeah?
UNCLE ANDREW
There was the waitress in Chattanooga, the claims adjuster in Montgomery, the florist in Biloxi, and that coat check girl in Orlando.

JOHN
Oh yeah.

UNCLE ANDREW
And that's just off the top of my head. If you're not going to be a team player we had might as well call the whole thing off!

JOHN
(sitting up)
Now hold up. I'm getting awfully fond of being a millionaire.

UNCLE ANDREW
Well you're not one yet.

JOHN
No, but I'm awfully good at pretending. And I'll say it again; presentation is three-quarters of performance.

UNCLE ANDREW
I can't do this. Not dry. I'm a nervous wreck. I keep telling you you should be the President of this outfit.

JOHN
And I keep telling you nobody's going to trust a twenty-eight year old mechanic with a multi-million dollar corporation.

UNCLE ANDREW
So why should they trust a fifty-seven year old mechanic?
JOHN
(standing)
Because you look the part. And people’ll believe anything if it looks the part and comes with the proper paperwork. You’ve done great. Great so far. Just look at us.

UNCLE ANDREW
I suppose.

JOHN
No "I suppose" about it. We’ve got real captains of industry throwing money at us left and right.

UNCLE ANDREW
Humph.

JOHN
I mean it! Bigwigs. High rollers. Caviar consumers. In another couple of years we could have emperors and kings eating out of the palms of our hands.

UNCLE ANDREW
(softening)
Not bad for two boys from Steubenville.

JOHN
That’s the ticket! And after that tanker delivers its cargo in Mobile next week, we’ll be two genuine millionaires from Steubenville! You can pay off your loans and people won’t know the Hickenloopers from the Rockefellers.

UNCLE ANDREW
Then we’ve got work to do. I’m a drunk and you’re a woman chaser. Still, they say the first step is admitting it.
JOHN
What's the second step?

UNCLE ANDREW
Avoiding temptation.

JOHN
(incredulous)
Oh, Uncle Andrew!

He begins to sing TEMPTATION IS HARD TO RESIST. When each takes a verse they pantomime the actions described.

JOHN (CONT’D)
"Should a lady stop near you
to fasten her shoe,
temptation is hard to resist!
Of a tapering ankle
to catch a quick view,
temptation is hard to resist!
And if it should prove
quite an obstinate tie
to beauty's assistance
you promptly would fly,
then to give the small foot
a soft press on the sly,
temptation is hard to resist!"

UNCLE ANDREW
I know just what you mean.
(singing)
"When you're caught in the rain
near the house of a friend,
temptation is hard to resist.
'Tis a chance to make pleasure
and profit well blend,
temptation is hard to resist!
For if your umbrella
should happen to break
to place it just near his
and work an old fake
that of taking his good one
by thoughtless mistake,
temptation is hard to resist!"
JOHN
"After all we are human
and cannot be blamed,
temptation is hard to resist!
to do things for which
we are later ashamed,
temptation is hard to resist!
If when sitting close
to a charming young miss
Your pulses beat high
with the thought of what bliss
it would give you to print
on her red lips a kiss,
temptation is hard to resist!"

JOHN & UNCLE ANDREW
"Temptation is hard,
since it comes by the yard,
yes temptation is hard to resist!"

End song.

INT. JOHN AND UNCLE ANDREW'S ROOM - DAY - LATER
John reclines on the bed, arms folded, twiddling his thumbs.

JOHN
(under his breath)
"Stay in the room," he says. "There's no girls in the room," he says.
(his stomach rumbles)
Yeah, but there's no lunch either.

He sits up and starts to stand, but hesitates and sits again. He gets up and walks to the door but stops, goes back and sits again. He grabs the ancient telephone from the nightstand and dials zero.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Hello? -- Hello, room service? -- Anybody? Hello?
He sets the phone on the bed and pulls on its ancient cloth cord. It comes up loose, chewed through at the end. He looks around the bottom of the nightstand to find a mouse hole in the wall. He frowns.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

John shuffles into the Hotel’s grand lobby. Its once-grand marble floors have not been properly polished in years and the massive decorative ferns likely died when Eisenhower was in office. He spies Roscoe at the far end of the room struggling with a ladder, and proceeds towards him, head down to “avoid temptation.”

But he runs straight into Danica anyway, toppling down on top of her.

DANICA

Oh!

JOHN

I’m awfully sorry. Oh, it’s you!

DANICA

You really know how to knock a girl off her feet.

The “tingle music” swells up again as John stares at her, just inches from her face.

DANICA (CONT’D)

Would you mind getting off of me?

The music stops and John scrambles up before starting to help her to her feet.

JOHN

Oh yes, I really am awfully sorry. We keep getting off on the wrong foot, don’t we.

DANICA

I wouldn’t say that. You’re kind of cute.
He nearly drops her, but catches her and yanks her up so she steadies herself close to him. They look into each other’s eyes, and John kisses her. She accepts the kiss.

DANICA (CONT’D)
Mmm, you know, you’ve got the wrong idea about me. I’m not involved with your oil company at all.

JOHN
You’re not?

DANICA
Uh-uh. I’m here on holiday. Daddy and I come to the Tangeray every year. For sentimental reasons.

JOHN
Daddy?

DANICA
Oh Daddy wouldn’t like you at all. He doesn’t like me kissing strangers.

JOHN
(sly)
Well then, let’s not be strangers. I’m John D. Hickenlooper. Of the Ohio Hickenloopers.

DANICA
(playing along)
What an interesting name. Pleased to meet you. I’m Danica Nobel.

He smiles and leans in for a kiss.

DANICA (CONT’D)
Of the Dynamite Nobels.

JOHN
Dynamite?

DANICA
Yeah, you know. “Boom”? They use it in mines and stuff—
JOHN
Yes, I'm aware what dynamite is. Uncommon line of work. But I bet you've got just the explosive personality to go with it.

DANICA
Oh, I've been known to light things up from time to time.

JOHN
I'll bet you could be pretty dangerous.

DANICA
As long as Daddy's not around...

She kisses him again, powerfully, and John staggers backward. He trips over the ropes surrounding a 1906 Ormond Special two-seater open-body racecar displayed in the lobby, and onto the car with a crash. Roscoe rushes over. Danica giggles.

ROSCOE
Oh, Mr. Hickenlooper, please don't touch that! That's a land speed record holder!

JOHN
(getting helped up)
I was speeding myself, just now.

ROSCOE
I know it may not look like much, but in 1906 they clocked it in at a hundred twenty-two miles an hour out on the beach. That was quite a speed in those days!

DANICA
He's very sorry, Roscoe. It won't happen again.

ROSCOE
Oh hello, Miss Nobel. Enjoying your stay?
DANICA
As I do every year, Roscoe.

ROSCOE
Good, good. Well, I've gotta get going.
(to John)
Don't touch the car.

JOHN
I won't, I won't.

Roscoe exits to go back to his ladder.

JOHN
Unfortunately I have to be going as well. Business and all that.

DANICA
Oh pooh. But here, if you're ever bored, come up and see me sometime. Just make sure Daddy's not around first.

She drops a room key into his pocket and pats it there before sauntering off the opposite direction. John stares after her until she turns a corner. He takes out the key and looks at it, with the number 508 printed on the fob, but his stomach rumbles again and he goes after Roscoe.

EXT. HOTEL FRONT DRIVE - DAY

John strolls out the main entrance to the hotel to find Roscoe atop one of two ladders set of on either side of it, attempting to hang a banner above the door. He already has one side pinned up and is about to pin the other when the first comes fluttering down.

ROSCOE
Rats.

JOHN
Um, Roscoe?

ROSCOE
Yes? What can I do for you, Mr. Hickenlooper?
JOHN
I’m awfully sorry to bother you. I wanted to order some room service but my room phone’s out. Mice, I think.

ROSCOE
Again? Rats.

JOHN
No, mice.

ROSCOE
Yes, mice. Rats. I mean, just a minute and I can make you something. In fact, could you help me out here?

JOHN
Oh yeah, sure.

John picks up the downed end of the banner and hikes up the second ladder. Only once he’s got it stretched up and ready to pin does he realize that the banner proclaims, “Welcome Spring Breakers!” Not good for avoiding temptation. He pins it with trepidation.

ROSCOE
Thanks! And just in time, too!

A large touring bus pulls up the Hotel’s front drive, “Oread Women’s Institute” printed on its side. It parks right in front of the main entrance and its doors swing open. John watches in horror as a bevy of beautiful young college girls comes streaming out.

JOHN
Oh no!

He averts his eyes from the massive temptation, and tries to climb down the ladder, but looses his footing and topples into the bushes below.

INT. HOTEL DRAWING ROOM - DAY

About twenty girls from the Oread Women’s Institute gather in a drawing room off the hotel lobby. They chat with each other excitedly. KATHERINE SEWARD, their teacher and chaperone, steps forward to address them. Young, fit, but
nevertheless somewhat matronly, she wears large unbecoming spectacles, almost of a government-issue type. She is frazzled, both physically and emotionally.

KATHERINE
Girls! Girls, settle down! Please!

The idyll chatter dies away.

KATHERINE (CONT’D)
Now girls, you all have your room assignments?

OREAD GIRLS
Yes, Miss Seward.

KATHERINE
Good, good. Then you can all get settled in in a few minutes. But first I wanted to stress again that this is alternative spring break. You’re here to have fun, yes, but you’re also here to learn something.

OREAD GIRLS
Yes, Miss Seward.

KATHERINE
So no wild partying.

OREAD GIRLS
No, Miss Seward.

KATHERINE
No drinking.

OREAD GIRLS
No, Miss Seward.

KATHERINE
And no men.

OREAD GIRLS
Of course not, Miss Seward.

Katherine looks wistfully into the distance. CAROL WIENEKE, a gold-hearted freshman, steps forward.
CAROL
Is something wrong, Miss Seward?

KATHERINE
No. -- Well, yes.

Katherine she sits in a chair.

GIRL 1
What is it?

KATHERINE
I don't mind telling you all now. The Institute wants to fire me.

GIRL 2
What!

GIRL 3
They can't do that!

CAROL
You're our favorite!

GIRL 4
But why?!

KATHERINE
Apparently my research is costing too much money.

GIRL 5
That's ridiculous!

SHERYL
Fire Dr. Pond! He's weird!

SHERYL ZIMMERMAN is the most caustic and cynical of the group.

KATHERINE
Girls, girls! Dr. Pond has tenure. And besides, he's a good friend of mine.
SHERYL
Just making a suggestion before he gets here.

CAROL
Why's it always have to be about money?

KATHERINE
Well, Carol, you know as well as I do that Oread is a small school. We depend very much on donations from sponsors and alumni, and frankly they're way down.

CAROL
But your research is making the world a better place! Oil algae could help the Earth towards a cleaner tomorrow. Isn't that worth funding?

SHERYL
Not when their choice is between a cleaner tomorrow or a cappuccino today.

Katherine stands and walks among the girls. There, she begins to sing ALL GOING OUT AND NOTHING COMING IN.

KATHERINE
"Money is the root of evil, everywhere you go."

SHERYL
"But nobody has any objection to the root now ain't that so."

GIRL 1
"You know how it is with money and how it makes you feel at ease."

GIRL 2
"Things look brighter all around and your friends are thick as thieves."
KATHERINE
"But when your money's running low
and your clinging to a solitary dime,
no one can see when you come in, that
is the awful time."

KATHERINE & SHERYL
"That is the time,
oh that is the time,
oh when it's all going out and
there's nothing coming in,
oh that is the time when the troubles
begin.
You're money's getting low,
people say 'I told you so,,'
and you can't borrow pennies from any
of your kin
when it's all going out and there's
nothing coming in."

SHERYL
"I've had my share of this world's
trials,
so one knows how I've tried
so to keep my little boat from
sinking
and to battle with the tide.
You know when you've got your money,
how easy just to keep afloat,
your friends are mighty numerous, and
they'll help you to row your boat.
Oh when your money is running low, times
are bad and things look mighty blue.
You look for help and find that all
of your friends are paddling their
own canoe."

The girls start to pick up their luggage and one by one
exit the drawing room to head up to their hotel rooms.

OREAD GIRLS
"That is the time,
oh that is the time,
oh when it's all going out and
there's nothing coming in,
oh that is the time when the troubles
begin."
You're money's getting low, 
people say 'I told you so,' 
and you can't borrow pennies from any 
of your kin 
when it's all going out and there's 
nothing coming in."

Katherine is left standing alone in the drawing room. She 
strolls out to the 

LOBBY 
and sighs as she gazes after the girls heading up the 
staircase. She then notices a black felt board sign with 
white changeable letters headed "Medallion Oil Retreat 
Itinerary." It lists the schedule of events for the oil 
company's retreat. She looks more closely at it and smiles. 

KATHERINE 
(singing to herself) 
"...and you can't borrow pennies from 
any of your kin 
when it's all going out and there's 
nothing coming in."

EXT. THE GULF OF MEXICO - DAY 

A blue-hulled, white-topped 120,000-ton oil tanker ship 
plows through the waters of the Gulf. "Petroleum Princess" 
is painted on its hull. 

EXT. THE HOTEL TERRACE - DAY 

John and Uncle Andrew enter onto the terrace. A large area 
resembling a Spanish courtyard, except for the side open to 
the sea over a balcony, the terrace is filled with little 
metal café tables and chairs, and tastefully sculpted 
trees. The same millionaires from the day's earlier meeting 
mill about chatting casually and sipping drinks from yet 
another a table of refreshments. A waiter with a single 
flute of champagne on a tray strolls past, and John snags 
it and downs it before Uncle Andrew gets the chance. 

DANICA 
Mr. Hickenlooper!
UNCLE ANDREW

Yes?

Danica hails John from across the crowd.

DANICA
Oh, no, sorry, I meant the younger Mr. Hickenlooper.

UNCLE ANDREW
(aside)
They always do.

JOHN
Don’t leave me!

UNCLE ANDREW
Don’t worry, I’ll be right over there. At the bar.

He leaves to try and find a drink while Danica approaches John with a starchy-looking older man on her arm.

DANICA
You see, I told you I’d met him. You remember me, don’t you, Mr. Hickenlooper?

JOHN
Certainly! And you must be Daddy. Er-Mr. Nobel.

John and DADDY NOBEL shake hands.

DADDY NOBEL
I certainly am. Here, my card.

He hands John a business card reading “Nobel Dynamite Co., D. Nobel, President.” He pockets it.

DADDY NOBEL
My little Dani was just telling me what you’re like in person, said you bumped into each other twice today. Said you were very inviting.
JOHN
Oh, did she?

DADDY NOBEL
Yes, said she tried to get to know you socially but all you wanted to talk about was business.

JOHN
Oh, yes, well-

DADDY NOBEL
No shame in that. No shame a-tall. In fact I admire a man who can keep focused on figures when my little girl is around.

DANICA
Daddy!

JOHN
Well, she has quite a figure herself.

DANICA
Now, both of you be nice.

JOHN
Well it was awfully nice meeting you, Mr. Nobel. Danica.

(kisses her hand)
But if you’ll excuse me, I have a ship coming in.

DADDY NOBEL
Of course, of course. I hope we’ll meet again.

John jogs over to in front of the balcony.

JOHN
Ladies and Gentlemen, ladies and gentlemen, may I have your attention, please! First, I’m glad to see everyone out and having a good time after this morning’s little upset, for which I profoundly apologize. From here on out it’ll be smooth
sailing for the Medallion Oil Company. And speaking of sailing, here again is your President, and my uncle, Andrew Hickenlooper.

Polite applause as Uncle Andrew steps forward. He’s gotten ahold of a few drinks and doesn’t even hide the fact that he’s simply reading a pre-written speech.

UNCLE ANDREW
Friends, entrepreneurs, benefactors. You know as well as I that this great nation of ours was founded on oil. Oil for lighting our homes, for cooking our food, and for powering our mighty dynamos! But oil does not come bubbling up from the ground as kerosene, as motor oil, as gasoline. No, it starts as black crude. Black gold that will make the poor of us rich, and the rich of us richer. Medallion’s superior oil is drilled from the fossil-rich swaps of Louisiana, a relatively untapped market that you all have helped to thrust open. But it must be refined from that mighty crude in our chartered plant in Mobile, Abalama. Excuse me: Alabama. To get the product from point to point we have arranged shipment on the proudest of this nation’s oil fleet, the ship you see before you today, filled to the brim with 25,000 barrels of pure Medallion crude, the Petroleum Princess!

Polite applause again as Uncle Andrew lifts an arm to present the ship. Yet the Princess is rather small in the distance, and not that impressive to the naked eye. The investors cluster against the balcony for a better look.

DANICA
Kinda small, isn’t it?

Many investors murmur in agreement.
JOHN
What? No, it’s a hundred-twenty thousand ton tanker!

DANICA
Well that can’t be right. Our yacht looks bigger than that.

She points to the only other significant boat in the bay, a white steam-powered yacht anchored to the North.

JOHN
Well it’s just closer is all. I assure you the Princess is awfully big. Just watch.

He pulls his cell phone from his pocket and makes a call.

INT. THE BRIDGE OF THE PETROLEUM PRINCESS - DAY

CAPTAIN BRIGGS stands at the helm of the ship, confidently steering it as one would a masted battleship instead of diesel oil tanker. His white uniform gleams. A COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER calls to him from his controls.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
Captain, you have an incoming call on the main line.

Captain Briggs snaps out of his steering trance to pick up a phone receiver.

CAPTAIN BRIGGS
Ahoy. Captain Briggs speaking.

THE TERRACE

JOHN
Yes, hello, this is John D. Hickenlooper, vice president of affairs at Medallion Oil. I- Yes- I- Well, how the hell are you too. Look, I’m over at the Tangeray Palms Hotel on Sarasota beach. -- Yes. “The tiny crumbling one.” You’re doing an awfully good job so far and we can see you, Captain. Your timing is
impeccable. But frankly you’re a little tiny.

THE BRIDGE

CAPTAIN BRIGGS
Uh-huh. -- Uh-huh. -- Well technically it’s against regulations for a vessel this size to sail in any closer than a mile off shore when there’s no port to enter. -- I realize you’re putting on a show. But what if the Coast Guard is watching? -- Triple, huh? You sure you can afford that? -- Well if you’re sure you’re you can afford it. Aye-aye, sir. Just say “when.”

He casually turns the wheel hard to the right and the whole ship lurches starboard.

THE TERRACE

John approaches Uncle Andrew.

JOHN
Awfully well done on the speech. Very regal, very inspiring.

UNCLE ANDREW
That’s the way you wrote it.

JOHN
I’ve told the ship to pull a bit further into the bay. It looks awfully small out there. I want people to be able to imagine just how much oil is on it.

DADDY NOBEL
Twenty-five thousand barrels, I thought I heard you say.

Nobel and daughter saunter up to the balcony next to Hickenlooper and nephew. The four of them stare out at the ship in the bay.
JOHN
You heard correctly.

DADDY NOBEL
That’d run you close to a two-million dollar haul in today’s market, no?

UNCLE ANDREW
Around that. And it’s just the first shipment of many.

DANICA
That’s a good chunk of mullah. Why don’t we leave you two to talk?

JOHN
I have to tell the Captain- I’m not sure if that’s-

DADDY NOBEL
Of course Danni, don’t let us old men bore you with business.

Danica takes John by the hand and leads him behind a topiary sculpture where she pulls him into another kiss. The “tingle” music flares up again. Meanwhile Daddy Nobel and Uncle Andrew continue their chat.

UNCLE ANDREW
Are you an oil man, sir? I don’t believe we have you on our list of investors.

DADDY NOBEL
No, no, here, have my card. I’m in ballistics. Dynamite.

UNCLE ANDREW
Dynamite?

DADDY NOBEL
Yes. You know. “Boom”? They use it in mines and stuff-

UNCLE ANDREW
Yes, I’m aware what dynamite is.
There is a bang in the distance.

UNCLE ANDREW (CONT’D)
Hmm, sort of sounds like that, actually.

A red flare just went up above the “Petroleum Princess,” which, incidentally, has stopped. The crowd applauds ignorantly. John pulls away from Danica and steps out from behind the bush, Danica pouting after him.

DADDY NOBEL
That’s odd. They’re only supposed use the red flares in case of distress.

JOHN
(into his phone)
“When!” “When!”

THE BRIDGE
A red light flashes and an alarm blares loudly. Crewmen run around frantically in the background.

CAPTAIN BRIGGS
(shouting)
Yes, Hickenlooper? A little late for that. We’ve run into a bit of a problem.

THE TERRACE
John stands ashen-faced as he listens on his phone to the Captain.

JOHN
(dazed)
Yes. -- I see. -- You don’t say. -- Really. -- Thank you Captain.

He slowly and deliberately hangs up and pockets the phone.

UNCLE ANDREW
Well?

John leans in and whispers in his ear.
UNCLE ANDREW (CONT'D)

Crashed?!

Uncle Andrew finds a nearby bottle of champagne and begins chugging it.

JOHN
(calming him)
Well, more like run aground.

UNCLE ANDREW
Run aground?! On what?

JOHN
The bottom of Sarasota Bay, apparently. It seems... I... didn’t... say "when" in time...

DADDY NOBEL
I couldn’t help but overhear, but if your ship’s run aground, that’s certainly going to eat into your profits, my boy.

Somewhat contained until this point, an investor overhears Daddy Nobel and the news spreads like wildfire throughout the crowd. They begin to turn into a frenzy. They advance on the Hickenloopers.

JOHN
Just a minute, just a minute! The worst thing to do at a time like this is panic! Isn’t that right, Uncle Andrew? One collapse today is enough!

INVESTOR 4
But what about the ship?

INVESTOR 5
Is it sinking?

INVESTOR 6
Who cares about the ship, what about the oil?
INVESTOR 7
Is it leaking?

JOHN
Not really, they may have lost a barrel or two-

The crowd takes this information poorly, to say the least, barraging John with more questions and pressing him ever closer over the terrace ledge.

UNCLE ANDREW
Hey! Everybody! Leave my nephew alone!

Uncle Andrew has stood up on a café table, drained bottle in hand. He speaks on pure liquid courage.

UNCLE ANDREW (CONT’D)
Don’t talk ask the boy. What crisis has he (hiccup) handled? Ask a man of experience!

MR. MUNTZ
Alright, what do you think we should do?

UNCLE ANDREW
Nothing.

INVESTORS
Nothing!

UNCLE ANDREW
Nothing. The fact is it doesn’t matter what is. What matters is how we all react to it. A wise man once told me that presentation is three quarters of performance.

Here begins the spoken word intro to I’VE BEEN FLOATING DOWN THE OLD GREEN RIVER.
UNCLE ANDREW

Friends! Friends! Friends, as I once learned in my youth, sometimes the best thing to avoid can be the truth!

He tosses the bottle aside where it shatters.

UNCLE ANDREW

“Half past four, little me came sneaking to my mother’s door. She’d been waiting up all night, waiting for me to go to bed. I just smiled, like a child, but my mother grew very wild. “Where have you been all night long?” she cried, and this is what I replied:

I’ve been floating down the old green river on the good ship Rock and Rye. But I floated too far, I got stuck on a bar, I was out there alone, wishing that I was home. The ship got wrecked with the captain and crew, and there was only one thing left to do, so I had to drink the whole Green River dry to get back home to you.”

He jumps down amongst the investors, palling around and dancing rather drunkenly until they’re much less mutinous.

UNCLE ANDREW & INVESTORS

“We were floating down the old green river on the good ship Rock and Rye. But we floated too far, we got stuck on a bar, we were out there alone, wishing that were home. The ship got wrecked with the captain and crew, and there was only one thing left to do,
so we had to drink the whole Green
River dry to get back home to-
Get back home to-
Get back home to you!"

End song.

Uncle Andrew collapses into a nearby chair, exhausted, and the investors, armed with the strategy of lying if asked about the ship, begin to quietly dissipate back into the Hotel.

UNCLE ANDREW
I tap out. I'm done. Your turn.

JOHN
I didn't know you had it in you.

UNCLE ANDREW
Neither did I. I could use a Rock and Rye about now.

JOHN
You deserve one. You know, I think we may just survive this. The ship is fixable easy enough, and if we hire a tug we can pull it back off the bottom of the harbor.

UNCLE ANDREW
Fine. Good, I'll get the board on that.

JOHN
We just have to make sure that the press doesn't get wind of this.

UNCLE ANDREW
I thought, "any publicity is good publicity."

JOHN
Not when we've actually done something wrong! A hundred-twenty-thousand tons of crude oil marooned on one of the most pristine beaches in the world? The protesters would
have a field day! And that’d be
goodbye millionaires, goodbye
Rockefellers, hello Steubenville!

UNCLE ANDREW
(panicking)
We’re ruined!

At the other end of the terrace Katherine enters from the lobby.

JOHN
Now calm down! I’ll go get you a cup
of coffee. You just stay here. And
don’t talk to anybody.

He pats Uncle Andrew on the back as Uncle Andrew slumps over a table. He then starts walking in the directions of the kitchens and gets about twenty feet away while Katherine circles around to try and see Uncle Andrew’s face.

KATHERINE
Um, Mr. Hickenlooper? My name is
Katherine Seward, and I’m a biology
professor at the Oread Women’s
Institute. I was wondering if I could
have a word with you.

John over hears this and stops dead in his tracks.

UNCLE ANDREW
Oh? Well, I, um-

KATHERINE
I’ve read a little about you online
and I hear you’ve got a little
problem with some crude oil leakage.

UNCLE ANDREW
(hot under the collar)
Oh did you? Well, um, I-

John, now wearing dark sunglasses, suddenly collides with Katherine and sends her toppling to the ground. John looks around in the manner of a blind man, arms outstretched and grasping at air.
JOHN
Eh? Who’s there?

UNCLE ANDREW
(shocked)
You just flattened the poor girl!

JOHN
Did I? Girl? Oh my, I’m awfully sorry!

Katherine gets up slowly and dusts herself off.

KATHERINE
Oh, that’s quite alright. It was an accident, I’m sure.

UNCLE ANDREW
What do you think you’re doing, my boy?

KATHERINE
It’s nothing, really. -- Do you two know each other.

UNCLE ANDREW
Know him? Why I-

John crushes Uncle Andrew’s foot with his heel, causing him to cry out. He continues to feign blindness.

JOHN
Oh dear, my fault again. No, I’m afraid I know very few people here. So sorry, sir.

He puts an arm around Katherine and starts slowly leading her away from Uncle Andrew back towards the hotel. Uncle Andrew stares after him, and when Katherine isn’t looking he raises his sunglasses and gives Uncle Andrew a wink.

JOHN (CONT’D)
But I really am concerned I’ve hurt you. Did you say you were a biologist?
KATHERINE
I really am fine. Please, I wanted to speak to-

JOHN
Do tell me about your work. Do you get out in the field much?

KATHERINE
(trying to be polite)
Well, swamps more than fields but yes. I teach college biology but I’m also a confirmed environmental activist. Now please, I-

JOHN
(wanting to keep her hooked)
You don’t say! I’m an environmental philanthropist myself! I donate money to activists all the time! You know, for the trees -- and whatnot.

Katherine stops, believing she’s accidentally stumbled upon a lucky break.

KATHERINE
You do? -- What did you say your name was?

JOHN
(unprepared)
I didn’t. My name? It’s um-
(fishing Mr. Nobel’s card from his pocket)
Nobel. Danny Nobel. I work in dynamite.

He presents the card in front of him as if he doesn’t know where she is and she takes it.

KATHERINE
Dynamite?

JOHN
Yes. You know. “Boom”? They use it in mines and stuff-
KATHERINE
Yes, I’m aware what dynamite is.

JOHN
Aren’t we all.

KATHERINE
Well, Mr. Nobel, perhaps I could show you my work then. I’m sorry, I mean, not “show,” obviously—but, describe, maybe-

JOHN
Shh, shh. I never let my condition inconvenience me, Miss Seward. You’ve got to appear strong. After all, presentation is three quarters of performance.

KATHERINE
Well what has that got to do with-

JOHN
Lead on!

He takes her by the arm and starts muscling her toward the lobby again, but “accidentally” walks straight into a column before going two feet. He bows to it apologetically.

JOHN (CONT’D)
Beg pardon, m’am.
(to Katherine)
Lead on!

INT. HOTEL DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Back in the hotel drawing room the Oread girls have set up their scientific headquarters. Numerous collapsing tables are piled with books, arrays of glass tubing, laptops, and more. It’s an entire transplanted classroom.

The 20 girls, however, are not working on science at the moment, but sit in chairs sit clustered around a large TV screen. They each hold a band instrument, and Carol sits in front of an old upright piano.
On the screen is DR. CHARLIE "WALDEN" POND, both senior biology professor and band teacher at the Oread Women's Institute. Bearded, bespectacled, and bizarre, he leads the girls in an almost dirge-like rendition of WOODMAN, SPARE THAT TREE via live video feed. It is an extremely old and dainty song, and the girls look bored to death playing it.

WALDEN
(operatic)
"Woodman, spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough!
In youth it sheltered me,
and I'll protect it now.
'Twas my forefather's hand,
that placed it near his cot.
There woodman, let it stand,
thy axe shall harm it not!"

Sheryl, on the trombone, nods off and the others seem ready to follow. They play the instrumental interlude with lackluster.

WALDEN (CONT'D)
"That old familiar tree,
whose glory and renown
are spread o'er land and sea.
And wouldst thou hew it down?
Woodman-"

Katherine opens the door and tries to enter without disturbing the girls, followed by John. From his point of view he observes the room full of beautiful college girls and the "tingle music" stars to flare up. So he shuts his eyes tight, leading him to bump into Sheryl, who wakes up in a huff. The song peters out pitifully.

End song.

SHERYL
Hey! Watch where you're going! What, are you blind?

JOHN
Yes, actually.

CAROL
Sheryl, you should be ashamed!
SHERYL
He should be more careful.

WALDEN
(on the TV, henceforth)
What's going on?

The girls part down the middle so that the camera above the TV can see John and Katherine. She steps toward it.

KATHERINE
Oh hello, Dr. Pond! They got the video link up and running I see. How's sailing?

WALDEN
Fine, Katie, fine! Got it on auto pilot for a while and figured the girls could use their practice.

KATHERINE
How efficient of you. You'll be here soon?

WALDEN
Tomorrow morning, if the weather holds out. -- Who's that fella?

John has been groping around blindly behind her. She grabs him and moves him toward the camera.

KATHERINE
Oh yes. Everyone, this is Mr. Danny Nobel. He's an environmental philanthropist and he might just solve our problem for us.

(to John)
Mr. Nobel, these are my students, and over video link is my colleague, Dr. Charlie Pond. But everyone calls him "Walden."

JOHN
Oh, "Walden Pond." How Thoreau.
WALDEN
Precisely. Strictly non-violent protest.

JOHN
Oh? Whom against?

WALDEN
Oil companies, mostly.

John cringes.

CAROL
Dr. Pond is a leading authority on oil pollution. He also owns a tugboat, which he’s driving here, because-

SHERYL
Because he’s a nut...

CAROL
Yeah. I mean, no!

JOHN
So you’re all biology students, then?

GIRL 4
Nah.

GIRL 6
Not really.

GIRL 9
I’m a business major.

GIRL 14
I’m in English.

GIRL 17
I’m in Phys. Ed.

KATHERINE
But they are all in the biology club, Mr. Nobel.
JOHN
Which also has a brass band?

WALDEN
I’m also the school’s band teacher.

JOHN
Oh. You’re all in the biology club and you all play instruments?

CAROL
Oh, sure. We’re all multitalented. Most of us are in five or six extra curriculars. You’ve gotta be to get into a school like Oread.

The other girls nod their heads.

JOHN
That was some tune you were playing. When was it written?

WALDEN
1837.

JOHN
Is that all? Look, I don’t mean to crash the party, but you mind if I offer my two cents? As I understand it, part of your problem is marketing, attracting donor interest. Well, the only think you’re gonna attract with that is flies. Because it’s pretty dead. Not that it should be thrown out entirely. The bones are good, but the meat is spoiled. Um, mind if I take a crack at it?

He stumbles over to the piano and Carol gives him her seat.

WALDEN
Um, sure, Mr. Nobel. Anything to drum up business.

JOHN
Now let me see. “Woodman, woodman, spare that tree, yadda, yadda,
yadda." Ok. Ok. Let's give this a shot. Just try and keep up, folks.

À la Ray Charles he lets loose a skilled jazz riff opener on the piano, beginning WOODMAN, WOODMAN, SPARE THAT TREE! The girls are soon clapping along.

JOHN (CONT’D)
"Woodman, woodman, spare that tree touch not a single bough. For years it has protected me and I’ll protect it now. Chop an oak, a birch or pine, but not this slippery elm of mine. It’s the only tree my girl can’t climb So spare that tree!"

Collective laughter at the turn the song has taken. At this point the girls launch into full jazz band orchestration to supplement the piano.

JOHN (CONT’D)
(spoke-sung)
"Yes, a great big tree grows near our house. It’s been there quite some time. This tree’s a slippery elm tree, and very hard to climb. But when my girl starts after me up in that tree I roost. I go up like a healthy squirrel and never need no boost. The other day a woodman came to chop the refuge down and carve it into kindling wood to peddle ’round the town. I says to him, “I pray thee cease, desist, refrain, and stop! Lay down that crazy razor, man, chop not a single chop!”

OREAD GIRLS
"Woodman, woodman, spare that tree touch not a single bough. For years it has protected me and I’ll protect it now. Chop an oak, a birch or pine,
but not this slippery elm of mine.
It's the only tree my girl can't climb
So spare that tree!"

JOHN
(spoke-sung)
"I said to him, You see that hole
Up near that old treetop?
I've got five dollars there, that's your,
if you refrain to chop.
No beast but me can climb that tree
'cause it's too slippery.
I can get up myself unless my girl is after me.
So get my wife and I'll call her a very naughty word.
And then you'll see me give an imitation of a bird.
You may not know just where to go,
when my girl comes around,
but when she comes remember this if I'm not on the ground:"

OREAD GIRLS
"Woodman, woodman, spare that tree
touch not a single bough.
For years it has protected me
and I'll protect it now.
Chop an oak, a birch or pine,
but not this slippery elm of mine.
It's the only tree my girl can't climb
So spare that tree!"

John and the girls complete the number with a flourish.
They all seem much happier.

End Song.

JOHN
Haha, one of the more obscure uses for trees, but a worthwhile one, I assure you.
WALDEN
Well it looks like you’ve got the most impressive donor there, Katie. Sadly it looks like I’ve got to sign off. There’s some tricky seas ahead.

JOHN
(waving in the wrong direction)
Pleasure to meet you, sir.

WALDEN
So long, girls.

Walden waves goodbye and the TV screen goes blank. John rises from the piano.

KATHERINE
Well wasn’t that fun. Now, Mr. Nobel, I wanted to show you my research.

She takes him to stand by one of the tables as the girls pack up their instruments.

KATHERINE (CONT’D)
Do you know much about algae, Mr. Nobel?

JOHN
The green stuff?

KATHERINE
Yes, that. I’m developing a strain of algae meant to counteract oil spills.

GIRL 5
It’s really rather clever.

KATHERINE
You see, normally, oil spills cause vast environmental destruction because the spilled oil depletes the water of oxygen.
And it upsets the whole food chain since no oxygen first kills the algae and plankton, then the fish, and then larger mammals.

In the background, Sheryl mimes a suffocating larger mammal.

JOHN
How awful.

KATHERINE
Yes, but my special algae can help. It's genetically modified to both depend on much less oxygen to multiply and it actually eats the carbon structures comprising the oil. It basically cleans up the mess.

JOHN
Well isn't that something.

SHERYL
Too bad it doesn't work.

JOHN
It doesn't?

KATHERINE
Well, not yet. But that's why I need more funding, and the Institute is reluctant to give it.

JOHN
Well I'd love to help. How much do you need?

KATHERINE
About fifty thousand dollars.

John blanches at the amount. At the same time Carol approaches Katherine.
CAROL
Miss Seward? We’ve got some free
time now and Sheryl and I wanted
to take a rowboat out to test the
pollutant levels in the bay. Is
that alright?

KATHERINE
Well of course. That sounds like a
very smart thing to do, doesn’t it, Mr. Nobel?

JOHN
(gulping)
Does it?

KATHERINE
I’ll bet they can prove that
there’s oil pollution in that bay,
same as everywhere. Maybe even
guilt these oil tycoons into a
donation or two.

JOHN
(jumping on it)
I want to go too.

KATHERINE
Well I don’t see why not.

SHERYL
Aw, does he have to?

JOHN
Lead on!

EXT. SARASOTA BEACH - DAY

Katherine, Carol, and Sheryl emerge from the pathway in the
overgrown Hotel grounds and march toward the beach. They’re
now in bathing suits: the girls in bikinis and Katherine
in a tasteful one-piece. John lags behind carrying a tray
of test tubes.
The group approaches the boathouse at the beach end of the Tangeray Hotel’s pier that leads out into the bay. It’s a lopsided old wooden structure, but bears a sign reading “rentals” above a shop window.

Katherine rings bell for service and Roscoe emerges from the back.

ROSCOE
Afternoon, what can I do for you?

KATHERINE
We’d like to rent a boat, please.

SHERYL
Or some jet skis!

CAROL
Sheryl, those are dangerous!

SHERYL
No they’re not. They’re fun!

ROSCOE
Sorry ladies, I’m afraid we only have canoes and rowboats.

SHERYL
Darn.

KATHERINE
Will a rowboat seat all of us?

ROSCOE
I don’t see why not.

KATHERINE
Then we’ll have one of those.

She rummages through a purse for some money. John has been playing with the test tubes behind the girls and nearly drops them, but catches them with a jangle of glass.

ROSCOE
Oh, hello! I didn’t see you there Mr. Hick-
John violently mimes for Roscoe to shut up. When the girls turn to look at him he’s moving his head around blindly again.

ROSCOE (CONT’D)
I mean, I didn’t see you there, you hick. You old beach bum, you.

The turns turn to look back at Roscoe and John gives him a thumbs up. Roscoe can’t help looking puzzled.

KATHERINE
You know Mr. Nobel?

ROSCOE
Oh I know Mr. Nobel, alright. He’s a regular at the Hotel, but-

JOHN
I’m afraid we have to get going, Roscoe. Science waits for no man.

ROSCOE
Is that right...

JOHN
Yes, sir.
(to the girls)
Lead on!

EXT. SARASOTA BAY - DAY

The foursome sits in an old long rowboat, with Sheryl at the fore, Katherine and Cheryl at the aft, and John rowing in the center. They’re a fair ways out to sea.

KATHERINE
A little more to the left, Mr. Nobel.

JOHN
Veering left.

CAROL
How exciting, to be by the beautiful sea!
JOHN
Oh yes, awfully thrilling.

The row in silence for a few moments.

KATHERINE
You know, I wonder what that big tanker ship is doing here. It hasn't moved since we got to the beach.

JOHN
What? Where? I don't see an oil tanker.

SHERYL
You don't see anything!

CAROL
And who said it was an oil tanker?

JOHN
Oh, nobody. Nobody did. -- But I suppose that would make sense, what with those Hickenloopers staying at the hotel and all.

KATHERINE
You're quite right, Mr. Nobel.

SHERYL
Geez, those oil guys think they can do anything they want, don't they? Makes me just wanna slug one.

KATHERINE
Sheryl! You will not be sluging anyone while I'm around.

CAROL
Here should be good.

KATHERINE
Alright. You can stop now, Mr. Nobel.
John sets up the oars with a groan. The girls take the tray of test tubes and uncork one. Carol leans over the side of the boat and dips the tube in the water. As the others watch, John peers over the top of his sunglasses and glances around. He pushes them back up.

JOHN
Wait a second. What’s that?

KATHERINE
What’s what?

JOHN
That sound.

CAROL
What sound?

JOHN
Sounds like a bee. Or a wasp.

A bee!

SHERYL
I don’t hear any bee!

JOHN
That’s because you don’t have the super-hearing of the blind. It’s — right over there!

He points to underneath Carol. Carol screams and jumps up.

KATHERINE
Carol, honey, you can’t stand up! It’ll be ok!

CAROL
But I’m allergic to bees!

Katherine sits Carol back down but John jumps up.

JOHN
Uh-oh! It’s over here now!
SHERYL
I don't see it!

John crawls over to Katherine and Carol, making the boat rock as he does.

JOHN
Don't let it sting me!

Carol screams and rushes toward Sheryl at the other end.

JOHN (CONT'D)
No! Now it's going that way!

Sheryl screams at Carol bearing down on her and from the excitement.

KATHERINE
Please, everybody sit down!

John stands straight up.

JOHN
It's every man for himself!

The girls scream and the rowboat teeters violently before finally capsizing, sending John, Katherine, Carol, Sheryl, and all their testing equipment tumbling into the waters of the Gulf.

EXT. HOTEL TERRACE - NIGHT

The entire terrace has been decorated with tiki torches and grass skirts around the tables. The Medallion investors, the Nobels, and the Oread girls have all turned out for a luau put on by the hotel. The girls, however, are up on a tiny makeshift stage in front of the sea view.

They're treating the crowd to some live music, specifically THERE'S A GARDEN IN HAWAII. Carol is in the middle as the vocal soloist and also plays the ukulele as the other girls crowd around her.
CAROL
"There's a land a-way out yonder, when at night I sit and ponder, there in dreams of love I wander, far across the sea."

OREAD GIRLS
"There's a garden in Hawaii, where we loved beneath the palms. I could see the love-light gleaming while I held you in my arms. When you kissed me and caressed me all my dreams of love came true. There's a garden in Hawaii where I fell in love with you."

They all play a jazzy interlude.

OREAD GIRLS
"When you kissed me and caressed me all my dreams of love came true. There's a garden in Hawaii where I fell in love with you."

End song.

The rest of the crowd applauds enthusiastically as the girls return to their seats. At the same time, John and Uncle Andrew enter from the lobby, dressed in eveningwear. John reaches into his pocket and pulls out the dark sunglasses. Before he puts them on, however, Uncle Andrew reaches out a hand to stay him.

UNCLE ANDREW
Are you sure you know what you're doing, Johnny?

JOHN
She'll be so smitten I could steer her and her girls clear of the Princess for the next week, let alone a few days. Trust me, I don't even like "Miss Seward." And you know I can tell. When I look at her there's no tingle. No fuzzy feeling. Nothing. And that means that it'll be fine.
UNCLE ANDREW
I still don't like it.

JOHN
Well I think you'd like going back to being an auto mechanic even less, so unless you have any better ideas...

Uncle Andrew releases his arm and John puts on the sunglasses.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Just stick to the plan.

UNCLE ANDREW
I know, I know.
(looking at the crowd)
This had better work.

They set off in opposite directions, John towards Katherine and the Oread girls, Uncle Andrew toward the Nobels. John passes by Mrs. Muntz, the obese Medallion investor, on his way and she sticks her nose in the air.

MRS. MUNTZ
Really! Wearing sunglasses at night...

John smiles and bows toward her as she walks away.

JOHN
Oh, yes. And what a fine evening it is, Mrs. Muntz.

Carol and Sheryl pass right behind him and as he turns he runs into Sheryl yet again. Carol hits her arm.

CAROL
Sheryl, you really should stop bumping into Mr. Nobel.

SHERYL
He should stop bumping into me!
JOHN
(patting her on
the head)
Awfully sorry. Honest mistake. Could
happen to anybody.

It only takes a moment for him to realize how awkward this
is, and start sidling blindly away.

SHERYL
(calling after him)
Hey, if you're blind, how come you
don't use a walking stick, anyway?

John stops.

CAROL
Sheryl! You can't just ask blind
people why they don't use a stick!
Maybe it's his pride or something.

JOHN
No, no, it's quite alright. I, um-
don't use a cane because I've
mastered the art of echolocation. I
simply make these little clicks with
my tongue when I walk-

SHERYL
I never hear any clicks.

JOHN
I said "little" clicks! And then the
sound bounces back to my sensitive
ears, and depending on how long the
bounce back takes I can "see" what's
in front of me.

CAROL
Well isn't that clever!

JOHN
Yes. Isn't it.
He bows to the pair of them, and starts walking off, but stumbles over a lip in the sidewalk and catches himself. He bows toward them again and heads off, now audibly making a clicking noise with his tongue.

SHERYL
There's something about that guy...

Katherine sits alone at her table. John comes clicking up behind her.

JOHN
Ah, Miss Seward, is that you?

KATHERINE
Mr. Nobel, hello! Are you feeling better?

JOHN
The swim back to shore was a little taxing, wasn't it. But now I'm just as ship-shape as ever. And you?

KATHERINE
I'm quite recovered thank you. Won't you join me?

JOHN
Well, I'm awfully flattered that you would ask. But I was hoping to ask you the same thing.

Meanwhile Uncle Andrew has approached the Nobels' table. Mr. Nobel sits slumped in his chair while Danica twists not far off on the dance floor. Uncle Andrew nods at her and she smiles.

UNCLE ANDREW
Evening, Mr. Nobel.

DADDY NOBEL
Oh, it's you, Hickenlooper. What do you want?

UNCLE ANDREW
Well... I thought we could discuss a little business.
DADDY NOBEL
Business, eh? Say no more; I wondered when you’d come to me.

UNCLE ANDREW
You did?

DADDY NOBEL
No need to be coy about it, Hickenlooper. You’ve got a good head on your shoulders. I can see that. But I could also see on your face after that fiasco in the bay this afternoon that you wanted to branch out. Sit down.

Uncle Andrew sits facing him. Daddy Nobel sits up.

UNCLE ANDREW
Um- branch out?

DADDY NOBEL
And I’d be more than willing to help you! What’s the point of making tens of millions if you can’t make a few friends along the way?

UNCLE ANDREW
Yes... quite.

Daddy Nobel signals a waiter with two fingers, and Roscoe immediately brings two tropical drinks to the table.

DADDY NOBEL
That’s an important lesson right there. It should never be about the money. It should be about doing something that makes you happy.

UNCLE ANDREW
Here, here.

They raise their glasses.
From over at Katherine’s table John sees Uncle Andrew and Daddy Nobel chink glasses and Uncle Andrew gives him a thumbs-up while Daddy drinks.

KATHERINE
I’d love to come up to your room, Mr. Nobel.

JOHN
Fantastic. But Mr. Nobel is awfully formal. Please, it’s Danny.

KATHERINE
In that case I’m Katherine.

JOHN
Wonderful. Just give me 15 minutes to spruce the place up, and then head right up. Room 508.

He bows slightly and strolls toward the Hotel.

KATHERINE
See you soon!

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

John, his sunglasses now on top of his head, emerges from around a corner and puts his key into the lock of room 508. He holds a bucket of champagne.

INT. THE NOBELS’ ROOM

The Nobels have an actual multi-room suite at the Tangeray, comprised of an entry hall, two bedrooms, two baths, a large seating area, a dining area, a kitchenette and a veranda. John slips inside, sets the champagne down, and quietly closes the door before setting off to work. He brings the drinks into the seating area and draws all the thick curtains in the main room. This makes it rather dark so he puts on some mood lighting. He then checks the rooms one by one.

THE TERRACE
Daddy Nobel prattles on about business while Uncle Andrew struggles to stay awake. His head flops over, but he jerks it up and looks around. Danica is no longer on the dance floor.

UNCLE ANDREW
..And so, you see, that is why it is never prudent to invest in long-term expenditures along the Congo-

UNCLE ANDREW
Um, Mr. Nobel, where did your daughter go?

DADDY NOBEL
Danni? I’m not sure. Hmm, let’s see. (glancing around then taking his cellphone from his pocket)
Seems she had a bit of a headache. Went upstairs about ten minutes ago.

UNCLE ANDREW
She did!?

DADDY NOBEL
Oh I wouldn’t worry. She gets little headaches all the time. She usually gets over them with a soak in the tub.

THE NOBELS’ ROOM

John continues to check each of the rooms, opening the second bedroom and lastly the bathroom. He opens it and Danica is just standing up in the bathtub, completely naked [shot from over her shoulder]. The “tingle music” flares up but John shields his eyes.

DANICA
Oh! John!

JOHN
Sorry! Sorry! So sorry!

He tries to blindly back out into the hall.
DANICA
Johnny, wait! I appreciate that you’ve come to play; I just wish you would’ve knocked first. Care to join me?

JOHN
Um, perhaps you’d better just towel off.

DANICA
(all smiles)
Alright. Give me a moment to slip into something more comfortable.

JOHN
Um. Right.

He slowly exits the bathroom and starts pacing in the seating area.

DANICA (VO)
(from the bathroom)
Put on some music, why doncha?

John finds a stereo and puts on some soft instrumentals. Danica emerges in a monogramed bathrobe and walks over to kiss John hard on the mouth.

DANICA
Oh, you brought champagne! How sweet! But you really shouldn’t have, we have a whole fridge full.

JOHN
Oh. Really?

DANICA
Yup. Whenever you’re really feel free to follow me.

She kisses him lightly again and then saunters toward the main bedroom. When she gets to the door she lets the robe fall off her shoulders and to the door. John gulps. Still showing only her backside, Danica winks at him before going in the room. There is a knock at the outside door. John shoots a furtive look between the hall door and Danica’s
door before quickly going to the hall door. Just remembering his sunglasses, he answers the hallway door and admits Katherine. After locking the door with the deadbolt he leads her to the seating area.

JOHN
Please, come in. We don’t want any interruptions.

KATHERINE
Hello again, Mr. Nobel. My, what a lovely room.

JOHN
Oh yes, it’s modestly alright, I suppose.

KATHERINE
Modestly alright? I’d say it’s rather posh.

JOHN
Well, I suppose you can tell better than I can.

KATHERINE
(laughing)
I suppose I can.

JOHN
Please, um, have a seat, Katherine. I’ve got to go into the other room and grab something.

He sits Katherine in an elegant couch and quickly slips into Danica’s room. She looks oblivious but still displeased. He haltingly approaches her.

DANICA
Who was that knocking? And what’s up with the glasses?

JOHN
(flipping glasses up)
That? Oh, that was just a man bringing up another bottle of champagne. Oh well, what can you do?
DANICA
Well let’s hope we don’t have any more mix-ups, shall we?

JOHN
We can hope.

EXT. HOTEL ROOF - NIGHT

A gust of wind lifts a roofing panel, simultaneously loosening a brick and causing it to fall. This brick hits a power line strung across the building and it sparks.

DANICA’S ROOM

All the lights go out and the screen goes black.

DANICA
Ooh, Johnny. Setting the mood?

The sounds of her kissing John with wild abandon.

JOHN
(fighting her off)
Oh, no. I-I-didn’t. I was right here. We must have blown a fuse or something.

The sounds of him clambering off of her bed.

DANICA
Where’re you going?

JOHN
I’d better see if I can get them back on. You never know what could happen in the dark.

DANICA
Don’t just leave me here alone-

JOHN
You just snuggle under your blanket and you’ll be plenty safe. I won’t let anything get you. But, um, just in case. You’d better keep quiet. Be right back.
The sounds of him quickly opening her bedroom door, exiting, and closing it.

JOHN (CONT’D)
Miss Seward? You still here? Are you alright?

KATHERINE
Yes, I’m here, but something’s happened to the lights.

JOHN
Has it? That’s strange. I hope you’re not-

The sound of him tripping over the coffee table and sprawling across the floor.

KATHERINE
Oh, Danny! Are you hurt?

JOHN
(wincing)
No, no, I’m great. You didn’t move that coffee table, did you?

KATHERINE
I’m afraid not. Here, sit by me.

JOHN
Sure, sure. We’d might as well get cozy.

THE TERRACE

Daddy Nobel stares at Uncle Andrew.

UNCLE ANDREW
It really is a shame that your daughter couldn’t join us. She’s so terribly pretty.

DADDY NOBEL
Yes. She is.
UNCLE ANDREW
I'm sure she's very popular with the boys, looking the way she does.

DADDY NOBEL
Popular?

UNCLE ANDREW
Well I know if I was her age I'd like to take her out and-

A vein begins to throb on Daddy Nobel's forehead.

UNCLE ANDREW (CONT'D)
Um, discuss art and literature at a polite distance from each other. From the opposite side of the room, even.

DADDY NOBEL
I don't like your tone.

UNCLE ANDREW
Tone?

DADDY NOBEL
My little Danni is a delicate flower of virtue. I believe you are suggesting otherwise about the apple of my eye.

UNCLE ANDREW
(muttered)
Well somebody's going to take a bite out of her.

Daddy Nobel stands with vigor.

DADDY NOBEL
Hickenlooper, if I were a younger man I would slug you. But suffice it to say that I don't want you or your nephew anywhere near me or my daughter again.
UNCLE ANDREW
(aside)
Probably a little late for that.

DADDY NOBEL

What!

Uncle Andrew claps his hands over his mouth and shrugs. Daddy Nobel stares at him, vein throbbing, then looks sharply upward in the direction of his hotel room, then back at Uncle Andrew. He throws his napkin on the table and strides off. But before he gets to far he returns, socks Uncle Andrew in the face, and then leaves. Uncle Andrew falls out of his chair.

UNCLE ANDREW
Mr. Nobel, Mr. Nobel wait!

Daddy Nobel strides off toward the Hotel.

THE NOBELS' ROOM

Darkness still prevails.

KATHERINE
Well there's no need to just sit here in the dark. A big suite like this -- there must be a flashlight or some candles or something.

The sounds of Katherine rummaging around the immediate area.

JOHN
You think so?

KATHERINE
I do. -- Ah ha! See? Here's a whole box of candles.

JOHN
Really?

KATHERINE
Yes, and a matchbook too. What luck!
She strikes a match and holds it to the wick of the "candle" but instead of just burning it starts to fizzle and spark like a sparkler.

KATHERINE (CONT’D)

Oh my!

Katherine stares at the sparking stick in her hand, but in its light John can see behind her to the wooden crate she got it from. It was under the coffee table and covered by a sheet, but even in the dim light clearly reads “Nobel Dynamite Co.” on its side. He blanches and grabs the "candle" away from her and starts trying to blow it out.

JOHN
Don’t play with that!

KATHERINE
Oh, thank you. I suppose it’s some sort of trick candle.

JOHN
(panicked)
I’d rather not wait around to find out!

He lifts the bottle of champagne out its ice bucket and plunges in the stick of dynamite, dousing it and throwing them all back into darkness with a hiss.

THE LOBBY

Daddy Nobel marches through the lobby toward the main staircase and bounds up it.

HOTEL ROOF

A ladder leans against the gutter next to the downed wire, and Roscoe climbs up it. He sets a large metal toolbox on the roof and starts removing tools.

THE NOBELS’ ROOM

Darkness still prevails.

KATHERINE
Perhaps I ought to try another one...
JOHN
No, I really don’t think any of those candles would be any different.

KATHERINE
What a shame. I suppose we’ll just have to get comfortable in the dark then.

JOHN
Oh, you think so, eh?

KATHERINE
I do.

JOHN
How comfortable?

KATHERINE
Very, very comfortable.

There is the sound of a kiss. From the darkness, John’s “tingle music” swells up fuller and richer than ever before.

HOTEL ROOF

Roscoe has one arm on the fixture to reattach the electric wire, but drops the tool in his other hand into the gutter. He reaches across himself to grab it, but one of the metal buttons on his uniform touches the live wire, sending several thousand volts coursing through him.

THE NOBEL’S ROOM

The lights flicker on and off as John and Katherine kiss passionately on the couch, but neither notice as the tingle music continues.

HOTEL ROOF

An electrocuted Roscoe shoves the live wire in its proper socket, and a flash of sparks knocks his ladder backward sending him crashing down.
THE NOBEL’S ROOM

The lights stay on as they break their kiss and hold each other. He looks at her with new eyes… under the sunglasses.

KATHERINE
(smitten)
Well hello there.

JOHN
(smitten as well)
Well, hello— I mean, are the lights back on?

KATHERINE
They are. -- You know, you’re not like anyone I’ve ever met. You’re different, somehow.

JOHN
How so?

KATHERINE
I can’t quite put my finger on it, just the sense that you’re a wonderful, honest, dependable man.

JOHN
(guilt-ridden)
That’s being awfully generous.

KATHERINE
I mean it! Around you I get the sense that nothing could really ever go wrong.

He glances off toward Danica’s room when he notices someone jostling the handle to the door leading to the outer hallway. He gets up from the couch.

JOHN
I just remembered I never grabbed that thing I said that I was going to… I’m so sorry, please excuse me.

DADDY NOBEL (OS)
Danni! Danni, open this door at once!
JOHN
(on the brink)
Oh who now?

DADDY NOBEL (OS)
Danni, dearest darling, open this
door or I will break it down!

JOHN
(realizing)
Nuts.

He almost dives into Danica’s room and shuts the door.

DANICA
Johnny, where have you been! And
who’s that pounding on the door? I’m
scared.

JOHN
Well... It appears to be your father.

DANICA
Daddy! Oh no! You’ve got to get out
of here! He’ll break your neck if he
catches you with me!

JOHN
Alright then. Bye.

He awkwardly kisses her cheek, pats her head, and slips out
into the living area. Katherine approaches him.

KATHERINE
Danny there’s a man at the door
shouting your name!

JOHN
It’s, um, it’s a debt collector! Big
Daddy, they call him. Not that I’m in
debt. I was once, and once they get a
taste of you they just keep on
biting.
KATHERINE
No need to explain to me, I’ve had plenty of debts in my lifetime.

The pounding increases in intensity.

DADDY NOBEL (OS)
Danni, you’re making Daddy angry!

JOHN
Ah yes, well this is one of those debt collectors that’ll break my neck if he gets ahold of it.

KATHERINE
Ok. Quick, we can escape over the balcony.

JOHN
We can?

KATHERINE
Sure! Just like in pictures. Come on!

JOHN
But what about my, um, condition?

KATHERINE
You never let it inconvenience you. You said so yourself. I’ll help you; now hurry!

She gathers her things and rushes out the double French doors leading to the room’s terraced balcony five stories up. He starts to follow, but doubles back to snatch a bottle of champagne from the ice bucket before running out to join her. But Katherine’s already gone.

JOHN
Katie!

KATHERINE
Down here! Hurry up.

He leans over the balcony to find that she’s already climbed over it. She yanks him to safety over the edge just as Daddy Nobel bursts through the hallway door, wrenching
out its deadbolt. John and Katherine laugh silently as she holds his hand and they shimmy down a flower trellis to safety.

EXT. HOTEL ROOFTOPS - NIGHT - LATER

John and Katherine sit snuggled on top of a corner of the Hotel’s roof. He has his arms wrapped around her and they’re both smiling. The empty champagne bottle lies nearby. He begins to sing I’M AWFULLY GLAD I MET YOU.

JOHN
“I used to wonder why
all lovers used to sigh
and hold each others’ hands at night.
With them I’ve often chaffed,
at times I’ve even laughed
and thought it such a funny sight.”

KATHERINE
“I used to think it queer
But since I’ve met you dear
it seems the proper thing to do.
For when you are away,
I’m lonely all the day
and think of nothing else but you.”

JOHN
“I am awfully glad I met you,
and I want to tell you true
that I never can forget you,
that no other girl will do.”

KATHERINE
“There is something sweet to live for,
since I fell in love with you,
I am awfully glad I met you, deary,
aren’t you glad you met me too?”

JOHN
“Now times when I feel blue
as fellows often do
I only need to see you smile.
Whenever you are near,
all worries disappear
that’s why I love you all the while.”
KATHERINE
"It suits me to appease,
both you and I agree
we seek each other every way.
Whatever pleases you,
Is sure to please me too
and that's the reason why I say."

JOHN & KATHERINE
"I am awfully glad I met you,
and I want to tell you true
that I never can forget you,
that no other one will do.
There is something sweet to live for,
since I fell in love with you,
I am awfully glad I met you, deary,
aren't you glad you met me too?"

They melt into each other's arms and kiss again.

End song.

JOHN
Gee, I like you an awful lot.

KATHERINE
And I you! We oughta get married.

JOHN
Yeah! We oughta. Wait, a minute, I
just met you...

She kisses him.

KATHERINE
I was joking, silly. But that sounds
nice.

JOHN
Oh. Ho-hum. I don't suppose we can
sit up here forever.

KATHERINE
No, I suppose not. But I really did
have fun getting to know you, Danny.
JOHN
And I you, Katherine. You’re ok to
get back yourself? You don’t need an
escort?

KATHERINE
Not if I want to get back to my own
bed. Can you get back up?

JOHN
I’ll find a window somewhere. After
all, I never let my condition
inconvenience me, right?

KATHERINE
Right. Goodnight, Danny.

JOHN
Goodnight, Katie. Or rather, good
morning!

She kisses him one last time and then skillfully shimmies
down a drainpipe and out of sight. He watches her leave,
dumbstruck, and then flips up his glasses and hurriedly
calls Uncle Andrew.

JOHN (CONT’D)
Hello? ... Yes. I don’t think we’ll
have any problems from Miss Seward. -
- She thinks I’m going to donate
fifty thousand dollars to her
research. -- Of course not. -- No, I
don’t think she’ll be going near the
Princess anytime soon. She’s- she’s
wonderful, Uncle. Gorgeous and smart,
and-and- yes I’ll talk to you
tomorrow. -- Goodnight.

He puts his phone away and stares out over the moonlit bay.
He gets up and slides down the drainpipe himself, landing
on

THE TERRACE

where he strolls a few paces and then chuckles to himself.
JOHN (CONT’D)  
(incredulous)  
Ha! Married.

He sighs.

JOHN (CONT’D)  
(wanting it)  
Married.

He looks out over the bay, past the Petroleum Princess and the Nobel’s yacht all the way over to where the boats of the Sarasota marina can just barely be seen in their docks. As he looks he sings THEY DID’NT BELIEVE ME.

JOHN  
“And when I told them how beautiful you are,  
they didn’t believe me.  
They didn’t believe me.  
Your lips, your eyes,  
your cheeks, your hair  
are in a class beyond compare. You’re the loveliest girl that one could see.  
And when I tell them,  
and I’m certainly going to tell them,  
that I’m the man whose wife you’ll one day be,  
they’ll never believe me.  
They’ll never believe me.  
That from this great big world you’ve chosen me!

And when I tell them,  
and I’m certainly going to tell them,  
that I’m the man whose wife you’ll one day be,  
they’ll never believe me.  
They’ll never believe me.  
That from this great big world you’ve chosen me!”

The number ends with chords of the exact same violin tremolo and chimes as the “tingle music.” But as John smiles out across the bay a bolt of lightning strikes in
the Gulf right behind the Petroleum Princess. A storm is brewing, literally.

The notes of the “tingle music” switch from happy major chords to horrified minor chords as John remembers that falling in love inevitably brings disaster to his company.

He stares out at the tanker, and then turns and runs back toward the hotel.

End song.

INT. KATHERINE’S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Katherine lies in bed in her modest hotel room, face down, her head under her pillow. There is a knock at the door, but she doesn’t move. Several louder knocks stir her from sleep, and she groggily rises. Although very sleepy, she smiles uncontrollably, still punch-drunk on love. She slips a light bathrobe over her pajamas, and answers the door. Roscoe stands there.

KATHERINE
Yes, what is it?

ROSCOE
(regretful)
I have a message for you, Miss Seward. I’m sorry it’s so early, but he asked me to deliver it personally.

She slowly takes the folded letter from his hand.

KATHERINE
(concerned)
Thank you.

Roscoe nods and she closes the door. She stumbles back to the bed, where she sits and unfolds the letter.

JOHN (VO)
Dear Katherine. You are a wonderful woman: smart, beautiful, and kind. But I’m afraid I may never see you again. Urgent business has called me away from Florida, business I can’t explain. I promise, however, that I
will wire you the fifty thousand dollars for your research in one week’s time. Under one condition, you and your girls must return to the Institute immediately. I’m sorry I had to go, but this is goodbye. Yours sincerely, Danny Nobel.

Katherine finishes reading, trying to hold back tears. She falls over onto the pillow and sobs lightly. Soon after, however, her cell phone rings on her nightstand and she answers it.


INT. THE CABIN OF THE MARJORY DOUGLAS - MORNING

Walden reclines in a chair in the cabin of his vintage tugboat, the Marjory Douglas. The docks of the Sarasota Marina are visible through the windows.

WALDEN You don’t sound fine, Katie. What’s wrong? -- He did? -- But if you’re still getting the money then-- Oh. I think I understand. -- No, no. Please don’t rush. It looks like I got into port just in time, though, there’s quite the squall coming in.

KATHERINE’S ROOM

KATHERINE Good. I’d hate to have anything happen to you. You’re a good colleague and a better friend. -- Yes, I’ll be fine. I just think I need some time. -- I’ll see you soon. -- Bye.

She ends the call and sets the cellphone down before picking up the letter again. She stands and looks at herself in the mirror. She sings the song I CAN’T STOP LOVING YOU NOW as a confession to herself.
KATHERINE

"You’ve done it.
You’ve done it.
You’ve made me love you.
And since you’ve stolen my heart,
I’m wond’ring what you meant to do.
If you will love it dear
or break it in two.
Why don’t you?
Why don’t you?
Why don’t you love me?
Love me the way I love you?
My heart is aching, breaking,
waiting for your reply.
And this is why.

I can’t, no I can’t stop
from loving you now.
My heart from the start
kept on teaching me how.
Like time and tide my love will go on
I’ve got to keep it up
keep it up
keep it up.
Begun all in fun,
then in grew to be real.
Each kiss has more bliss than
I thought I could feel.
The more I get,
the more I crave,
I just can’t make my loving behave.
Oh no I can’t,
Oh no I can’t,
I know I can’t stop loving you now."

End song.

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

John slips out of the door to his hotel room. He still wears the dark glasses, but also a hat and a coat with the collar up, as if he were trying to be covert. Suitcase in hand, he shuts the door and starts to sneak down the hall before realizing that the doorknob has come off in his hand.
He walks back over to the door and tries to jiggle the knob back into place but it simply falls back out. He stares at it, and glances at his surroundings at large, then shrugs and continues back down the hall.

INT. ELEVATOR STAIRWELL - MORNING

John enters the stairwell and presses the elevator call button. The elevator itself is an ancient steel cage elevator, manually operated until it was retrofitted. The stairs wrap around its gilt shaft all the way down five stories. The elevator is already at the top floor so the double pair of inner/outer gates slide open and John enters. He presses the button for the first floor and frowns as he begins to descend excruciatingly slowly.

On the next floor down, however, who should also be waiting for the elevator but Danica. It stops on her floor and she enters. John pulls his coat collar up higher.

DANICA
Hello, sir.

She nearly presses her floor button but turns back to him

DANICA (CONT’D)
John? Is that you?

JOHN
Oh, hello, Danni. I didn’t, um, see you there.

DANICA
What are you doing in that coat?

JOHN
I’m just- hiding.

DANICA
Silly, you don’t have to hide anymore. Daddy’s gone to bed.

JOHN
Oh, good for him.
DANICA
Besides, I convinced him that you were never even there! Here, you look ridiculous in that hat.

She tries to yank the baseball cap off of his head but he fights to keep it on.

JOHN
Danni, please!

She lets do of him and pouts.

DANICA
What's the matter with you, John Hickenlooper? First you're hot and then you're cold. I can't make sense of it!

JOHN
Danni, don't get me wrong, I'd like to be hot for you, but-

DANICA
But what? Can't you see I'm crazy about you?

She presses him against the side of the elevator and starts to sing LIGHT YOUR LITTLE LAMP OF LOVE.

DANICA (CONT'D)
"Light your little lamp of love for me,
Light your little heart with sympathy,
When you're sad and feeling oh so blue,
just remember I feel lonesome too!
My darling write and tell me that you can't forget,
write and tell me that you love me yet,
when the night is falling,
somewhere a voice is calling
light your little lamp of love!"