THE ANGRY CHARMER

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Jeffrey R. Wall, B.A.
Denton, Texas
May, 1988

This screenplay, dealing with the theme of anger, is divided into three acts: setup, confrontation and resolution, respectively. Beginning in medias res, flashbacks are employed for expositions of the two main characters, Connor Tracy, alias the Angry Charmer, and Howard Goldberg.

Act I opens with Connor at the wheel of a van, driving wildly, Howard accompanying. The setup is established.

Act II returns to the careening van and then flashbacks to the college meeting of Connor and Howard. By the end of the act, the two, now unwilling relatives, go off on a European trip together. The confrontation has begun in earnest.

Act III resolves the problem of Connor's anger through the purgative experiences of the vacation, in particular the climactic ending.
FADE IN:

EXT. FRENCH HIGHWAY. 1951 - DAWN

A VAN is approaching, driving through mist and drizzle. As it nears, we MOVE IN ON three unhappy faces THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD. The wipers are drearily SLIDING back and forth.

The grim, tight-lipped driver is CONNOR TRACY (20), alias the Angry Charmer; a lively, redheaded, American college student of noticeable Irish descent; a sometimes charming soul whose "refining European tour" has, unfortunately, been plagued by his persistent character flaw -- temper -- which he is now on the verge of indulging to the uttermost. His clothes are still disheveled from the previous night's brawl.

Sitting next to him in the long seat of the cab, looking a little bit like Rodin's "Thinker," is HOWARD GOLDBERG (20); a dark haired, stolid, introverted, Jewish-American college student on vacation. As the Fates would have it, he is also recent brother-in-law to, and conscience of, the troubled Connor. If Connor is the fire, Howard is the water. Connor acts. Howard ponders.

In the passenger seat is FISHMONGER (40); a French wholesaler and purveyor of fine aquatic produce.

The van ROARS by. CAMERA, REVERSE ANGLE, follows. On the back of the departing van there is a picture of a gasping fish.

INT. VAN - DAWN

Howard and Fishmonger stare at each other helplessly.

Behind the three travelers are a mass of fish baskets, sitting by the back doors of the van. Some fish are still flipping. Howard slowly looks at the fish, turns his face back to Fishmonger, and then looks at the road.
3

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAWN

An enormous semitrailer approaches from the opposite direction, splashing water everywhere.

4

INT. SEMITRAILER - DAWN

OPERA MUSIC PLAYS on the radio. A burly, Italian truckdriver yawns. Suddenly his mouth snaps shut in disbelief. He turns off the radio and starts honking wildly.

From the truckdriver's POV THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD we see the van, in the wrong lane, driving directly towards the semi. Connor is playing chicken.

Cursing in his best Italian, the truckdriver speeds up, his fist sunk on the horn like lead.

At the last minute the van VEERS into its own lane. Fishmonger is seen sprawled against the van's windshield, obviously distraught.

5

INT. VAN - DAWN

CONNOR

Living on the edge. Refreshing!

HOWARD

And to hell with everyone else, right Connor?

CONNOR

Yeah.

FISHMONGER

(Looking at Howard and disentangling an arm from his fish smock)

You paid for a ride to the coast in my van, monsieur. But you didn't tell me about...

(CONTINUED)
He glances slowly at Connor.

...it!

HOWARD

Don't thank me for the bargain.

Connor takes a turn at a casual 30 m.p.h. Fish go flying everywhere.

FISHMONGER
(trying to smile nonchalantly)

Give me the wheel back and I'll...drop you off. Keep your...

HOWARD

No.

FISHMONGER
(in tears)

But why?

HOWARD

You mean, but who.

FISHMONGER
(again glancing at Connor)

Who is this...man?

HOWARD

Don't ask.

FISHMONGER
(turning directly to Connor)

What's your problem, I mean, your name?

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR
(With a look of derring-do)

I'm....the Angry Charmer!

FADE OUT.

BLACK SCREEN. The title "THE ANGRY CHARMER" DISSOLVES UP IN WHITE LETTERS.

Lively MUSIC PLAYS the ANGRY CHARMER THEME SONG as the MAJOR CREDITS ROLL.

FADE OUT TITLE.

FADE IN:

EXT. SNOWY SKY - AFTERNOON

As the INSTRUMENTAL continues we see solid grey, which gradually becomes grey clouds, then white clouds, then (as POV DESCENDS) snowfall, then snowballs lofted into the air.

EXT. FARMER'S FIELD. MIDWEST. 1943 - AFTERNOON

SNOW FALLS everywhere. We see a panoramic VIEW of a long sweeping valley, a farmer's rolling open field actually, covered with fresh snow. Two boys, brothers DUNCAN TRACY (14) and CONNOR TRACY (12), alias the Angry Charmer, are engaged in snowball battle with five local youths ranging in age from 12 to a huge, ugly leader of 17. The gang is massing for what looks to be, in the whirling flake-fall, its final attack. All wear 1940's clothes.

Duncan, the older brother, surveys the scene with anxious mien. He is tall for his age, serious, and given to doubt. While he appears hyperintelligent, even brilliant, one senses a lack of confidence. Fear rules his features, the result of fundamental doubt. He has dark brown hair and blue eyes.

(CONTINUED)
Connor, the redheaded younger brother looks very different. Short and wiry, even puny, he seems the kind of kid everyone would pick on. However, the fire in his blue eyes is blazing in Irish glory. Connor is completely undaunted by the size and number of his motley opposition. Indeed, he seems to relish the challenge.

Brimming with self-confidence, Connor's cheerful face seems positively entranced by the opportunity to display his considerable temper which is so pronounced that his small frame is literally shaking with fury as he hurls three snowballs for every one of his thoughtful older brother.

Connor wears his winter cap at a jaunty angle. Dangling from his neck, on the outside of his small coat is his lucky crucifix.

DUNCAN
(Gawking at the yelling, onrushing gang)

Connor!

CONNOR
(Enjoying himself)

Duncan!

DUNCAN
Let's go.

CONNOR
(Throwing again)

Chicken.

DUNCAN
You hard headed...I've NEVER liked you!

A snowball just misses Duncan's head.

(CONTINUED)
Try to hurt my brother. Eat this, wienie!

EXT. FARMER'S FIELD - AFTERNOON

The gang members are seen from ANOTHER ANGLE as they run toward the Tracy brothers.

GANG MEMBER #1
(About ten feet away)
Spudheads!

LEADER
Richies!

Connor hurls the iceball with all his tiny-titan might. The world awaits the outcome as the deadly missile approaches in slow motion the now fearful bully leader.

DUNCAN

Oh, Lord! Not him!

CONNOR
(With the simple faith of the believer, rubbing his amulet fervently)

Saving Jesus, bring it in!

GANG MEMBERS

Rudy, DUCK!

LEADER
(Now wobbly as a newborn foal, as his body is hurled forward while his legs retreat)

Oooooooooooohhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...

The iceball slow-mos in the last fateful distance.

(CONTINUED)
GANG MEMBERS

wwwwwwhhhhhhhhooooooooraaaarrrrrrrr...  

DUNCAN  
(Fearfully)

Nnnnooooooooonnnnnnnnooooonnnnnnn...  

CONNOR  
(Flushed with temporary victory)

Aaaayyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy...  
The iceball finds its mark with a terrific WHACK!  

GANG LEADER  
(On his back with a huge red welt on his forehead. His cap is sprawled on the ground behind him)

Aaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...  

INT. TRACY HOME - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Mother Tracy, a lively strong-faced housewife (35) of clear, proud Irish descent is pacing in the living room. A huge feast, Christmas dinner, is slowly spoiling on the dining room table.  
The darling Tracy boys are late! And for the biggest, most religious family gathering of the year! Anger is boiling from Mother Tracy's eyes.  

Her daughter, COLLEEN (8), is pacing with her, somewhat unenthusiastically perhaps, but obediently enough.  

Enthroned, sleepily, in his living room chair, newspaper in hand, is Father Tracy (51), a noble-faced judge of grave dignity and quiet manners with a hint of humble humor. He is, by profession, exceedingly tolerant of the foibles of mankind much to the dismay of his rigid wife.  

(CONTINUED)
The impression given is that of a Roman senator married to a fervently religious tap dancer of greater conviction than knowledge. Overall, we see a healthy, well-to-do family of what in an earlier generation would have been called "Lace Curtain Irish."

MOTHER TRACY

Jesus, Mary and Joseph!

FATHER TRACY
(From behind his newspaper)

Temper, Mother.

MOTHER TRACY

Colleen, Didn't I tell you to tell Duncan to come straight home from his friend's, no tricks, with Connor?

COLLEEN

Yes, you did and I did.

MOTHER TRACY

Then where are they? The dinner's in ruins. I wouldn't serve it to an Englishman!

FATHER TRACY
(putting down his newspaper)

Now Mother, don't exaggerate.

MOTHER TRACY

Who's exaggerating? Where ARE they? Oh, that Duncan! When he comes back, why I'll...

Just then the boys troop in, singing "Kathleen Mavourneen" mournfully. With their torn and bloody clothing, they look like two Irish soldiers inured to failure.

(CONTINUED)
FATHER TRACY
(Gently sardonic)

"Here's to the great Gaels of Ireland,
The men whom God made mad.
For all their wars are merry ones,
And all their songs are sad."

MOTHER TRACY

Is this a time for poetry? Hush!
Boys, what HAPPENED?

CONNOR

Nothing too eventful, Mother.

MOTHER TRACY

Nothing?

CONNOR
(Exuding charm)

Compared to the importance of tonight's dinner, that is.

MOTHER TRACY
(Temporarily flattered by her favorite child, then turning her ireful brows to Duncan)

Well?

DUNCAN
(Resignedly)

It's all my fault.

CONNOR
(Flaring)

No it wasn't.

MOTHER TRACY

Hush, Connor. It's ALWAYS Duncan's fault.

(CONTINUED)
FATHER TRACY
(soothing the rising Irish passion, temper)

Mother, Mother. Let's hear them out before judging. Go ahead, Duncan. What happened?

DUNCAN

This gang's been after us...me...
My plan...

MOTHER TRACY

Plan! Our country's at war, clothing's rationed, you two come home in shreds, and you've got a PLAN?

FATHER TRACY

Temper, Mother.

DUNCAN

...was to take a different route home, avoid them, but we got caught in a field. We had a fight...

MOTHER TRACY

I'll say! And who gave your little helpless brother...

CONNOR

Helpless?

DUNCAN
(Winking at Connor)

Hopeless!

MOTHER TRACY
(Shouting fanatically)

I said who gave your little brother this SHINER?

(CONTINUED)
A grim silence ensues. Duncan doesn't want to tell.

FATHER TRACY
(Patiently)
Answer your mother, son.

CONNOR
(Stepping in to save his brother)
I think I may have given myself the shiner, Poppo, by punching too many enemies of the Irish.

FATHER TRACY
This time, Connor, your blarney's closer to a fib. No, we need the truth here. Duncan, who gave Connor the shiner?

DUNCAN
(grimly)
This kid named Rudy.

MOTHER TRACY
The school bully I heard about?

DUNCAN
The state bully. He likes to chew on people's thumbs. I think he's part Indian or something.

MOTHER TRACY
Well, I don't care if he's part Tasmanian devil. He's in a whole lot of trouble fooling with the Irish. We've been through eight hundred years of struggle with the British...

DUNCAN
Ohhnnnn, spare me.

(CONTINUED)
MOTHER TRACY

...and, by God, we didn't move to America to knuckle under to bullies, especially PROTESTANT bullies...

ALL
(except Mother Tracy)

Motherrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr...

MOTHER TRACY

Well, don't get me started with this talk of oppression. Look at your baby brother! Why he looks worse off than you!

CONNOR
(proudly)

Thanks, mom!

DUNCAN

(his dander finally up from his mother's goading)

Now just a minute!! Are you saying I didn't fight too?

MOTHER TRACY

I'm saying that bully has to be beaten into submission. NOW! Beaten not fought. I won't have my children coming home bloody. Now you march out there and finish the joo.

DUNCAN

Oh, MOTHER! Do I have to?

She glares at him. He turns imploringly to his father who also returns his gaze without consent.
COLLEEN

I have to ooey Mother when I don't want to...temporarily don't want to. Why not you?

FATHER TRACY

Son, you may not know it yet but when you're in the right you can face lions. Your mother's right, we have to stand up to oppression.

DUNCAN

You want me to go out there ALONE and face a lion? I'm penalized for tardiness with...martyrdom?

MOTHER TRACY

Duncan, let me tell you a little poem about being Irish.

FATHER TRACY

I thought you said poetry wasn't...

MOTHER TRACY

Hush! This time it is. Listen, Duncan. "Now Paddy may be stubborn And he's sometimes very wrong, And Paddy may get angry Though it won't last for long, And Paddy may be lazy But everybody knows, There never was a coward Where the shamrock grows."

All take in the importance of Irish pride as Duncan silently heads for the door. As he opens it, Connor rushes up to him.

CONNOR

Wait!

(CONTINUED)
DUNCAN
(bitterly, with tears in his eyes)

What? Have you got another sentimental reason why I should get my face kicked in? This family, I tell you...I'll be glad someday when...

CONNOR

Shut up. I've got a secret to tell you.

DUNCAN

Hurry. I've got a meeting with a pulverizer my mother's anxious for me to attend.

CONNOR
(handing him his battle-hardened lucky hat)

Here.

DUNCAN
(Upset by Irish provincialism)

I don't want your magic hat, ignoramus. I don't believe in your charms.

CONNOR

That's because you don't have any.

DUNCAN
(Still upset)

Anhh, you well-meaning fool. You can't save me from my misery.

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR
(slowly taking off his crucifix)

Well, here. It's the best I've got. I know it's got blood on it but...really, I was stuck in a closet once, afraid of the dark and...and you weren't there to protect me like you were today and...well it helped me having this reminder of a loving Lord around my neck. Can't you just accept it?

DUNCAN

Ahhh, I don't want to hear any more...

CONNOR

No, really Duncan. Honest Injun! If you had a little more trust, a little more faith...you could face things like...this...with more...

DUNCAN
(impatiently)

All right. I'll take it. Just to get that look off your face. And then I'll go my merry way.

Duncan takes the crucifix, puts it on his neck and storms out.

CONNOR
(shouting after him)

Remember King David. Put some iceballs in your pockets!

INT. VAN - DAWN

Fishmonger is agitated, about to explode. Howard is also trying to figure out what to do about Connor's wild driving. Connor is lost in thought, reminiscing at approximately 30 m.p.h.. Finally, Fishmonger erupts.

(CONTINUED)
FISHMONGER
(opening the door of the van)

Let me out!

Connor, noticing him, drives remorselessly on, picking up speed around a curve. They are getting into hilly country. As the road levels out again, Fishmonger grabs a dead fish from one of the baskets and drops it out the door to gauge the impact of sudden landing. The fish breaks in pieces on the road. Sighing, Fishmonger closes the door.

HOWARD
(weakly)

This isn't right.

DISSOLVE TO:

12. BLACK SCREEN.

LOUD NOISE is heard. Some sort of assembly is sitting down to a meal. People SHOUT, dishes CLINK, chairs SCRAPE, etc..

NARRATOR (V.O.)
(The teenage voice of Howard Goldberg, as he repeatedly hits a glass with a spoon for silence)

Quiet people! Every one take a seat. Over there! Hey! No! Let them in. They're my...Hey! Let my people go. They're relatives. Sit DOWN folks. Let me give my speech and then we'll eat. You there! I SAID SIT DOWN, FOLKS, SO I CAN GIVE MY...

Howard's glass is shattered by the spoon

Musicians! Play till they all settle down.

Festive MUSIC rises from a black background. The MUSIC SOUNDS exotic, Middle Eastern.

(Continued)
FADE IN:

INT. NEW YORK SYNAGOGUE. 1943 - DAY

We slowly LOWER our view of an empty synagogue; starting with the ceiling, down to the balcony, then down to the central platform with the altar and, beneath it, empty seats.

We HEAR muffled MUSIC. It gets louder and louder as, following it, we travel through an exit on the side of the platform, then down some stairs, to where a bar mitzvah reception is being held in a large room filled with tables, chairs, guests, musicians, etc..

At the head table, our newly confirmed bar mitzvah boy, Howard Goldberg (13), is waiting to give his prepared speech. As the people finally settle in, the MUSIC stops, and all eyes look at Howard.

HOWARD

Dear friends and assembled guests:
Now that I am a man, come, let us reason together.

What is the source of the courage of our people? What is the heart of Judaism? How have we been able to resist centuries of persecution, to uphold our traditions with honor, our rights as human beings and, most importantly, our religious belief, the only true belief resting as it does on the authority of the Torah? Where did we get the STRENGTH to survive?

Seated in the audience is the GOLDBERG clan; MOTHER (36) and FATHER GOLDBERG (38), and REBECCA (14), the elder sister of HOWARD. With them are Uncle NAT and Aunt RENEE (age a family secret, either a year younger or older than Mother Goldberg, her sister, with whom she is engaged in a lifelong grudge-battle over alleged childhood grievances.)

Every face tells a story, and the stories behind the CAMERA's BRIEF FOCUS on this clan are, succinctly, as follows:

(CONTINUED)
Father Goldberg is a Depression-hardened, bitter shoe salesman with a devastatingly sharp tongue. Mother Goldberg is an intellectual, tense pessimist with a bleak view of her husband's potential. She has a boundless dedication to her children, especially to her brilliant son Howard; a fact not overlooked by Rebecca who is extremely jealous by nature and on the careless side like her father (a fact not overlooked by her mother) though generous to a fault.

The whole family has cross currents of resentment for each other. Mother resents Father, whom she suspects of infidelity. Father resents Mother, whom he is convinced is "gonna go to jail someday," that is, the funny farm. Rebecca resents the hell out of Mother for Howard's preferential treatment. Howard is too dreamy to know yet that he resents the hell out of Mother for her pampering (read smothering) attention.

On top of everything else, the family is also polarized by an ongoing debate over the relative merits of "books versus experience." Mother and Howard are in one camp, Father and Rebecca in the other.

Uncle Nat, alias Nat Stein, is a happy man though a bit of a live wire. A former singer, he loves to regale an audience, captive or otherwise, with his nasal renditions of current classics. He has a thriving bookbinding business that was launched with a timely loan from his brother-in-law, Bob, alias Father Goldberg. Nat procured this loan from Bob by promising Bob's wife, Elaine, alias Mother Goldberg, a "lifetime job" as accountant for the prospective business.

Alas, due to Elaine's uncompromising honesty and Nat's tendency to siphon business funds to his own poor relations, the "joo" didn't last long. Nat fired Elaine on a flimsy pretext. This breach rankles in Bob's soul and he exacts revenge on Nat as frequently as possible.

(CONTINUED)
Currently in the military, Nat is in soldier's uniform, home on leave. Father Goldberg, alias Bob, draft rejected due to flat feet, is a trifle ashamed by Nat's uniform. Nat always talks about his "mazel," or luck, much to the chagrin of "unlucky" Bob.

Aunt Renee, alias Renee Stein, is running the business for her husband Nat for the duration of the war (WWII). Nat is trying to relax with relatives. The last thing he is looking for is trouble or painful reminders of his obligations towards the Goldbergs.

Renee (pronounced Ree - knee) is a truly golden woman. Her hearing is growing increasingly worse. Extremely generous and warmhearted, she is happy, witty and fun loving. Renee is the polar opposite of her dour sister Elaine, alias Mother Goldberg. Renee waltzes through life like it was a ballroom floor. Elaine sees life as a ball and chain.

The Goldbergs and the Steins watch Howard.

HOWARD
(continuing)

True enough, it can be said, "If I am not for myself, who will be?" The great principle of self-reliance is a partial answer to the evident indestructibility of the Jew. But it can be conversely argued...

FATHER GOLDBERG
(sitting in the audience)

Oy, my head!

HOWARD

...that if is God is not for us, will we BE at all? And therein lies the strength of our people...

FATHER GOLDBERG

I'm losing strength just being here

(CONTINUED)
MOTHER GOLDBERG
(sitting next to him)

Shhhhh, Bob!

GUESTS

Shhhhh!!!
Look! The father heckles his own son!
What'd you expect from the Goldbergs?
Feh! They're all meshugenah, crazy!

HOWARD
(realizing the gathering impatience, he wraps up his overlong speech, blushing at his father's behavior)

...It is the Lord's favor that strengthens us, nourishes us...

More NOISE is heard.

...and preserves us, unworthy as we are, from sinful generation to generation.
Nevertheless, it is not all God's doing.
In partnership with him, WE must make the titanic effort, WE must do heroic battle...

FATHER GOLDBERG

What does he know about fierce fist fights?

MOTHER GOLDBERG

What do you know about making a living? You spiteful...

GUESTS

Shhhhhhh.
Shhhhhhh.
Shhhhhhh.

(CONTINUED)
FATHER GOLDBERG

He's a dreamer. Like your smarty-pants brother, the only valedictorian who ever failed.

MOTHER GOLDBERG

Oh, and you're better 'cause you sell shoes to women?

GUESTS

SHHHHH!!!

FATHER GOLDBERG

(roaring like a wounded bull)

MY WOMEN'S SHOES BUY HIS BOOKS!

GUESTS

(gasping)

See? Meshugenah!...
Why'd we come to honor such a family of nuts?

HOWARD

...with uh...with uh...with every INTERRUPTION that would pull us away from our purpose...

Speeding up his delivery.

...How then can I, as a loyal son of Jacob, refuse my hand when a brother, that is, a brother Jew - we're not assimilationists here - is in distress? How can I, in short, fail in any particular the stringent requirements of our lofty Judaism and yet still claim the honor, the privilege of calling myself first a man and then, above all, that highest of men...a Jew?

(Continued)
I pledge myself, therefore, to uphold the Law and spend my days in active pursuit of the moral perfection that IS Judaism, so help me God.

Rousing applause is heard for the bar mitzvah candidate with the mission-filled burning eyes.

INT. VAN - DAWN

Fishmonger is clapping Howard on the shoulder, trying to get his attention.

FISHMONGER

Monsieur, wake up! Where ARE you?

The van takes another precarious curve.

HOWARD

I...uhhh...

FISHMONGER

What are we going to DO?

HOWARD

(remembering his oar mitzvah speech)

The right thing...with the Lord's help!

The wheels of the van SCREECH around another curve.

FISHMONGER

A deaf angel! Sacre Bleu. I could have had Jacques take the dammed fish. Foolish me! Instead, I die among lunatics.

HOWARD

I'm not crazy. My family is.

He starts pushing back the hair near his temples, evidently looking for something.

(CONTINUED)
FISHMONGER

Oh.

A sudden turn throws Howard against Fishmonger. The door opens and Fishmonger almost falls out.

HOWARD

Whatever you do, don't smile.

FISHMONGER

(looking at Connor's glazed eyes and fearing the worst)

He's your friend. Reason with him. Talk!

HOWARD

Look. Some people just aren't rationale.

FISHMONGER

(getting hysterical again)

Speak...to....him!

He starts clapping Howard on the shoulder.

INT. NEW YORK SYNAGOGUE. 1943 - DAY

As the young Howard is being applauded for his speech, the Goldberg clan joins in, with Mother Goldberg leading the pack in frantic enthusiasm (Father Goldberg looking at her like she is crazy) and jealous Rebecca bringing up the rear, barely tipping her fingers.

MOTHER GOLDBERG

(with tears in her eyes)

Wasn't that the finest speech you've ever heard, Bob?

FATHER GOLDBERG

More than that. It's the finest speech you've ever written.

(CONTINUED)
MOTHER GOLDBERG
(miffed)

Oh! I don't write Howard's speeches...
Well, maybe I REWRITE them. But no, I
don't have time...

REBECCA

You're too busy doing his other homework.

MOTHER GOLDBERG

You're just jealous 'cause you're not as
good a student as...

REBECCA

Then why don't you tutor ME, like you do
him morning, noon and night?

MOTHER GOLDBERG

I don't tutor him morning, noon and night!
I do the wash in the morning.

RENEE
(breaking up yet another quarrel
in the Gloom family)

Elaine. Elaine. On him the speech sounded
good. Who cares where he got it?

NAT
(cheerfully)

Boo, what a fine boy you got! I wish him
lots of mazel.

FATHER GOLDBERG
(sarcastically)

Why? Have you promised him a job, too?

(CONTINUED)
NAT
(upset by Bob's needling)

Bob, Bob. Are you on that again? Why can't you be a PERSON, Bob, a mensch?

FATHER GOLDBERG

I can't afford to. You're the rich man who won't help the family that got you started.

NAT
(quickly changing the subject)

Be happy, Bob. Why can't you and Elaine be HAPPY like Renee and I? Come down to our level, Bob.

FATHER GOLDBERG

I'm trying.

NAT
(indignant)

You never LISTEN, Bob. You always TALK.

FATHER GOLDBERG

How can I talk and listen?

MOTHER GOLDBERG

Look, Bob! Renee's giving some money to Rebecca. Don't give my child money just 'cause you don't have one.

NAT

Jesus! Always the sore point. What is it with you two? I tell ya...

MOTHER GOLDBERG

We don't need their money, do we Bob?

(CONTINUED)
FATHER GOLDBERG

Why not? It's ours.

NAT

BOB!

MOTHER GOLDBERG
(to her sister)

We don't need a nice assist from you, you sneaky...

RENEE
(disarmingly)

If I'm sneaky then you're snaky! So what is that, news? Let's go eat at my place. I'm from hunger, already.

MOTHER GOLDBERG

Wellllllll...I do hate to cook.

RENEE

Come on... gefilte fish for an appetizer! Then some matzo ball soup, and a nice chicken, without the feathers this time... everything a nosher would want. Say you'll come, dolink.

MOTHER GOLDBERG
 stil preferring anger to joviality)

We're not going, Bob. Are we?

FATHER GOLDBERG

Like we've got something else to do? Dust off the welcome mat, Nat.

(CONTINUED)
RENEE
(winking at an increasingly upset Nat)

Ignore him, bubbelah, he's family. You're supposed to ignore your family.

NAT

I tell you, Renee, I'm gonna...

RENEE

So what are you gonna do, already? I have a tongue, I talk. They talk too. So let's feed them Nat, dolink, bubbelah, and maybe that Bob'll shut his dragon mouth.

FATHER GOLDBERG
(with a final decisive needle)

Sure, Nat. Feed us. The way I figure it, you owe us plenty. And how! Bisels of bagels...

NAT
(exploding)

Bob, you're a real whaddacall, a real...

FATHER GOLDBERG

Whaddacall?

NAT

No, a real...

FATHER GOLDBERG


NAT

You're like hell, Bob. You're like being in hell.

(CONTINUED)
FATHER GOLDBERG

You should be comfortable there, Nat. Isn't that where...

By this time the crowd of people has quieted down to hear the raucous argument. There is a sudden silence.

NAT

(fit to be tied)

GO TO HELL! YOU GODDAMNED...

GUESTS

See? Real meshuggenahs!
Oh! Awful!
In a synagogue no less!
We'll put a stone in you!

Howard approaches crestfallen, his arm linked with RABBI WEISS, followed by two young Yeshiva students.

HOWARD

Uh...Rabbi...this is...my family. Do you remember my uncle Nat?

RABBI WEISS

Does he allow me to forget?

NAT

(squirming)


HOWARD

(coldly)

I was referring to SINCERE practitioners. A man who doesn't APPLY his religious beliefs is like an ass carrying books!

(continued)
REBECCA
(snidely looking at Howard)
I'll say.

NAT
(twitching nervously, he starts convulsive swimming motions)
The air in here. Oh, Boy! It's like matzo ball soup. Wow!
He starts laughing and crying simultaneously.

RABBI WEISS
Are you all right?

NAT
(twitching and shaking like a rabbit in a wolf's jaws)
Never better.

FATHER GOLDBERG
(relishing Nat's excruciating embarrassment)
Watch out if he promises you a job, Rabbi. He gave my wife one and then fired her when she caught him stealing. But that's our family secret. He'd die if word ever got out to the congregation.

GUESTS
Is this a Jew?
Ehnn, why does this man live?

Nat starts biting his lips in fury. He grows strangely quiet, standing erect in his uniform. His hands turn into balled instruments of death.
INT. GOLDBERG LIVING ROOM - DAY

Father Goldberg is sitting in his chair reading the sports pages. He has a huge black eye, given him by Nat a few days earlier at the synagogue. Mother Goldberg is at the dining room table helping Howard with his homework. Rebecca is cleaning the dishes, eyeing mother and son jealously, feeling very much like Cinderella before the ball.

FATHER GOLDBERG
(work his jaw)

Boy, I didn't know that whaddacall had so much in him.

HOWARD
(looking up, pleased, from his tutoring)

Who?

FATHER GOLDBERG

That goif, Nat. Boy, what a hit I got from that son of a...

MOTHER GOLDBERG
(scandalized)

Bob! Not in front of the children.

FATHER GOLDBERG
(putting his paper down and touching his ribs gingerly)

Man! I feel like I had a baby. The way we were fighting...If I'd gotten any closer and he was a girl, he woulda been pregnant.

MOTHER GOLDBERG

You're coarse, Bob, like a gentile. You've got thick peasant fingers and...

(CONTINUED)
FATHER GOLDBERG

Ah, go on with ya, already. You and your bugaboos. Gentile this, gentile that. Who gives a damn?

MOTHER GOLDBERG

Nobody gives a damn about the Jews. That's why Hitler gets away with what he's doing. What d'you think is going on in all those resettlement camps?

HOWARD

(idealistically)

Slave labor like in Pharaoh's time, right?

REBECCA

I wonder if they had to wash dishes, too.

MOTHER GOLDBERG

(ignoring Rebecca's complaint as she addresses Howard)

Don't worry about it, dear. Thank God we're in America! What we had to go through in Poland and Russia...the hate, the pogroms...oy, I wish it on no one. That was then. How it's even worse! Europe isn't safe anymore.

FATHER GOLDBERG

Yeah, times are sure changing. Look at Nat. A violent Jew! I used to rib him weeks on end. Now all of a sudden he's crawling like an Irishman. What's the world coming to?

He touches his black eye and shifts uncomfortably in his chair.

Times are changing, all right. Who knows how far they'll go?

(CONTINUED)
MOTHER GOLDBERG

As long as we're left alone to survive and be Jewish, who cares?

Rebecca looks up long and thoughtfully from the sink.

EXT. FRENCH COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

Two French policemen have their motorcycles parked in the middle of the road. They are checking traffic both ways, evidently looking for someone or something. A few produce trucks and the like are rolling to a stop, being checked and then waved on.

The checkpoint is at the base of a huge hill. Suddenly a SOUND from the top of the hill is heard, attracting the attention of the police. As they look up the hill, one of them takes off his dark glasses and stuffs them in his shirt pocket.

ROARING from the top of the hill comes the van, wheels spinning in the air, steered, or rather, piloted fantastically by that rouge rogue, Connor Tracy. The van lands and ZOOMS down the hill, then brakes quickly, laying a huge patch of rubber and almost VEERING off the road. The driver, Connor, has spotted the police.

By the time it reaches the checkpoint, the van is going normal speed. It rolls to a stop in front of the alarmed police. One searches frantically for a bullet, and, procuring one, puts it in his revolver. He then nervously puts his revolver in his shirt pocket.

INT. VAN - DAY

HOWARD

We're gonna pay now, you ass! Speeding, kidnapping, now what?

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR
(breaking into a sharklike smile)

Fatal charm.

He rolls down the window to try to explain his way out of the trouble he’s obviously in, judging by the apprehensive looks of the gingerly approaching police.

One of the police, as he gets within shooting range of the van, pulls his revolver out of his shirt pocket. The revolver has a broken lensed pair of sunglasses dangling from the snout.

The other cop, who has a lit cigarette in his right hand, transfers it nervously to his left while reaching for his gun. He is prepared, French-style, to meet his fate. Unfortunately, in the process the cigarette is reversed so that the lit end enters his mouth.

Connor clears his throat.

FISHMONGER
(seeing his charge)

I'll handle this.

CONNOR
(glowering)

No funny stuff.

FISHMONGER

It won't be funny.

Fishmonger rolls down his window and motions to the scared cop who comes over to him. The policeman, seeing Fishmonger’s beret, sticks his face in the window within breathing distance, French-style.

POLICEMAN
(adjusting his broken glasses)

Oui?

(Continued)
FISHMONGER  
(at the top of his voice, right in the policeman's face)

HEEEEEEEEEEEELLLLLLLLLPPPPP!!!!

Pandemonium breaks out. Connor punches the windshield in fury, Howard starts shouting, the nonchalant policeman swallows his cigarette and runs away in a figure eight pattern, the other one shoots his gun through the roof, the fish flip and Fishmonger, after throwing his beret at Connor in impotent rage, promptly collapses in frustration against the door.

Connor pounds the pedal to the floor and ZOOMS off, running over the two motorcycles in the process, as if the Furies were after him.

FISHMONGER  
(ranting out the window at the incapacitated officers)

Hellllllllllpppp. It's Bugs Bunny! Leading us into the mouth of hell!

The officers shout angrily after him. Fishmonger shakes his fist at them.

You fascist goon squads! Where were you in 1940?

The van VEERS snarly.

Oh Noooooooooooooo!

EXIT. FRENCH COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

The police mill about their ruined motorcycles as the van tears off in the distance. One of the cops, taking off his broken glasses, apparently for greater efficiency, tries to make a call on a vestigial bike radio. The other, hyperventilating, refuses a nearby trucker's offer of a cigarette.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK SCREEN.

(CONTINUED)
Eerie, dissonant MUSIC (violin versions of nails-scraping-chalkboards, etc.) is HEARD with weird, uneasy shiftings of VOLUME.

A RHYTHMIC CLACKING is HEARD. We are inside a speeding train, which is coming out of a tunnel.

FADE IN:

21 EXT. NEW YORK COUNTRYSIDE. 1949 - DAY

This scene, a dream sequence, is shot on black and white film.

The train is RACING along, leaving behind rural stretches of foliage, as it approaches a metropolis looming in the distance.

Connor Tracy (18), is leaving the Midwest to go to the same college in New York that his brother Duncan has been attending for two years. Viewers can ascertain the gist of this situation by a CLOSE UP of a New York University catalogue lying on Connor's bunk with a picture of Duncan Tracy wearing an NYU sweater clipped on top of it.

Connor is sharing, because of a bureaucratic screw-up, a train compartment of the sleeping-car sort, bunk beds on either side, with a family. A wife is sleeping, cramped, with her baby on one of the bottom bunks. The husband is sleeping on the bed over her.

Standing, Connor is staring moodily at his reflection in the train window. The reflection shows a huge piece of toilet paper on his cheek, put there to stem the flow of a shaving accident, something he is still prone to through unfamiliarity.

Although fully eighteen-looking, we see by his intemperate expression that Connor is still the rash but charming soul he was in his childhood. He bears certain rough edges which have yet to be smoothed out. His lucky crucifix is still around his neck.

Connor's reflection in the window slowly takes off the toilet paper. Blood flows.

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR

Damn!

He punches the window angrily. It breaks. Then superstitiously:

I mean...darn.

He tries to piece together the window shards. They all fall out, leaving a two foot by four foot gaping hole in the speeding train.

I mean...DAG NAB IT!

He rudely pulls the blanket off the sleeping woman and child and attempts to cover the hole. He succeeds only in arousing the now wind-blasted twosome.

LADY

Hey...Hey...What's going on?

BABY

Waaaaaaaaanhhh.

CONNOR

(trying to assuage their justifiable anger)

I mean...go back to sleep ma'am. I'm just fixing...

He impulsively kicks the window wall of the train. It falls off.

MAN

(waking up grumpily)

If it's not broken, don't fix it.

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR
(getting riled again)

Look buddy! There's no sense getting NASTY. 'Cause when I get riled I lose CONTROL!

So saying, he punches the train roof in a show of force. It collapses and falls away. They are now riding in an open box car. The family stares at him quietly. Suddenly they approach another dark tunnel. The family panics.

LADY
(At the top of her voice, hitting herself on the head with a sandwich)

I'm going crazy!

BABY

Waaaaaaahhh.

MAN

He's nuts! Let's get outta here.

LADY
(arguing with her husband even during this extremity)

I told you what this city does to people. Why'd we ever come back?

The train continues on into the dark tunnel while the arguing crescendos.

CONNOR
(Desperate)

If you folks'll just CALM DOWN! I'm not responsible when I'm angry.

BABY

Waaaaaaahhhhhhh....Waaaaaahhhhhhh. Waaaaaaahhhhhhh....oooops. (CONTINUED)
LADY
(in a subdued voice, then shrieking)
Where's my child....Where's my chiiiiild?

CONNOR
(in a scary night voice)
I told ya not to rile the Angry Charmer.

LADY
You monstrous...aaaaaaahhhhhhh!

MAN
You bastard. You hell-spawn...

CONNOR
Things could get worse for you, fella, if you don't calm down.

MAN
How? She had the money. Why I'm gonna reach out in this dark and rips that crucifix right off your...

CONNOR
(in a panic)
No! That's my soul...

Suddenly we HEAR CHAOS; the sound of troops coming through the car door, dogs and apes barking, machine gun fire, etc..

MAN
Careful! We have a killer in this car!

SOLDIER
More than one! You look for trouble you find it!

(CONTINUED)
He starts spraying lead. The beasts start up again. A lion roars.

**MAN**

Grab his crucifix! That's his weak spot. He's jelly without it!

**CONNOR**

(shouting at the top of his lungs)

No! That's my soul. That's my... Noooooo...

The train comes out of the dark tunnel into blinding light.

The film goes back to color.

22

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Everything is back to normal. The window, the roof, all normal. Connor wakes up from his nightmare.

**CONNOR**

(Yelling himself awake. He still is wearing his toilet paper bandage)

Noooooo...

**BABY**

(startled)

Waaaaaaaaahhhhh!

**CONNOR**

(wide awakes)

You! I thought I'd thrown you...

**LADY**

(scandalized)

What?

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR
( scrambling with charm)

I mean... I thought I'd thrown the little... mess... so many candy kisses that...

He reaches over to pat the child's head. The child jabs him with his sticky chocolate bar.

...Thank you. I'm glad to see you alive.

LADY
(annoyed)

What? What kind of morbid humor is this, young man?

CONNOR
(getting riled)

Well, I'd like to see you flying too someday, ma'am. Front seat in my glass airplane.

MAN
(mollifying things)

You looked like you were throwing more punches than candy kisses in that dream of yours, son. Are you all right?

CONNOR
(surly)

Look, I just woke up. Let me order my thoughts, will you?

MAN
(cheerily)

Sure, son. Where ya from?

CONNOR

It don't make a damn to you.

(CONTINUED)
MAN
(losing patience)

There's a gentlemen's agreement on certain words to not use in front of...

CONNOR

Who said I was a gentleman?

He storms through the door, slamming it.

EXT. NEW YORK TRAIN STATION - DAY

Duncan Tracy (20), junior year college student, with a big N.Y.U. jersey on and another smaller one draped over his arm, is waiting at the arrival platform for his "hick from the sticks," red-neck younger brother (read bother), Connor. New York has been a tonic for Duncan. The cultural diversity and sophistication of the city have given the aspiring intellectual, stifled in his youth by a rigid Irish brand of Catholicism, the confidence to explore his own ideas of life and living. Duncan is a free man at last.

Nevertheless, a deeply engrained, big brotherly sense of duty obligates him to assume the difficult task of weaning Connor from his certain "culture shock" at the pagan horrors of "Jew York."

The train arrives. People begin pouring out with their luggage from the long trip. Duncan sees Connor and waves to him. Connor is hardly enthusiastic. They meet.

DUNCAN

Welcome to New York. Welcome...

CONNOR

(handing him a valise)

Here.

(CONTINUED)
DUNCAN
...to...

CONNOR
Let's get outta this stinkin' mob.

DUNCAN
...New York. You hard-headed...

CONNOR
(finally cracking a smile)
Come on, you bum. What are we, loitering bohemians? Let's GO!

DUNCAN
Not ONCE have I ever liked you.

They put their arms around each other and march off.

INT. NYU LIBRARY - NIGHT

Freshman Howard Goldberg is diligently burning the midnight oil. On scholarship, he feels conscientious about "deserving" his financial aid. Studiousness is written all over his face. Like a true bookworm, his sleeves are rolled down, his hair is plastered up and his bow tie is snapped in place.

Down by the checkout desk someone is making a DISTURBANCE. Howard lifts up his head and goes back to his book. NOISE continues. Howard makes a concerted effort to concentrate and finds, annoyed, that's he's lost his place. NOISE increases. Howard taps his fingers on his book.

NOISY ONE
I tell you it's my RIGHT to take out as MANY books as I need WHEN I need them!

DESK CLERK
But, sir. You're not the only patron.

(CONTINUED)
NOISY ONE

Don't patronize me, you four-eyed twit. I'll slap that sass right outta you!

DESK CLERK

Where are you from, the Wild West?

NOISY ONE

That's right! And I'm gonna do the Prairie Stomp up and down the back of your ninety pound hide if you don't...

HOWARD

Excuse me.

CONNOR

(the Noisy One)

Back of the line, pal. You can have what's left of...

HOWARD

I'm trying to study.

CONNOR

Get! Rude people! Don't even let you finish a...

HOWARD

I said I'm trying to STUDY!

CONNOR

Well go to your seat, son. You can't study in a line no kinda way.

HOWARD

I will if you'll be QUIET.

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR

The squeaky wheel gets the oil.

HOWARD

You squeak too much, you'll get fire.

CONNOR

(admiringly)

Hey! Well said, guy. Come on, let's get outta this mausoleum and down a few brewskis. I've got a thirst you could photograph.

HOWARD

Brewski?

CONNOR

Jeez! What are you guys, cousins? Brewski, beer. You ever had a beer?

HOWARD

Let me think.

CONNOR

I don't believe it! What'd you come to college for?

HOWARD

To study.

CONNOR

Oh, you poor guy. You're coming with me. NOW!

Connor drags Howard off.

(CONTINUED)
HOWARD
(charmed and intrigued)

Wait! Let me get my stuff. I have fresh pencils over there! And pink, unrubbed erasers.

Conscientious Howard runs off to collect his hoard of academic accessories.

CONNOR
(to the desk clerk)

Keep the books. It'll take you a week to erase all my underlines.

DESK CLERK

You can't deface...

CONNOR
(brandishing his fists)

You can't defight!

HOWARD
(apprehensively)

How much is a brewski?

CONNOR
(pityingly)

It's on me, junior.

INT. COLLEGE BAR - NIGHT

Connor and Howard are horsing around, drinking beer and telling outrageous stories, most of which "never happened and never possibly could have happened."

Howard, sleeves rolled up, hair gone dry, bow tie... well, bow tie in his POCKET at least, is hoisting a "brewski." Connor starts playing "name that tune" a little too boisterously.

(CONTINUED)
HOWARD
(Suddenly serious)

Listen, Connor.

CONNOR

No, YOU listen.

He hoists his brew for a toast.

Here's to the years of college decadence!
May they never end.

HOWARD
(looking troubled and half-hearted)

Never.

CONNOR

And now, the maestro will now perform.

He clears his throat.

OK, what's this? Da duh...dah duh
dah...dun DAH duh duh... duh DUH dah duh
dah duhh...

REVELER

Hey, watch out!

CONNOR

...Dun dah DUH...dah duh dah DUHHHHH!!

REVELER

I said watch...uhhhhhhhhhhhhh.

CONNOR

On, sorry guy. I didn't mean to pour it on your girl...I was aiming for you.

(CONTINUED)
REVELER

You stupid...

CONNOR

Although she looks happier with the beer on her face than you on her arm.

HOWARD

Listen, Connor. We're not gonna get into this happy horseshit tonight.

CONNOR

But this guy's soaking up my beer!

HOWARD

You can practice your karate chop another time, son. This night is DIFFERENT.

CONNOR

Why is that?

HOWARD

Because tonight I invited my sister. She's a junior, and you're gonna act civil or you can party alone. You got that, alley cat?

CONNOR

All right, all right. It's just as well.

HOWARD

Why?

CONNOR

Because it just so happens that I invited MY kin tonight, too.

(CONTINUED)
HOWARD

Your brother, Mr. High and Mighty Intellectual, I'm always hearing about?

CONNOR

Yes, the king will attend our festivities tonight. Dust off your quotes. Hey DUNCAN!

The crowd quiets. All eyes turn on shy-looking Duncan who, scowling, crosses the room to Connor.

CONNOR

Shut up, everybody! My brother Duncan's gonna be hilariously funny for the next three minutes.

The crowd listens even more intently.

DUNCAN
(to the crowd)

Ignore him. He's a...

He waves his hand to indicate looniness. Then he arrives at the bar and comes up to Connor.

Charming as a buzz saw, you pain in the...

CONNOR

Ah, come on. Don't gripe me out. Look! I gotta guy all lined up for you to fight. One more spritz and he's off to the races. You want in on a bloodletting?

DUNCAN

No thanks. I learned long ago not to fly in one of YOUR hurricanes.

He turns to Howard.

Hello. My name's Duncan. What are you doing with this desperado? (CONTINUED)
HOWARD
You should know. He's your brother. Don't you like him or something?

DUNCAN
Some people are best loved at a distance. You know, small doses of quality time couched between eons of recuperative convalescence.

HOWARD
(impressed)
You ARE an intellectual.

DUNCAN
And you're a glutton for punishment if you can't see trouble hanging around with this...

He sees Rebecca (20) enter the bar. She is quite beautiful with big warm eyes and long black hair. The crowd quiets again. To Duncan's astonishment, she crosses the room and walks right up to him, smiling.

...Hi!...uhhhhhh...
She walks right past him and gives Howard a hug.

HOWARD
Gentlemen, this is my sister, Rebecca.

Even raucous Connor is stilled by her presence. For thunderstruck Duncan, however, it's love at first sight.

CONNOR
well!
Rebecca looks at him.

(CONTINUED)
REBECCA

Well?

CONNOR

Well, WELL!

HOWARD

Language major. Name's Connor. Come on, you can something more than "well."

CONNOR

(regaining some of his native bravado, he offers her his stool)

Sure, sure. Sit, SIT.

In his exuberant way he practically forces her to sit on the stool next to flabbergasted Duncan.

REBECCA

(pleasantly)

And who are you?

Duncan opens his mouth. Words fail him.

New filling?

Duncan nods affirmatively, then, coming to his senses, wags his head vigorously from side to side. Rebecca is put off by this display of lunacy.

Howard, maybe I should...

HOWARD

Oh, that's Duncan, Connor's older brother. He's supposed to oe quite the intellectual.

REBECCA

How can anyone tell?

(CONTINUED)
Duncan, realizing his chances of ever having this goddess for his own are sinking fast, comes up with a bold scheme.

DUNCAN

Connor, you big-hearted prince of a guy! Would you do you me a BIG favor?

CONNOR

Leave?

DUNCAN

No. Well, yes. Just for a minute. I left my car double-parked.

CONNOR

Uh huh.

DUNCAN  (exasperated)

You...I mean, you can keep the jersey I got for you. It's in the trunk. Safe.

CONNOR

In the trunk?

DUNCAN

Yeah, under the oil can. I didn't think I'd be giving it to you again.

CONNOR

Giving it to me AGAIN? What was it, on a yo-yo?

DUNCAN

It's just that...oh, why don't you ever MOVE when I tell you to?

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR

Because I want advice not direction.

REBECCA
(sensing a fight)

Come on, Howard. Let's go.

DUNCAN
(smiling at her)

No, WAIT!

He looks at Connor with a look of pure fury, holding out the car keys.

Keys!

Connor leaves in a huff. Duncan turns to Howard.

You better go with him. I think he feels like taking a little spin.

HOWARD

Sure. What are friends for? You OK, sis?

REBECCA
(in a motherly tone)

I can take care of myself, thanks. Wait, Howard! What's that?

HOWARD

What?

REBECCA

I think you're going bald.

HOWARD

Bald? Where?

(CONTINUED)
REBECCA

On your head.

Howard looks in the bar mirror.

HOWARD

I've been using a new shampoo...maybe...oh no...WIDOW'S PEAK!

REBECCA

You could check it out in the car mirror while you're cruising with Connor.

Duncan is trying not to laugh at Rebecca's easy manipulation of her self-conscious younger brother.

HOWARD

I'll do that RIGHT AWAY.

He runs through the bar with his hand over his "widow's peak." People stare. He glares at them.

Don't look.

Howard scuttles through the door, looking awkwardly at his reflection as he does. Duncan has her alone!

DUNCAN

You're a funny lady.

REBECCA

You're a funny guy.

DUNCAN

How do you mean that?

REBECCA

Probably opposite of what you meant.

(CONTINUED)
DUNCAN  
(impressed)  

Smart too.

REBECCA  
(bored)  

Hmmm.

Duncan realizes he is losing her again, maybe for good. He tries again to communicate his admiration, this time in an INTERESTING way.

DUNCAN  

I feel like I know you from somewhere.

Utterly turned off, Rebecca slowly lights a cigarette and blows smoke in his face.

Uhhh....my father's a judge.  
A very dignified...

He starts coughing violently. Rebecca laughs and finally decides he MAY be a little cute but she'll be hog-tied if she knows why. Maybe its his sincerity, maybe she just likes his obvious ardor.

...kinda guy.

REBECCA  
(in a good mood, enjoying her present superiority in the age-old battle of indifference)

Mine sells shoes.

DUNCAN  

See that gap narrowing? He must meet senators...

REBECCA  

...to women...

(CONTINUED)
DUNCAN

...of course, senator's wives have all the influence. Everyone knows that.

They both stare at each other in a distant, fish-eyed way.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Duncan and Rebecca, new friends, are walking along, continuing their long running, exploratory discussion of each other's philosophy. They are in a stage of mutual enchantment that has not yet ripened into mature love.

REBECCA

Are you trying to say that because my father is important, I am too?

DUNCAN

Yes.

REBECCA

Well I say that because your father is a judge doesn't make you anything. You're not beans till you do something on your own.

DUNCAN

On, yeah?

REBECCA

Yeah. And you're rated higher if you come from humble beginnings anyway. So your high expectations are a burden unless you're prepared to live up to them.

DUNCAN

You think I'm stupid and you're smart, don't you?

(CONTINUED)
Rebecca laughs and walks on. Duncan, magnetized, slowly follows.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Duncan and Rebecca are once again engrossed in conversation. They sit in a dark, romantic corner of the quiet, intimate dining establishment.

REBECCA

I think you're privileged but don't realize yet the obligations attached to those privileges or you wouldn't be always bragging about your father. Not everyone can.

A waitress comes up with the bill on a tray. Duncan pulls out his wallet and, seeing it empty, reaches into a side pocket of it and pulls out his "safety twenty." As the waitress frowns and Rebecca smiles sympathetically, Duncan puts the crinkled bill on the tray and waves off the waitress, pretending not to know her.

DUNCAN

Wouldn't YOU brag if yours was a judge? Especially if you were trying to impress someone?

REBECCA

Of course.

DUNCAN

(incensed)

So what you're saying is you're a hypocrite!

REBECCA

Yes.

(CONTINUED)
DUNCAN
(used to a lifetimes of arguments, especially with his hickory-headed brother, puffs up for yet another full scale verbal war)

No? Well let me tell YOU a thing or two pretty lady. I think you're a real...

REBECCA

I said YES! I AM a hypocrite!

DUNCAN
(confused)

Yes? What's going on? You're playing with my mind like you did with your little brother the night I met you at that bar.

REBECCA
(quietly)

There's a difference.

DUNCAN

Yeah, what's the big difference?

REBECCA

I played with Howard's mind to send him away. Yours I'm trying to attract.

DUNCAN
(as amazed and delighted as when he first saw her)

Yeah?

REBECCA

Yeah. So I'm a hypocrite. You're trying to impress me with your pedigree and I'm trying to impress you with my mind... 'cause that's all I have to offer.

(CONTINUED)
DUNCAN

(laughing)

Lady, look again! Where you been, in a box all your life?

REBECCA

Kinda.

DUNCAN

Take a look in the MIRROR!

Duncan reaches over the table, grabs her shoulders and turns her towards a large mirror on the far wall. Both laugh and she spontaneously puts her hand on one of his. In the mirror their smiles fade, replaced by somewhat more earnest expressions.

28 MONTAGE. A series of lovers' scenes: along a beach, on a picnic, strolling together hand in hand through a leafy September park, etc..

29 EXT. NYU CAMPUS - DAY

REBECCA

(agitated)

This...sneaking around...it's got to stop.

DUNCAN

What sneaking around?

REBECCA

You hiding in the closet when my brother comes. What d'you call that?

DUNCAN

Good safety standards.

REBECCA

What about making me stand out on an icy ledge when Connor...

(CONTINUED)
DUNCAN
...the weather isn't bad that high up.

REBECCA
Don't be a hypocrite.

DUNCAN
There's that lovely phrase again.

REBECCA
It's the motto of our love.

DUNCAN
Now wait a minute...

REBECCA
Twelve months in a nowhere relationship!

DUNCAN
Wait! That's you talking, not me.

REBECCA
It hasn't materialized in terms of any commitment.

DUNCAN
Yes and no.

REBECCA
Hypocrite!

DUNCAN
Oh, jeez. Look. I love you and you love me, right?

(CONTINUED)
REBECCA

Why else would we stand here and argue?

DUNCAN

Then let's hear YOUR solution to our family...differences.

REBECCA

Come to Passover dinner. Announce our engagement there.

DUNCAN

(scared out of his wits)

WHAT?

REBECCA

Chicken.

DUNCAN

(distracted)

That'd be fine.

REBECCA

Coward.

DUNCAN

Wait! I'm not ready yet. Let me think it over.

REBECCA

(heading off to class)

Fine. Think it ALL over. Besides, Passover's not for a while yet, you can always try to worm...

DUNCAN

All right, I'll go. Ohhhhhh, this is gonna be excruciating!

(CONTINUED)
REBECCA
(calling back)

By the way! Connor's invited Howard to spend Easter with him at your folk's house.

DUNCAN

What? Taking Howard to see MY folks? Tell him to wear a bullet proof vest. Oh, God! Worlds in collision on two fronts!

INT. TRACY LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Mother Tracy is playing an Easter song on the organ. Connor, Colleen (now 14) and Father Tracy are sitting quietly in various chairs listening. Howard, sitting next to Connor on a couch, has a frozen smile on his face.

HOWARD
(whispering to Connor through his mask-like smile)

Has someone died?

CONNOR

Shhhhh! My mother doesn't like...

MOTHER TRACY
(without turning around)

Who's talking?

CONNOR
(charmingly)

Your playing always gets me humming.

Howard looks at Connor, surprised to see him so deferential. Then he looks at Mother Tracy, wondering what hold she has on him.

(CONTINUED)
HOWARD

Connor, why are we all grinning like jack-o-lanterns?

CONNOR

Shhhhh!

MOTHER GOLDBERG

Another... interruption?

An organ chord CRASHES.

HOWARD

My face is cracking. I'm breathing under my arms.

CONNOR

SHHHHHHH!!

MOTHER TRACY

(turning around to face Connor)

You never interrupted me before, Connor. New York has influenced you strangely.

HOWARD

No ma'am. He's just as much a clod as...

MOTHER TRACY

I'm talking to my SON, sir. IF you don't mind.

FATHER TRACY

(getting up after a painful silence enshrouds the room)

Well, shall we vent our spleens at the feast tables then?

(CONTINUED)
MOTHER TRACY  
(guilty over her breach of etiquette)

Oh, uhh...Father forgive...

FATHER TRACY

Crusade adjourned to the dining hall, Mother, for further ammunition. You can recharge there for your next moral sally.

All gather rather solemnly around the table for Easter dinner. It is evident that the family is scrutinizing the alien presence. Howard, realizing this, maintains his Kabuki-mask smile.

MOTHER TRACY

Howard, would you like to ask the Easter blessing?

HOWARD

I...I wouldn't know how.

MOTHER TRACY

Another lapsed Catholic.

HOWARD

I wouldn't say that.

Connor, looking at Howard, puts his finger on his lips. Mother Tracy looks at a picture of Duncan, in altar boy uniform, on the wall.

MOTHER TRACY

Well, it happens in the best of families.

HOWARD

Not in mine.

(Continued)
CONNOR
(in a coughing voice so as to be indistinguishable)
Howard, shut up.
Mother Tracy looks at Connor. Connor smiles sweetly.

MOTHER TRACY
(irritated by Howard's mysterious contradictions)
Why not in your family?

HOWARD
Well, to be perfectly frank with you, Mrs. Tracy, I'm...

CONNOR
(cough-talking)
Howard, shut UP!
Mother Tracy looks at Connor. Connor smiles extra sweetly. Colleen and Father Tracy start to titter at Mother Tracy's unwillingness or inability to realize the obvious. Mother Tracy begins to suspect a conspiracy of silence.

MOTHER TRACY
(suspiciously)
What kind of name is Sandburg, anyway?

All LAUGH.

FATHER TRACY
Some milk, Mother?

COLLEEN
Mother, pass the milk to Father please.

Everyone continues LAUGHING under their breath.

(CONTINUED)
HOWARD

I wouldn't know, Mrs. Tracy.

The whole table HOWLS.

MOTHER TRACY

What is this?

The LAUGHING ceases.

What DO you know?

HOWARD

I know that my name is Howard GOLDBERG,
not Sandburg. I'm not Scandinavian, I'm...

MOTHER TRACY

...Don't say...

HOWARD

(insistently)

JEWISH!

Silence reigns as all take in the shocking 1950's
import of having a Jew in the house. Mother Tracy's
eyes look around the room.

CONNOR

I left the insecticide under the sink.

MOTHER TRACY

Is this more of your New York humor?

FATHER TRACY

(cooling things down again, as usual)

Now, now Mother. Milk please.

(CONTINUED)
Mechanically, Mother Tracy passes the pitcher of milk to Father Tracy. Father Tracy fills his cup and passes the pitcher to Colleen who likewise fills her cup and passes the pitcher to Connor who fills his cup and passes the pitcher to:

HOWARD
(feeling unwanted)

No thank you.

The pitcher has stopped by Howard who shows no indication of picking it up. Faces tighten. Tension builds. It's a Mexican standoff. Finally, Connor takes his cup full of milk and pours it into Howard's cup.

MOTHER TRACY
(livid)

That's right, Connor. Give your milk to the Jews. They killed the Lord you know!

Another shocked silence reigns.

FATHER TRACY
(clearing his voice and speaking in a tone of magisterial authority)

Mother, that was uncalled for.

Mother Tracy, feeling betrayed by her family, which has never fully appreciated the depth of her religious passion and, hence, zealotry, gets up and runs upset into the kitchen.

Connor, torn between loyalty to his friend and mother, goes into the kitchen. As we hear soft, then rising VOICES and RATTLING PANS from the kitchen, Father Tracy turns to Howard.

FATHER TRACY

Goldberg.

(CONTINUED)
HOWARD

Yes, sir. Goldberg.

FATHER TRACY
(pronouncing his judgeliike decision)

It has a ring to it. A SUBSTANTIAL ring.

HOWARD
(smiling)

Well...

FATHER TRACY

I like it...and I like you.

Both turn to the rising NOISE in the kitchen.

Please forgive her zealotry, son. She... Well, her grandfather, an immigrant, filled her with horror stories from the Old Country.

HOWARD
(sympathetic)

So did mine.

FATHER TRACY

Good, you understand then. Although I will say this; she doesn't express her humanity well.

HOWARD

Who does, sir?

More NOISE from the kitchen. Connor is defending his friend.

(CONTINUED)
COLLEEN
(placating Howard)

She thinks she's being loyal to her grandpa...and her ideals.

HOWARD

The problem is people have DIFFERENT ideals.

FATHER TRACY
(thinking back on a lifetime of court cases)

Amen!

EXT. GOLDBERG RESIDENCE - EVENING

Duncan and Rebecca are going to spend Passover dinner with "her" family. Duncan is visibly nervous; first, at going to a Jewish ceremony - something he knows nothing about - and second, that he has to drop the bombshell of their engagement.

Strolling arm in arm they approach the fateful door. Duncan raises his hand to knock and then succumbs to an anxiety attack.

DUNCAN
(agitated)

I gotta go. See ya. Bye.

REBECCA
(coaxingly)

Duncan.

DUNCAN

I'm sick.

REBECCA

is the food so bad here you get sick before you even eat it?

(CONTINUED)
DUNCAN
I can't go on with this.

REBECCA
Then I can't go on with you. You're either sincere or you're not. Don't be a...

DUNCAN
Please, not that again.

REBECCA
It's the...

DUNCAN
...motto of our love. Yes.

He sees a loophole.

But look here, do we have to tell it ALL at...

REBECCA

DUNCAN TRACY, WILL YOU MAKE UP YOUR MIND AND STICK TO IT!

DUNCAN
I hate your merciless logic!

Rebecca is silent, furious. She is about to tell him to shove off forever.

But I sure don't hate you.

Rebecca relents.

REBECCA
Do what you feel is right. I'm going in.

(CONTINUED)
She knocks on the door. Mother Goldberg is HEARD inside walking towards the door. Her footsteps draw near. Suspenseful MUSIC plays.

As the door cracks open, Duncan has an imagination overload.

DUNCAN
(overwhelmed with it all)

AAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!

The door slams shut. Mother Goldberg is HEARD GALUMPHING deep into the recesses of her home.

REBECCA
Shhhhhhhhhhh! What are you, meshugenah?

DUNCAN
Sorry.

REBECCA
Are you all right now?

DUNCAN
I think so.

REBECCA
Good. Things are going better than I expected.

DUNCAN
(amazed)

Really?

REBECCA
Sure. You haven't met my family yet.

(CONTINUED)
DUNCAN

Oh, no. This is gonna be one of those nights you DON'T tell the grandkids about.

REBECCA

Relax. What could happen?

She knocks again. This time we HEAR MOB NOISES. As the door slowly cracks open we see several brooms and a vacuum cleaner waving menacingly. The seder guests have come armed.

Open up, mom. It's me.

Mother Goldberg opens the door and sees Rebecca standing hand in hand, with a man. She calls back inside:

MOTHER GOLDBERG

It's OK. They're unarmed.

The weaponry vanishes. She looks at Duncan.

So THIS is your "little surprise."

REBECCA

Part of it.

MOTHER GOLDBERG

Why were you hollering, young man?

DUNCAN

Tight shoes.

MOTHER GOLDBERG

Next time you put on shoes that size, I'll knock your block off!

(CONTINUED)
REBECCA
(changing the subject)

So when do we come in, already?

INT. GOLDBERG DINING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Gathered around the table are Mother and Father Goldberg, Nat and Renee, and Rebecca and Howard. Duncan has yet to broach the marriage subject.

Things are going rather well, actually, for the Goldbergs. No wars, no casualties yet, not even a skirmish. But Boo has his sights, black eye notwithstanding, on Nat.

FATHER GOLDBERG

So tell us, Nat, about your singing career.

NAT

Sure, Bob. Why not?

RENEE

Bob. If you razz him I'll give you such such a knock.

NAT
(standard level of emotion)

What razz? For cryin' out loud, Irene, can't the mensch schmooze a little?

FATHER GOLDBERG
(delighted to be sowing division again)

Renee...about the gefilte fish you cooked.

RENEE

You liked it, Boo?

(CONTINUED)
FATHER GOLDBERG

Pure schlock! Gimme the recipe so I can throw it away.

Duncan starts laughing at the raillery.

RENEE

You're a meshugenah CUP!

Rebecca, as guide, leans toward Duncan.

REBECCA

(whispering)

That means crazy in the extreme. The ritual now calls for a frank exchange of views, to cleanse the house of any remaining good feelings.

FATHER GOLDBERG

(in vintage form)

No, really, Renee. You didn't overcook! You can dry out the fish and use them as bookends.

Nat laughs. Renee browbeats him into silence.

RENEE

You could use yourself as a bookend, Bob, except you don't know how to hold a book.

MOTHER GOLDBERG

Just the sportspages. What a gentile!

All laugh except Duncan.

FATHER GOLDBERG

Terrific, Mother. What a ripper. So go on, already, Nat with your story.

(CONTINUED)
NAT

I went to Radio City Music Hall...

FATHER GOLDBERG

Did they let you in?

NAT

(inhaling his cigarette nonchalantly, then exhaling)

Sure, why not? I was the star.

RENEE

(barging in)

What's he talking about, what?

MOTHER GOLDBERG

Let him talk. No one wants to hear you. You're the bottom of the totem pole.

RENEE

(going deaf again)

what's that? The bottom of the toilet bowl?

All LAUGH.

NAT

(continuing)

After the show they said they'd never forget me.

FATHER GOLDBERG

But were they willing to forgive?

NAT

Go on with ya.

(continued)
REBECCA
(exasperated after waiting all evening for Duncan to "feel right")

Excuse me! Duncan would like to announce that he's an actual Christian and we're getting married.

All eyes turn on Duncan who spills a soda he was drinking all over himself in surprise. His mouth gapes open.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Connor and Howard are boxing. Both are shirtless, earnest and heaving for breath. As they circle each other, Connor breaks in for the kill.

HOWARD
(A little timer sitting on the grass goes off)

Three minutes. Time's up.

Connor's not listening. He throws a vicious right cross in Howard's face. At the last split second Howard ducks under to the left and comes around with a left hook that floors Connor.

CONNOR
(roaring with delight)

GREAT SHOT!

He gets off his back and rises, his chest heaving.

Great...ahhh...shot.

HOWARD

Sorry, guy. But I said "three minutes" and you kept coming. I thought you didn't hear.

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR

I didn't. I never listen when my mind's on something I enjoy.

They start pulling their shirts on, getting ready to leave.

HOWARD

(looking at his watch)

It's time for your class.

CONNOR

An, come on, man. Let's ditch and get a brewski.

HOWARD

You know the deal. You teach me boxing to get me through life and I keep you in class to get you through college.

CONNOR

Come on, bookworm. You're sucking life through a straw.

HOWARD

You want to break the deal... go ahead. I'll just join the boxing club. Where are YOU gonna go when you flunk?

CONNOR

You drive a hard bargain.

They start walking.

HOWARD

We're known for that. Listen, buddy. I'm going to EUROPE for Christmas Break. Interested?

(CONTINUED)
Wow! I could take pictures of the Pope for my mother! Ireland! France! Hell, yes I'm interested. But the money... how?

HOWARD

I got it all worked out. You'd have to give up brewski for a while and get a job...

CONNOR

WHAT?

HOWARD

... but what's that compared to Paris on New Year's?

CONNOR

Wait'll Duncan hears this!

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE DUNCAN'S DORM ROOM - EVENING

Connor, in a brisk, lively mood knocks on Duncan's door. The door opens slowly. Connor pushes it aside and barges in.

CONNOR

Where the hell you been, Duncan? I've been trying to track you down all day.

INT. DUNCAN'S DORM ROOM - DAY

To Connor's surprise he sees not Duncan but Rebecca.

CONNOR

Rebecca! What are you doing here?

REBECCA

I... uhhhh...

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR

Oh, excuse me. You must be looking for Howard. He's at the library the little do-gooder...

REBECCA

No...uhhh...Connor, hasn't Duncan told you yet?

CONNOR

(noticing a ring on Rebecca's finger)

What's this? A RING! What'd ya, get married to someone?

REBECCA

Someone with real tight lips.

CONNOR

Yeah, I heard girls like that...from a magazine, of course. But...and Howard, a guy I've known for what, over a year and he's mum about his sister getting...something's WRONG.

He sits down to think, something he normally studiously avoids.

REBECCA

(sympathetically)

Your world's about to come crashing in on you, little brother.

CONNOR

(jumping up with tears in his eyes)

Don't talk to me like you married my brother.

(Continued)
REBECCA

I did.

CONNOR

(hotly)

No! My brother...Duncan...wouldn't DO something like that. It's just not done.

REBECCA

It IS done.

CONNOR

You're lying and I don't know why.

REBECCA

I'm NOT lying. You're avoiding the truth.

CONNOR

All right, so you played a joke on me to see where I stand. Duncan put you up to it right?

REBECCA

You still don't get it, do you? My God, what a denial system!

CONNOR

Look! It's not that you're Jewish.

REBECCA

Yes it is. I can hear it in your voice.

CONNOR

You're wrong. Howard's my best friend...or he WAS! It's not that you're a Jew. It's that you're JEWISH.

(CONTINUED)
REBECCA

Oh.

CONNOR

You don't know where we come from! It took me all night just to get my mother to sit at the table with Howard.

He starts pacing, probing the extent of the disaster.

Just the CONCEPT of a Jew is offensive to her. If she found out...it'd kill her. Duncan would NEVER do something like that to his mother. It's inconceivable!

His pacing increases.

Why if I thought he'd ACTUALLY married a Jew, I'd...

DUNCAN

(entering the room)

You'd what?

Rebecca goes over to Duncan and puts her hand on his arm. Connor watches in horror.

CONNOR

Tell me it's all a bad joke.

DUNCAN

It's no joke. I love her and I married her. Isn't that the honorable thing to do?

CONNOR

But DUNCAN! What about your FAMILY! Doesn't family opinion mean a thing?

(CONTINUED)
DUNCAN
Not in something like this.

CONNOR
(in disgust)
You must really hate us to marry...

DUNCAN
Go on, little brother, say it.

CONNOR
I don't want to know you anymore.

He storms out.

DUNCAN
(calling after him)
You never knew me to begin with!

EXT. BEACH - DAY

It is a windy day. Howard, looking troubled, is walking along the sea shore. We HEAR HOWARD'S THEME SONG.

With his black shoes filling with sand and his dark pants getting wet from the waves, he cuts a pitiable figure. Clearly, he is none too pleased about his sister's marriage. He is blaming himself; for introducing her to Duncan, for not chaperoning her properly, for not knowing.

He gazes at people on the beach; some Jew, some gentile. He lies back on the sand and stares up moodily at the moody sky.

Connor sees him at a distance and comes up to him.

CONNOR
Get up.

(CONTINUED)
HOWARD

Leave me alone. I wanna be...by myself.

CONNOR

Why didn't you TELL me?

Howard ignores him and keeps looking up at the sky.

You knew all along didn't you, you sneaky...

HOWARD

Get out of here. I don't want to talk right now.

CONNOR

I oughtta punch you out.

HOWARD

Do what you want. I don't give a damn.

He gets up and faces Connor. They exchange unhappy looks. Howard turns and leaves.

I just wanna be...by myself.

CONNOR

(yelling after him into the wind)

You can forget about our trip to Europe! It's been ruined.

HOWARD

(calling back over his shoulder)

Whatever.

Sea gulls fight overhead.

DUNCAN

I can't go on with this. (CONTINUED)
REBECCA

Then I can't go on with you. You're either sincere or you're not. Don't be a...

DUNCAN

Please, not that again.

REBECCA

It's the...

DUNCAN

...motto of our love. Yes.

He sees a loophole.

But look here, do we have to tell it ALL at...

INT. VAN - DAY

Connor is still driving at breakneck speed after crashing through the police checkpoint. Up ahead a flock of sheep is crossing the road. The terrain is too rocky to try to veer around them. Connor is forced to stop. He honks the horn repeatedly.

Just as he rolls up to the edge of the huge herd, he hears sirens. Turning around he sees police coming over the bend behind him. Connor is trapped between the police and the sheep!

HOWARD

Time to end the...

Connor starts honking violently and starts moving into the sheep. The sheep panic and start running in all directions. The van slowly picks up speed through the thinning herd.

By now the sheep have regathered on the road and form a barrier between the police posse and the van.

(CONTINUED)
FISHMONGER

I think maybe...

HOWARD

No time for that.

He opens the door and gives Fishmonger a decisive shove. Fishmonger falls out, bounces a bit and rolls to a stop by a lamb.

CONNOR

Good riddance.

HOWARD

Now it's your turn.

CONNOR

Don't even THINK of trying!

HOWARD

I'm through thinking.

He lunges at Connor and the van veers sharply off the road.

INT. DINING HALL OF A PASSENGER LINER - EVENING

Connor and Howard, after agreeing to disagree about whose fault the "marriage" is, have both grudgingly decided to take the Christmas Break trip to Europe, but by BOAT so they can get some studying done.

The "marriage" has thrown a pall over their friendship. The trip is more like a funeral than a vacation, both have taken to wearing their respective religious emblems around their necks.
There is a storm at sea and the boat is rocking violently. People are rushing from their tables to go off and vomit each time another sickening lurch comes. One lone waiter is soberly delivering food, undeterred by the general nausea all about him. He is AMIR, a dignified young Persian.

Connor and Howard are seated across from each other at one of the dining tables.

Howard, still in shock at the dread approach of "assimilation" in his family is studying Connor, the gentile, as one would study a picture of a man in the final stages of elephantiasis. He is leaning forward awkwardly so as to more closely examine his subject.

Connor is calmly reading a book.

CONNOR

Well?

HOWARD
(surprised and trying to cover up his faux pas)

Well what?

CONNOR
(paraphrasing Shylock)

Hath a gentile nose? Hath a gentile eyes?

HOWARD
(innocently)

What are you talking about?

CONNOR

Do I look human enough? Is a goy a man?

HOWARD

Why certainly a goy, a CHRISTIAN, is a man. Not very evolved but...

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR
(his legendary temper rising)

Then why are you leaning so close to me?
Are you trying to kiss me?

HOWARD
(horrified and looking around to make sure no one heard the remark)

No, no. I'm sorry. I...uhhh...

CONNOR
(in a loud voice)

What are you, QUEER?

At the sound of the word "queer," ten people snap their heads in Howard's direction. They then immediately jump up from their tables and run out. Howard smiles at some lingering onlookers. He points to himself and vigorously wags his head in negation. Then he points to Connor and shrugs. Finally, he starts eating quietly, trying to be inconspicuous. He decides on civility as the least intense course to take.

HOWARD

Soooooo...uhhh...heh, heh...

uhhh...what BOOK are you reading?

CONNOR

"Meditations" by Marcus Aurelius. I haven't got to the ingredients yet to see if it's kosher.

HOWARD

Look, Connor. What do you want? To fight all the way over and all the way back? Is that why you came?

CONNOR

I don't KNOW why I came. (CONTINUED)
HOWARD

Well, make up your mind.

Connor tries to think, again unsuccessfully. He is like a lobster in a kettle, boiling without knowing why. He remains quiet.

I can't tell you the pleasure of travelling with a guided missile aimed at my heart.

CONNOR

(doi ng something he is good at - getting mad at slight provocation)

There you go again. Talking down to me like you think I'm some kinda narrow-minded hick from the ignorant American West.

HOWARD

I don't think that. I thought you were from the Midwest.

CONNOR

(losing control, he holds two fingers an inch apart)

You're this close with that red neck stuff.

HOWARD

I'm gonna be a hero to civilization. First college student to bring back alive a wild Bornean ape.

Connor obliges the comparison by snorting fiercely.

I've found my calling. Howard Goldberg, safari bwana.

Connor continues breathing hard, about to explode.

(CONTINUED)
Hey, your mouth looks like the slit in a poor box.

CONNOR

Keep on! Blast me one more time! I wanna hear "red neck" one more...

HOWARD

If I was taught Jews were devils I'd be a red neck too.

CONNOR

On, so my TRAINING is inferior. Next you'll start talking about ingrained shortcomings of Catholicism.

HOWARD

(goading him to the limit)

Well...

CONNOR

(rising livid from his seat)

Well?

Just then the captain of the ship enters the dining hall drunk. He stumbles by the table of the two contending brothers-in-law. He is about fifty-five, tall and heavy set, like a Dutch version of John Wayne. He speaks with a heavy accent.

CAPTAIN

(mistaking the two "well" remarks as an invitation to dine, he seats himself heavily)

Yah, yah. Sortainly, sortainly. But you needn't look at me so fierce, young man. How do they say...did a wasp catch your butt?

(CONTINUED)
HOWARD
(snickering)

That's "cat catch your tongue," sir.

CAPTAIN
(with drunken mirth looking at the angry young man)

First a wasp, then a cat. What a problem of piles you are!

He laughs uproariously at Connor, who begins to find spleen incompatible with folly. Connor cracks a smile.

CONNOR

You know what they say about red heads.

CAPTAIN

Yah, fanatical temper.

HOWARD
(looking at Connor with an I-told-you-so expression)

Yeah, fanatical temper.

CAPTAIN

A man without a temper isn’t worth pig droppings but...

HOWARD

Do we have to talk about pigs?

CAPTAIN
(noticing Howard’s Star of David for the first time)

Oh, sortainly, sortainly. I’m sorry. You’re Jew. I was saying a man without a temper isn’t worth…anything. But a man who can’t CONTROL his temper is a beast and has no place in society.

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR

Quite right, sir. And kind of you to point out, especially in your condition.

CAPTAIN
(outraged)

Condition? Are you saying, schweinhund, that I'm a drunken...

HOWARD

Pig?

CONNOR
(charmingly and winking at Howard)

...Master pilot, responsible for every soul on board, and therefore in especial need of...sober minded...patience.

CAPTAIN
(guilty)

Yah, that's for sortainly sure. I can guarantee...uhnnn...

A particularly big wave hits the ship, knocking plates off tables.

HOWARD

Captain. How big is this ship?

CAPTAIN

What do you mean, Jew? I mean, man?

CONNOR

Is it cap size?

(CONTINUED)
CAPTAIN

Hah! Capsize! You're a sortainly funny ignoramus. That I can guarantee for sortainly sure.

CONNOR

And you have a dangerous sense of humor.

CAPTAIN

No, man. There's NOTHING to worry about.

Another wave broadsides the titanic vessel, throwing bodies against the wall. Through a porthole we move in on lifeboats being lowered, brimming with white suited personnel.

Perhaps I ought to check in today. But first I . . . unhhhh...

He starts self-consciously picking at his uniform. Then, succumbing to his unfortunate addiction:

Waiter! Amir!

Amir calmly comes over, stepping over several seasicks, as a cat delicately steps over mounds in a barn full of horses.

AMIR

Sir?

CAPTAIN

Drink!

AMIR

No thank you, sir. My religion forbids it.

CONNOR

It also forbids salvation, heathen, doesn't it?

(CONTINUED)
AMIR

Insha Allah..

HOWARD

Translation, please?

AMIR

God willing, sir. God willing.

CONNOR

(roaring with righteous indignation)

The Koran's a joke book!

AMIR

(gravely)

Millions take it seriously each day. Just like you believe in Mary's...

CONNOR

(rising from his chair again, more livid than ever)

I'll kill you, you savage...

All the groaning people redouble their complaint to high heaven as they realize their hell of sickness has been invaded by a mad religionist.

CROWD

Oh nooooooooooooonnnnnn... Xoooolllll... ohhhhhhhhh... 

Howard jumps up and restrains Connor. The captain clumsily gets up and blows a whistle for help.

(CONTINUED)
CAPTAIN
(assuming responsibility for the
ship for once)

Lunatic on board. All hands! Swabies!
Men at arms!

HOWARD
(trying to extricate himself
and Connor from yet another
anger-based predicament)

No need for the whistle, sir, no need.
The captain looks at him and blows again.

CROWD MEMBER

Captain...the waves, the sickness, now
this...will we survive this pleasure trip?
The pamphlet said...

CAPTAIN
(blowing his whistle)

I can not guarantee your hides.

CROWD MEMBER
(sick again)

Ohhhhh...New York!

CAPTAIN

Wait! Does your luggage float?

CROWD

New York!
New York!
New York!

The requested disciplinary force of sailors come in
and start hosing down the unruly crowd. The ship is
pitching violently.

(CONTINUED)
CAPTAIN
(angrily to his men)

No, schweinhunds. Over HERE!

The men start spraying the captain's area, knocking down the captain with the force of the hose.

HOWARD
(trying to drag a still incensed Connor away)

Actually, sir. He's my new brother-in-law. He's having a little trouble adjusting.

CAPTAIN

They should be adjusting a strait jacket around him. He's nitroglycerin!

HOWARD

He doesn't always foam like this.

CONNOR
(held by Howard but trying to get to Amir)

If this lousy world would disappear, I'd be fine. You don't deserve to exist, you little sandbag...

Howard starts to drag off Connor.

HOWARD

We'll be in our...come ON, man...cabin, sir, reading. I've got a wire cage there with comfortable bars for him, sir.

CAPTAIN

Are you sure our brig wouldn't be safer?

(CONTINUED)
HOWARD

Thank you VERY MUCH for the offer, sir. But we'll...come ON...be strolling home, sir, real quiet like, COME ON!

CONNOR
(coming back to his senses)

Wait! My "Meditations" book!

HOWARD

I'll cook you some sedatives, I mean, soup in the cabin first. Then you can put your eyes back on their stems to find your book.

CONNOR

Oh, all right! You're such a pain! And what about my eyes?

HOWARD

They look like two blueberries pinned onto white cue balls.

CONNOR
(laughing)

Whirlpools of neuroses, eh?

The boat lurches again and, as the moaning of the ill passengers crescendoes, Howard finally gets Connor out the door.

39

INT. DUBLIN RESTAURANT - MORNING

Connor and Howard are seated having breakfast. Connor is delighted to be in the land of his ancestors. Everything looks so familiar.

CONNOR
(effervescent)

What a city! Just look at this!

(CONTINUED)
HOWARD
(apprehensively)

What? Police?

CONNOR

No, no. Our troubles are over. Europe's a perfect tonic for our problems.

HOWARD

The day's just starting.

CONNOR

I know and WHAT a day! Did you ever see so many red heads in all your life? I love you Ireland! Look at THAT one!

He points at a cheerful looking boy strolling by the window. The boy looks in, sees Connor and Howard looking at him, and waves back.

He could be my cousin!

Howard glances again at the boy and sees him chasing a girl down the street.

HOWARD

Yeah.

The waitress comes up, smiling.

CONNOR
(in a excess of joy)

So, it's Sunday in Dublin!

WAITRESS
(in a charming brogue)

Sure it's Sunday all over the world!

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR
(laughing)

What a country!

HOWARD

England's next.

The smiles fade off the waitress and Connor.

CONNOR

Don't remind me.

40

EXT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE - DAY

Connor and Howard are standing in front of a red suited English guard who is not permitted to speak. The guard is ignoring Connor as one would a pesky fly.

CONNOR
(to the guard)

You won't answer, huh?

HOWARD

He's not ALLOWED to answer. Come on, stop harrassing the guard and let's go.

CONNOR

I got one question I KNOW he'll answer. So why did you torture the Irish for eight hundred years?

The guard's lips are tightening.

Why the Penal Laws that forbid a Catholic from owning land and getting an education, you cold blooded...

Steam is about to come out of the guard's ears.

(CONTINUED)
HOWARD

Come on, man. That was GENERATIONS ago! Forgive and forget and let's get the hell out of here before...

CONNOR

Wait! One more. Did King George fall off the pot when he heard Washington...

GUARD

Aaaaaahhhhhhhhh!

He raises his rifle and starts shooting at Connor and Howard, who scramble off. He is so mad that he starts bayoneting the grass. Officers come and take him, protesting, away. His career is over. Connor has struck again.

MONTAGE

We see SHOTS of the two brothers-in-law at several European tourist sites; Picadilly, the Eiffel Tower, the Coliseum, the Parthenon, the Munich Hoffbrauhouse, where Howard goes up on a stage and sez heilz, using a black comb for a mustache. He is roundly booed as Connor drags him away.

We next see Connor dragging a reluctant Howard into the Vatican, gesticulating wildly at the architectural brilliance. We see a sullen Connor being handed a song sheet at a Rome synagogue. An elderly Jewish man glares at him suspiciously. Connor defiantly makes the sign of the cross over his chest. The elderly man bites his thumb at Connor.

INT. PARIS SUBWAY TRAIN - AFTERNOON

Howard is talking soothingly to an agitated Connor.

HOWARD

Calm down. You can learn it!

Une boiss du lait. A glass of milk.

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR

Une bra.

HOWARD

Bois.

CONNOR

Bra.

HOWARD

BOIS! Buh...wah. Bois!

Passengers are staring at the two.

CONNOR

(trying to be patient)

Ber...wah.

HOWARD

Close.

CONNOR

Like Ireland's close to England?

HOWARD

Yeah, close like that. Again.
Une bois du lait, si vous plait.
A glass of milk, if you please.
Une bois du lait, si vous plait.

CONNOR

(in a sing song voice)

A bra was made of silver plates.

The subway train screeches to a halt.

(CONTINUED)
HOWARD

We get off here. And I'M ordering lunch in French.

INT. SUBWAY DINER - AFTERNOON

Connor and Howard enter the crowded diner and go up to the packed counter. They manage to get two stools when a couple abruptly leaves. The counter lady is rushing about filling orders. People are clamoring for their lunches.

CUSTOMER #1

Pain! Pain!

HOWARD
(whispering to an irritated and disinterested Connor)

Bread. Bread.

The counter lady gives the man bread.

CUSTOMER #2

Le fromage bleu.

HOWARD
(in a normal voice)

The blue cheese. See? It's easy to learn a new culture!

Connor stares moodily.

All you gotta do is try to think from their...

The counter lady comes up to Howard.

COUNTER LADY

Et vous, monsieur?

(CONTINUED)
HOWARD
(unprepared)

Oh, uhhh, yes sir, ma'am. I...uhh... Yes, miss mademoiselle ma'am sir. I...
unhh...my dictionary...

COUNTER LADY
(irate)

Eh?

HOWARD

Can I have a Pepsi, mom, no fizz? I mean...

COUNTER LADY

EH?

Connor bangs his fist on the counter.

CONNOR

PEPSI!

Half the people at the counter leave. Howard stares open mouthed, unable to fathom the root of Connor's madness.

CROWD

American idiot!
Assassin!
Savage!
Barbarian!

The counter lady moodily serves Howard his drink. Feather on her hat waves in his drink.

CONNOR

They respond to tone.

(CONTINUED)
A nervous fat lady with a huge hat, a Pekingese in one arm and a cat with a silver collar in the other, comes into the diner. Seeing an empty stool, she grasps it somehow and pushes it, herself and her menagerie in between Howard and Connor. She wants the middle space at the counter so she can be served quickly.

FAT LADY
(As she pushes Connor aside, the feather on her hat waves in his face)

Pardon.

CONNOR

Excuse you.

FAT LADY
(to the counter lady)

Une Perrier, si vous plait. Une Perrier.

The counter lady gives her one.

CUSTOMER #1
(a croissant dangling from his mouth)

Le fromage bleu.

CUSTOMER #2

Pain! Pain!

The counter lady, in a fit of pique over the unusually rude crowd (even for a French subway diner) she has, rips the croissant from Customer #1's mouth and gives it to Customer #2. Then she takes Customer #2's plate of cheese and gives it to Customer #1. Following this draconian measure, she turns, in a huff, to Connor.

COUNTER LADY

Et vous?

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR

(he pauses, smiles at Howard and then rumbles like thunder)

UNE BOIS DU LAIT!!!!!!

The fat lady faints in Howard’s arms. Unfortunately, Howard is not strong enough to handle her and, together, they knock the whole row of customers onto the floor. The animals lend their SOUNDS to the general melee. The outsized Perrier-quaffer looms over the crush of humanity as a hen dominates its nest of slender straws.

CUSTOMER #1

My clothes are ripped in SHREDS.

CUSTOMER #2

My glasses are broken on my face.

CUSTOMER #3

(to the sunken ruin sprawled atop him and several other people)

Your dog, madame, we are wet...enough.

In the confusion the counter lady manages to get Connor his glass of milk.

CUSTOMER #4

(to the fat lady, trying to trick her into movement)

Your cat is flying against the wall.

CUSTOMER #5

(an exceedingly frail man)

My arms are pinned, you fat...SOW.

CUSTOMER #6

(A panicked Arab student)

Please, I'm very thin and need to buy scotchbutter.

(CONTINUED)
Connor is sipping his glass contentedly, admiring himself in the mirror. With a smirk, he assumes his best Maurice Chevalier intonation.

**CONNOR**

...si vous plait.

**COUNTER LADY**

(quitting, she takes off her serving smock)

C'est FINI!

She throws a croissant at Connor who nonchalantly ducks. She storms out, a free woman.

Scanning the wreckage and the departing lady, Connor shrugs.

**CONNOR**

(imitating Maurice again)

If this is the way you feel.

---

**INT. PARIS BAR - EVENING**

Connor and Howard are having a charm contest. The winner gets exclusive talking rights to a young woman who has agreed to the conditions.

It is Howard's turn first. He puts his beer down and goes over to a piano.

**HOWARD**

OK, so the winner in the charm contest gets the honor of your company, right?

**WOMAN**

That's right.

**HOWARD**

OK, here goes then. My admiration for you takes the form...

(Continued)
CONNOR

...of a loss.

HOWARD

...of a song. Ready?

WOMAN

(oozed already)

I said I was.

HOWARD

(taking a swig of courage, he starts singing)

What do you do
When you're forty-two
And you feel life's
Ganging up on you?

What do you do
when your dream is gone?
You wake up alone
And your passion is through.

(CHORUS)

Songs of love and sounds of mirth,
Sirens listless by my windowpane.
It's hard here on earth living up
To universal acclaim.

A night on the town
Would fix me up just fine
Except for the wine
And the hullabaloo.

A still and standing night
Watches me lay down;
A newly twenty blackbird
Drops his crown.

Howard drops his drunken head on the piano keys for maudlin effect. The bar is conspicuous by its silence.

What d'you think? (CONTINUED)
WOMAN

I think you're the WORST excuse for an entertainer. You look like you have no teeth.

CONNOR

Thank you, Mr. Receding Hairline. And NOW I believe it's MY turn?

HOWARD

Ahh, you're the only unproductive man I've ever liked.

WOMAN

(to Connor)

Will you be singing too, because I've only got one ear left?

CONNOR

No, no, my dear. My attempt to win your love will consist of a single observation.

WOMAN

(extraordinarily bored)

Go ahead.

CONNOR

Your nature is a paradox to me.

WOMAN

(yawning)

Why?

CONNOR

Because here you are sitting in the full light and yet I see the shadow of a smile.

(CONTINUED)
WOMAN
(finishing off her free beer and walking out)

Good-bye.

HOWARD

Who won?

No answer. The woman is gone.

CONNOR

I did, she smiled with...

HOWARD
(a little tipsy)

Ahh, shut up. I'm sick of you and your lies.

CONNOR

Oh, yeah?

HOWARD

YEAH!

CONNOR

Step outside.

HOWARD

I'll step anywhere I want to.

CONNOR

Care to step OUTSIDE?

HOWARD

Love to.

(CONTINUED)
They go outside and bring the vacation to a new depth of joylessness. As the SOUND of fighting is heard, a woman's SHRIEK wafts inside the bar.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Eeeeee

INT. ANOTHER FRENCH BAR - LATER THAT EVENING

Connor, drunk, is sitting alone at the bar. A sad FRENCH SONG is PLAYING on the jukebox. The MUSIC has more and more of an effect on him. Finally, in an animal response to pain, Connor throws his glass with a roar against the wall, narrowly missing an unmoved bartender.

BARTENDER

You make me nervous when you do that.

A man unfortunate enough to run into the Angry Charmer in one of his despairing King Saul moods seats himself beside the human bomb.

CONNOR

Hey pal! Can I buys yah dink?

The man ignores him.

I said can I BUYS YAH DINK?

MAN

Why, monsieur?

CONNOR

To honor your glorious country. Where are we again?

BARTENDER

(smiling)

Monsieur, when you want to you can be quite charming.

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR

Shut up.

He turns, melancholy, to the man.

Not you. You’re my friend. My ONLY friend! Although I try to be nice to people. Always thinking of them over myself.

He starts sniffling.

MAN

I can see that.

CONNOR

Don’t listen to me, pal. I’m not such a nice guy, actually. I’m not really charming, you know what I mean? You French superman? Wow, look at those muscles! Are you a boxer or something?

MAN

(flattered and laughing)

No, I just work at the post office down the street and come here for a singsong sometimes, mon ami.

CONNOR

(sentimentally touched)

Boy, what a prince! You’re the prince of all good men, that’s what you are!

MAN

Well...

CONNOR

Mon ami. That’s French for “my friend,” isn’t it?

(CONTINUED)
Ah oui, c'est vrai.

CONNOR
(not understanding)

Now I wouldn't go that far. But don't listen to me, partner.

OK.

I'll tell you one thing, though. The truth is...the sweetest flowers grow on the volcano's edge. So you just be sure and be...on the lookout...stop spinning...for nice guys.

Uh huh.

(continuing his monologue)

It's not always obvious. Someone you trust can...

C'est vrai. How true! But is that the alcohol talking or you?

It's me. The real me! And I'm trying to squash into your ugly frog brains that a flatterer is rarely a gentleman.

Well said. An observation perfectly suited for you to make.

(CONTINUED)
Connor is silent before this truth. Finally, he decides to get everything off his chest.

Connor

I've hurt people for remarks like that.

Bartender

I know people. You're talking nonsense because you don't want to say what's really on your mind.

Connor is silent before this truth. Finally, he decides to get everything off his chest.

Connor

I...I...

Man

Yes?

Connor

I fought, really FOUGHT with my own brother-in-law tonight.

Man

Porquoi, monsieur?

Connor (slowly sobering up)

I don't know but I'll tell you why. Because he's a Jew. My brother married his sister and now he's kin.

Man

But he's your brother-in-law, monsieur. Surely being in the same family would... what... make you more tolerant?

(Continued)
CONNOR

You'd think so but... ahhhhh....
What I can't figure out is this: what

gives value to a man, beliefs or behavior?

MAN

Beliefs or behavior?

CONNOR

Yeah. 'Cause if behavior makes one man
better than another, then my brother-in-
law's my superior.

MAN

Why?

CONNOR

Well, he keeps me outta trouble all the
time, he looks after me, takes incredible
risks for me, and all I do for him is

bust his face in fifty pieces. He's

more civilized.

MAN

He sounds like a better man.

CONNOR

Problem is he's a Jew. A real one. Not
one of those historic characters you see
in the wax museum. A LIVE one. And no way
his beliefs are better than mine.

MAN

Hmmm.

(CONTINUED)
CONNOR

So it's full circle. How can I be worse than someone in behavior -- and therefore have to respect him -- and yet still be better than him in belief at the same time? Which one, belief or behavior, gives true value to a man?

MAN

These are moral questions, monsieur. One does not come to France for morality. We seek pleasure here. We are...

CONNOR

(embarrassed and angry at exposing his feelings)

...like your currency, debased, huh?

MAN

(coldly)

It is YOU that fit poorly into the fabric of existence, monsieur. As you see, I am perfectly at ease.

BARTENDER

What I don't see is how your brother could have been such an idiot! Of course I don't understand why the stupid Americans have no culture and no...

CONNOR

(rising)

Can you understand this? Une punch!

Connor He swings at the bar tender but misses by a mile. He is thrown by the two men out of the bar.
EXT. PARIS - EVENING

Connor, thrown out of the bar, goes off muttering down the street. A lady of the night approaches him. He acts meek until just before she passes him.

CONNOR

UNE PUNCH!

LADY OF THE NIGHT

Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...

Connor staggers further down the street. There are three men standing together with their arms on each other's shoulders. They are laughing good-naturedly. Connor kicks the middle one in the pants.

CONNOR

UNE KICK!

The three men, CURSING, chase after the drunk for a while. Connor scampers down a few alleys and comes to a stop by a corner. Across the street is a gendarme. It is a merry New Year's period for him! Still, he musters enough empathy to offer a passerby a season's greeting.

GENDARME

Joie de Noel!

CONNOR

(snowballing his hat off)

UNE HAT!

Along with the gendarme's hat, his wig falls to the ground revealing a bald head with only a few upstanding hairs in the front, like a wind break.

GENDARME

Mon pompadour!

(CONTINUED)
By now a huge angry crowd is chasing Connor. He laughs uproariously. Coming down another street, he sees a huge French motorcyclist dressed in Hell's Angels-type clothing, lolling by his vehicle. Connor brandishes his fist at the Gallic behemoth.

UNE PUNCH!

MOTORCYCLIST

D'accord!

The giant comes up and nails Connor and then tries to jump on him. Connor rolls away at the last minute and quickly gets up. He mounts the giant's motorcycle and speeds away.

Coward!

We HEAR the MOTORCYCLE SOUND RECEDING then INCREASING again. The Angry Charmer has returned in force! This time he heads straight for the giant who stands there laughing. As the motorcycle gets close the giant has a change of heart and turns tail. Connor jumps off the motorcycle just before it runs over the hefty squashling.

Mon leg!

Connor, on his mad rampage runs off down another street with the half of France unoccupied for the evening in hot pursuit.

Connor stops, panting for breath, in front of a small post office. Lifting up a brick from a small nearby wheelbarrow, he throws it mightily against the plate glass window.

CONNOR

UNE PICTURE POST CARD: BARBARIAN IN PARIS!

He sees that the other plate glass window is still unbroken. He throws another brick.

UNE STAMP!

(CONTINUED)
One of the avenging throng, the gentleman at the bar, cries out:

MAN

Mon office!

EXT. EIFFEL TOWER - EVENING

Climbing a fence and crossing a wide boulevard, Connor comes to the Eiffel Tower. He immediately starts climbing the structure.

As the crowd gathers at the base, Connor stares down at the world in a rage, King Kong-like. He shakes his fist and roars in a drunken voice:

CONNOR

UNE PUNCH!

By now there are several furious men climbing up after him. It looks like karma has finally caught up with the unruly fanatic.

gendarme

(with a snowball in one hand)

Une snowball!

KICKED GUY

Une kick!

MOTORCYCLIST

(favoring one foot)

Une leg!

Up to the rescue comes a van with a huge net on its roof. It drives up to the base of the Eiffel Tower. Howard jumps out.

HOWARD

CONNOR! JUMP!

(Continued)
Connor jumps through the air and lands with a THUMP on the netted roof of the van. As the people scatter in terror and surprise, the van races off.

**EXT. PARIS—EVENING**

The van ZOOMS and VEERS around town, trailed by a fleet truly Homeric in size. On the roof, Connor is defying France.

Going down a long alley, the van SCREECHES to a halt. Howard jumps out.

**HOWARD**

(to Connor)

Hurry. Get off and get the net in the van!

Howard and Connor unhook the huge net and stuff it inside the van, already half-filled with baskets of fish.

Get in! I'm paying this guy plenty!

**CONNOR**

Where're we going?

**HOWARD**

Back to England and then home...in a hurry.

Police SIRENS are HEARD approaching.

**CONNOR**

I know the way. I'm driving.

The driver of the van, with a wad of money sticking out of his shirt pocket, turns to Howard.

**FISHMONGER**

That wasn't the deal.

(Cont.)
CONNOR
(stuffing more cash in the man's hand)

New deal. Move over.

FISHMONGER

No.

Howard quietly pays him more. He moves over.

Careful! I've got fish in nere.

Howard piles in after Fishmonger. Lastly, Connor seats himself at the drivers wheel. They all look at each other. Fishmonger lights a cigarette nervously when he sees Connor's wild eyes.

CONNOR

Yeah. I'll be REAL careful!

He PEELS RUBBER into the night. SIRENS WAIL.

INT. VAN - DAY

Back in the present, SIRENS are WAILING in the distance as Howard and Connor are locked in mortal combat over control of the van.

Fists are flying, fish baskets are spilling, the van is now on, now off the road.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

Fishmonger is in the car with two pursuing police. Faces are taut.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

In the offing one can begin to see... the ocean. But the road is inclining towards some craggy cliffs.
INT. VAN - DAY

Howard, looking through the windshield sees the ocean and the looming danger. With renewed vigor he manages to open the driver's door and...slowly...push...Connor...out!

Alas, right at the cliff's edge, as Connor rolls to safety, Howard in the van tries a spin stop. The back of the van slides off the cliff.

CONNOR
(running up to it to try to save Howard)

Noooooooooooooo!!!!!!

The van totters. We see Howard desperately trying to get out of the doomed van. He frantically rolls down the window. Connor comes up. He grabs Howard's hand...too late.

The van, with Howard in it tumbles off the steep cliff.

As the forces of order pull up at the horrible scene, we see Connor pinned between nature and society. In this peak of extremity, he can only sink on his knees.

CONNOR
(reaching under his shirt and holding his crucifix fervently)

Oh God! What do I do?

The police jump out of their cars and run toward him. Like a madman, he jumps up and goes plunging headlong over the cliff.

The faces of the policemen are frozen in horror. Trembling, Fishmonger walks to the cliff's edge to see the finale. Suddenly he starts calling wildly.

EXCITING MUSIC PLAYS.

FISHMONGER

Allez! Allez! Vite! Vite!

(Continued)
As the police man the seabreak, CAMERA PANS to Connor, his arm around an apparently unconscious Howard's neck, making for the shore.

A CHEER rings from the top of the cliff as Connor, with the face of an old man, anxiously struggles to save his brother-in-law.

The Frenchmen on the cliff are exuberant. One policeman goes so far as to hug Fishmonger. After smelling him, he quickly lets him go.

MUSIC CRESCENDOES TRIUMPHANTLY as the SCREEN GOES BLACK.

FADE OUT.

THE END