

THE VAIN AND THE HEARTLESS

By David J. LeMaster

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SYNOPSIS: Dueling family businesses, long-lost lovers, double-crossing backstabbers and backdoor trysts, amnesiacs and murderers, philanderers and evil twins—they're all part of the soap opera. See how two filthy rich tycoons—Morgan Newbury and Jack Phillips—try to destroy each other's lives, businesses and futures. Will Morgan defeat his identical twin and overcome the attempt to overtake the family business? Will Morgan's daughters, Mandy and Mindy, give in to Jack Phillips' spell and surrender to his maddening desires? Will the Newbury family beat Jack Phillips to the new cholesterol-lowering operation that promises to change the world forever and make its owner the richest man in the world? Will Jack Phillips live after contracting a rare and fatal disease in the deepest, darkest jungles of Africa? Will Morgan's wife, Rachael, be discovered in her affair with Raul, the house servant, and her evil plot to kill Morgan, murder his children and take the family fortune for herself? The answers can only be found in *The Vain and the Heartless*.

DURATION: 90 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(8 females, 3 males, 6 either)

MORGAN NEWBURY – (m) the faux-British patriarch, head of Newbury Enterprises; pompous, and proud of his vocabulary

BENTON NEWBURY – (m) MORGAN's identical twin and played by same actor; seedy, from the streets, the opposite of Morgan in every way

RACHAEL NEWBURY – (f) MORGAN's wife; whispery, scandalous, overly concerned with herself; her day revolves around manicures and pedicures

MANDY NEWBURY – (f) the bad daughter

MINDY NEWBURY – (f) the good daughter

JACK PHILLIPS – (m) MORGAN's greatest enemy, a superb business man who dominates scenes and easily seduces women

LAUREN MOORE – (f) his lawyer and lover

DR. MAJOR – (either) the award-winning doctor

DR. BUTCHER (either) DR. MAJOR's partner and discoverer of the fatal Butcher virus

SECRETARY (either) – employed by JACK, but really works for self

HINDLESPATT (either) – an unfaithful employee of JACK's

LYNN LONDON – (f) MORGAN's lover

RAUL – (m) the Newbury houseboy; RACHAEL's lover. Devious.

MELISSA JOHNSON – (f) JACK's top person, a traitor and seducer.

ELIZABETH REX – (f) MORGAN's former wife; everyone thinks she's dead

ROSIE FRENCH – (f) BENTON's girlfriend

BROOKS – (either) one of MORGAN's workers; obsessed with charts

PATIENT – (either) is very, very sick

POTENTIAL DOUBLE-CASTS

Brooks / Hospital patient (either)

Elizabeth / Dr. Butcher

Hindlespatt / Brooks / Hospital patient

*To my beloved wife, Heather, without whom
I'd never have seen a soap opera.*

SETTING

The set may be either minimal or complex. The play only requires separate playing spaces for the Newbury house, MORGAN's office, JACK's office, and a few brief scenes in the hospital. The action moves from one area to the next, and there should be cross-fades rather than blackouts, imitating the quick, fast-paced movement of soap opera cameras from one scene to the next.

Stage left is the Newbury Home, a lavish mansion. There should be at least two chairs. There is a front door and an exit into the wings for a kitchen. The space should be big enough for several actors. It is the biggest of the four spaces.

Stage right is Newbury's office. The actor playing MORGAN/BENTON may exit and enter through the wings, allowing himself time to enter the opposite side of the stage.

Center stage is JACK's office. There is a desk with drawers and a chair.

Down center is the Hospital. These scenes may be played on a bare stage. If possible, the patient (and later JACK) may be transported in a wheel chair. If a wheel chair is unavailable, then the cast may adjust.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The same actor plays both Benton and Morgan. Benton is earthy and wild. Morgan is faux-British and exceedingly pompous. They are, of course, the good twin and the evil twin.

There should be dramatic music to accompany various transitions. The use of the music is up to the discretion of the director, but there should be a recognizable theme. The music is used to drown out voices at the end of the play.

The action is continuous, and there are no blackouts between the scenes.

Jack's and Morgan's offices should be next to each other, so that the actor playing Benton/Morgan can move from one to the other without effort.

Morgan/Benton's changes become faster as the play continues. The change for the actor should become stylized and fun.

If possible, the company should use a wheelchair for Jack in Act II. However, if the chair is not possible, an alternative would be to have Lauren carry/push Jack about herself. This creates a fun potential comic situation in itself.

PROPS

- a weapon (BENTON NEWBURY)
- a family photograph (BENTON NEWBURY)
- a cell phone (RACHAEL NEWBURY)
- a regular phone (RACHAEL NEWBURY)
- a suitcase (MANDY NEWBURY)
- a thermometer (JACK PHILLIPS)
- an ice pack (JACK PHILLIPS)
- a wheel chair or transportation for second act (JACK PHILLIPS)
- a cell phone (JACK PHILLIPS)
- a satchel with papers (LAUREN MOORE)
- a cell phone (LAUREN MOORE)
- a syringe (DR. MAJOR)
- a syringe (DR. BUTCHER)
- a thermometer (DR. BUTCHER)
- latex gloves (DR. BUTCHER)
- Files (SECRETARY)
- a pen (SECRETARY)
- Files (HINDLESPATT)
- a pen (HINDLESPATT)
- files (LYNN LONDON)
- serving tray with four champagne glasses (end of act one) (RAUL)
- serving trays with six wine glasses for act two, including one with tape on the stem (RAUL)
- a satchel (MELISSA JOHNSON)
- a large envelope with photographs (MELISSA JOHNSON)
- a purse with weapon (ROSIE FRENCH)
- a series of charts/presentational materials (BROOKS)
- thermometer (PATIENT)

ACT ONE

MANDY: Good morning, Daddy.

MORGAN: Good morning, my daughter. You're up early today.

MANDY: Why wouldn't I be? Knowing today you plan to blackmail my boyfriend, Jack Phillips, and run his multi-million dollar business into the ground.

MORGAN: Amanda. Your pretentious boyfriend, Jack Phillips, would destroy me if he had the chance. He's trying to drive a wedge into this family.

MANDY: You're just jealous of him.

MORGAN: Preposterous. I could never be jealous of that maladroit little philanderer. I simply wish to prevent you from consorting with the enemy.

MANDY: Mal and droid philosopher? Whatever.

MORGAN: Very well. I'll put this in terms you can understand. I forbid you to see Jack Phillips anymore. Do you hear me? Forbid!

MANDY: You can forbid our love, Father dear, but you'll never stop us from loving each other. Never. Never. Never! **(SHE rushes off in tears. MORGAN takes a sip of coffee. Enter RACHAEL NEWBURY, MORGAN's wife. SHE poses in the doorway.)**

RACHAEL: Good morning, Tiger.

MORGAN: Mmm.

RACHAEL: Why did Mandy rush crying down the hall?

MORGAN: The girl is lovesick for Jack Phillips.

RACHAEL: Jack Phillips? The man you plan to stab in the back this afternoon?

MORGAN: Indubitably. Of all the things Jack Phillips has done to me over the years, he deserves what's coming to him. Do you hear me, Rachael? That little mollycoddle has cost me millions. And this is a business venture. I must protect myself from that gold-digging sycophant.

RACHEL: But Morgan -

MORGAN: **(rises and straightens tie)** I'm going to work. Jack Phillips will be broken by the end of the day, and that will be that. **(pause)** What do you plan to do today, my dear?

RACHAEL: Oh, the usual. Sit around. Sip Mai Tais by the pool. Have a manicure and pedicure. Very exhausting.

MORGAN: You don't plan to warn Jack Phillips of my plans, do you?

RACHAEL: Whatever gave you that idea?

MORGAN: Very well. **(kisses her cheek)** Have a good day, my dear. Tell Amanda and Aminda I love them.

RACHAEL: Morgan. The girls don't like to be called Amanda and Aminda. They prefer Mandy and Mindy.

MORGAN: Those girls belong to the richest and most successful family in this city. I will not have them bandy themselves about with teenage names.

RACHEAL: But darling. They *are* teenagers.

MORGAN: They are heirs to the vast Newbury fortune. And they will be the only heirs...since you've been unable to give me the son I desire.

RACHAEL: **(reacts dramatically)** How dare you bring that up this morning!

MORGAN: I will bring up whatever I feel like bringing up, and whenever I feel like doing it. And you will sit back and let me lavish you with millions, and you won't say anything about it, because you're a covetous, money-grubbing old windbag.

RACHAEL: **(sarcastic)** Have a nice day at the office, dear.

MORGAN: Indeed, I will.

(MORGAN exits. RACHAEL poses, thinking, then crosses to the telephone and dials. The music swells as lights go up on JACK PHILLIPS' office, a plush area with desks and chairs, etc. JACK PHILLIPS embracing LAUREN MOORE, a lawyer.)

LAUREN: Oh, Jack, darling. You're such a genius.

JACK: Why am I a genius, Lauren? Just because I'm stealing Morgan Newbury's idea for a foolproof operation to remove all trans-fatty acids from the human body and thus reduce cholesterol and allow people to eat anything they want without ever thinking of obesity or heart disease, so I can use the operation for my own evil deeds and become unspeakably rich and powerful? Oh, that's nothing.

LAUREN: Jack. Are you certain the operation will work?

JACK: Dr. Major says it will. But if it doesn't -

LAUREN: Yes?

JACK: Then I've got the best lawyer in town to protect me from any lawsuits. Haven't I, darling?

LAUREN: Oh, Jack! You think I'm that good?

JACK: But of course. Now, kiss me. ***(They embrace. There is a knock on the door. LAUREN jumps away from JACK.)***

JACK: ***(furious)*** What?

(Enter JACK's SECRETARY.)

JACK: I thought I told you not to interrupt us.

SECRETARY: I'm sorry, Mr. Phillips, but Dr. Major is here.

LAUREN: Ah! Dr. Major.

SECRETARY: Should I send him in?

JACK: Of course, you nincompoop. Send him in. And don't bother us again.

SECRETARY: Yes, sir.

JACK: This man's a genius.

LAUREN: We just need him to sign the papers and commit the operation patent to the Jack Phillips Company. Then plan belongs to us. Er. You.

JACK: Let me do the talking, darling.

LAUREN: All right. But as your legal council, if I hear anything that could be used in court, I'll have to stop you from incriminating yourself -

JACK: Of course.

(The door opens and DR. MAJOR walks inside. HE looks glum.)

JACK: Doctor Major.

MAJOR: I have news for you, Jack.

JACK: Oh?

MAJOR: Yes, Jack. Big news. And it isn't good.

(The music swells. Cross-fade from JACK's office to the Newbury house, where RACHAEL is on the phone.)

RACHAEL: Jack Phillips, please. *(pause)* I'll wait. *(Enter MINDY, who looks at her mother. RACHAEL, caught, slams down the phone.)* Mindy, darling. I didn't hear you come in.

MINDY: What are you doing, Mother?

RACHAEL: Oh. Nothing.

MINDY: Yes you were. You were on the phone.

RACHAEL: Telemarketer.

MINDY: I don't believe you.

RACHAEL: Don't believe me, then. You never believe a word I say anyway, you ungrateful, good-for-nothing kid. *(pause)* By the way, why were you out until two this morning?

MINDY: What? How do you know that?

RACHAEL: I have my spies.

MINDY: Mandy?

RACHAEL: Maybe.

MINDY: Mandy!

MANDY: *(enters)* Mindy?

MINDY: Mandy!

MANDY: Stepmother?

RACHAEL: Mandy.

MANDY: Stepmother!

RACHAEL: Mandy...

MANDY: Mindy -

MINDY: Mandy.

RACHAEL: Enough! Look. I know you were out until two in the morning, Mindy. And I know you're seeing Jack Phillips, Mandy.

MANDY: Who told you?

RACHAEL: Mindy.

MANDY: Mindy!?

MINDY: Mandy -

RACHAEL: Cut it out! Look. Mindy, I don't know who you were gallivanting about with last night, but I won't have it. You are grounded.

MINDY: But mother!

RACHAEL: And Mandy. You are forbidden to see Jack Phillips anymore.

MANDY: You can't keep me from the man I love!

RACHAEL: Don't you see you're being used? He only wants to hurt your father.

MANDY: You'll never stop me, Stepmother! Never! Never! Never!

(Music swells. Cross-fade from the Newbury home to MORGAN's office. It is even more plush and better decorated than JACK's. MORGAN looks bored, listening to BROOKS, a PR person, give a presentation.)

BROOKS: So the new campaign will attempt to reach people of all age groups and ethnicities. We'll be able to show a net profit in the first quarter.

MORGAN: Indubitably. I like it, Brooks, old boy *(or girl)*.

BROOKS: Now. According to my charts -

MORGAN: I said I liked it. Thank you very much.

BROOKS: Good. Now, if you look at this pie graph, you'll see that -

MORGAN: For goodness sake, you've sold me on the deal. What more do you want?

BROOKS: Well. I worked really hard on all these charts and graphs, and I'd like to show them to someone.

MORGAN: Put them in the corner and I'll look at them later.

BROOKS: I'd much rather show them to you myself.

MORGAN: I appreciate your obsequiousness -

BROOKS: Gesundheit.

MORGAN: But I'm an exceedingly busy man -

BROOKS: Oh, please! Please, please let me show you the charts. I never get to show anything to anybody - please let me show you the charts!

MORGAN: *(annoyed)* Very well.

BROOKS: Okay. So. Here's a pie chart. Look at this pretty blue.

MORGAN: What does it mean?

BROOKS: Um. I'm not really sure. I just like the pretty blue. *(switches chart)* And I worked really hard on this one - I combined blue with a little white and silver and mixed them together -

(Enter LYNN LONDON, MORGAN's personal assistant.)

MORGAN: Ah, Lynn! Just in time.

BROOKS: Yes. Look at the pretty blue. Isn't it fabulous?

LYNN: I'm sorry?

MORGAN: Brooks here was just leaving. Weren't you, Brooks?

BROOKS: But I still have five more charts.

MORGAN: Show them to someone else.

BROOKS: But what about the -

MORGAN: I'll buy it.

BROOKS: Or the -

MORGAN: I'll buy that, too.

BROOKS: And the -

MORGAN: For goodness sake, I'll buy it all. Just get out of here, okay?

(BROOKS, heartbroken, leaves. Pause. MORGAN swoops LYNN into his arms.) Lynn, my beloved. How lost I've been without you.

LYNN: When are you going to leave Rachael and be with me for good?

MORGAN: Soon, my darling. Soon.

LYNN: I can't stand it, Morgan. Not another night without you. Not another day. Another minute. Another second.

MORGAN: Oh, my darling. **(The telephone rings. MORGAN and LYNN stare at each other. MORGAN breaks the embrace and answers the phone.)** Yes? Yes. Send her in. **(hangs up)** It's Johnson.

LYNN: Johnson? You mean Melissa Johnson, the top personal assistant to -

MORGAN: Jack Phillips.

LYNN: Why are you talking to her?

MORGAN: I have a plan, my darling. And it will render Jack Phillips to pauperism.

LYNN: Huh?

MORGAN: I'm going to bankrupt the little sucker.

(Cross-fade from MORGAN's office to JACK's office. JACK and LAUREN face DR. MAJOR, who looks grim)

JACK: You've got bad news for me, Doc? You mean something's wrong with our plans for the cholesterol lowering operation?

MAJOR: No. The cholesterol operation is fine.

JACK: Well, what is it, then?

MAJOR: Perhaps you should sit down.

LAUREN: This sounds serious.

MAJOR: It is serious, Miss Moore.

LAUREN: Jack, as your legal counsel, I want to advise you -

JACK: Not now, Lauren. **(pause)** What is it, Doctor. What have you got to tell me?

(Cross-fade from JACK's office to the Newbury house. RACHAEL is back on the phone)

RACHAEL: Yes. Jack Phillips, please. It's an emergency. **(Enter RAUL, the houseboy.)** Oh, Raul! **(drops the phone and the two embrace)**

RAUL: I saw the girls go back upstairs.

RACHAEL: Yes, Raul. They're such horrid little things. Two twins from Morgan's second marriage to Elizabeth Rex-Newbury, the heir to the Rex Coffee fortune, and the woman who mysteriously disappeared five years ago and is presumed dead after she never returned from an evening jog.

RAUL: Yes. That was before Mr. Newbury's twin brother, Benton, was sentenced to five years in prison, but never actually linked to Miss Rex's disappearance.

RACHAEL: Perhaps Benton killed Elizabeth.

RAUL: Perhaps. But I like to think...

RACHAEL: Yes?

RAUL: That it was you.

RACHAEL: **(laughs)** Yes, Raul. Perhaps it was me who killed Elizabeth. Except I got stuck with those miserable girls of his.

RAUL: Would you like me to take care of them for you?

RACHAEL: Not yet. Wait until I divorce Morgan and peg him for half his estate. We'll get the court to award him custody of the little brats.

RAUL: And if they don't? **(RACHAEL makes a slicing gesture across her throat)** Come on, Rachael. What are you waiting for?

RACHAEL: I want to see what Morgan does to Jack Phillips. If he drives Jack out of business, then that means Morgan's in line to make millions. And in return, we'll be in line to make millions on a divorce settlement.

RAUL: Come on, darling. How many millions do you really need?

RACHAEL: A million millions, darling. A billion millions. And that's what we'll get if we wait and let Morgan destroy himself.

(Both laugh wickedly. Cross-fade from the Newbury house to MORGAN's office, where MORGAN talks with LYNN. Enter MELISSA JOHNSON, an attractive girl in a business suit. SHE carries a satchel.)

MORGAN: Miss Johnson, how nice to see you again. Have you met my personal assistant, Lynn London?

LYNN: Hello.

MELISSA: How nice to meet you.

MORGAN: Lynn was just leaving.

LYNN: I was?

MORGAN: Yes, you were.

LYNN: Oh. I suppose I'm leaving, then. Goodbye.

MELISSA: So sorry you have to go. Sven, was it?

LYNN: Lynn.

MELISSA: Oh, yes. Lynn. Goodbye, Lynn.

(LYNN exits.)

MORGAN: Miss Johnson? You can provide me with details about Jack Phillips's affairs with his lawyer, his accountant, his tax advisor, his psychiatrist, his congressional representative, his college professor, his business mentor, his wife's sister, his veterinarian, his theatrical director, his Sunday School teacher, his best friend's sister, his physician, his physician's sister, his physician's sister's best friend's sister, his mail carrier, his supervisor, his next-door-neighbor, and five of his ex-wives' sisters' girlfriends, so I can blackmail him with the evidence and drive him into bankruptcy?

MELISSA: Yes.

MORGAN: Indeed. Start talking.

MELISSA: It's going to cost you.

MORGAN: What do you want?

MELISSA: A kiss.

MORGAN: *(suave)* A kiss? Is that all?

MELISSA: For starters. *(kisses him)* There. That's not so bad, is it?

MORGAN: Only when I think of what I'm doing.

MELISSA: And what is that?

MORGAN: Kissing a vixen who would betray her own boss and friend for the sake of a little money.

MELISSA: Yes?

MORGAN: Kissing someone with no scruples.

MELISSA: None at all.

MORGAN: Someone who I find to be the very scum of the earth.

MELISSA: Kiss me, you fool!

(Cross-fade to MORGAN's/JACK's office. JACK, LAUREN, and DR. MAJORS are in mid-conversation.)

DR. MAJORS: What I have to tell you, Jack, is not about business at all.

JACK: It's not?

DR. MAJORS: It's something far more serious.

JACK: What could be more serious than business?

DR. MAJORS: Well, Jack. Remember last week when you came by my office and had a physical?

JACK: Yes? I wanted a physical before going to negotiate a trade agreement in outer Mongolia.

DR. MAJORS: Yes. Well, the test results from the physical came back, and we found some things that are cause for alarm.

JACK: What kind of alarm?

DR. MAJORS: A five-bell alarm. Five-star alarm. Ultimate spicy chicken wing sauce alarm. Alarm like you feel when you're on an ocean liner and it's sinking. When you're in a jetliner and both engines and the tail are on fire. **(pause)** Do you get the picture?

LAUREN: Gee. That doesn't sound too good.

DR. MAJORS: Tell me, Jack. Did you travel to the jungles of Africa recently?

JACK: Well. Yes.

LAUREN: Jack went on a business trip to the deepest, darkest jungles of Africa to learn an ancient form of medicine from a tribe of pygmies.

JACK: I do that all the time.

DR. MAJORS: Yes, Jack. But this time, did you eat a dish called Mabu
Atu Ubu Booboo?

JACK: The pygmy king served the dish. I couldn't turn him down.

LAUREN: I turned it down. It was gross.

DR. MAJORS: But you ate it, Jack? **(pause)** That's just what I was
afraid of. You've been poisoned, Jack. Poisoned. Poisoned!
(pause) And you're going to die.

***(Cross-fade from JACK's office to the Newbury house. The stage
is empty. After a moment or two, MANDY sneaks inside. SHE
holds a suitcase.)***

MANDY: Mom? **(pause)** Mom? ***(No answer. MANDY starts toward
the front door. Enter MINDY.)***

MINDY: Trying to sneak away, Sis?

MANDY: What's it to you?

MINDY: I know about you and Jack. And that you're going to tell Jack
about Dad's plans.

MANDY: So?

MINDY: So. Just as soon as you walk out that door...I'm calling Dad.

MANDY: You wouldn't dare!

MINDY: If I can't leave, then neither can you.

MANDY: ***(mimic)*** I wasn't out partying until two in the morning.

MINDY: I wasn't partying. I was feeding the homeless at the soup
kitchen. I was out until two because of the prayer service afterward,
and then we built low-income houses in the projects. And tonight
I'm going act, sing, dance, and emcee a fundraiser for famine
victims in Ethiopia.

MANDY: Oh, no you won't. You're grounded.

MINDY: I'm going anyway.

MANDY: I'll tell. Little goody-two-shoes.

MINDY: Take that back.

MANDY: I won't!

MINDY: Jack's only using you so he can get to Dad!

MANDY: Take that back!

MINDY: It's true!

(Catfight; they tear at each other, ripping, crawling, snarling. Enter RAUL, who watches. They stop, embarrassed.)

RAUL: That was really cool. Do it again.

MANDY: Raul! How many times do I have to tell you? We don't like it when you watch us fight.

RAUL: Oh, come on. Fight just a little.

MINDY: I don't want to fight anymore.

MANDY: Yeah. You're creeping me out.

MINDY: Where is our mother?

RAUL: She...uh. Went to inspect the servant's quarters.

MINDY: Again?

RAUL: The pipes are leaking. She went to fix them.

MINDY: I thought she fixed the pipes week last week.

MANDY: No. Last week she fixed his window.

MINDY: Oh, yeah.

RAUL: Well. It doesn't matter. She'll be finished in a few minutes and she won't want to see her daughters fighting.

MANDY: No.

RAUL: So perhaps you should finish your fight now.

MANDY: Raul!

RAUL: Just kidding! ***(pause)*** Guess I'd better go to the kitchen and prepare lunch. ***(exits)***

MANDY: He is so weird.

MINDY: Listen. I met this guy at the homeless shelter last night.

MANDY: Met a guy, huh?

MINDY: Not that kind of guy. It was bizarre. He...

MANDY: What?

MINDY: He looked...just like...

(The doorbell rings. MANDY goes and opens it. And there, standing at the door is BENTON NEWBURY, MORGAN's identical twin, with ROXIE FRENCH.)

BENTON: Yo.

MINDY: Dad! He looked just like Dad!

(Cross-fade from the Newbury home to JACK's office. JACK, bold, faces DR. MAJORS and LAUREN)

JACK: Break it to me straight, Doctor. How long do I have?

DR. MAJORS: Oh, it's hard to say. Give or take the normal margin of error, I'd say...

JACK: Yes?

DR. MAJORS: A week.

JACK: A week?

LAUREN: Oh, Jack!

DR. MAJORS: That's given a plus or minus margin of error. I mean, technically within that margin of error you could live a normal, happy life, or you may already be dead.

LAUREN: But this is horrible. **(takes JACK in her arms)** Jack, darling.

JACK: Is there any cure?

DR. MAJORS: Well, perhaps. That's why I rushed over to talk with you.

JACK: An operation?

DR. MAJORS: I'm afraid so. But the risk is very high. In fact, the operation has never been successfully performed before. We've only tried it on chimps and mice. And a guy from Nebraska - but we don't talk about that much, and the Medical Board dropped all charges...

JACK: Doggone it, this takes all the fun out of screwing over Morgan Newbury, doesn't it?

LAUREN: How can you think of Morgan Newbury at a time like this?

JACK: Old habits die hard.

LAUREN: Oh, don't say die, Jack!

JACK: Sorry. It's just that I've spent my life trying to knock that old coot out of business. And I'll do it if it kills me.

LAUREN: **(crying)** Oh, Jack!

JACK: Sorry.

DR. MAJORS: Listen carefully. We've got just one chance.

JACK: Or what? I'll die -

LAUREN: Jack!

JACK: Can it, Lauren. I can't think about dying right now. I've got to -

SECRETARY: **(entering)** Mr. Phillips!

JACK: I thought I told you not to bother me.

SECRETARY: But Rachael Newbury is on the phone. And she says she has some very important news.

LAUREN: Rachael Newbury? You mean the wicked socialite harlot of the west? **(a discovery)** Jack, why would she call you?

(Cross-fade from JACK's office to the Newbury house. MINDY and MANDY look with astonishment at the man who appears to be their father, BENTON. ROXIE holds tightly onto him.)

MANDY: He's the spitting image of Daddy.

MINDY: It's amazing.

BENTON: Yo, ladies. You gonna let me to come in or what?

MINDY: Oh. Of course.

ROXIE: Is this the house?

BENTON: Yeah, babe. This is the one.

ROXIE: Where's all the money?

BENTON: Shh! **(pause)** You gotta forgive her, she has no manners.

ROXIE: Yeah. I ain't used to being around classy people such as yourself.

MANDY: I don't think Stepmother will be too happy about having these people here.

MINDY: I don't care what Mother thinks. I invited them here for a free lunch.

BENTON: Yeah. Free lunch.

MANDY: But these people are...poor.

MINDY: That's what I do, Mandy. Don't you understand? I work with poor people.

MANDY: You mean, like at Christmas time, when we donate to the orphanage?

MINDY: But I do it all year round. I work at the soup kitchen. I feed the homeless. I read books to the blind. I knew there had to be more to life than just being really rich and having a lot of money, Mandy. And there is. There's helping and giving and nurturing. There's so much, much more.

MANDY: You're really weird.

BENTON: Hey, I hate to break up this do-gooder speech and stuff, but I'm really hungry.

ROXIE: Yeah. Where's the safe?

BENTON: (*under breath*) Roxie -

ROXIE: (*whisper*) But you said they were loaded and maybe they hid money in the house -

BENTON: (*overlap*) Would you be quiet!? (*pause*) Uh. She meant to say, this place looks really safe, and you have baloney in the house.

MINDY: I'll have Raul bring in sandwiches.

MANDY: Wait a minute, Mindy. We don't even know who these people are.

BENTON: Oh. Well. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Benton.

MANDY: Benton?

BENTON: Yes?

MINDY: You mean - you're our long-lost Uncle Benton?

(Cross-fade from the Newbury home to JACK's office. JACK and LYNN face DR. MAJORS)

JACK: I can't believe it. You're telling me I have no time to live. (*Cell phone rings; HE answers. As HE does, a special comes up on RACHAEL, somewhere in the Newbury house. SHE holds a phone; answers*) Yes, this is Jack Phillips.

RACHAEL: Jack, darling. It's me.

JACK: (*tries to be formal*) Oh, hello, Mrs. Newbury.

RACHAEL: Don't Mrs. Newbury me - (*pause*) Oh. I get it. There are people around you, so you can't talk.

JACK: (*formal*) That's right.

RACHAEL: Well, listen to me, Jack. And listen good. My husband has decided to outbid you for the operation and then leave you holding the bag. He's going to blackmail you somehow. You've got watch out for your back.

JACK: (*formal*) I'll be sure and keep that in mind.

RACHAEL: Are you listening, Jack? He's plans to drive you to bankruptcy.

JACK: (*formal*) That's interesting news indeed.

RACHAEL: One more thing, Jack.

JACK: Yes?

RACHAEL: Guess what I'm wearing?

JACK: (*formal*) I think I'll let that one pass.

RACHAEL: I'm not wearing anything, Jack. Do you hear that? I'm completely naked and totally helpless, all alone here at the house -

(HE hangs up. Blackout on RACHAEL.)

LAUREN: Well? What did the Whore of Babylon want?

JACK: Rumor says Morgan Newbury wants to outbid me for the operation.

LAUREN: Why would she call to tell you that?

JACK: I have no idea.

LAUREN: Jack. Is there something you're not telling me?

JACK: I have no time for that drivel now. I've got to corner the market on that operation.

DR. MAJORS: But you're facing life and death.

JACK: Yes, but more importantly, I stand to lose millions!

LAUREN: But Jack -

JACK: ***(to MAJORS)*** Have you been negotiating with Morgan Newbury?

DR. MAJORS: No.

JACK: Then who has?

DR. MAJORS: It must be my partner, Dr. Butcher.

JACK: That dirty double-crossing -

DR. MAJORS: Remember, we created the cholesterol operation together. I can't negotiate rights to the process without Dr. Butcher's approval.

JACK: And where is Dr. Butcher?

DR. MAJORS: At the hospital.

JACK: Then we're going to have a little talk with Dr. Butcher.

LAUREN: As your legal council, Jack, may I remind you that you're dying and require immediate surgery -

JACK: Would you stop reminding me of that! Come on.

(Cross-fade from JACK's office to MORGAN's office. MORGAN and MELISSA are finishing their kiss.)

MELISSA: Think you get the picture yet?

MORGAN: Not quite. We'd better try it one more time.

(They start to embrace, but break away immediately as LYNN LONDON enters)

LYNN: Morgan. ***(pause; unsure if SHE saw something)*** I hope I'm not interrupting anything.

MELISSA: ***(smug)*** Not a thing.

LYNN: Well? What have we learned about Jack's plans?

MORGAN: ***(fumbling)*** Jack's plans? Oh, yes. That's right. I was learning about Jack's plans. Well. Miss Johnson was just informing me about them. Right, Miss Johnson?

MELISSA: No, actually, you were kissing me.

LYNN: ***(furious)*** What?

MORGAN: She's lying.

MELISSA: You've been caught, Casanova. And I see this two-bit floozy is jealous.

LYNN: Who are you calling a two-bit floozy, you dime-store coquette?

MELISSA: Gee, Morgan. She's got brains. If only she had looks to go with them.

LYNN: Why, you -

MORGAN: ***(holding LYNN back)*** Wait a moment. Stop! ***(to MELISSA)*** I don't like your tone. What are you insinuating, Miss Johnson?

MELISSA: Call me Melissa, please. After all, Morgan darling, I just kissed you. And during the kiss, I happened to take pictures of the two of us, using a tiny camera phone hidden in my clothing.

MORGAN: You devilish little guttersnipe.

MELISSA: I intended to send copies to Mrs. Newbury. But now it seems your most devoted employee is upset about the kiss, too. I can't imagine why.

MORGAN: You're attempting to blackmail me!

MELISSA: I want a cut of the operation sale. Twenty percent.

LYNN: You can't get away with this!

MELISSA: Watch me, Delilah. It's all here. The kiss. The jealous lover. Oh, dear Mr. Newbury. I've got you twice. I should charge double.

MORGAN: Very well.

LYNN: You're not just going to sit here and let her do this to us -

MORGAN: I have no other choice. If my wife files for divorce, she'll strip me of half my estate. And that, my dear, would be preposterously bad for business.

MELISSA: I thought you'd see it my way. After all, what's a few million between friends?

LYNN: You'll never get away with this.

MELISSA: I already have.

(Cross-fade from MORGAN's office to the hospital, where DR. BUTCHER works with a PATIENT (either in a bed or in a chair). DR. MAJOR rushes inside.)

DR. MAJOR: ***(out of breath)*** Dr. Butcher! I got him here as soon as I could. Jack is in the waiting room.

DR. BUTCHER: Thank heavens. Does he know the severity of his case?

DR. MAJORS: I don't think so. He just wants to purchase the rights to the cholesterol operation.

DR. BUTCHER: ***(with thermometer)*** Oh, yes. That. ***(to PATIENT)*** Stick out your tongue.

DR. MAJOR: ***(sticking tongue depressor)*** Why?

DR. BUTCHER: Not you, him ***(or her)***. ***(PATIENT sticks out tongue.)*** Um. Just as I thought!

DR. MAJORW: What is it?

DR. BUTCHER: This patient shows all the symptoms of the rare and extremely contagious disease, Butcher's Syndrome.

DR. MAJOR: Butcher's Disease! Dear Mother of Pearl!

DR. BUTCHER: It is essential that we isolate this patient immediately. We mustn't allow anyone else to get near him.

(Enter JACK and LAUREN.)

JACK: Dr. Butcher, we've got to talk with you.

DR. BUTCHER: Great Hippocratic Oath! Now they've been exposed!

JACK: Exposed? Exposed to what?

(Cross-fade from the Hospital to JACK's office. HINDLESPATT, a worker, and the SECRETARY go furiously through JACK's files.)

HINDLESPATT: It's got to be here somewhere.

SECRETARY: Keep looking, Hindlespatt.

HINDLESPATT: Wait a minute. **(pulls a document)** This might be it.
(reads paper)

SECRETARY: Yes? Yes?

HINDLESPATT: Eureka!

SECRETARY: Jack Phillips' last will and testament.

HINDLESPATT: You're sure he's dying?

SECRETARY: I heard the whole thing while I pretended to file. I do lots of spying while I feign work.

HINDLESPATT: Then we've got to doctor this thing so his whole estate goes to us.

SECRETARY: Right.

HINDLESPATT: Find some liquid paper.

SECRETARY: Don't you think they'll notice that?

HINDLESPATT: Blast. You're right.

SECRETARY: What do we do?

HINDLESPATT: We'll write in the changes and forge his signature next to them.

SECRETARY: Oh, I'm good at forgeries. Mr. Phillips has me do them all the time.

HINDLESPATT: Now, let's -

(Enter ELIZABETH, frazzled.)

HINDLESPATT: Wait. Who are you? What are you doing here?

ELIZABETH: I don't know. I was walking along and suddenly I blacked out and I woke up in the hospital. The doctors told me I slept for five years. But now I'm awake. And I'm just walking about, looking at the city, trying to remember.

SECRETARY: **(whisper)** Kill her.

HINDLESPATT: Wait a minute. I think she's telling the truth.

SECRETARY: She's here to spy on us.

HINDLESPATT: We can't kill an innocent person.

SECRETARY: Well? She's seen us in here. What else do we do?

HINDLESPATT: Let's test her.

SECRETARY: You test. I'll write.

HINDLESPATT: *(to ELIZABETH)* So...Miss?

ELIZABETH: What?

HINDLESPATT: Your name. What is your name?

ELIZABETH: My name. My name is...Is...That's funny. I don't remember.

(Cross-fade from JACK's office to the Newbury home. MINDY and MANDY stare at BENTON and ROXIE.)

MINDY: So, you're my Uncle Benton.

BENTON: Huh? Uncle?

MANDY: You mean you don't know?

BENTON: I'm just here because this young lady, out of the goodness of her heart, invited me here to have a nice lunch at her estate.

ROXIE: *(whisper)* Psst! I thought you said we was here to rob this place -

BENTON: *(whisper)* Will you shut your trap and let me take care of this?

ROXIE: I just want to get my hands on that cash -

BENTON: Be quiet, Roxie.

ROXIE: And what about that fur coat?

BENTON: Be quiet, Roxie!

ROXIE: And I'm tired of sleeping on the streets without -

BENTON: Roxie, for the love of Pete, quit flapping your trap, shut your pie hole, button your lip, cut the crap, make like closing the attic door and shut-up!! *(pause)* I'm shocked to know that you think I look like your father.

MINDY: Raul is in the kitchen making lunch. Do you like caviar?

ROXIE: What's caviar?

BENTON: ROXIE!

MINDY: *(pause)* Fish eggs.

ROXIE: *(whisper to MINDY)* You eat fish eggs?

BENTON: ROXIE!

ROXIE: But they eat fish eggs - ***(HE makes a threatening gesture. SHE stops for a moment, then mutters under her breath.)*** Do you boil them or fry them sunny-side up?

(Another threatening gesture. Pause. BENTON straightens clothing, etc., then makes a dramatic gesture.)

BENTON: As I was saying. I can't believe you think I look like your father. **(makes a dramatic swoop to a nearby photograph)** Great Jumping Jehosaphat! Is this your family portrait?

MINDY: Yes.

BENTON: I do! I look exactly like your father! It's amazing! **(sees a family photograph (it can be imaginary) and makes a dramatic show of seeing it)**

RACHAEL: **(appears in the doorway)** Cut the crap, Benton. I know it's you.

BENTON: **(pause)** Ah. Rachael. So nice to see you again.

(Cross-fade from the Newbury home to the hospital, where DR. BUTCHER and DR. MAJOR face JACK and LAUREN. DR. BUTCHER still tries to doctor PATIENT.)

DR. BUTCHER: You've all been exposed to a deadly virus. We must quarantine you immediately.

JACK: Virus? I thought I was dying from a poisoned dinner.

DR. MAJOR: You are.

JACK: Big deal, then.

DR. BUTCHER: It is a big deal. If you leave this hospital, you could expose hundreds more people to Butcher Syndrome.

JACK: What are the symptoms?

DR. BUTCHER: How do you feel?

JACK: I feel fine.

DR. BUTCHER: Sweet mother of mercy! That's one of the symptoms.

JACK: You're insane.

DR. BUTCHER: You've got to listen to me. You're fine. Then, all of a sudden it hits you.

LAUREN: What? You get sick?

DR. BUTCHER: No, you have an overwhelming urge to eat grapefruit and bran cereal.

LAUREN: What are you talking about?

DR. BUTCHER: That's the last phase. By then it's too late. You slowly lose consciousness.

DR. MAJOR: Jack, whether you believe it or not, you're a very sick man.

(Dramatic music. JACK looks stern. Cross-fade from the Hospital to JACK's office. HINDLESPATT and the SECRETARY, still holding files, face ELIZABETH.)

HINDLESPATT: Wait a minute. I think I recognize her.

SECRETARY: Who is she?

HINDLESPATT: Yes. It's all becoming clear now.

SECRETARY: What?

HINDLESPATT: Look at her closely. Think about it. She's been asleep for five years.

SECRETARY: You don't mean -

HINDLESPATT: It's Morgan Newbury's dead wife!

SECRETARY: Shh! ***(whisper)*** How do we tell for sure?

HINDLESPATT: ***(to ELIZABETH)*** Miss? Tell me, now. You don't remember anything about your past?

ELIZABETH: I seem to remember...jogging.

HINDLESPATT: ***(whisper)*** Elizabeth disappeared while jogging!

ELIZABETH: And running water. I went across a bridge.

HINDLESPATT: Yes? Yes, go on!

ELIZABETH: A dark and mysterious figure approached me. And then.

HINDLESPATT: Yes?

ELIZABETH: Then. I blacked out. Darkness. And I woke up in a hospital and the doctors said I'd been in a coma.

HINDLESPATT: But you can't make out the face of the person on the bridge?

ELIZABETH: No. It's...all darkness.

HINDLESPATT: ***(pulls SECRETARY aside)*** Don't you see? We could make a lot of money out of this.

SECRETARY: ***(whisper)*** How?

HINDLESPATT: ***(whisper)*** We'll kidnap her demand ten million dollars ransom!

SECRETARY: Brilliant!

(Cross-fade from JACK's office to MORGAN's office. MORGAN sits behind his desk and faces MELISSA and LYNN.)

MORGAN: **(to MELISSA)** So now that I've fallen victim to your heartless chicanery, where is the information you were supposed to bring to me?

MELISSA: You mean the way to blackmail Jack Phillips?

MORGAN: Indubitably.

MELISSA: Right here. **(SHE reaches into her satchel and pulls out an envelope)** Photographs of Jack with women; lots and lots of women.

MORGAN: **(takes photos and goes through them; HE turns them various ways, etc)** You pernicious little strumpet. You're quite the amateur photographer.

MELISSA: Only when there's a potential for blackmail.

MORGAN: You devious little cockscomb. You'll get your comeuppance.

MELISSA: Oh, don't you wish.

LYNN: I don't get it. Jack's been married and divorced nine times. Who cares how many lovers he has now?

MORGAN: Indeed. But now Jack's got a reputation to watch. He wants to enter into a family-oriented business. Portraying him in the tabloids as a philanderer will destroy him.

MELISSA: He claims he's turned over a new leaf.

MORGAN: Then we've got the goods.

MELISSA: Yes. But we've got a problem.

MORGAN: What's that?

MELISSA: Jack's secretary and his assistant, Hindlespatt. They suspect me of being a corporate spy.

MORGAN: Oh? Why is that?

MELISSA: Because they caught me spying. I photographed classified documents hidden in Jack's filing cabinet when Hindlespatt and the secretary walked in on me.

MORGAN: Oh? And why were they in the room?

MELISSA: **(thinking)** I don't know.

LYNN: Could it be that they were spying on him, themselves?

MELISSA: Why, yes! That's a possibility!

MORGAN: Then we must unveil these photographs in front of Jack before they have a chance to do it first.

(Cross-fade from MORGAN's office to the Hospital. JACK faces LAUREN, DR. BUTCHER, and DR. MAJOR.)

JACK: But Doc, I can't be quarantined! I've got work to do.

DR. BUTCHER: Not only that, but I'll force you to undergo the operation to save your life.

JACK: I don't have time for this! Morgan Newbury is slandering my name.

DR. MAJOR: If you don't let us operate, you won't have a name left to slander.

JACK: I'm too rich to die.

LAUREN: ***(crying)*** Oh, don't say die!

JACK: ***(to LAUREN)*** Would you be quiet?

DR. BUTCHER: We must put you under, Jack. But before we do, I want you to know your odds of surviving this operation.

JACK: Yes?

DR. BUTCHER: Well. They're slightly better than the odds of the earth spinning out of orbit tomorrow and crashing into the sun. But only slightly, I'm afraid.

JACK: Gee. That doesn't sound too good.

DR. BUTCHER: I suppose not.

JACK: ***(to LAUREN)*** Perhaps I should put my affairs into order.

LAUREN: Oh, Jack! Jack! Jack!

(LAUREN weeps. Cross-fade from the hospital to the Newbury house. MANDY and MINDY stare at RACHAEL, who stands in the doorway, smug. BENTON is also smug. ROXIE appears confused.)

RACHAEL: Girls. Go to your rooms.

MANDY: Why?

RACHAEL: Don't question me, Mandy. Go.

MANDY: I hate you, Stepmother! I hate you! I hate you! I hate you!
(makes a dramatic exit)

MINDY: Guess I'll be in my room, too. Call me for lunch. ***(exits)***

RACHAEL: Well, well, well. You've got a lot of nerve coming here.

BENTON: I saw the kid last night at the soup kitchen and thought, why not?

RACHAEL: Why were you in a soup kitchen?

BENTON: We was hungry.

ROXIE: Benton. Aren't you gonna introduce us?

BENTON: Oh, yeah. This is my sister-in-law, Rachael. Rachael, Roxie.

ROXIE: Charmed, I'm sure.

RACHAEL: Where'd you find this little harpy, Benton, the sewers?

ROXIE: Well! I never.

RACHAEL: I'm sure you haven't.

BENTON: So. Rachael, baby. Where's your old man?

RACHAEL: My old man, as you call him, is at work. That's something people do to earn money so they can feed and clothe themselves and their families. I'm sure you've never heard of it.

BENTON: You still got that great wit, don't you Rachael?

RACHAEL: Why don't you just slither back under the rock you came from?

BENTON: Hold the phone, there. I am given to understand my brother's made a lot of money. By, uh - working - if that's what you call it.

RACHAEL: Yes. So?

BENTON: So, I want my cut.

RACHAEL: Is that so? Most people don't get a cut unless they've actually done work, Benton.

ROXIE: Yeah? So what work do you do around here for your cut, Toots?

RACHAEL: How dare you! I'll have you know it's a full-time job to do what I do. Managing the estate, keeping myself beautiful and luxurious for my husband.

ROXIE: Make yourself beautiful. I'll bet *that's* a full-time job.

RACHAEL: How dare you, you would-be call-girl.

ROXIE: Hey! I'll scratch your eyes out, you -

BENTON: Ladies, please. There's enough money to go around for all of us. After all, Rachael, darling. I know what happened to my brother's wife.

RACHAEL: I don't know what you mean.

BENTON: Oh, come on, you little bimbo. You know good and well what I'm talking about. Hiring me as a hit-man. Sending me money in small brown envelopes -

RACHAEL: I think perhaps you should leave.

BENTON: Leave, huh? Listen, babe. If I leave, I'm headed straight to the office to tell my brother you hired me to off the old lady.

RACHAEL: It's your word against mine.

BENTON: You don't think he'd listen to his own flesh-and-blood?

RACHAEL: He knows I'd never hire someone as stupid as you to do an important job like that.

BENTON: Who're you calling stupid?

RACHAEL: A rich socialite like me would hire a real hit-man to kill a rival, not a rank amateur. That's what makes it all so brilliant, you see? Hiring you is completely beneath my character.

BENTON: All right, Toots. I'm going straight to the big guy.

RACHAEL: And set yourself up for arrest? Even *you* aren't that stupid.

BENTON: Oh yeah? I'm stupider than you think! **(to ROXIE)** Come on, Babe.

ROXIE: What about all the money?

BENTON: We'll get money, all right. For solving the mystery of what happened to Elizabeth Rex.

ROXIE: I thought you killed -

BENTON: Just stop trying to think, sweetheart, okay?

ROXIE: Okay.

(BENTON grabs ROXIE's arm and starts to lead her out. RAUL suddenly appears from the kitchen area.)

RAUL: Wait. Don't leave yet, Mr. Newbury.

RACHAEL: Raul?

RAUL: I have a proposition for you.

(Cross-fade from the Newbury home to JACK's office where HINDLESPATT and the SECRETARY look at ELIZABETH.)

HINDLESPATT: **(to ELIZABETH)** So. If I can help you find out who you are, what will you do for me?

ELIZABETH: I'd be eternally grateful.

HINDLESPATT: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But how about dollars?

ELIZABETH: I don't know. Perhaps if I have some money.

HINDLESPATT: **(snickers)** Yes. Perhaps so.

SECRETARY: **(writing)** There. It's done.

HINDLESPATT: Let me see. (**looks at will**) Yeah. That looks just like his signature all right.

ELIZABETH: Whose?

HINDLESPATT: Never mind, sweetie. Just close your eyes and try to remember who you are.

ELIZABETH: Oh, wait. I'm seeing something. I see...a man. A very rich man.

HINDLESPATT: That's right. You're doing great.

SECRETARY: (**whispering**) How are we gonna get money out of this?

HINDLESPATT: I have a plan.

(Cross-fade from JACK's office to the Newbury Home. RACHAEL, RAUL, ROXIE, and BENTON are in mid-conversation)

RACHAEL: What are you doing, Raul?

RAUL: It's perfect. Don't you see?

RACHAEL: What's perfect?

RAUL: He's the spitting image of Mr. Newbury.

ROXIE: That's because he *is* Mr. Newbury -

BENTON: Roxie, shut up.

RAUL: Nobody will be able to tell the difference.

RACHAEL: Yes?

RAUL: So he can help us off Mr. Newbury and then he'll take the old man's place.

RACHAEL: Ingenious.

RAUL: He'll run the business and take the girls off your hands. And you can keep the family fortune without having the old rat in your hair.

BENTON: Just a minute, here, Pancho. What makes you think I'd be privy to killing my own flesh and blood?

RACHAEL: You've always hated Morgan.

BENTON: Hate's a rather strong word.

RACHAEL: You tried to kill him in a game of dodge ball in the third grade.

BENTON: True.

RACHAEL: And you tried to crash the car into him in Junior High.

BENTON: Yeah...

RACHAEL: And you tried to drown him in high school. And you dropped a piano on him in college. And you've tried to shoot him, blow him up, stab him, poison him, drop him in the lake with his feet stuck in a block of cement, and run him over with an oil tanker.

BENTON: Okay, so I might try to kill him under the right circumstances. What's in it for me?

(Cross-fade from the Newbury Home to the Hospital. JACK, has a thermometer in his mouth and an icepack on his head. HE is surrounded by DR. MAJOR, DR. BUTCHER, and LAUREN)

DR. BUTCHER: The patient is prepared for surgery.

DR. MAJORS: Jack. Are you ready?

JACK: ***(to LAUREN)*** Lauren, you need to handle the business if I don't make it out.

LAUREN: ***(crying)*** Oh, Jack -

JACK: Can it. Just don't drive the company into the ground. ***(pause)***
All right, Doctor. I suppose I'm ready.

LAUREN: Wait.

DR. MAJORS: Yes?

LAUREN: Jack, your will.

JACK: What about it?

LAUREN: As your legal counsel. You should give me the power to disperse your earthly possessions if...You know.

JACK: To whom?

LAUREN: What did you write in your will?

JACK: Wouldn't you like to know?

LAUREN: Jack. As you know, I witnessed your signing of the will, but it won't stand up in court unless I acknowledge what's in it. After all, I could deny that it's your signature, and then where would we be?

JACK: What, you want me to leave all my money to you?

LAUREN: Well, now, Jack. It is customary for a dying man to leave his fortune to the woman he loves.

JACK: Yeah. And I did.

LAUREN: Did?

JACK: Left it to the woman I love.

LAUREN: You left it to me!

JACK: No. I left it to the woman I love.

LAUREN: What are you saying, Jack? You don't love me?

JACK: Of course not. You're my lawyer.

LAUREN: You snake in the grass. You filthy liar. You cheater. You skunk. You scum of the earth -

JACK: You're boring me. **(to DR. BUTCHER)** Time is money. Let's get this show on the road.

LAUREN: I hope you die, you filthy beast! I hope you die!

(Cross-fade from the Hospital to the Newbury house, where RAUL, RACHAEL and ROXIE wait on BENTON to return from dressing in the bathroom)

RACHAEL: This will never work.

RAUL: Have faith, Mrs. Newbury. Once he puts on one of your husband's suits, no one will know the difference.

RACHAEL: Benton may look like Morgan, but he doesn't sound like him at all.

RAUL: Their voices are close enough.

RACHAEL: It's not their voices, Raul. It's the vocabulary.

ROXIE: What's wrong with the way Benton talks?

RACHAEL: Are you joking?

ROXIE: I think he talks real good.

RACHEL: Of course you do.

ROXIE: What's that supposed to mean?

BENTON: ***(appears)*** It means, Roxie, you should shut your trap and keep it shut. ***(wears MORGAN's suit; they are identical)***

RACHAEL: Oh. Oh, my.

(Cross-fade from the Newbury Home to JACK's office. HINDLESPATT and the SECRETARY are in mid-conversation with ELIZABETH)

HINDLESPATT: ***(to ELIZABETH)*** Look. I got an idea. Miss, why don't we call you Miss Smith?

ELIZABETH: Miss Smith. I like that.

HINDLESPATT: Yes. Why don't you go with Miss -

SECRETARY: ***(whisper)*** Don't use my real name.

HINDLESPATT: Miss Lewis. Why don't you go with Miss Lewis and freshen up down the hall?

SECRETARY: (*whisper*) What am I doing with her?

HINDLESPATT: Let her freshen up.

SECRETARY: (*whisper*) You want me to kill her?

HINDLESPATT: No! She doesn't know anything.

SECRETARY: But she can identify us.

HINDLESPATT: Stop being melodramatic. Take her to freshen up while I close the office. Then we'll take her home and call Newbury.

SECRETARY: Stay here. (*takes ELIZABETH outside, pause*)

HINDLESPATT: Now. Let's see about that will. (*reading*) Leave to Hindlespatt and my faithful secretary... (*smiles, takes out pen*) Maybe we'll just get rid of the "faithful secretary." (*HINDLESPATT crosses out words. Pause. HE smiles and puts the will away. Pause. Enter LYNN and MELISSA.*)

MELISSA: Hindlespatt? What are you doing here?

HINDLESPATT: (*panicked*) Oh. Nothing.

MELISSA: Where's Jack?

HINDLESPATT: Nowhere.

LYNN: Who is he?

MELISSA: Just a no good worker trying to climb his (*her*) way up the corporate ladder. Isn't that right, Hindlespatt?

HINDLESPATT: You better be nice to me.

MELISSA: Oh, yeah? And why's that, Hindlespatt? Why's that? (*Enter the SECRETARY. They all glare at each other.*)

(Cross-fade to BENTON, RACHAEL, and RAUL in the Newbury house.)

BENTON: How do I look?

RACHAEL: It's astounding.

RAUL: You're identical.

BENTON: So what'a we do now?

RACHAEL: Well, for starters, you've got to quit talking like you came in off the streets.

BENTON: Yo. I did come in off the streets.

RACHAEL: This will never work.

RAUL: Sure it will. **(to BENTON)** Don't speak to people unless you're spoken to. Mr. Newbury likes to use these real high-class phrases, like "indeed." And "Very well." And "Corporate financing."

BENTON: Corporate financing?

RAUL: I don't know what it means either, I just hear him use it all the time.

RACHAEL: You're not a good enough actor. People will know immediately.

BENTON: Yo, yo. I can do this crap.

RACHAEL: Morgan would never use a word like "yo."

RAUL: He'd say, "Indubitably."

BENTON: Who does he think he is, Mary Poppins?

RAUL: Try it.

BENTON: Indubitably.

RACHAEL: No. He has a faux-British accent. A sign of his pomposity.

BENTON: Pomposity. Hey, that's a good word.

RACHAEL: Please.

BENTON: **(being MORGAN)** Indubitably pomposity.

RAUL: That's not bad.

RACHAEL: Not bad? He sounds like an idiot.

BENTON: Who you calling an idiot?

RACHAEL: This is absurd.

RAUL: We need a trial run. Call the girls.

RACHAEL: They'll never believe it's him.

RAUL: Just try.

RACHAEL: They know their father. **(pause)** Oh, all right. You'll see. **(calls)** Mandy! Mindy!

BENTON: **(to RAUL)** What am I supposed to do?

RAUL: Ask them why they came in late last night.

BENTON: Yo, I -

RAUL: What?

BENTON **(correcting self)** Indubitably.

RAUL: Just think faux-British.

ROXIE: **(to BENTON)** What is faux?

BENTON: Faux. You know. Like the number. One, two, three...

ROXIE: Oh.

(Enter the girls. They stare at their mother.)

MANDY: What is it, Stepmother dear?

RACHAEL: Your father wants to have a word with you.

MINDY: **(to BENTON)** What are you doing home?

MANDY: I thought you were going to destroy Jack.

BENTON: Indubitably.

MANDY: You mean, you've already done it?

BENTON: Indeed.

MANDY: Oh, Daddy? How could you?

BENTON: Corporate financing.

MANDY: You're the most horrible father in the entire world and I hate you! Hate you! Hate you! **(runs away crying)**

MINDY: **(to ROXIE)** Why are you still here?

ROXIE: Me? I -

RACHAEL: She's waiting for your Uncle Benton to return the restroom.

MINDY: Oh.

RACHAEL: Don't you have anything to say to your father?

MINDY: Like what?

RACHAEL: Such as "I'm sorry."

MINDY: Why?

RACHAEL: For staying out until two last night?

MINDY: I was at the soup kitchen!

RACHAEL: Mindy.

MINDY: I'm sorry. For staying out until two. At a prayer meeting and the soup kitchen.

BENTON: Indeed.

MINDY: Gee. Thanks, Dad.

(MINDY glares at her mother. BENTON gives her a little smile. Exit MINDY.)

RACHAEL: I can't believe it! They fell for it.

RAUL: I told you.

BENTON: So what'a we do now?

RACHAEL: We kill that SOB and bury him in the back yard.

RAUL: And you'll take his place.

BENTON: In exchange for?

RACHAEL: One million dollars.

ROXIE: (**elated**) Oh, Benton!

BENTON: Hold it. My brother's got money coming out of his ears. I'm not settling for a measly million.

RAUL: That's the deal.

RACHAEL: Right. And you take care of the girls.

BENTON: (**menacing**) Oh, I'll take care of the girls, all right.

RACHAEL: Then it's settled.

RAUL: (**exit**) I'll get a bottle of champagne to celebrate.

ROXIE: (**nudges BENTON**) Champagne?

BENTON: Yeah, it's like beer, only expensive.

ROXIE: Oh, boy!

BENTON: And you drink it out of shoes.

ROXIE: Oh? Boy.

RACHAEL: Well, well, well, Benton. Looks like we're business partners.

BENTON: Politics makes strange bedfellows.

ROXIE: Bed - Hey!

RACHAEL: Watch your back.

BENTON: Touché.

RAUL: (**enters with drinks**) A toast. To our newfound partnership.

RACHAEL: (**to BENTON**) Can we trust you?

BENTON: Are you kidding?

RAUL: What was that?

BENTON: I mean. (**as MORGAN**) Indubitably.

(They toast. Blackout. End of First Act.)

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