

SCENE 1.0

The pleasant music is playing. George with a beatific smile, resting, lounging in his chair. We see smiling Loraine. Loraine has new earrings.

LORAINÉ

Like it?

GEORGE

(fun)

Shine like the real thing!

Gradually, pleasant music gives way to anxiety music and strange knocking sound. George's face clouded. He started as if waking up.

SCENE 1.1

Lorraine is walking back and forth in the living room of an apartment, collecting her belongings and putting them into a large yellow handbag. George is sitting in a recliner, staring vacantly down toward his feet. Near his feet is an open bottle of whisky.

LORAINÉ

Me, live with a lush and a dooper? A
brainless stoner, that's all you are...
What was I doing with you so long? I
should have left you two years ago.
Take a look at yourself! What a
nobody...

GEORGE

It's all about the money... Right? I
know... You need money... You can't
fool me. But, I will have money... A
whole lot of it in fact, you hear? You'll
be sorry then!

LORAINÉ

Ha. Ha! You, with money? You don't
even have enough to keep high... So
what's your scheme? Problem with you
is, you have no brains... You wouldn't

even be good for a hold-up. Something like that takes a *man*...

GEORGE

Don't leave! I'm begging you! (*His voice is full of tears,*) I'll die without you!

LORAINE

(*speaking on auto-pilot, her mind elsewhere*)
Mmm, oh yeah?

GEORGE

(*on hands and knees in front of her*)
I'm begging you! Loraine! Don't leave me! Give me a chance!

Loraine walks around him with an air of contempt and resumes gathering her belongings, paying no attention to his antics.

LORAINE

Whatta you mean, another chance?
Take a look at yourself! ... Whatta you been smoking...

GEORGE

I'll kill myself...

LORAINE

Go ahead, only I'm getting out of here first.

George's lips are trembling. He seizes his head with his hands. He moans.

LORAINE

Hysterics! That's all you're good for...

GEORGE

I'll slit my wrists, I will...

LORAINÉ

Ha, ha, ha! You make me laugh.
(leaning over his face) You're such an insect. A pitiful little bug! You're going to cut your little veins open, are you? Poor little thing... You know, I'm actually curious. Will you be able to take one serious decision in your whole life? Nope... I'm afraid nothing will happen... You haven't got it in you! But it's a shame, really!

(George, breathing heavily, looks imploringly – and hatefully – at Loraine.)

LORAINÉ

Make yourself useful. Tell me where my *Michael Kors* is – my red purse, where's my red purse? Hopefully you haven't sold it for booze yet...

George stands up from the couch and walks shakily away from Loraine.

GEORGE

(in a whining voice)
You can't leave me...

Loraine heads toward the exit, carrying her large yellow handbag. The door is open. Suddenly she pauses and places the bag on the floor.

LORAINÉ

Now I remember! It's in the closet!
Over there... Up on top

She walks toward the closet. George stands near the door, carefully positioning the blade of a kitchen knife above his left wrist.

GEORGE

(repeating hysterically)
You can't leave me ...

LORAINE

(looking at George with contempt)
Ha! Now what! How interesting! Will you actually manage to scuff up your precious little hands?

GEORGE

(his breathing labored, his voice tremulous)
How cruel you are... You can't leave me ...

LORAINE

(with hatred and contempt)
You're wrong, I can do lots of things. You're the one that can't do anything!

GEORGE

(beginning to scream)
I can too. I can. Here, look!

George's face is contorted. His eyes are wide open. We hear him scream, and we hear the dull thud of a beating heart. George's hands are covered with blood.

GEORGE

(his voice growing faint)
There! There! I can! ... You can't leave me...

A dull pounding sound is heard – the sound of the entrance door slamming.

GEORGE

(Switching to a whisper)
No, you can't leave me...
(He falls to his knees.)

SCENE 2

George stands by the kitchen sink and examines his hands in a stupor. His wrists are bound with adhesives tape. Traces of blood can be seen in the sink.

GEORGE
(Hysterically)
You can't leave me...

The dull thud of heartbeats is heard. The sound grows louder, causing the air to vibrate. George seizes his head. He screams in a feral voice.

GEORGE
A-a-a-a-a!

SCENE 3

We see fragmentary images from George's mind: Adhesives tape rolling on the floor; George's bound, bloody wrists; The floor, giving way underneath George's feet, disappearing off to one side; From the entrance door, the dull echoes of footsteps from a person walking away; A bloody knife held by a hand that is becoming feeble. George faints. Everything goes dark.

SCENE 4

George is standing, cradling his head in his hands. Suddenly from somewhere in the distance comes a strange knocking sound. It is someone knocking at the door. The knocking grows louder and becomes duller in timbre. George's visions fade away as he rejoins reality. He takes his hands off his head. The door shakes from the knocking. George opens the entrance. Loraine stands on the threshold. George looks at her in amazement.

LORAININE
(looking at him with alarm and
speaking her words slowly)
I ... I'm staying...

She goes into the living room. She casts onto the floor her large yellow handbag with everything in it. She stands with her back toward George. George can hardly believe his eyes. He is overjoyed.

GEORGE
(with relief in his voice)
Loraine!

He falls in exhaustion to his knees in front of her, hesitant to actually touch her.

GEORGE

(his voice growing faint)

You came back! Now everything will be fine! Everything will be different. You'll see! And there will be money! Lots of money... I promise... I'm gonna change everything... everything..

LORAININE

(quietly)

I believe that deep down you really love me and it will give you the strength to believe in yourself... the strength to help me in difficult time...

SCENE 5

George is lying alone on the bed in the bedroom. Loraine's large yellow handbag is on the floor by the closet. Loraine herself is nowhere to be seen. From the kitchen comes the sound of running water. Once again there is a knock at the door. A strange knock. George awakens.

GEORGE

(toward the kitchen)

I'll open up...

He rises and walks toward the door. He looks into the peep hole. He sees nobody. The knock on the door is repeated. This time it is much louder. George throws wide open the door.

SCENE 6

There are two people in the doorway, Andy and Jane. George gazes at them as though he had never seen them before in his life. Andy and Jane exchange surprised glances.

ANDY

Do we go in?

GEORGE

(coming back to his senses)

A-a-a... Yes! I do know you guys...

ANDY (*pointing first at one, then the other as they enter*) and Jane. We're old friends... Yeah... Whooooooh... It's ... Something happened to my head...

Andy and Jane giggle and look at each other in surprise. They go into the living room

ANDY

There's something wrong with your head!

Jane nods in agreement, glancing at George confidentially.

GEORGE

What I mean is... My head is splitting, I have a cold, I suppose...
(*He attempts to simulate a cough.*)

SCENE 7

Andy and Jane are seated on one side of a table. George is sitting opposite them.

GEORGE

(*There is commotion in the background.*)
That's my neighbor, two floors above me. Every evening he comes home with a bulging suitcase. In the morning when he leaves, it's empty, and when he comes back, it's full!

JANE

So what? How do you figure it's full of money?

GEORGE

What else could it be? I see his black limousine constantly... Right here... In our neighborhood... All the time!

JANE

A limousine?

GEORGE

Don't you get it? It's all connected.
Everything fits together!

Andy and Jane look at each other dubiously

GEORGE

(in a crazed, hysterical tone)
There's got to be cash inside! Of course! What else could he have in there? What don't you understand? That suitcase must be full of money! And we're gonna get it. Are you on board?

Andy and Jane are unsure how to react. From somewhere in the distance, a strange knocking sound is audible. But Andy and Jane show no sign of hearing it.

ANDY

(giving the matter deep thought)
Now, an attaché case, or at least a metal briefcase... Something like that would make sense... Sometimes people use 'em to haul cash around... But an ordinary suitcase...

JANE

Yeah, yeah! What we want is an attaché case! Handcuffed to the guy who's carrying it, a sure bet to have cash inside... But a leather suitcase? Nah...

Again a knocking sound is heard, but much louder now. It becomes obvious that someone is knocking at the apartment door. George turns around abruptly toward the door and walks up to it on tiptoes. Andy and Jane look on in amazement. George looks through the peep hole and sees Andy and Jane, standing outside the door. George whirls around and looks to where Andy and Jane had been, but they are gone. Dumbfounded, George opens the door and sees Andy and Jane walking down the staircase. They both pause and turn, facing him. George looks at them, stunned.

ANDY

What?

JANE

Hey, relax! If it was a metal attaché case, then sure, why not... But a suitcase... *(She throws her hands up in the air.)*

GEORGE

(with hatred)

Yeah, f...k you! F...g freaks! Without you, I will do!

George slammed shut the door.

SCENE 8

George gently hugs Loraine's shoulders. She is seated at the table.

GEORGE:

(with excitement in his voice)

You know, I can do it without them!
I'll make it work ...

LORAININE

(with tired voice. hopefully)

I believe! You do love me... It is true that you love me? You will find the strength. You can ... you can do it ... I just look strong ... but I am so tired! Me so hard! I need your help...

(She hugs him.)

SCENE 9

George is lying alone on the bed in the bedroom. From somewhere comes an unidentifiable sound, but then the sound turns into the familiar knocking sound. George awakens and sits up on the bed. He moans, clasping his head in his hands. The knocking continues, getting louder. George rushes to the door and flings it open. He sees there two policemen who very much resemble Andy and Jane. George looks at them in a daze.

POLICEMAN 1

Hello!

(He opens his jacket and shows his police badge.)

Detective Schonberg. I'm sorry to bother you. We're looking for a neighbor of yours, the gentleman who lives two floors above you. When did you see him last?

GEORGE

(peering into the eyes of the policemen, mumbling and in a weak voice)

What the hell? ... What's going on here?

POLICEMAN 2

(glancing at his partner)

Are you all right?

GEORGE

...Yes...

POLICEMAN 1

We were informed... Your neighbor is missing. Do you know the man?

GEORGE

...No...

POLICEMAN 2

(holding out a business card)

Uh, huh. Well, if it's not too much bother, please let us know if you have any information... We'd appreciate it!

George accepts the card without speaking and quickly shuts the door. The policemen exchange a glance.

SCENE 10

George backs away from the door. He looking into the peep hole again, but there is

no longer anyone out there. George begins to black out. And a knocking sound begins to come from somewhere again.

GEORGE

(talking to himself in a low voice)

No! No! ... Enough! I can't stand that sound any more

He turns on the television and sits down in the armchair opposite. He turns up the volume to drown out the hateful knocking sound. Two people appear on the screen, a man and a woman

THE MAN

It's getting hot, couldn't we go more slowly?

THE WOMAN

We must hurry.

THE MAN

Do you know the way well?

THE WOMAN

Yes. He took us there several times himself.

From the television comes a vague noise—the barking of dogs, the wailing of the wind

GEORGE

What nonsense! *(He changes the channel. The picture flickers, but doesn't change.)* I don't get it... *(He changes the channel again.)* Is it broken, or what? What's up, the same show on all channels. Impossible. No, it must be broken. *(He beats on the top.)* Take that, you son of a bitch.

He sits down on the chair. The two on the screen walk up to a brick wall. George grabs his head with his hands and emits a sound somewhere between singing and moaning

THE WOMAN

Well, we're almost there now.

GEORGE

What? (*Startled, he removes his hands from his head.*)

THE MAN

How impressive. What do we do now?
The woman— Just be patient.

GEORGE

What a crazy show...

THE MAN

We can't do a thing by ourselves. I don't have enough strength, you can forget about that.

THE WOMAN

You don't have enough strength for anything.

GEORGE

What's wrong with my head? (*He breathes heavily.*) I'm in a fog...

THE MAN

I don't understand, did you bring me along to ruin my day? Why didn't you invite your old flame, he has enough strength for everything...

THE WOMAN

Lay off, I don't have anyone, how many times do I have to tell you?

THE MAN

Don't bother...

THE WOMAN

Wait a second... Help is on the way...
Don't you sense it?

THE MAN

You think he's the right one?

THE WOMAN

Why not? He's so nice, so full of
passion...

THE MAN

Oh no, not another one...

THE WOMAN

Oh, your one-track mind again! You
know what I mean... (*She speaks to one
side.*) Do you hear us? Put your hand to
the screen.

GEORGE

How weird. Is someone talking to
me? (*He rubs his face with the palms of
his hands, looks around.*) And why do I
feel so weak?

THE WOMAN

Put your hand to the screen.

GEORGE

What for? (*He answers like a machine,
and rolls himself into a ball.*) I must be
hallucinating...

THE WOMAN
(speaking to the man) Help me out.

THE MAN
(in a soft, but insistent voice) Hey,
fellow, stretch your hand out to the
screen.

GEORGE
(in a weak voice, searchingly)
Whaaa?

His hand rises against his will and stretches toward the screen.

GEORGE
What am I doing?

His finger touches the screen and a brick falls off of the wall.

GEORGE
How did that happen?

Out of curiosity he pokes the screen again and other bricks fall out, leaving a hole in the wall. The two on the screen enter the passage.

GEORGE
Ha! It's the damnedest thing! Were
those two talking to me? That's crazy!

George appears to be drawn physically to the screen. He sits down, and stares at it.

GEORGE
What's this, some kind of hocus pocus?
Where are those two people?

The television set emits the sound of heavy, resounding steps.

THE WOMAN
(hissing with irritation) Get out of my
way, you keep stepping on my feet.

THE MAN
I'm sorry, I can't see a thing.

THE WOMAN
That's it, we're there.

Loud sounds are heard— a heavy lock opening, an iron door screeching.

THE WOMAN
So pull! Don't you at least have the strength for that?

THE MAN
There you go again!
The screen lights up and on it we see a room. The two enter it.

GEORGE
(fearfully) Ahhh... They're back!...

THE WOMAN
I always like appearing here.

THE MAN
What, have you been in his apartment before?

THE WOMAN
I don't know if you're an idiot or you're just trying to wear out my patience. I mean here, on this side...

THE MAN
Hmmm... The air is pleasant here...

THE WOMAN
The air... Yes, it's the air I love. It's filled with energy. I can feel it with my entire body. A visit here is enough to make me several years younger.

THE MAN

Well, then, he deserves our gratitude.
Incidentally, are you sure he'll be
accepted?

THE WOMAN

Who can ever be a hundred percent
sure? But I like him.

The man says nothing, but emits an involuntary "hmmm."

THE WOMAN

That's all I can say. I sensed him
immediately, and he pulled me to this
side right away. It was only for a
second or two, but he made an
astonishing impression. You know how
rare that is! Sometimes it takes months
to tune a person in... I felt like howling
with joy, and that's just what I did. (*She
chuckles.*)

In the kitchen the water pipe loudly clatters.

GEORGE

(shaking) Damn! That lousy *water
pipe.*

THE MAN

Did you hear? What sound was that?

THE WOMAN

I don't know, but it's somewhere
nearby.

GEORGE

What's this, a coincidence?
*(Tensing up, he stretches his neck
toward the screen.)*
Hey, that room is my bedroom.

THE WOMAN

I think he's guessed.

THE MAN

It's about time. Frankly, I don't know what you saw in him.

George attempts, unsuccessfully, to rise from his chair. In fear, he looks behind himself, at the open door of the bedroom, but sees no one. Meanwhile the two enter the living room, where George is sitting. Their appearance has changed. Now they look horrifying.

THE MAN

Where is he? Still here? Maybe he ran to the kitchen? The woman— I don't know... No, he's here! Block the exit.

The man blocks the door, stretching out his arms. The woman, her arms similarly stretched out, walks around the room.

THE WOMAN

Here! (*pointing to the chair*) That's it, he won't escape now!

The man moves away from the door and toward George. The woman approaches George from behind, and above his head she joins her hands, which emit a sparkling blue light. George yells in pain and horror. His eyes go dark and he loses consciousness. Darkness, then a gradual return of the light.

SCENE 11

George is sitting on the floor. His hands are bloody. His right hand holds a roll of adhesives tape. He is turning it in his hand, trying to make it match his wrists, but he suddenly discovers that the cuts on his wrists have disappeared, and he has no reason to bandage them... At this moment, the terrifying knocking sound begins again.

GEORGE

(*yelling insanely*)

No! I can't stand it anymore! No-o-o!!!

No! No! No more!

The knocking does not stop and only gets louder. Now George knows for certain where the sound is coming from. It is coming from his bedroom. His whole body quivering, George goes toward the sound. It becomes louder. George stops opposite the bedroom closet, realizing the sound is coming from there. He slowly opens the closet door. On the floor, in a pool of blood, lies Loraine, bound with adhesives tape. The handle of a bloody knife is protruding from her abdomen. She is still alive. Trying to break the tape wrapped around her ankles, she is jerking her now-feeble legs. The heels of her shoes beat against the closet wall, causing the knocking sound...

GEORGE

(terrified)

Loraine! No!

He extends his trembling hand toward her, but a moment later his eyes become glassy. He leans his head over to one side, examining her at a different angle. The tension leaves his face. He pulls Loraine's legs forward toward the closet door, so that the heels of her shoes will no longer beat against the closet wall.

GEORGE

(relieved)

Loraine! Everything'll be different now! You'll see! Everything'll be for you. I promise! Everything'll be fine now!

LORAININE

(She hardly can speak with adhesives tape on her mouth)

Wake up, finally, if you really love me!
You see - I'm dying! If you really love -
help me...

These words awaking George. Suddenly he sees a reality. With weeping and shouting "I'm sorry" and "I didn't want to" he breaks the adhesives tape freeing Loraine's hands. Loraine hardly gets up to her feet and pressing his hands to her stomach, goes to the door.

SCENE 12

Silence. George alone. He is sitting at the table absently staring in front of him. The doorbell rings. George opens the door. Behind the door is detective.

DETECTIVE

I apologize. I'm looking for the young woman.

Detective shows a photo Loraine. We hear familiar sound of a heartbeat or it's a knock of a heel on the wall of the closet? Alarming music. George in a daze. The camera moves into his crazy eyes.

The END