

ETTA

by

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CHARACTERS

- QUINCY ELLIOTT A struggling photographer trying to make it in the harsh New York Arts scene. Celebrated for photographing model, Etta Gunn, and punished for loving her, Quincy struggles with a mutually leaching relationship.
- ETTA GUNN A runaway from her quiet, small town life, Etta is best known for Quincy Elliott's success as a photographer. Also his lover, she left Elliott for British director, Daemon Jones in pursuit of higher fame. She died shortly after.
- LES The friend Quincy Elliot wants and the disciplinary action he needs - Les is the level head in the mix of artists that clutter Quincy's world at the studio. An old timer in the New York art scene, Les manages Quincy's art, financials, and his life.
- STU One of the artists that floats around the studio and the crowd that constantly resides there - Stu is best known for always saying the wrong things. He likes to consider himself brutally honest, but really he just doesn't know when to shut his mouth.
- JOSIE A close friend of Etta's ever since she came to New York City, Josie refuses to pick a side on the matter of Quincy and Etta's relationship. Although she did stay with Quincy and the others at the studio, this didn't strain her relationship with Etta.
- AGNES One of the lonely drifters who, in the pursuit of something different, ended up at the studio. She mooches off the atmosphere of the place while trying to fuel her own career in surrealistic painting.
- SLICK One of those people who just one day show up for no reason and you don't ask why. A frequenter of the studio, it's not known if he really has any artistic ambitions or if he just needs a place to hide his weed. Still, he's a nice addition the group, and no one asks too many questions.
- DAEMON JONES Famed British film director - Daemon Jones saw Etta Gunn on the cover of a magazine and knew right then that he had to have her in his possession. Much like with Quincy, Daemon and Etta fed off what the other could give them, but unlike with Quincy, Etta and Daemon made no

genuine connection. He ended up by leaving her by the wayside for the next best thing.

VAL

One of Quincy's many casual lovers and his date to his first Gala.

MAN 1

MAN 2

WOMAN 1

REPORTERS 1 - 6

ACTOR

WORKER

ISABELLA

An actress in Quincy's first and only film, and one of his brief lovers.

FILM CREW 1

FILM CREW 2

GUESTS 1-10

THUG 1

THUG 2

THUG 3

BOY 1

GIRL 1

GIRL 2

BOY 2

GIRL 3

BOY 3

CLARA

ARTS CENTRE DIRECTOR

JACKIE

Quincy's attempt at a new muse after the loss of Etta Gunn.

SETTING

The dark and grimy underground of New York City.

TIME

1966

ACT I

Scene 1	In front of the camera	Past - Quincy and
Etta's first meeting		
Scene 2	Venue of the art Show	Morning of the art
show		
Scene 3	Church	Morning of the art
show		
Scene 4	The art show	Evening of the art
show		
Scene 5	The studio roof	Day after the art
show		
Scene 6	In front of the camera	Past - Quincy and
Etta's first meeting		
Scene 7	Theatre	Premier of Etta and
Daemon's movie		
Scene 8	The studio	The shooting of
Quincy's movie		
Scene 9	Quincy's apartment/Theatre	Premier of Quincy's
movie		

ACT 2

Scene 1	In front of the camera	Future - After Daemon
Jones's party		
Scene 2	The studio	Morning of Daemon
Jones's party		
Scene 3	Hotel/Quincy's apartment	Daemon Jones's Party
Scene 4	Etta's drug pushers'	Late at night
Scene 5	Central Park	A week later
Scene 6	The studio/Alice's Pub	Middle of the night

Scene 7	Quincy's apartment	Same night
Scene 8	Moving set	Various locations
Scene 9	Daemon Jones's office/Quincy's apt.	Early evening
Scene 10 death	The studio	Morning of Etta's
Scene 11 died	In front of the camera	Past - before Etta
Scene 12 funeral	Cemetery	Weeks after Etta's

ACT [1]

SCENE [1]

(The lights are down, the stage is empty, all except the large white screen at the back of the room. The screen flickers then illuminates and begins counting down 4, 3, 2, 1. Then the screen shows, in black and white, the top of a chair against a white wall. A well dressed ETTA enters into the camera's field of view and squints at the lens.)

ETTA

Is it on?

(Etta moves to sit down, then stands and again peers into the camera)

Is it on?

QUINCY (O.S.)

Yeah, it's on.

(Etta sits and stares into the camera.)

ETTA

Fred Astaire. That's Fred, A - as in astronaut. S. T - as in tautology. Astronaut.

(Cut Scene.)

ETTA

So, this is the studio, huh?

QUINCY (O.S.)

Yup. This is where the magic happens.

ETTA

Funny. I thought you were just a photographer. I didn't realize you were into the movies too.

QUINCY (O.S.)

I am just a photographer. Really the movies aren't all that different from photographs, just that they move and can have sound.

ETTA

Oh. I've always wanted to be in the movies.

QUINCY (O.S.)

Well, here you can do whatever you want. This is the dream factory.

(Both laugh a little awkwardly)

ETTA

Do you keep birds in the dream factory?

QUINCY (O.S.)

What?

ETTA

(indicating)

I just noticed all the cages hanging up.

QUINCY (O.S.)

Oh, those. No, they're just part of one of the sets.

(Etta nods. There is a silence.)

QUINCY (O.S.)

So, Mr. Astaire...or I guess it's Evetta, isn't it?

ETTA

Just Etta, actually.

QUINCY (O.S.)

Lost the Eve in the heat of battle did we?

ETTA

Something like that.

QUINCY (O.S.)

Okay then, just Etta. What exactly are you doing here?

ETTA

Oh, well, you gave me this address and...

QUINCY (O.S.)

(interrupting)

No, no. I mean, y'know, what's your purpose here. What's your *disease*?

ETTA

Oh, uh...well, you know. Just uh...hopeless drifter really.

QUINCY (O.S.)

Yeah.

ETTA

Yeah...loved once. Married twice - then divorced. Five kids in a one room apartment and...a terrible habit for killing the men I fuck...

(Pause. Etta tries to hold it in but soon bursts into laughter. Lights up on the stage. QUINCY and a few others begin moving things around on the stage, essentially preparing the set. Lights fade momentarily and focus is

brought back on the screen.)

(Bantering over top of each other)

ETTA

I'm not putting you on! No.

QUINCY (O.S.)

You are. You're putting me on.

ETTA

No. Who thinks that?

QUINCY (O.S.)

Yes you are.

ETTA

No. I'm not.

(Lights up. Screen turns off. For the remainder of the song the stage continues to be set as LES oversees the gala being put together. STU walks on with a sign reading: NEW YORK CITY: 1966 and hangs it amongst the other photographs in Quincy's display.)

ACT [1]

SCENE [2]

(Les, Quincy and a few others are on the stage, regarding the display of photographs. Specifically, Les is eyeing the NEW YORK CITY sign.)

LES

(Calling)

Stu! Stu, get in here for a minute!

(Turns and beckons Quincy.)

What do you think about this here? I thought you were wanting the 'Bridge' print on this wall.

QUINCY

Yeah man, how'd that get in the mix?

LES

I don't know. I think it was Stu that hung it up. Stu! Get in here.

(Enter Stu.)

STU

Yeah, sorry. What's up?

LES

The sign here. It was supposed to be the 'Bridge' print on this wall. This just looks tacky.

STU

The 'Bridge' print. Right, what do you want me to do with this one?

LES

Doesn't matter. Just toss it somewhere.

(Stu removes the sign from the wall and begins to exit. Quincy stops him abruptly.)

QUINCY

Wait a minute man. Hold up, could you actually grab the one of Etta instead? The big, y'know, ten by ten where she's on the bed.

STU

Sure.

(Exit Stu)

QUINCY

Yeah, that big ten by ten, right on this wall. It'll be like she's watching you from the moment you walk in.

LES

(Unimpressed)

Really Quincy? The one of Etta?

QUINCY

Yes really. Those are the ones that sell anyways.

LES

Uh-huh. And this has absolutely nothing to do with what happened.

QUINCY

What? No. Nothing happened. And besides, even if something did happen, I would certainly be over it by now.

(Enter VAL. She and Quincy kiss and share a moment.)

QUINCY

Oh Les, have I introduced you to...

VAL

Val.

QUINCY

Val, yet? She's a *dancer*.

LES

Uh-huh. Is she coming tonight?

QUINCY

Who, Etta? I don't...uh no. Probably not. I don't think so.

LES

Right then. You've obviously got things under control here. I'll just leave you to it. It was a pleasure Miss Val.

(Exit Les. Val pulls Quincy in for another kiss. Lights down.)

ACT [1]

SCENE [3]

(Lights completely out.)

ETTA

Forgive me father, for I have sinned.

(Lights up on an open confessional booth,
on either side of which sit JOSIE and
Etta. Etta is drinking.)

ETTA

I'm afraid I must confess to having impure thoughts about a man
I've only met twice. I jumped the queue at the one stop the other
day, where I stole this bottle of booze from and I've since
become a hopeless drunk. My father's disowned me, my mother
doesn't love me and I may...or may not, have slept with one of
the Rolling Stones.

(Etta bursts into laughter.)

JOSIE

Jesus Christ, Etta. Not the guy with the lips?

ETTA

(laughing)

I can't remember.

JOSIE

Figures. Is there anyone you *haven't* screwed?

ETTA

Shut up, I was joking. Besides, I only like boys that are no good
for me.

JOSIE

(sarcastically)

Because Mick Jagger would be so good for you.

ETTA

No, I wouldn't do Mick Jagger. Keith Richards, maybe.

JOSIE

Really?

ETTA

Sure.

JOSIE

Okay, you'd better give me some of whatever you're drinking.

ETTA

(mock shock)

Josephine! We're in a confessional.

(Etta passes the bottle to Josie, who takes a hearty swig.)

JOSIE

Please. When's the last time you've even been to a service?

ETTA

Last Sunday.

JOSIE

Fuck off.

ETTA

No, straight up.

JOSIE

Why would *you* go to church?

ETTA

Cheap entertainment. I do get awfully bored these days.

JOSIE

Well, I don't care how bored you get tonight, you are not going to the gala.

ETTA

What? What gala?

JOSIE

Shut up Etta. You know what I'm talking about. You owe it to him not to show up, you know.

ETTA

I don't owe him anything.

JOSIE

Sure, the man who only gave you fame, sex, and made you the object of desire of every man in America, including the ones that need arthritis pills to get it up.

ETTA

Okay, first of all - ew. And second, why would I even want to go? I have nothing to say to him.

JOSIE

I don't buy that for a second. You'd show up just to spite him and taunt him one last time before running off to England with your mysterious lover boy.

ETTA

You're right, I would do that. You caught me Detective Holmes.
Now go call me out to the authorities or else pass us a drink.

(Josie sends the bottle back through the small
window to Etta.)

JOSIE

You're terrible, you know that?

ETTA

God knows it. But I've confessed my sins, so all is forgiven.

JOSIE

(to herself)

Did you have to sleep with God first?

ETTA

That's between me and the Holy Spirit.

(Lights down.)

ACT [1]

SCENE [4]

(Lights up. There is already a crowd of people cluttering the stage all milling about the gala and mingling amongst themselves. Some are examining the photos, others are dancing in small groups.)

MAN 1

I must say, Elliott really outdid himself last time, and he's not doing a very good job of repeating the feat.

WOMAN 1

Who cares. That print of Etta Gunn is the whole show. The rest is just decoration.

MAN 2

She's got a point. Really, the only reason his last show did as well as it did was because it was all based on her. She truly is a star.

WOMAN 1

She's so glamorous!

(Enter Quincy with Les, Stu, Josie and Val on Quincy's arm.)

QUINCY

(To Les)

Man, who invited all the stiffs?

LES

I did, Quincy. Because without the stiffs, you have no living. They're the only ones rich enough to waste money on buying your photographs.

QUINCY

Thanks Les.

(Quincy searches his pockets for a cigarette when he is approached by REPORTER.)

REPORTER

Quincy Elliott.

(Reporter offers Quincy a cigarette, which Quincy takes gratefully, and lights it as he begins ruthlessly questioning him.)

REPORTER

A highly anticipated artist, this is your first show after the

better part of a year. How does it feel thus far?

QUINCY

Thanks man. Uh, well, you know it's alright I guess, but-ah, I can't really say until I've had at least one drink and another cigarette.

REPORTER

Is there anything you want to say about the photographs on display here tonight?

QUINCY

Nope. Except, just that Les here has got to eat you know, so I'd suggest you buy a print.

REPORTER

(laughing)

Duly noted. One last question Mr. Elliott. Shortly after your last art show you and Etta Gunn had a very public professional departure from each other. Was your putting up her photo tonight, and her coming to the show, was that meant at all as some sort of 'make-up' gesture?

QUINCY

What? She's here?

REPORTER

Oh, you didn't know?

JOSIE

(Sighing)

God damnit. I told her not to come Quincy, I really tried.

(Reporter gestures to the downstage left corner where Etta is dancing among a group of people)

REPORTER

She's right over there.

QUINCY

(Calling)

Etta!

JOSIE

Quincy, c'mon. Just leave it.

(Quincy begins moving through the crowd toward Etta. As he does guests and reporters try to get his attention, but he just pushes past them.)

QUINCY

Etta!

(Etta steps out of the group and begins creating her own path. Quincy tries following her, always keeping a safe distance.)

QUINCY

Etta! Edgar! Fred Astaire...uh, Arthur Rimbaud!

ETTA

Ah, Quincy Elliott. What a pleasant surprise.

QUINCY

Well, it shouldn't be considering it's *my* art show. You, on the other hand. I don't know what in God's name you're doing here.

ETTA

Oh! Would you like me to leave?

QUINCY

No, no. It's not that. I just mean, you know, after what happened...

ETTA

What happened? God, Quincy, that was nothing! You honestly think *that* was the biggest thing I've gone through over the past year.

QUINCY

Fine, so it was nothing. In that case what *have* you been doing for the past year?

ETTA

Oh, just been riding the freight trains here and there. Bumming around with nothing but my guitar on my back, playin' for anyone who'd listen.

QUINCY

Bobby Dylan. Classic.

ETTA

I thought so.

QUINCY

Honestly, though. What are you doing here?

ETTA

I only came to see if there was anything I could do for you before I redeem my one way ticket out of here...but it looks like Val's got that covered.

QUINCY

Huh? Val?

ETTA

She looks like she likes it dirty and on the side of the street.

QUINCY

At least *she* doesn't bite.

(Etta throws Quincy a look.)

ETTA

Right, you're obviously not damaged.

QUINCY

I don't know why you'd care about the state I'm in. You did, after all, leave me for dead with nothing but a roll of scotch tape and a length of rope.

ETTA

Oh, the rope wasn't meant for your survival.

QUINCY

I know. But you know what they say about when life gives you lemons.

ETTA

You...fuck the next thing that moves? Funny, I don't think I've heard that one before. Ever.

QUINCY

Yeah well, I heard you're going with Tucky Cummings, so...

ETTA

Tucky?

QUINCY

Wait, so you're not going with Tucky? Goddamn, Les. I told him she wasn't going with Tucky.

ETTA

(amused)

You thought I was going with *Tucky*? God, you're hilarious.

(laughs)

QUINCY

Fine then, who is it? It's not Aaron Scotts is it? 'Cos if it is...

ETTA

No, it's not Aaron.

QUINCY

Is it Johnny from down the hall?

ETTA

Guess again.

QUINCY

No. Don't tell me you're dating a Beatle. I knew it. Which one is

it, the one with the bushy eyebrows who walks around like he's got pebbles in his boots.

ETTA

You get witty when you're frustrated. It's cute. Here's a hint: you'll never guess.

QUINCY

Geeze. He must be something else.

(Etta walks up to Quincy and circles him once, taking the cigarette from his fingers and taking a drag.)

ETTA

Wouldn't you like to find out.

QUINCY

Anyone I know?

ETTA

Funny. But I'm afraid you'll have to do better than that. I don't go around kissing just anyone, you know.

(Etta returns Quincy's cigarette and exits. Quincy laughs dryly as he watches her go.)

QUINCY

Fine. Sure. Hey, anything you say, babe.

ACT [1]

SCENE [5]

(Quincy remains in one place, fishing in his pockets for a cigarette and a light. As he does all the guests from the gala don hats, mikes, recording devices and the likes and become reporters. They rush toward Quincy and thrust their microphones in his face. Les stands beside Quincy for the duration of the scene directing the questions of the reporters, who become a babbling frenzy in between questions.)

REPORTER 1

Quincy Elliott! Two words on last night's show.

QUINCY

Arsenic Poisoning.

(Crowd laughs)

REPORTER 2

Do you feel it was a financial success?

QUINCY

For the landlord probably. But, I mean, how many financially successful artists do you know?

REPORTER 3

Mr. Elliott, Russell Holt for *Arts New York*, have you and Etta Gunn mended your professional relationship at all?

QUINCY

Um, I didn't know it was ever broken.

REPORTER 4

How about your personal relationship?

QUINCY

What about it?

REPORTER 4

Do you plan on working with Etta Gunn again any time soon?

QUINCY

No.

REPORTER 5

Does it bother you at all that she's set to work with Daemon Jones over the next few months?

Who?
QUINCY

Daemon Jones.
REPORTER 5

Who said that?
QUINCY

REPORTER 5
She and Jones announced it yesterday.
(REPORTER 5 passes a newspaper up to Quincy who opens it and stares disbelieving.)

Fuck me.
QUINCY

(Reporters disperse. Quincy is immobilized staring at the article in the paper. The press filter offstage and are replaced by Stu, Josie and AGNES. All are holding bunches of helium balloons and are very concentrated on untangling the strings.)

Man, cat's in over his head.
QUINCY

How's that?
STU

(Enter Les, also toting balloons.)

LES
(singing)
Da da da da! And now presenting: The man who wants to fly! Hey, did you see the article about you in there?

No. Is it good?
QUINCY

(Quincy begins flipping through the paper.)

LES
Depends on how you define good.

QUINCY
Does it make me look like an ass?

LES
You make yourself look like an ass. D 8.

JOSIE
I hear you gave the press a pretty bad time after that last show.

QUINCY

No worse than they were giving me.

LES

Yes, it's always Quincy Elliott vs. The World, isn't it?

QUINCY

So long as the world wages that war.

(laughs)

"Quick witted and sharp tongued, Quincy Elliott seems to be in the constant effort of putting the public on."

STU

Well, it's true.

AGNES

Hey Les, lend a hand?

(Les walks over to help Agnes untangle her balloon strings.)

QUINCY

"Elliott gives no indication of resuming work with model Etta Gunn after she signed her contract with popular film director Daemon Jones. He says of the future he looks forward to exploring new things..." I never said that.

STU

Who?

QUINCY

Me.

STU

No, Etta. Signed a contract with who?

QUINCY

Oh. Uh, Daemon Jones.

(Quincy closes the paper.)

AGNES

That asshole?

QUINCY

Tell me about it.

(Quincy discards the paper on the ground. Josie snatches it up and begins flipping through it.)

STU

Wait, Daemon Jones the British guy with the hair? That Daemon Jones?

QUINCY

No, the other one.

JOSIE

(chuckling)

Looks like Etta's set to be a big time movie star now. They're gonna put her on the silver screen?

QUINCY

(absently)

Silver screen queen...and the man with the straight back seams...sailed across the ocean to the land of private notions....

(Quincy wanders off a little. Enter SLICK carrying a large fan.)

SLICK

Hey, Quincy. Where do you want this?

QUINCY

There's fine.

SLICK

You're not even looking.

QUINCY

So? Hey, Les - d'you think it's bright enough out there?

LES

I'm sure it will be by the time we get this all set.

(Quincy snaps a few shots with his camera.)

SLICK

If we get this all set.

(Slick sets down the fan.)

JOSIE

Oh my God! Quincy, have you seen this photo of them?

(Les peers over Josie's shoulder)

LES

Let's see?

AGNES

They're practically fucking each other with their eyes!

STU

Give me that.

(Stu grabs the paper.)

STU

Oh my God, they are.

(Stu shows Slick and begins making loud slurping noises and licking his lips.)

QUINCY

Yes, well, those types of relationships never last long.

SLICK

Hey, massage special - two for one. Quincy, we should go.

QUINCY

Nah, bad experience at the massage place...She had an extra thumb.

JOSIE

Well, how long do you give them?

AGNES

How long does it take her to eat breakfast?

QUINCY

(Dryly)

Good one.

JOSIE

I mean, what if she actually...likes this guy, or something?

QUINCY

Are you saying she never *actually* liked me?

AGNES

Well, she did kind of chew you up and spit you out.

LES

She has a point.

QUINCY

Well, he can't be *that* much better than me. I mean, what's this cat got that I don't?

STU

Money.

JOSIE

Fame.

AGNES

Connections.

SLICK

And let's face it: he's a helluva lot better looking than you are.

(Quincy strides over to look at the paper.)

QUINCY

He is not.

(Pause)

Oh...maybe...Well, chick was right about on thing: I never would've guessed that.

STU

No kidding.

AGNES

Certainly had me stumped.

QUINCY

(absently)

Yeah.

STU

(To Josie)

You really think she's gonna stay with this guy?

JOSIE

No, I was just trying to make Quincy feel like the
(louder)
package of used condoms that he is.

QUINCY

Alright, you two just about done over there?

STU

You done obsessing over who's stickin' it in Etta?

QUINCY

(Unimpressed)

Fuck you.

STU

(to himself)

Yeah, fuck yourself.

(Lights down.)

ACT [1]

SCENE [6]

(Lights remain down. Screen flickers and shows a black background.)

ETTA (V.O.)

My parents...

(Screen flickers again, this time revealing Etta in front of the camera against the white wall.)

ETTA

My parents were young, poor and in love. My father worked in a butcher's shop sweeping up the floor under the shoes of the wealthy and my mother was a stay at home seamstress. There wasn't always food on the table but-uh, my dad was a bottomless fountain of wisdom. You know, those things came free.

(laughs meekly)

(Cut scene)

ETTA

He used to tell me, you know...

(imitating)

"Evetta, dream big, and maybe your small hopes will come true."

(laughs)

They worked hard and they *never* let me forget it. And... I think they were hoping I would follow a little...closer in their footsteps. They don't really approve of the whole 'living fast and dying young' thing.

QUINCY (O.S.)

You're planning on dying young?

ETTA

Well, I don't think anyone really plans on dying, but I don't know - sometimes I just can't shake the feeling.

QUINCY (O.S.)

Okay, so you're 'living young and dying fast' and you come to New York City for that?

ETTA

Sure. I mean, when I think of New York City I think: Frank Sinatra, you know? Tin Pan Alley, and Broadway.

QUINCY (O.S.)

So that's what this is all about? Frank Sinatra and, and Broadway.

ETTA

Well, I don't know. It just seems like such a magical place.

QUINCY (O.S.)

Hey, that's alright, babe. I just hope you're not disappointed, that's all.

ETTA

Oh? And why would I be disappointed?

QUINCY (O.S.)

I don't know. I just, y'know. I spent the last five years of my life trying to make more than a dime on this shit they call art, but, uh, as they say: no cigar.

ETTA

Ah. Well, if it's meant to happen, I'm sure it'll happen.

QUINCY (O.S.)

Yeah, maybe. Smoke?

ETTA

Sure.

(Etta leans forward, takes a cig and lights up. When she sits back up she takes a deep drag and exhales, holding the thing and posing like Audrey Hepburn.)

ETTA

What do you think? Just like Audrey?

QUINCY (O.S.)

Better.

(Etta laughs and takes another drag.)

ETTA

What about you Quincy Elliott?

QUINCY (O.S.)

Uh, *what* about me?

ETTA

Who are you trying to be?
(exhales)

QUINCY (O.S.)

Oh, uh...no one in particular really.

ETTA

No one?

QUINCY (O.S.)

Well...Elvis maybe. I could definitely see myself being him, but,
uh, with a camera and more of an Upstate New York sort of thing.

ETTA

I can see it.

QUINCY

Yeah? You think we're gonna make it with this thing?

ETTA

Absolutely.

(Screen off.)

ACT [1]

SCENE [7]

(Lights up on Etta and ACTOR. An audience sits in rows facing them. Cue dramatic music. Etta turns away from Actor.)

ETTA

(over the top)

James...I-I don't think I can.

ACTOR

Eleanore. You can say it. Say it to the world. Scream it if you must! Nothing could change the way I feel about you.

ETTA

It's just...

ACTOR

Yes...?

(Etta turns dramatically toward Actor.)

ETTA

I love you!

ACTOR

Oh Eleanore!

(Etta and Actor embrace each other.)

ETTA

Oh James!

(Dramatic music rises to a crescendo and ends as Etta and Actor share one long kiss. The audience applauds, stands and begins filing off stage. Quincy and Les rise from their seats and remain on stage. Quincy takes a cigarette and lighter from his pocket and lights up. Les watches patiently.)

QUINCY

(to Les, after awhile.)

Last time this time, I swear to-

LES

To whom? To God? Because the last time I checked, Quincy, you didn't believe in him. And anyways, how many times have you seen that picture now?

QUINCY

I dunno. Ten... 'leven maybe.

LES

Mhm. And how many times have you said it's the last time?

QUINCY

(thinks)

Ten... 'leven maybe.

LES

Mhm. Why do you do this to yourself?

QUINCY

Hey, it was a really good movie. Didn't you like that movie?

LES

Yes, I thought it was a fine movie - the first two times. Maybe even the third. But, I must admit, after the last six times I began to get the feeling that...I don't know, that I'd seen it before or something.

QUINCY

(sarcastically)

Ha ha, very funny Les. Hey, maybe we should start doing that.

LES

Doing what?

QUINCY

Making movies.

LES

Making movies.

QUINCY

Yeah, we could make movies and-and...

LES

And what? Hire beautiful, sultry actresses like Etta Gunn to fill the lead roles?

QUINCY

Exactly, Les. Now you're getting it.

LES

Yeah, you know, I have a hard time seeing that...going well, for some reason.

QUINCY

Why not?

LES

First of all, I don't think you know the first thing about making movies.

QUINCY

No?

LES

No. Second, I *know* you can't afford it. And third, I think Etta likes fucking Daemon Jones a lot more than she likes fucking you right now.

QUINCY

Is that what you think?

LES

Yes, Quincy, that *is* what I think.

QUINCY

Well, so?

LES

So it's an awful idea. Stupid, even. If you miss her so damn much why don't you just telephone her or something?

QUINCY

Telephone her?

LES

Yes.

QUINCY

Did that sound stupid to you when you said it?

LES

Yes. You're right, that's a horrible idea. You shouldn't telephone her at all.

(Les begins walking off.)

QUINCY

(calling)

Well, wait. What *am* I gonna do then?

LES

I don't know Quincy. Maybe you should just forget about that chick. Ever thought about that?

QUINCY

Forget her?! Les!

(Quincy runs after Les. Lights down.)

ACT [1]

SCENE [8]

(Lights up. A movie crew and some of Quincy's company are in a frenzy in the studio moving around equipment and pieces of set, trying to pull together Quincy's movie. Enter Quincy with WORKER talking his ear off.)

WORKER

So, I was just thinking if we did that scene today, Bonnie and J.J. will be available tomorrow and you could still use the same set.

QUINCY

(distracted)

Uh-huh. Hey, where'd that bail of hay go?

WORKER

And also, you won't have to make any adjustments to the lighting because that's always such a huge hassle.

QUINCY

Yeah, that's great. Hey! Who moved that bail of hay?

(Worker runs off. Stu runs up to Quincy.)

STU

Hey Quincy, one of the beams that you used for the flying scene yesterday, it's in this shot and nobody's able to get it out.

QUINCY

Oh, just leave it up there. It'll be fine.

STU

Leave it up there?

QUINCY

Yeah.

QUINCY

Josie. Hey, Josie, where's Isabella?

JOSIE

D'you want me to find her?

QUINCY

Please. we're rolling in five.

(Josie nods and heads off.)

QUINCY

Everybody! We're starting in five so make sure you all know what you're doing and...don't talk to me until we start.

(Quincy moves to sit at a desk. There he contemplates things a little before picking up the telephone. He holds it to his ear a moment then hangs up the receiver. After a little more contemplation he picks it up again and finally begins dialling the number. He waits while the phone rings.)

QUINCY

Uh, hi. I'm looking for Etta.

(Beat)

Etta, Etta Gunn.

(Beat)

No, I'm a very affectionate friend.

(Beat)

Yes. Alright. Alright.

(Quincy waits with the phone pressed to his ear while he's put on hold. Enter Les who walks right up to Quincy's desk.)

LES

(unimpressed)

Quincy.

QUINCY

Hold on.

LES

(persistent)

Quincy.

QUINCY

Hold on.

(into phone)

Yes, I'm here.

LES

You're not calling her are you? Jesus Christ.

QUINCY

(glaring at Les)

Sorry, could you repeat that?

(Beat)

Yes, Quincy Elliott.

(Beat)

She what? Tell her-no tell her it's Elvis.

(Beat)

Yes, I know. I know, but-

(Beat)

Alright. Alright. Yeah.

(Quincy hangs up the phone.)

LES

...Quincy?

QUINCY

Yes, Les?

LES

What were the two things I told you indefinitely not to do?

QUINCY

(thinks)

Make movies and phone Etta.

LES

(over top of Quincy)

Make movies and phone Etta. So, would you like to explain to me what you were doing on the telephone while a movie crew sets up in your art studio?

QUINCY

...No.

LES

I didn't think so. Did you want to tell me how you're going to pay for this movie?

QUINCY

No.

LES

Okay. I didn't think that either. I found your bail of hay. It was in the cupboard in the bathroom. I got Matt to bring it back onto the set and Isabella should be ready to go any minute now.

QUINCY

Groovy.

(Les walks onto the set, leaving Quincy alone at the desk. He picks up the phone again, thinks about it, then puts it back down. Quincy walks onto the set.)

QUINCY

Alright folks, look alive and...places, or whatever. Where's Isabella?

(A pair reading a magazine begin to laugh.)

QUINCY

Hey, what's with you two?

(Quincy walks over, grabs the magazine and stares wide-eyed.)

QUINCY

Playboy!? Really? Oh my God. She's everywhere!

JOSIE

Is that Etta?

(Enter ISABELLA. She walks right up to Quincy, wrapping herself around him.)

JOSIE

Quincy?

ISABELLA

Quincy, darling. Who's that?

(Isabella kisses a very reluctant Quincy who keeps his eyes on the magazine, and pulls away slightly from her.)

QUINCY

Oh, uh. She's no one.

(Isabella takes hold of the magazine and looks at it with disgust.)

ISABELLA

Oh, that girl. You dated her, right?

QUINCY

Never. Not unless that's what you call prison time.

FILM CREW 1

(from behind a camera)

Quincy. Not that this means a tick to you, but we are on a bit of a time crunch here.

QUINCY

Right, places everyone. And, uh, Isabella, you look lovely.

(Quincy plucks the magazine from Isabella's hands.)

ISABELLA

Thank you, darling. And I told you, call me *Bella*.

(Isabella pecks Quincy on the cheek. Quincy is seemingly unaffected.)

QUINCY

(to himself)

Bella, Bella.

(To the set)
Alright. Rolling?

FILM CREW 1
(shouts)
Rolling!

FILM CREW 2
'Whatever Happened to Never.' Quincy Elliott. Scene five, take one.

QUINCY
Action!

(The studio falls into a hush and watches the scene unfolding before them. Isabella, leaning against the bail of hay, and facing the camera takes a slow bite of an apple. Lights down.)

ACT [1]

SCENE [9]

(Muffled dialogue from Quincy's movie and booing from the audience can be heard in the background underneath a piece of opera humming away on a turntable in Quincy's room. There is a full length mirror and a vanity table cluttered with make-up. Enter Quincy in a skirt and a bra and heels. He struts up to the mirror and looks himself over once, adjusting this or that. He picks up a shirt from the floor and puts it on. Afterwards he picks up various other articles of clothing, and holds them up to himself in the mirror, all the while taking periodical sips from a glass of alcohol.)

VOICE (O.S.)

Elliott, the movie's almost over. They'll be expecting you soon.

QUINCY

Okay. I'll be out in a minute.

(to himself)

If they don't tear the whole damn place to pieces first.

(Quincy walks over to the vanity table and starts looking through the make-up. Quincy begins putting something on his eyes. Lights down.)

(Lights up. A crowd of unimpressed people are standing around the stage, waiting and socializing impatiently with each other.)

LES

(to a guest)

He'll be here shortly. I'm sure he's just tied himself up again. He's a busy man. Always working.

(nervous laughter.)

GUEST 1

He's probably just too embarrassed to show his face.

LES

(nervous)

More drinks, gentlemen?

(Enter Quincy in regular attire. Les rushes over to him.)

LES

Where the Hell have you been? These people have been waiting a half an hour to tell you off, and none of them will leave because they want to exercise their 'right to freedom of speech.' They really hated it Quincy.

QUINCY

(indifferently)

Did they really hate it? You're lying to me Les. Always the joker.

LES

Smarten up Quincy. I've been tied up all night with complaints about your film. They want your head on a platter and I've got to be the one telling them that the kitchen's at a bit of a standstill.

QUINCY

Well, thanks for looking out for me, man. 'Preciate it, really.

(Les turns Quincy's head with his hand to examine the make-up on his face.)

LES

And what is this, on your face? What, were you playing dress up or something?

QUINCY

Yeah, something like that.

GUEST 1

Quincy Elliott!

QUINCY

Hi.

(to Les)

You wanna get me a drink?

LES

You don't need another drink.

GUEST 1

I want words with you.

QUINCY

What kind of words? I only got so many.

GUEST 1

Don't get smart with me Elliott. I just wasted two and a half hours on that pile you call a film. Two and a half hours of my life that I will never get back. What do you have to say for that, hmm?

QUINCY

Hey man, I've got nothing to say for it. It's just art y'know.

GUEST 1

Just art.

QUINCY

Yeah.

GUEST 2

(from across the stage.)

Hey, Quincy! That was hands down the worst two hours of my life.

QUINCY

Hey-

GUEST 3

It was borderline pornographic!

GUEST 4

You're promoting the abuse of women!

GUEST 5

Is that how you treated Etta Gunn!?

QUINCY

Oh, I see. Sure. Bring Etta into this.

GUEST 6

Is that why she left you for Daemon Jones?

(The crowd all begin yelling unintelligibly at once and Quincy is backed onto a platform upstage centre, looking overwhelmed.)

QUINCY

(over the crowd)

Hey, I can't say anything for my film. Right, if you don't like it, well, that's up to you. But, you know, I don't really have to answer for it.

GUEST 7

He's a Satanist!

GUEST 8

Spawn of the Devil!

GUEST 9

Lucifer!

QUINCY

Easy now-

GUEST 10

Get him!

(The crowd begins advancing toward Quincy who ducks his head and gets lost within it. Les and Josie grab Quincy by the arms and push him through the crowd until he comes out the other end. Josie and Les help a discombobulated Quincy off stage while Stu, Agnes, Slick and a few others try to control the crowd. Lights down. End Act 1.)

ACT [2]

SCENE [1]

(Screen flickers and shows various clips of Etta dancing and posing in front of the camera. Cut to Etta sitting on the chair in front of the white wall.)

ETTA

Never.

QUINCY (O.S.)

Not once?

ETTA

No. Never.

QUINCY (O.S.)

I don't believe you.

ETTA

(laughing)

You never believe me.

QUINCY (O.S.)

You're right, I never do.

ETTA

Does my surprising modesty unnerve you?

QUINCY (O.S.)

Sometimes. Okay, uh, what's the worst thing you ever read about yourself in the papers?

ETTA

Oh, that's easy.

(sipping her drink)

They called me 'Queen of Nothing' in this one...

QUINCY (O.S.)

Who said that?

ETTA

I can't remember what paper it was or even what the article was about, I just remember reading that: 'Queen of Nothing.' I didn't even really understand at first, but now...

QUINCY (O.S.)

Well, what do you think it means now?

ETTA

I think they were saying that I have everything at my disposal - the world at the snap of my fingers, but no control over any of

it. Like I'm being used or something...I guess it was their version of calling me a slut.

QUINCY (O.S.)

But, you've been called a slut before.

ETTA

Well, yeah. And, normally I don't really give a damn. But, for whatever reason...

QUINCY (O.S.)

It just stuck with you.

ETTA

Yeah...That was when I first went public with Daemon too.
(Pause- thinks)

QUINCY (O.S.)

Do you like him?

ETTA

Do I like him?

QUINCY (O.S.)

Yeah.

ETTA

Well, I don't know. No more than I like anyone else, I guess.

QUINCY (O.S.)

Do you go with him?

ETTA

What?

QUINCY (O.S.)

Has he put his dick in you?

ETTA

Quincy!

QUINCY (O.S.)

Come on Etta. Has he?

ETTA

Well, so what if he has?

QUINCY (O.S.)

Why do you go with him if you don't like him?

(Etta opens her mouth to speak, then stops, gathering her calm.)

ETTA

(Slowly)

Why do you go with Val? Or Isabella? Or any of those girls? I know you far too well for this Quincy Elliott. Try again.

QUINCY (O.S.)

So, you don't like him, but it's good sex. Is that it?

ETTA

No. Although, there is something a lot more sexually appealing about him than you. He's a lot better looking than you are.

QUINCY (O.S.)

So I've heard.

ETTA

It's true.

QUINCY (O.S.)

(acceptingly)

I know.

ETTA

It's about status, Quincy. It's about being above all the bums and panhandlers, the vagabonds and the starving artists, and all the other nameless fuckers in this goddamn town.

ETTA

That's why I go with him.

(Etta blinks once. Screen off.)

ACT [2]

SCENE [2]

(Lights up while the stage is being set for the studio. Quincy is sitting at his desk with his feet up, reading a paper. Josie is sleeping, Agnes is pouring salt into the teacup beside her and a few others are scattered around here and there, mostly sitting and relaxing.)

STU

I feel...I feel...like creating something, man. Instead of sitting around here like the has-beens that we are.

AGNES

More like never-beens.

SLICK

Yeah.

QUINCY

(from behind his paper)

Creativity's dead. Didn't you hear that, Stu? No one 'creates' things anymore, they just get them out of aisle nine at the one-stop. Ask the Campbell's Soup guy, what's his name?

AGNES

Uh...Warhol - Andy Warhol.

QUINCY

That's the one.

STU

Isn't that where you get your photos Quincy? How come your shit doesn't make that much money.

(Enter Les - all business.)

LES

Alright folks, I'm putting an end to all this sitting on our asses moping around business. Today there are things needing done and we are going to do them.

STU

Do any of those things involve whatever's down Josie's blouse, because if they do you have my full commitment.

JOSIE

(wakes abruptly)

Stu!

LES

Uh-no. Quincy, do you have those prints from Greenwich ready yet 'cos I just got a call from The Arts Centre.

QUINCY

Uh, they're hanging.

LES

Are you lying to me?

QUINCY

Yup.

LES

Okay, get those developed soon, please. The Arts Centre has limited space and a deadline - two things that still apply to even marginally successful artists...living off the meal tickets.

(Quincy laughs)

LES

Are you on Earth, Quincy?

QUINCY

No.

(laughs)

"In a drunken stench Elliott staggered into a riot. The emotional crowd were all shouting 'Lucifer' and making demands for the artist's head."

(Josie takes a sip from the teacup, instantly spitting out the drink)

JOSIE

What is this shit!?

QUINCY

Salt.

LES

Is that last week's little spectacle?

QUINCY

Yeah.

(showing Les)

"Donning women's eye makeup, he appeared in a variation of the 'space man' getup." Can you believe these cats?

LES

I think they were asking themselves the same thing about you.

QUINCY

Well, they can say what they like. I'll make Daemon Jones answer for it.

LES

Good, because he's in town.

QUINCY

Who?

LES

Daemon Jones. He's having a party and you're invited. Did I mention that's the other thing you have to do today?

QUINCY

Fuck off, Les. No. You're putting me on.

LES

I'm not putting you on. He asked for you personally.

QUINCY

Now you're putting me on.

LES

Yes, now I am. Oh, and did I mention that Etta's gonna be there?

(Quincy disregards his paper)

QUINCY

Etta? As in my Etta? As in Etta Gunn, Etta? That Etta?

LES

(bored)

First of all, she's not *your* Etta. And you didn't really think he'd show up without her did you?

QUINCY

Well I can't go tonight anyways. I've got a...thing.

LES

Like Hell you've got a thing. You have a party to go to tonight and you're going to behave and you're going to make up for that little scuffle they're talking about in the paper.

QUINCY

Don't you think it would be better for me *not* to go. You know, don't even give me the opportunity to cause another 'riot.'

LES

Not possible, I'm afraid. Could you imagine what the papers would say then, about Quincy Elliott turning down an invitation from Daemon Jones? 'Old Tensions Die Hard between Elliott and Gunn,' no that's a shit storm I just don't want to deal with actually. So, you're going to go. And you're going to be civil. And that's the end of it.

QUINCY

Do I need to ask what I'm not going to do?

LES

You are not going to drink until your brains turn to piss, wear space man makeup and-

QUINCY

Leave without getting laid?

LES

Try to pick up other people's chicks. Especially Daemon Jones's.

QUINCY

And that would be...who, again?

LES

Don't get cute. You'll be there at nine o'clock sharp. As for me, I really do have a thing to avoid the actual thing-

QUINCY

You have a thing!? With a guy? Like a date?

LES

Maybe.

QUINCY

What's his name? What does he do? Does he have a really big cock?

LES

That's enough Quincy. This is what I'm talking about. I'm not going to be around to babysit you, so you're going to have to be on your best behaviour. Okay?

QUINCY

Yes mommy.

LES

And get those prints ready. I need them for eleven o'clock tomorrow morning. Savvy Mr. President?

(Quincy re-possesses his paper)

QUINCY

Aye aye captain.

LES

(to Josie)

Just, make sure he doesn't break anything, won't you dear?

JOSIE

I'll do my best.

(Exit Les. Lights down.)

ACT [2]

SCENE [3]

(Lights up on Etta at a vanity table. She takes her time in popping some pills and blowing her nose. All the while she seems exhausted with the effort of simply standing. She looks herself in the vanity mirror a while, running her hands vaguely over her face or through her hair before exiting. Lights down.)

Lights up to a crowd of people all socializing and dancing. Enter Etta.)

ETTA

Quincy Elliott. Long time...no see.

QUINCY

Hey, same to you. How's it been in the land of paradise? Reality hasn't barged in with its big scary machine guns yet, has it?

ETTA

(lazily)

Oh, fuck off.

QUINCY

Come on now, babe. I think we both know you too well for that.

ETTA

(laughing dryly)

Really? It's been two years, Quincy Elliott. Don't you account for change?

(Etta gets close to Quincy and discreetly flicks her cigarette ashes into his drink.)

QUINCY

It's been two years, *Evetta* Gunn. Don't you think we're well past formalities?

ETTA

(scoffs)

What are you doing here?

QUINCY

I was invited...and you know how I hate to turn down an invitation.

ETTA

Now that sounds like Les talking to me.

QUINCY

Don't you account for change?

(Etta flicks her ashes into Quincy's drink.)

ETTA

Not really.

(Enter Josie.)

JOSIE

Etta! It's been forever!

ETTA

Josie, darling.

(Etta and Josie embrace. As they do Quincy taps the ring on Etta's finger. Josie and Etta separate.)

QUINCY

Geeze Etta, that's some rock you got there.

ETTA

(challengingly)

Thank you. *Daemon gave it to me.*

QUINCY

God, he really is something else. Didn't I tell you Josie? This guy...he's must be some guy.

JOSIE

(ignoring Quincy)

It's beautiful Etta. Are you two engaged or something?

ETTA

No, it's just payment for some of the work I've done for him.

QUINCY

Oh, so he's been whoring you out.

ETTA

In his movies...

QUINCY

Oh, so same thing.

(Enter DAEMON JONES behind Etta. He puts a hand around her waist and pulls her in close.)

DAEMON

Hey baby.

(Daemon coaxes Etta into kissing him. Keeping

his eyes fixed on the couple Quincy takes a sip of his drink, almost instantly spitting back into his cup. The couple separate.)

QUINCY

So it does exist. True love.

DAEMON

Evey. You want to introduce me to your friends?

ETTA

(uncertainly)

Uh...this is Josie Manning and...Quincy Elliott. Quincy, this is-

QUINCY

(interrupting)

Daemon Jones.

QUINCY

The properly privileged, promptly pampered. The man of the hour, am I right?

(Daemon and Quincy shake hands.)

DAEMON

That's it. What brings you 'round?

QUINCY

Well, I *was* invited. Plus, when I heard about you and Etta I knew I had to meet this guy. I mean, he must be something else for her to just pickup and leave everything behind for him, you know what I mean?

DAEMON

Hey man, you don't seem so bad yourself, you know.

QUINCY

Oh, I know. Trust me. It's not exactly *me* that I'm concerned about.

JOSIE

(warningly)

Quincy...

DAEMON

How's that?

QUINCY

You just don't really seem all that sincere, you know? I mean, I don't mind if you kiss her like that, but at least be sincere about it.

DAEMON

(nodding)

Okay, I see. You know what man, if you're not gonna be groovy, you can just leave, alright?

QUINCY

Be groovy?

DAEMON

Yeah man. Be groovy or leave, alright?

QUINCY

Alright.

DAEMON

Okay.

(Daemon replaces his hand around Etta's waist, turns their backs and begins walking away.)

QUINCY

(calling)

Let me rephrase that.

(Daemon stops. The rest of the room turns their attention to Quincy.)

QUINCY

I just hope your dick's more sincere than your mouth.

(Daemon takes a moment to laugh, then out of nowhere swirls around and punches Quincy in the face. Quincy stumbles backwards into the crowd, which half catches him and half pushes him back onto his feet.)

DAEMON

You know, I heard you were a right fucker. Turns out you're nothing but a pussy.

JOSIE

Quincy! Don't!

(Quincy stumbles forward and swings blindly at Daemon, missing clean. Daemon counters by knocking Quincy down. Etta screams. Daemon lays Quincy with his boot before Etta pulls him away. Quincy lies writhing on the floor.)

JOSIE

You asshole!

DAEMON

Just get the fuck out. Both of you.

(Daemon turns on his heel and exits with the

crowd. Etta takes a moment to look back.)

DAEMON

Come on baby.

(Etta catches up to Daemon. Josie bends down and tries to help Quincy sit. He pushes her away. She too exits stage right. Quincy sits a moment, analysing the damage. Eventually he stands and makes his way groggily to a box located downstage right, all the while muttering to himself. Lights down everywhere but that patch. Quincy sits down and lights himself up. After a while Etta enters behind him stage right.)

QUINCY

(without looking)

Don't you have an execution to pretend to be interested in, or something like that?

ETTA

(verbally rolling her eyes)

What the fuck was that about?

QUINCY

Oh, that's right. It's a party isn't it? I don't know what you're talking about babe.

(Etta moves to face Quincy)

ETTA

God. Why are you just such a huge asshole?

QUINCY

Is that a question?

(Etta scoffs)

QUINCY

Besides, I thought you were into huge assholes.

ETTA

This isn't about me.

QUINCY

You're right, it's not...oh, wait, no, no, it actually is.

ETTA

No, this about you. You and all your petty insecurities.

QUINCY

Sure, coming from the chick who wears her thugs like her high heeled shoes.

ETTA

Oh, and what about your girls? Are they comparable to *your* heels too, Quincy Elliott?

QUINCY

That's private. And completely different. I'm a photographer. They're models.

ETTA

Yeah, it's different. Here's the thing Quincy.

ETTA

Everyone wants something. And everyone's using someone else to get it. Don't pretend for one second that you never exploited me.

(Pause)

...Sold any *movies* lately?

QUINCY

Aha. Very good, Etta. Very good. Tell me, other than to insult me, is there any particular reason you're here?

ETTA

I just wanted to make sure you weren't bleeding out somewhere in the back of an ally. I know Daemon can throw a pretty mean punch.

QUINCY

Well, I'd thank you for your concern, but I'm too big of an asshole for that. And anyways, Daemon Jones may be able to throw a punch, but his cock's still the size of a toothpick.

ETTA

God, Quincy. Would you just shut up for one second and throw me a fag?

(Etta sits down across from Quincy who draws a pack from his breast pocket and presses a cigarette to her lips before lighting it.)

QUINCY

So, when can I start calling you Evey? First date, second date? Pre-marriage, post marriage?

ETTA

Never. Daemon just likes it. Says it sounds more like a movie star.

QUINCY

But you don't like it.

(Etta shrugs.)

QUINCY

But he likes it, so you like it. I see.

ETTA

Whatever, it's just a name, isn't it?

QUINCY

Yes, but *that's* not just a ring.

ETTA

Don't you like it?

QUINCY

Oh, it's beautiful all right. Finest piece of rubble I've seen come out of a mine. It's just, you know, I think that ring does a lot more talkin' than you do.

ETTA

So what? It's not like we're getting married or anything.

QUINCY

Good, because he really is a prick.

ETTA

(laughing)

What, are you in love with him or something?

QUINCY

No. Are you?

ETTA

Just, shut up about Daemon, okay?

(There is a small suspense before Etta kisses Quincy hard. Lights down.)

Lights up on a bed. Enter Quincy and Etta, kissing as they stumble toward the bed. Etta pushes Quincy onto the mattress before undoing the buttons on his shirt. Quincy sits up to stop her.)

QUINCY

Wait, do you really think this is a good idea?

ETTA

Do you really think we should talk about it?

(Quincy decides not and allows Etta to continue. Lights down.)

Lights up. Quincy sits up in the bed to find he's alone. He shakes his head and falls back onto the pillows. Lights down.)

ACT [2]

SCENE [4]

(Two men enter stage right, pulling onto the stage between the two of them, Etta lying on a bench. From there the men sit on either side of Etta on the bench and move her as they need like a puppet. They sit her up and she flops forward onto one's shoulder. The man she's lying on sticks out her arm. The other man ties a rubber band around the arm and begins fixing a needle. All the while Etta stirs a little and shows subtle signs of protest, but they are weak and easily overridden by the men. Finally the second man injects her with the needle. The two lay her back on the bench and push her off. Lights down.)

ACT [2]

SCENE [5]

(Lights up. Quincy and Les are sitting beside each other on a bench. Les is reading the newspaper. Quincy is taking snaps of people who are walking by. Les waits a while before speaking.)

LES

The Arts Centre is finally on board, you know.

QUINCY

(Distractedly)

Uh-huh.

LES

They raised their price by five percent but I got the extra wall space.

(Les waits for a response from Quincy but it doesn't come.)

LES

Hey, I had to really push for that, man. I've never seen anybody so reluctant to touch your stuff. After that film incident...

QUINCY

Uh-huh.

LES

A simple 'thanks Les' will suffice.

QUINCY

Thanks Les.

LES

(Frustrated)

Oh, come on. You should be ecstatic right now. You should be over the moon. This is the most productive thing we've done in months. You should be kissing the ground I walk on.

QUINCY

...Uh-huh.

LES

Right, I'm sorry. I obviously forgot to lick your wounds before discussing business with you. Please forgive me. What I meant to say was I'm sorry Etta left...again, but you really shouldn't have slept with her. Better?

QUINCY

Fuck off.

LES

Look, Quincy. As your...business partner-

QUINCY

I work alone.

LES

As your confident.

QUINCY

I don't need your confidence.

LES

(abrupt)

As your friend.

(Pause)

How did you really think that was going to end?

QUINCY

...I don't know.

LES

'Cos if you were thinking about riding off with her into the sunset on a chrome horse - I don't think I have to be the one to remind you that you don't have a horse. And anyways, she belongs to Daemon Jones now. You knew that.

QUINCY

I know. I just...

(There is a long silence. Les approaches his next phrase with the utmost of delicacy.)

LES

And you haven't heard from her since?

QUINCY

No.

LES

Well, head up ol'boy. She might see the light one of these days.

QUINCY

Yeah.

LES

On the bright side you do now have ten extra feet of wall space at The Arts Centre. Know what you're going to do with it yet?

QUINCY

Yeah, I've got some black and whites from Times Square that I think I'll put up.

LES

Good, good. Any from the last roll you took?

QUINCY

No, those were nothing. I'll probably toss them sooner or later.

LES

I thought you had some pretty good shots there. Maybe you should give them another look before you discard them completely.

QUINCY

Thanks Les.

LES

Any time.

(Les stands.)

LES

Now, I have some business to attend to, if you're done wiping your tears on my lapels.

QUINCY

What kind of business?

LES

Financial business. All that paperwork that dictates what happens to your money, that you never like to deal with. You're lucky you're so deep in the sticks when it comes to money, or I might want to take advantage of you, you know.

QUINCY

Oh.

(Les nods and begins to.)

QUINCY

(calling)

Les.

(Les stops and looks at Quincy.)

QUINCY

I shouldn't have fucked her, should I?

LES

No, Quincy. You shouldn't have.

(Exit Les. Lights down.)

ACT [2]

SCENE [6]

(Lights up on Quincy's studio, jam packed with people all drinking and smoking pot and having a good time. Les is lying quietly in a corner with a man on his chest. Puffing heavily on a cigarette, Quincy is working away in the back hanging photos and watching the scene before him.)

BOY 1

(to a girl)

It's like a little pinch. You wouldn't feel a thing. It's like this and then it's over.

(He pinches the girl he's talking to and she giggles.)

GIRL 1

(to another girl)

Speed is the ultimate, all time high. Like a 24 hour climax that, just, never ends.

GIRL 2

(yelling at Boy 2 and Girl 3)

Your aura is purple!

BOY 2

I can't hear you! What!?

GIRL 2

Your aura! It's *purple!*

GIRL 3

She's a psychic!

(Quincy puts out his cig and walks down into the crowd. Boy 3 tugs on his jeans and offers him a joint.)

BOY 3

Hey man, you've got to try this stuff.

QUINCY

What is it?

(Quincy accepts the joint and takes a hit.)

BOY 3

It's from Jamaica. Expensive shit.

QUINCY

Groovy.

(Quincy hands the joint back. Boy 3 takes a hit.)

BOY 3

Hey, that's alright, man. You know, we should get together some time, and I'll turn you on to some things.

QUINCY

Sure. Far out.

STU

Quincy!

(Stu approaches Quincy with CLARA on his arm.)

STU

Quincy. This is Clara. She's from *France*.

(Stu passes Clara off to Quincy.)

QUINCY

Bonjour.

(Clara smiles. The telephone on Quincy's desk. Quincy looks exasperated. Les shoots him a look.)

LES

You'd better get that.

(Reluctantly Quincy leaves Clara for the telephone.)

QUINCY

Hello?

(Lights up on Alice's Pub where Etta sits at a bar on the phone. Two thugs sit on either side of her, and one is watching her from behind the bar.)

ETTA

(out of it)

...Quincy...?

QUINCY

Etta?

ETTA

Quincy...I need...Quincy...

QUINCY

Etta. Are you okay? Where are you?

ETTA

I need money, Quincy.

QUINCY

Where are you?

ETTA

Down the rabbit hole.

(laughs weakly)

QUINCY

Where? Etta. What's going on. Where are you?

(Etta looks into the speaker of the phone then hangs up, exhaustedly. Quincy listens for a moment then hangs up abruptly. He moves briskly back into the crowd, searching for his coat and keys.)

LES

Who was it Quincy?

QUINCY

Etta. I think she's at Alice's.

LES

Is she okay?

QUINCY

I don't know.

(Quincy dons a jacket and grabs Les's.)

QUINCY

I'm taking your car.

LES

Oh, Quincy. No.

(Quincy ignores Les and exits. Lights down on the studio as he goes. At the bar the thugs are watching Etta intensely. She's lolling on her chair, struggling to keep her head up.)

ETTA

Can any of you boys light me a smoke?

THUG 1

Sure, baby.

(THUG 1 pulls a cigarette out of his pocket and

places it into Etta's open mouth. He lights it for her and watches as she takes a slow drag.)

THUG 1

You're a pretty little thing, aren't you?

ETTA

I think Quincy's coming here soon. Isn't he?

THUG 2

Who's Quincy?

(Quincy bursts in.)

QUINCY

(frantically)

Etta.

ETTA

Oh...Quincy...

(The three thugs turn to regard Quincy. Etta lies forward on the bar.)

QUINCY

C'mon Etta. Let's go.

(Quincy wraps his jacket around Etta's shoulders and supports her in a standing position.)

THUG 3

(as if it should be obvious)

She has a tab.

(Quincy pulls some loose money out of his pocket.)

THUG 3

That's not enough.

QUINCY

I don't have any more on me.

(THUG 3 pounds his fist on the table top.)

QUINCY

(to Etta)

Etta, do you have any money?

ETTA

No. I never carry cash.

(Quincy, noticing Etta's hands, pulls the ring

off of Etta's finger and places it on the bar.)

QUINCY

There.

(Quincy lets Etta fall back onto his shoulder and begins to drag her out of the bar. Etta resists weakly, reaching for her drink.)

ETTA

My drink...Quincy...

QUINCY

You'r done drinking. Come on.

ETTA

Quincy...

(Quincy successfully drags Etta off stage. Lights down.)

ACT [2]

SCENE [7]

(Lights up on Quincy's room. Quincy lays Etta down on his bed and sits himself on the floor, against its end, with a sigh. He waits a moment before speaking.)

QUINCY

(challengingly)

Where's Daemon Jones?

ETTA

What?

QUINCY

That hotshot, British, pretty boy of yours - why didn't you call *him*?

ETTA

I-I don't know where Daemon is. He told me not to bother him.

QUINCY

Not to bother him? He's your boyfriend isn't he? Shouldn't he be taking care of you?

ETTA

Just shut up about Daemon, okay?

QUINCY

Etta...

(Etta coaxes Quincy's face up toward hers and begins to kiss it. He allows her at first.)

QUINCY

Etta, no.

ETTA

Sh...

QUINCY

No. I'm not doing this.

(Quincy tries to pull away, but Etta brings him back.)

ETTA

Doing what?

QUINCY

(abruptly)

Etta, stop!

(Quincy pulls away. Etta sits up, confused.)

QUINCY

How much longer are we going to do this?

ETTA

This...?

QUINCY

It's not called a one night stand when you keep coming back.

ETTA

What do you mean?

QUINCY

You know what I mean.

ETTA

(childishly)

No I don't. Why would I say 'what do you mean' if I knew what you meant?

QUINCY

The ignorance really matches your eyes. Is that how you got the part?

ETTA

What is *that* supposed to mean?

QUINCY

(increasingly frustrated)

God, have you seen a fucking mirror lately?

(Quincy grabs Etta from off the bed, carries her over to his full length mirror.)

ETTA

(panicky)

Ah! Quincy!

(Quincy throws her down. Etta stares at herself, frightened.)

QUINCY

God! Just look at yourself, babe. Look what he's done to you. He doesn't *care* about you.

ETTA

Yes he does.

QUINCY

Cares about you enough to leave you strung up in a bar?

ETTA

He *loves* me.

QUINCY

No he doesn't. He's just beating you at your own game.

ETTA

Shut up Quincy!

QUINCY

(yelling)

What happened to Audrey? And the 18th century poet? Huh? He's used you all up and left you with this - this mess.

ETTA

Shut up!

QUINCY

You know it's true. And you keep going on with him, you keep going on with that fucker -

ETTA

Quincy!

QUINCY

Baby he's gonna kill you!

(There is a silence. Etta takes one last look at herself in the mirror then slowly turns to face Quincy and begins to sob.)

ETTA

(sobbing)

I know.

(She begins to crumble onto the floor. Quincy rushes over to her and holds her up. She falls, sobbing, onto his shoulder. They stand like that for a time. Lights down.)

ACT [2]

SCENE [8]

(Lights up on Quincy's room. The scene resembles that of the night before except for one thing: Etta is missing. Quincy is sleeping in an armchair somewhere downstage when he stirs from his sleep.)

(Quincy sits upright to find the jacket Etta was wearing lying empty on his chest. He picks it up, looks around, then sighs.)

(Quincy stands and puts on the jacket. He slips on his boots and walks toward the bed. He dons a hat from the night stand and lights himself a cigarette. He grabs a pile of files from the night table. He meanders off, flicking through the folder.)

(Enter Les with his new beau. Quincy looks up and walks toward him. Silently Les introduces Quincy and his partner. Quincy offers his hand and is pulled into an unexpected embrace. Quincy laughs a little then turns his attention to Les who is explaining something to him, then begins pointing animatedly at his watch. Quincy nods and bids the pair goodbye.)

(Shortly after Quincy is met by a man in a business suit. The two shake hands and Quincy hands him the folders. The arts director motions at the wall space behind him, and Quincy nods at the explanations he's being given. They chat a little longer before shaking hands one more time. Exit the arts director.)

(Quincy sits down on a park bench. Quincy takes a photograph from his pocket. As he's looking at it Josie and Stu enter behind him, arm in arm. Josie leans over his shoulder and plucks the photograph from his hands. She pulls three tickets from her pocket and holds them in front of his eyes. He takes one and thanks her. She and Stu kiss each other, then bid him goodbye and exit. Quincy puts the ticket in his pocket and leans back on the bench. Lights down.)

ACT [2]

SCENE [9]

(Lights up on Daemon Jones's office. Daemon is sitting at his desk talking on the telephone.)

DAEMON

(into telephone)

Yes, well. We got some big names this time. Yeah, some big bill producers, you know.

(Beat)

Well, you know by big bills I mean a *lot* of money.

(Beat)

Yeah.

(Beat)

Uh, no. Not this time, I don't think. Well, you know she's just not...yeah. Exactly. Alright.

(Beat)

Okay baby. Love you too. Yeah, I'll see you in a bit.

(Beat)

Okay. Love you. Bye.

(Daemon hangs up the phone. Enter Etta, looking quite the mess, she approaches Daemon's desk cautiously.)

DAEMON

Etta. I haven't seen you all day. Are you feeling better?

ETTA

Yes. I think so.

DAEMON

Good.

(Daemon gets ready to leave.)

ETTA

Where are you going?

DAEMON

I'm going to meet Gracie at Cosmo's. I might be late tonight.

ETTA

Oh. Is Gracie going to be in the movie too?

DAEMON

Er...yes. She'll be in the film.

ETTA

What part is she going to play?

DAEMON

Well, er...she's gonna take the lead.

ETTA

The lead? But, then, who am I gonna play?

DAEMON

No one. Baby, you're not in the movie.

ETTA

I'm not in...well...why not?

DAEMON

This really isn't a good time Etta. Look, we'll talk about it in the morning.

ETTA

But, you always give me the lead. Daemon, why aren't I in the movie?

DAEMON

I don't know, Gracie's just better for the part. Look, I really must go.

ETTA

Is she fucking you? That's it isn't it? She's fucking you.

DAEMON

Jesus Christ Etta.

ETTA

God. I should have known. All you men are the same; fuck anything that moves. And I was really under the impression that you might've actually *loved* me.

DAEMON

Well that was quite foolish, coming from the woman who took off the ring I gave her. Yes I noticed. The day you came back from Elliott's. Did *he* fuck you? Is that why you took it off?

ETTA

It wasn't like that. I lost it.

DAEMON

(softly)

Look, baby. How is it any different if Gracie fucks me for a part, than you fucking me for a part? Or me giving you a part so that you would fuck me? That *is* what we've been doing, isn't it?

(Etta gradually submits to her tears.)

DAEMON

(softly)

Nobody loves you, baby. We're done here.

(Daemon regards Etta a little longer before exiting. Etta is left alone, crying.)

Tearfully, Etta exits. Lights down on Daemon's office, lights up on Quincy's room, where Quincy is sitting in an armchair. Enter Etta.)

ETTA

(through tears)

Quincy! Quincy!

QUINCY

(delicately)

Etta. What are you doing here?

ETTA

Quincy. I need your help. I-I need money, and a place to stay. Please. I'll work for you. I'll pose-I'll do anything you want. Just please...please help me.

ETTA

Quincy, please.

QUINCY

Etta, no.

ETTA

Please.

QUINCY

No, not this time.

(A fresh batch of tears begin to flow from Etta's eyes.)

QUINCY

(somber)

Go home Etta.

(Etta turns slowly and. Lights down on Quincy's room. Lights up on. Crowds of people are walking on and off stage in a constant stream - as if on a busy street. Enter Etta, shoving her way through the jumble. She gets jostled and pushed around by the crowd, unable to keep up with their pace. She stops often and looks around her for some kind of familiar face. Eventually she is pushed out of the crowd. She looks about her frantically.)

ETTA

(screaming)

Somebody. Look at me!

(Etta melts to the ground in tears. The people walking behind her eventually thin out until she is alone on the stage. Lights down.)

ACT [2]

SCENE [10]

(Lights up on the studio. Quincy is sitting at his desk taking snaps of JACKIE who is posing in front of him. He is muttering things to her (mostly inaudible) like 'great' 'beautiful babe,' etc. Enter Les, paper under his arm. He approaches Quincy's desk and stands there a moment, waiting to be acknowledged. When he isn't he clears his throat.)

LES

Quincy. A word.

QUINCY

(not paying attention)

Sure, anything you say Les. Hey, Jenny, a little to the left.

LES

(hard)

In private.

QUINCY

Hey, whatever you have to say to me, you can say in front of Jenny. She won't breathe a word, right babe?

(Jackie blows a kiss.)

QUINCY

She's great. Ever hear that Little Richard song...nanana - oh Jenny Jenny...

LES

I take it you've read the paper today then.

QUINCY

(to Jackie)

Alright babe, take five.

(Jackie stops posing, walks up to Quincy and begins romancing him. He ignores her and turns to Les.)

QUINCY

No, why should I?

LES

So, you haven't heard about Etta?

QUINCY

Etta who?

LES

(frustrated)

Etta Gunn.

JACKIE

Etta Gunn?

QUINCY

Never heard of her.

JACKIE

You dated her right?

QUINCY

No.

LES

(angry)

Oh would you *please* get off your righteous ass and stop pretending. It's great you're 'moving on' and everything Quincy, but this is just verging on ridiculous and...aggravating.

QUINCY

I don't know why *my* relations with anyone by the name of Etta Gunn should aggravate you. I can't see how any of it's your problem.

LES

You really haven't read the paper have you?

QUINCY

Whatever mess that chick's got herself into now I don't care. She can start digging her own damn grave if she wants. I'd give her the fucking shovel.

LES

Well, good. Because she's dead.

(Les slams the paper onto Quincy's desk. Quincy holds his stare. Exit a frustrated Les.)

(Jackie continues to romance an uninterested Quincy, who is paralysed watching the spot where Les was standing. Jackie takes a step back, places Quincy's hands on her hips and begins to sway slowly.)

QUINCY

(calmly)

Jenny, do you mind?

JACKIE

My name's Jackie.

QUINCY

Whatever.

(Jackie scoffs, drops his hands and stalks off. Quincy watches her go and waits till she's out of sight. He turns toward his desk and unfolds the newspaper. Upon seeing the newspaper he pushes it aside. Lights down.)

ACT [2]

SCENE [11]

(Screen on to show a burnt out Etta slouching in the chair against the white wall. She is tired and her restlessness is displayed by a constant rubbing of her face as she speaks.)

ETTA

I don't know...what to think anymore. My mind is just a...

(Etta motions the explosion of her brain with her hands and a sound effect.)

ETTA

You know, it's just a ticking time bomb now. Really, I'm just kind of waiting to burn out, you know. I could burn out at any moment - I'm already burning out.

(Etta laughs. Cut scene.)

ETTA

I'm beginning to feel that time is...of the essence and I'm running out. I feel like I'm being victimized by it, you know? As if I was...like, if time was the ma- the puppet master, and I was the doll. Or something like that. Just a fucking trip...you know?

(Cut scene. Etta is resting her head in her hands, a cigarette smouldering between her fingers.)

QUINCY (O.S.)

Etta.

(Etta does not respond.)

QUINCY (O.S.)

Etta.

(Cut scene. Etta laughs loudly.)

ETTA

If I died tomorrow, would you be sad?

QUINCY (O.S.)

Yes.

ETTA

Would you cry?

QUINCY (O.S.)

Mm...probably not.

ETTA

Why not? If you're sad...

QUINCY (O.S.)

I don't know. Being sad just doesn't really make me cry.

ETTA

What does?

QUINCY (O.S.)

Well, like, being hurt. Like getting shot in the shoulder or something. But, uh, being sad doesn't hurt me in any sort of way so it doesn't make me cry.

ETTA

But you *would* be sad. If I died tomorrow, right?

QUINCY (O.S.)

Oh, incredibly so.

(Etta smiles, then lowers her head. Screen off.)

ACT [2]

SCENE [12]

(Enter Quincy, bearing a bouquet of roses. He stops and takes off his hat.)

QUINCY

You really made it big this time, didn't you babe? I suppose this is what you wanted: the dramatic finale, the front page obituary, your name in lights above a dimly lit stage.

(laughs bitterly)

And you know what the headline said? "UNDERGROUND STARLET MEETS TRAGIC END." Like we can't read between those words. "Loving everyone she met and hurting everyone she loved, this drop dead beauty queen leaves only a dream behind." But it doesn't mean nothing. When asked where they found you, the police said "on the cover of a magazine." Looks like you were dead, babe, long before your heart stopped beating. It's sad. And I almost fell in love with it. Some might call it an accident. Others a suicide. Some might even go so far as to call it a crime, but really it's nothing but a waste.

(Quincy drops the flowers on the ground, puts on his hat and exits. Lights down.)

FIN