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BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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Cloak and Dagger

SPOOF. In this spoof of “Casablanca,” the “usual” suspects appear—a fortune hunter, a crook, and a spy—but in this case, they take the form of a Texas cowgirl, a mysterious damsel in distress, and a tone-deaf café singer. It’s 1942 and with World War II raging in Europe, Nick, a cynical café owner in northern Africa, has to constantly be on the lookout for enemy spies. A fortune-teller warns Nick that a mysterious, murderous spy will appear at the café wearing a cloak and carrying a hidden dagger. But when five women appear at the café wearing cloaks and carrying hidden daggers, the warning doesn’t prove too helpful. And to top it off, one of the women is Nick’s long-lost love, Lola! Then when a shadowy businessman is found dead with a dagger stuck in his back, Nick elicits the help of his waiter, Ziggy, to expose the spy before another customer turns up dead.

Performance Time: Approximately 75-90 minutes.

Characters

(5 M, 6 F, extras)

NICK: Adventurous, cynical café owner; wears a white suit, white shirt, and a light-colored tie.

ZIGFRIED (ZIGGY) BRUNER: Host and waiter at Nick's Café; wears black pants, white shirt, black vest, and black tie.

MR. LEE: Suspicious, enigmatic "businessman"; wears a dark suit, fedora, white shirt, tie.

MIRELLA: Old and stooped fortuneteller; wears a long colorful skirt, a loose blouse, a bandana or scarf around her head, and a lot of jewelry.

NATALIA ROMANOFF: Young woman who carries a mysterious purse; wears a plain traveling dress and bright blue cloak.

DIMITRI ANDROPOV: Fortune hunter; wears a suit, white shirt, and tie.

CHANTELLE CHANSON: Young café singer who can't sing; dramatically made up; wears an evening gown and yellow cloak.

REGGIE BERESFORD-HYDE: Aristocrat in search of love; wears an argyle sweater, light pants, and saddle shoes.

SISSY BLAINE: Cowgirl from Ft. Worth; wears a western shirt, denim or western skirt, bandana around her neck, and a pink cloak; her purse holds a stuffed dog.

LADY HENRIETTA HARRINGTON: Member of Parliament; wears gray or another dull-colored suit with a green cloak.

LOLA MALONE: Nick's long-lost love; wears pants and blouse (à la Ingrid Bergman) and a long red cloak.

EXTRAS: As patrons of Nick's Café.

Setting

1942, a hotel café in a city in North Africa.

Set

Nick's Café is located just off the lobby of Nick's Place, a small resort hotel on the beach. The décor is art deco with several large plants lending a tropical air. Small café tables sit here and there with two chairs at each table. There is a small counter by the arch entrance up right, which leads to the lobby and to the main entrance of the hotel. The DSL wing entrance leads to the kitchen and outside. The DSR wing entrance leads to other hotel rooms and to an unseen stairway.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1: Nick's Café, evening.

Scene 2: Nick's Café, the following afternoon.

Scene 3: Nick's Café, an hour later.

ACT II

Scene 1: Nick's Café, the following morning.

Scene 2: Nick's Café, 9 p.m., that night.

Props

Nick's Café menus	Money
Tray	Paper
Drink glasses	Large brooch, Lola, nat, sissy, lady
Key	2 Teacups
Cloth for wiping tables	Chef's hat and apron
Tape recorder reel	Large knife
Fortune-telling cards	Scrapbook
Plate	Large hairclip
Purse, for Natalia	Pistol
Coffee cup	5 Suitcases
Newspaper	Small suitcase
Coffeepot	Engagement ring
Crude, childish sketch of Natalia	Covered dish
Purse with stuffed dog sticking out	Wine bottle
2 Glasses of limeade	Wineglass
Dog biscuit	Serving towel
Small notebook	Military-looking jacket, pants, hat, for Nick
Pen	Military-looking medals
Cloak with a series of pockets, for Lady Harrington	Fake beard
File folder	Tickets
Small rope	Bag of coins
Daggers	Note
Cup of tea	Small passport-sized photo

Sound Effects

Dog barking

Thud

Footsteps

Gunshot (Can use a starter pistol or sound effect)

Clock chiming nine times

"We'll always have Paris..."

—Lola

ACT I

Scene 1

(AT RISE: 1942, Nick's Place, a hotel café in Beauvais, a city in North Africa. Ziggy stands behind the café counter. He looks up and smiles.)

ZIGGY: *(To audience.)* Welcome. I am your host, Zigfried Bruner, "Ziggy," for short, and I welcome you to Nick's Place, the finest café in the finest North African city of Beauvais. *(Ziggy grabs a couple of menus.)* You would like a menu, no? No? Ah, you are just here like everyone else...to linger over a seltzer water and lime...to watch who comes, who goes...and to wait. You wait for what? If you don't know, I won't tell you. But here you will see all the big cheeses in Beauvais and a couple of the little cheeses as well. You may also see a few rotten cheeses if you keep your eyes open. So sit, relax, and enjoy your respite from the heat, the hustle and bustle...and the worry. Oui, I know of the worry. I live here, too. I know that the enemy is just over the ridge. I know the imaginary line across the top of the mountains that keeps them in their place. Nick tells us not to worry, but, what the heck, we still worry, don't we? I mean, after all, Nick is Nick—

(Nick, wearing a white suit enters up right with Mr. Lee, who is dressed in a dark suit sporting a fedora on his head, which he takes off once inside the café.)

LEE: But, Mr. Nick, I do not understand how you can be so...unconcerned.

NICK: *(À la Bogart.)* Say, Ziggy, meet my pal Mr. Lee.

ZIGGY: Bonsoir, Monsieur Lee. What brings you to Nick's Place?

NICK: What else? He's thirsty. Plant yourself here, Mr. Lee, and Ziggy will get us a drink.

ZIGGY: Right away, Mr. Nick.

(Ziggy exits SL. Lee and Nick sit at a table.)

LEE: Mr. Nick...such elegance, such tranquility in the face of such a terrible enemy...

NICK: *(Looking around.)* And I mean to keep it that way.

LEE: But how? At any time the line could be breached—

NICK: They just don't know what they'd be facing if they tried.

LEE: Oh? What would they be facing?

(Nick cautiously looks around.)

NICK: Can you keep it under your hat?

LEE: *(Handling his fedora.)* It's a good hat. Keeps the rain out.

NICK: Funny...there's no rain around here.

LEE: Just an expression.

NICK: All right, then...here's the skinny. *(Ziggy enters SL with two drinks on a tray. Quickly, as a cover.)* And wouldn't you know, my horse tripped as it was coming down the final stretch, and the jockey flew 20 feet in front of that animal, and landed over the finish line before his mount.

LEE: *(Laughing.)* Too bad for your wallet, my friend.

NICK: Set me back for about two minutes. I had money on the second- and third-place horses, so I made out like a bandit.

LEE: You seem to be a man of many talents.

(Ziggy serves them their drinks.)

NICK: I cover my bases. Thank you, Ziggy.

ZIGGY: My pleasure, Mr. Nick. Will there be anything else?

NICK: How about getting Mr. Lee set up in a room.

ZIGGY: (*Indicating the audience.*) And our guests?

NICK: I'll handle them.

(Ziggy bows, exits up right.)

LEE: It appears you don't trust your host.

NICK: I don't trust anybody, Mr. Lee.

LEE: Except me.

NICK: You seem an amiable chap.

LEE: My mother always said I was a friendly little fellow.

So...you were going to put something under my hat?

NICK: Just this. You know that old monastery just beyond

Beauvais in the western hills overlooking the city?

LEE: The abandoned monastery?

NICK: It's not abandoned.

LEE: Really?

NICK: What nobody sees is that it's a garrison for a thousand
and one men.

LEE: A thousand.

NICK: And one. At last count.

LEE: That is a formidable force.

NICK: Yeah...isn't it? And if the enemy tries anything...they
move one inch beyond that ridge between us and
them...and those thousand and one men will grab them by
the throat and strangle the life out of 'em.

LEE: The enemy must have some idea of your protection.

NICK: The General makes sure bits and pieces leak out.

LEE: The General?

NICK: The General.

LEE: And who is this "General?"

(Ziggy enters up right carrying a key.)

ZIGGY: Excuse me, Mr. Lee, but your room is ready. (*Hands
him the key.*) Here is your key. Room nine at the top of the
stairs. I have sent your luggage up.

LEE: Most accommodating.

NICK: Thanks, Ziggy. You're a pal.

ZIGGY: Glad to be of service.

(Ziggy moves left to wipe off a table.)

LEE: And you have a name for me, Mr. Nick?

NICK: *(Glances at Ziggy.)* Sure. Sure. Prize medal in the eighth race. That horse has got more metal than U.S. Steel and Alco combined.

LEE: I am glad to know that you have chosen a winner.

NICK: Me, too.

LEE: On that note, I bid you goodnight.

NICK: Yeah...don't let the bedbugs bite.

(Lee exits up right.)

ZIGGY: Another one?

NICK: You guessed?

ZIGGY: Mr. Nick, he was easier to see through than a plate-glass window.

NICK: And just as dumb. He took it hook, line, and sinker.

ZIGGY: And just how long do you think they'll keep swallowing the bait?

NICK: As long as I got the hook.

ZIGGY: If they find out the guards up there are mere actors—

NICK: Ziggy.

ZIGGY: And the supply shipments are empty boxes—

NICK: Ziggy.

ZIGGY: And that there's no general—

NICK: Ziggy. I'd hate to have to mention you to the General.

ZIGGY: And what's he going to do? Take away my birthday?

NICK: Yeah...that's one way of looking at what he'd do.

ZIGGY: Come, come, Mr. Nick. I wasn't born yesterday.

NICK: And if you want to keep alive till tomorrow, you'll watch what you say.

ZIGGY: Oh, and before I forget, this came for you. (*Ziggy moves behind the counter and pulls out an old tape recorder reel.*)

More garrison noises for the loud speaker?

NICK: This will give us a change of pace.

ZIGGY: I will say this, Mr. Nick, you've got more guts than brains.

NICK: I dunno, Ziggy...I think I'm pretty evenly divided.

(Mirella enters up right. She is dressed as a fortuneteller in bright colors, lots of beads and jewelry, and has a colorful scarf around her head. She is old and stooped.)

MIRELLA: Mr. Nick.

NICK: Mirella.

ZIGGY: (*To Mirella.*) Go on. Get out of here. We don't need any fortunes told.

MIRELLA: Ah, Ziggy. You are mad at me?

ZIGGY: You told me I was going to come into a lot of money.

MIRELLA: But you did, no?

ZIGGY: If you call tripping over a jar of worthless coins...all right then.

MIRELLA: A lot of money, no?

ZIGGY: Go on. You don't deserve a handout for that.

NICK: Ziggy...go tell André the kitchen can close...and bring a plate for Mirella here.

ZIGGY: You'll lose your shirt giving away food to beggars like this.

MIRELLA: Go, before I put a hex on you.

ZIGGY: You couldn't put a hex on a buttercup, you old snake.

MIRELLA: Oh, no? Remember that man at the tobacco shop?

ZIGGY: The one who disappeared last year?

MIRELLA: He never disappeared. That new wooden butler that stands by the shop now?

ZIGGY: (*Terrified.*) Oh, come on. You can't mean—

MIRELLA: He didn't believe in my hexes, either.

ZIGGY: So...you turned him into a wooden butler.

MIRELLA: And the next time you walk by, you'll hear him whisper... "Help me. Help me." (*Ziggy runs off left.*) A good thing that man's a fool.

NICK: He just scares easily. Everybody does these days.

MIRELLA: I know the feeling, Nick. I know it well. And you should know it well, too.

NICK: Have the cards told you something?

MIRELLA: They always whisper things.

NICK: Like what?

MIRELLA: "Like what" will cost you something.

NICK: How much?

MIRELLA: Nothing you can't pay.

NICK: Such as?

MIRELLA: My cousin Angélique—

NICK: What about her?

MIRELLA: She has escaped from hiding amongst the enemy over the mountains.

NICK: Good for her.

MIRELLA: Now she needs to get to Portugal.

NICK: That'll be a trick.

MIRELLA: Not for a magician.

NICK: I'm no magician.

MIRELLA: Nick...you're talking to Mirella. We have known each other for how long? Ever since you came here 15 years ago after you left what's-her-name in Paris.

NICK: Lola?

MIRELLA: I knew you couldn't forget her.

NICK: Not for a minute. She was everything I could ever ask for in a woman...beautiful, brilliant, and loaded.

MIRELLA: How these things just don't work out sometimes I don't know. But I did tell you once—

NICK: Yeah, yeah, yeah...she'll be back, Nick. She'll be back...just be patient.

MIRELLA: Well?

NICK: Isn't 15 years patient enough?

MIRELLA: There is no time limit on the future.

NICK: You know what I think? I think way back then you put a hex on me.

MIRELLA: No, my friend. I didn't know you way back then...but I do now...and I know that if anyone can get Angélique on a plane to Portugal, it is you.

NICK: And what do I get for my troubles?

MIRELLA: Information. Valuable information. *(Laying out her cards on the table.)* The cards say the enemy has a new spy.

NICK: I know...I already met him. Mr. Lee.

MIRELLA: *(Laughing.)* Him? They sent him as a decoy so you are lulled into thinking they're idiots.

NICK: That makes me feel good, Mirella.

MIRELLA: Beware...the real spy is so good she's able to pull the heart out of a rabid dog without leaving a drop of blood.

NICK: She's a vet?

MIRELLA: I am not making a joke.

NICK: All right...all right...she's a she.

MIRELLA: Yes...a she. Who better to use against Nick, the ladies' man?

NICK: And how will I know who she is?

MIRELLA: The cards say she will wear a cloak.

NICK: A cloak? Didn't the cards say something about her hair color? Her eyes? Her accent? Anything helpful?

MIRELLA: She will wear a cloak...and beware, she carries a dagger.

NICK: Cloak and dagger.

MIRELLA: Can you remember that?

NICK: How can I forget?

(A scream is heard off right. Nick moves up to right entrance. Mirella looks around nervously then races off down right. Ziggy enters SL carrying a plate. Natalia enters up right. She is wearing a bright blue cloak and carries a purse.)

NATALIA: Oh, help me. Help me, please.

NICK: What's the trouble, lady?

NATALIA: I must hide.

NICK: Who're you running from?

(Natalia ducks behind the counter.)

ZIGGY: You know what you're doing, Mr. Nick?

NICK: Sure, Ziggy...I'm helpin' a damsel in distress.

(Ziggy looks over the counter.)

ZIGGY: With that dagger she just pulled from her purse, I
have a feeling she's not the one in trouble.

NICK: Mirella. Mirella, get back here.

*(Natalia sneaks off up right, a dagger in her hand, as Nick looks
down left and right. Blackout.)*

Scene 2

(AT RISE: Nick's Place, the following afternoon. Nick sits at a table downstage with a cup of coffee in front of him. Andropov sits upstage holding a newspaper up so it blocks his face from the audience. Other café Patrons sit at other tables. Ziggy enters up right, carrying a coffeepot. He looks around nervously and then moves downstage.)

ZIGGY: *(To audience.)* So. You see how things go here at Nick's. But not to worry. When we turned around to find the woman last night, she was gone. Maybe we saw no one. Maybe our imaginations were working overtime. These days that is not so uncommon, no? We all see and hear things that just might not be there. *(Ziggy approaches Nick.)*
More coffee, Mr. Nick?

NICK: No, Ziggy...thanks. Too much of that stuff gives me the woolies. You know what the woolies are, don't you, Ziggy?

ZIGGY: What I felt just now.

(Nick rises and pulls Ziggy downstage, ostensibly out of earshot of the other customers.)

NICK: You have any trouble?

ZIGGY: Not exactly.

NICK: Angélique got to the airport all right?

ZIGGY: Sure, Mr. Nick. You can trust me.

NICK: All right, then, she got on the plane?

ZIGGY: Sure she did.

NICK: It was the right plane?

ZIGGY: Only one plane out at noon and that was bound for Lisbon.

NICK: Did the thing take off?

ZIGGY: Without a hitch.

NICK: Then where do the woolies come in?

(Ziggy cautiously looks left and right.)

ZIGGY: I...I couldn't help but feel like somebody was watching us. *(Andropov drops the newspaper for a moment and looks at them.)* It was like I was a kid again in one of those haunted houses.

NICK: There are no such things as ghosts, Ziggy.

ZIGGY: Tell that to my knees.

NICK: Get a hold of yourself. We've survived this long. This whole crazy world can't keep fighting forever. All we gotta do is keep our chins up, keep our eyes on the road, and keep our foot on the pedal.

(Lee enters up right and moves noiselessly down to Ziggy and Nick. Andropov jerks the newspaper back up to cover his face.)

ZIGGY: Too bad I never learned how to drive.

NICK: Look, Ziggy...you weren't followed. Nobody was watching you. You're safe here. After all, this is Nick's Place.

(Lee taps Ziggy on his shoulder. Ziggy screams and hides behind Nick.)

LEE: Sorry. So sorry.

NICK: Ziggy, here's, just a bit...anxious, aren't you, Ziggy?

ZIGGY: Yes, Mr. Nick. Just a bit anxious, that's all.

NICK: Go get yourself a pot of tea. Drink the whole thing.

ZIGGY: Right, Mr. Nick. *(Ziggy races off left.)*

NICK: So what are you doing slinking about like that?

LEE: I did not know I was...slinking.

NICK: Anybody who scares Ziggy half out of his wits is slinking, Mr. Lee.

LEE: I was looking for a young lady.

NICK: Aren't we all.

LEE: I mean on business. She was to...sell me a rug.

NICK: You can pick up a rug at the marketplace. Plenty of 'em there.

LEE: This was a special rug...made to order.

NICK: Yeah? So what is this doll's name?

LEE: Angélique.

NICK: Don't know anybody with a name like that.

LEE: Are you sure?

NICK: Why would I lie to you?

LEE: Of course. There is no reason to lie. But I have a feeling Angélique has—with a little help—how do you say...flown the coop?

NICK: Don't get your feathers ruffled. I'm too chicken for a stunt like that.

LEE: I am normally a very peaceful man.

NICK: Except where rugs are concerned.

LEE: Precisely. If she has absconded with the 500 dollars I paid her for the rug—

NICK: Hmm...that must be some rug.

LEE: Oh, it is. And I'll get my hands on it if it's the last thing I do.

NICK: Shhhh. Don't make promises you can't keep around here. *(Chantelle enters wearing a yellow cloak. She is dramatically made up and wears an evening gown. She begins to sing a song rather badly. Nick approaches her. To Chantelle.)* Hey. Hey. Hey. We don't allow songbirds in here without their cages.

CHANTELLE: I don't have a cage, Mr. Nick.

NICK: So you know who I am.

CHANTELLE: Everybody knows who you are.

NICK: And how about you? You got a name?

CHANTELLE: Chantelle. Chantelle Chanson.

NICK: Pretty sing-songy moniker. You born with that name, or you just invent it?

CHANTELLE: Necessity is the mother of invention.

NICK: That clears the mystery up.

CHANTELLE: Does it really make a difference? I am Chantelle Chanson, fresh from the stages of London, Paris, and Rome.

NICK: You're not fresh from any of those places. There's a war, toots, and nobody can hear a songbird above all the bombs and ack-ack.

CHANTELLE: You're right...they said you're always right...and you are. *(Chantelle sits, suddenly deflated.)*

NICK: This isn't the young lady you were looking for, is it, Mr. Lee?

CHANTELLE: Mr. Lee?

LEE: At your service.

CHANTELLE: You...you haven't been looking for me...have you?

LEE: I am afraid not, my dear. But rest assured, if I were, I have now found you.

(Chantelle gasps.)

NICK: You know each other?

CHANTELLE: No. No. Just...just a touch of...indigestion.

NICK: Join us, Mr. Lee?

LEE: Thank you, no. I am off to find my rug...or the woman who took my money for it.

(Lee exits up right. Nick sits.)

NICK: I'd hate to be that babe.

CHANTELLE: I know...he looks ruthless. Those eyes. That curled up lip. That scar.

NICK: He doesn't have a scar.

CHANTELLE: Oh, no? Why do you think he always wears a turtleneck? Do you have a room, Mr. Nick? I'm dead on my feet.

NICK: Let's hope not literally. Registration desk is out front.
You passed it on your way in.

(Ziggy enters left and approaches Nick.)

ZIGGY: Ah, Mr. Nick, you have a guest. Can I get you anything, mademoiselle?

NICK: Chantelle Chanson, here, was just heading to the registration desk.

CHANTELLE: But I'll be back. *(Chantelle exits up right.)*

ZIGGY: She's quite a dish.

NICK: But she's got her flaws.

ZIGGY: I know. I heard her sing.

NICK: I mean she can't lie to save her skin.

ZIGGY: Why should she have to lie?

NICK: Because she knows Mr. Lee...and a lot better than either one of us.

ZIGGY: Stop it. Stop scaring me.

NICK: Get a hold of yourself.

ZIGGY: But she was wearing a cloak.

NICK: And so was she.

(Nick picks up a sketch from his table. He holds it so the audience can see a very crude, childish sketch.)

ZIGGY: Ah, Mr. Nick...

NICK: I've captured her, haven't I, Ziggy? Our phantom guest last night.

ZIGGY: Mr. Nick, that looks more like Little Orphan Annie.

NICK: Are you saying I can't draw?

ZIGGY: Oh, Mr. Nick, you know I hate to be negative.

(Natalia enters up right, dressed as she was before, again clutching her purse.)

NICK: We'll see about that. *(To Natalia.)* Mademoiselle.
Would you mind, please?

NATALIA: *(Nervously.)* Yes? What is it?

NICK: Can you tell from looking at this picture who I was
thinking of?

NATALIA: Little Orphan Annie?

ZIGGY: See?

NICK: No. It's a girl who busted in here last night looking for
a place to hide. And come to think of it...she looked a lot
like you. As a matter of fact, it *was* you.

NATALIA: Oh, please, Mr. Nick...I was just...playing a game.

NICK: Aren't we all?

NATALIA: *(Covering, nervously.)* My girlfriend Lulu had
found a man she wanted me to date, but he looked like
him... *(Natalia points to Ziggy.)* ...and I just couldn't stand
the thought.

ZIGGY: Hey. I resent that.

NICK: Shut up, Ziggy, and get us a couple of limeades.

ZIGGY: Right, Mr. Nick...but I still resent it.

*(Ziggy exits SL. Nick and Natalia sit. Andropov drops his
newspaper, then quickly raises it again.)*

NICK: So, you don't think much of my artistic talent.

NATALIA: Don't take it personally.

NICK: What brings you back here?

NATALIA: It's the only decent place in town.

NICK: You just visiting?

NATALIA: Passing through.

NICK: Or running from.

NATALIA: And just who would I be running away from?

*(Natalia looks over at Andropov, who has dropped his newspaper and
is staring at her. Reggie enters up right. Natalia sees him and exits
SR.)*

REGGIE: *(To Nick.)* I say. I've seen that girl before.

NICK: You did a fine job of scaring her off.

REGGIE: Didn't mean to.

NICK: You're not a waiter by any chance, are you?

REGGIE: I should say not. I'm Reggie Beresford-Hyde of the London Beresford-Hydes.

NICK: As opposed to the Dover Beresford-Hydes.

REGGIE: You know my cousins?

NICK: Don't kid yourself. So, what can we do for you here at Nick's Place, Mr. Hyde?

REGGIE: *(Looking around the room.)* Why, I'm looking for someone.

NICK: Yeah? Any particular someone or aren't you picky?

REGGIE: Oh, I'm picky, all right. Frightfully picky.

NICK: I'll bet.

REGGIE: You see, I met her in London, and I've followed her here hoping that she'll...well, that we'll—

NICK: I get the picture. So what are you doing out of uniform, Mr. Hyde?

REGGIE: Probably the same as you, Mr. Nick.

NICK: Touché. A person can get in trouble asking a question like that. So are you sure the object of your obsession will be stopping by Nick's Place?

REGGIE: Since it's the only place in town with clean linen, I'm sure she will.

NICK: Then get yourself a room and keep your eyes peeled.

REGGIE: A bully suggestion.

NICK: Bully?

REGGIE: Where do I register?

NICK: Just step into the lobby there. *(Nick indicates down right exit.)*

REGGIE: Oh, and do let me know if she arrives—discretely, of course.

NICK: How will I know her?

REGGIE: She'll have Hortense with her.

(Reggie exits SR. Ziggy enters, carrying a tray with two glasses of limeade.)

ZIGGY: Two limeades, Mr. Nick.

(Nick takes one off the tray and sips.)

NICK: Refreshing.

ZIGGY: And the lady?

NICK: You're too late. She ran off.

ZIGGY: She has a habit of doing that.

NICK: If I didn't know better, I'd say somebody's after her.

(Andropov drops his newspaper, smiles, then raises it again.)

ZIGGY: Well, she has a certain...charm.

NICK: Or she's carrying a certain charm.

ZIGGY: Under her cloak, perhaps?

NICK: Why else would she be so...edgy?

ZIGGY: It is too bad you have two guests wearing cloaks.

NICK: C'mon, Ziggy, it makes life interesting. *(Sissy enters up right carrying a purse with a stuffed dog sticking out. She is wearing a pink cloak. Nick notices her immediately.)* But now it borders on the ridiculous.

SISSY: *(With a Texas drawl.)* Say. Say, are ya'll Nick?

NICK: Yeah, doll. And this is Ziggy, our host here at Nick's Place.

SISSY: Well, I sure am glad to be here. Somebody said you got a nice spread here with clean sheets and beans for breakfast.

ZIGGY: Whatever your heart desires, mademoiselle.

SISSY: Oh, don't go madam-ing me. The name's Sissy. Sissy Blain from Fort Worth, Texas.

NICK: You're a long way from home.

SISSY: Ain't we all, buster.

NICK: Perhaps you'd like to sit down?

SISSY: Ha. After sittin' on that plane all this time? My rear's number than an abscessed tooth at a dentist's.

ZIGGY: What colorful language you speak in Fort Worth.

NICK: Why don't you get another limeade, Ziggy.

ZIGGY: She can have this one, Mr. Nick.

NICK: Get a fresh one, Ziggy.

(Ziggy starts to exit SL in a huff.)

SISSY: *(Calls after him.)* Oh, and get a dog biscuit for my baby here.

ZIGGY: Yes, ma'am. *(Ziggy exits SL.)*

SISSY: Is he always that stuffy?

NICK: I thought he's loosened up a bit.

SISSY: Nice place you got here. Exotic. Real exotic.

NICK: A home away from home.

SISSY: And where's that, Mr. Nick? Your home, I mean.

NICK: Anywhere I unpack, Miss Blaine. And I trust you'd like to get a room and unpack?

SISSY: Kind of rushing things a bit, aren't you?

NICK: Not at all. *(Sound of dog bark.)* Cute little fellow.

SISSY: It's a girl. Hortense.

NICK: Oh, Hortense.

SISSY: Yeah. What of it?

NICK: A lovely name.

SISSY: She goes everywhere with me... *(To dog in purse.)* ...don't you, sweetie pie? Yes, mama's gonna get you a treat real soon.

NICK: What brings you and Hortense to Beauvais, Ms. Blaine?

SISSY: Not the weather, that's for sure. Isn't there any way you can turn down the heat?

NICK: I'm afraid not. This is North Africa, after all.

SISSY: So they tell me. Big sandbox, if you ask me. And if he chases me here, I'll—

NICK: You're being chased?

SISSY: Oh, some idiot wants to marry me.

NICK: I don't think he's an idiot.

SISSY: You know him? He's been here?

NICK: No. I mean, I think you have a lot to offer.

SISSY: Oh, sure. The second biggest cattle spread in Texas
and an oilfield the size of Rhode Island.

NICK: I was thinking of less tangible qualities.

SISSY: You don't talk like you're from New Jersey.

NICK: I never said I was from New Jersey.

SISSY: Yeah, well...he's just after my money, and I'm
definitely not ready to settle down.

NICK: What are you doing over here...so close to
the...conflict?

SISSY: My daddy told me to get a job so I can see what the
world is really like. So I hitched on as a reporter for the
Dallas Tribune.

NICK: A war correspondent?

SISSY: Anything wrong with that?

NICK: Not at all. And I would bet you've dug up a few
interesting stories.

SISSY: I'll say, buster. People got a real tendency to open up
to a cowgirl who misplaced her horse.

NICK: Is that how you met...him?

SISSY: My only mistake.

(Ziggy enters with a limeade and a dog biscuit on a tray.)

ZIGGY: One fresh limeade.

SISSY: And a dog biscuit?

ZIGGY: And a dog biscuit.

(Sissy grabs the limeade and drinks it down like a cowboy at a bar.)

SISSY: Now that hits the spot! *(She grabs the dog biscuit. To
dog.)* Here you go, Hortense. Just like Mama promised.
Now...I need a room. I gotta change my duds.

ZIGGY: The registration desk is—

NICK: Ziggy, why don't you take Miss Blaine up to the presidential suite.

ZIGGY: We don't have any—

NICK: Ziggy. You don't have to keep it a secret. It will be perfect for Miss Blaine. We don't want her to have to go to the registration desk right now.

ZIGGY: Oh, oh, right. This way, Miss Blaine. *(Ziggy moves up right.)*

NICK: *(Points left.)* That way, Ziggy.

(Ziggy moves left.)

SISSY: I don't think this guy could find a bucket of slop if he fell in it.

(Sissy follows Ziggy off left just as Lady enters up right wearing a green cloak. She is observing everything intently and writing notes in a small notebook.)

NICK: *(To Lady.)* Welcome to Nick's Place. *(He gets no response.)* Lady, you want a table? *(Again, no response. He approaches Lady.)* I said, you want a table?

LADY: How many guests can you accommodate at any given time, Mr. Nick?

NICK: You hungry? Thirsty? Tired?

LADY: I believe 21 in your rooms and 24 in your café, correct?

NICK: If you say so.

LADY: Just verifying the facts. Just the facts.

NICK: For what?

LADY: Lady Henrietta Harrington, M.P.

NICK: Military police?

LADY: Member of Parliament. I'm here on a fact-finding expedition.

NICK: Anybody else with you?

LADY: The rest of the group is in the hospital – if you can call that miserable building a hospital.

NICK: Any particular reason?

LADY: Jeep accident coming in from Alatebbe. I was the only one not injured, and as a result, I carry on.

NICK: I can see that.

LADY: You haven't verified my numbers yet.

NICK: Consider them verified.

LADY: Excellent.

NICK: What facts exactly are you finding, Lady Harrington?

LADY: That, dear man, is top secret.

NICK: You don't say.

LADY: I do say. *(Lady puts her notebook and pen under her cloak.)*

NICK: Pretty nifty cloak you're wearing.

(Lady opens her cloak. She reveals a series of pockets holding her notebook, pen, a file folder, a small rope, and a dagger.)

LADY: It holds everything I need.

NICK: That a dagger I see there?

LADY: This is a dangerous part of the world, Mr. Nick. I wouldn't want to consider being...defenseless.

NICK: Actually, Beauvais is a pretty peaceful kind of place.

LADY: And I mean to find out how. I believe you're hiding something here, and it has something to do with the garrison. I demand to meet with the General as soon as possible. And if I don't get full cooperation, you'll all answer to His Majesty's government.

NICK: I'll show you to the registration desk.

(Nick exits down right followed by Lady. Andropov drops his newspaper and rises. He moves SR to check on Nick. Ziggy enters SL just in time to see Natalia enter up right with purse.)

NATALIA: *(Angrily.)* Dimitri.

(Andropov turns to face her. Neither of them see Ziggy.)

ANDROPOV: You, my pet, have given me the slip one too many times.

(Andropov moves closer to her. From her purse, Natalia pulls a dagger.)

NATALIA: Take one more step, and it will be your last.

ANDROPOV: I am afraid you've reached the end of the line, my pet. There is nowhere else to run except over the ridge to the east...and you know what that means.

NATALIA: I mean it, Dimitri. Another step, and you'll find yourself in a pot of borscht.

ANDROPOV: You know what I want, Natalia...and I will get it. You know I will.

(Natalia exits up right, just as Lee enters angrily, pushing past her.)

LEE: Out of my way! Where is Nick?! I must see Nick!

ANDROPOV: And who are you who pushes ladies out of the way?

LEE: I must see Nick. Now.

ANDROPOV: Good luck.

(Andropov pushes past Lee to exit up right.)

LEE: *(To Ziggy, angrily.)* You! Where is your boss man?

ZIGGY: I'm afraid I don't know, Mr. Lee.

LEE: Tell me now, or you'll—

(Nick enters down right.)

NICK: What's all the heavy-handed stuff, Lee? You keep away from Ziggy, or you'll be wearin' your liver for a turban.

LEE: So, you don't know where she is?

NICK: Which "she's" that? We've had a run of female visitors today.

LEE: Angélique.

NICK: (*Flatly.*) Oh, yeah, the rug lady.

LEE: My sources say she left for Lisbon on the noon flight.

NICK: Funny...you can't be in two places at once.

LEE: What do you mean?

NICK: Your rug lady was just here.

LEE: Here? How long ago?

NICK: Not ten minutes, right, Ziggy?

ZIGGY: That's right, Mr. Lee. She was looking for you.

NICK: She's got your rug.

LEE: Which way did she go?

ZIGGY: Out the back door. You might still be able to catch her.

LEE: If you're lying— (*Lee races off down left.*)

ZIGGY: I'm glad he didn't finish that sentence.

NICK: Yeah...that's one angry decorator.

ZIGGY: Mr. Nick, if you don't mind my saying so, things are heating up a bit too fast.

NICK: I was thinking the same thing myself, Ziggy. We got four ladies in cloaks.

ZIGGY: Four?!

NICK: A Lady Harrington who says she's a member of Parliament breezed in a few minutes ago asking questions about the General.

ZIGGY: And our first little caped crusader was confronted by the guy who nursed that cup of coffee at this table for the last hour. He wants something from her, and it ain't romance.

NICK: Where'd he go?

ZIGGY: Out that way.

NICK: You go follow him. See what you can find out.

ZIGGY: Right. And what about Mr. Lee? He'll be back.

NICK: Yeah...what about Mr. Lee? Scram, Ziggy, before you lose your mark.

(Ziggy races off up right. Nick sits at a table and finishes a limeade. Lola, wearing a long red cloak, enters up right.)

LOLA: Nick?

NICK: *(Without turning around.)* I'd know that voice anywhere. How are you, Mom? *(Nick takes another drink.)*

LOLA: It's Lola, Nick. *(Nick spits his drink out.)* That's not exactly the welcome I dreamt about.

(Nick turns and rises.)

NICK: I didn't exactly expect to see you walk in here today.

LOLA: It's been too long, Nick.

NICK: Only 15 years.

LOLA: And every minute seemed like an hour.

NICK: Whaddaya want, Lola?

LOLA: I...I was hoping...

NICK: Yeah? That we could rekindle what we once had? That we could recreate Paris in this out-of-the-way little burg? That we could look forward to some kind of future?

LOLA: I was hoping I could get a room.

NICK: A room. Right. Say...that's a nice cloak you got on there.

LOLA: Isn't it? It's the latest fashion craze.

NICK: Wouldn't you know...

(Blackout.)

Scene 3

(AT RISE: Nick's Place, an hour later. Andropov is sitting at a table upstage. Ziggy enters up right, tired and worn out, and plops down at table down center. Ziggy doesn't notice Andropov.)

ZIGGY: *(To audience.)* Oh, but Ziggy is tired. Ah. You are still here. I hope that Nick has been taking good care of you. Moi? I have been on the—how do you say?—wild moose chase. *(Ziggy pulls off a shoe and rubs his foot.)* I chase that bear all over Beauvais, but do I catch him? No. He is slipperier than an eel.

(Nick enters SL.)

NICK: About time, Ziggy.

ZIGGY: Nick. Have mercy on my poor feet.

NICK: Don't tell me you're empty-handed.

ZIGGY: He gave me the slip in the marketplace, but then I caught up with him again. He gave me the slip near the old royal palace, but I was lucky and caught up with him again. He gave me the slip near the beach, but I saw him and caught up with him again.

NICK: Well?

ZIGGY: But then he gave me the slip at the Rock of Ages and disappeared.

NICK: Disappeared at the Rock of Ages? But how? You can walk around that thing in 30 seconds.

ZIGGY: I don't know how. I don't know, Mr. Nick. I'm just so tired I can't see straight. I know I'm gonna see that guy in my dreams. Except they won't be dreams. *(Ziggy gets up and moves around nervously.)* They'll be nightmares. I won't be chasing him, but he'll be chasing me. He'll be everywhere I am. He'll be hiding behind every doorway...every shop counter...every newspaper. *(Ziggy*

has moved to the table where Andropov is sitting and rips the newspaper from Andropov's hands. Ziggy screams and runs to hide behind Nick.) He didn't even wait till I fell asleep.

NICK: So, that's your mark, huh? *(Nick moves up to Andropov.)*

You seem to be pretty wrapped up in that newspaper, buddy.

ANDROPOV: *(Rising.)* Please, Mr. Nick...you...you must forgive me.

NICK: And who's "me"?

ANDROPOV: Harry. Harry Potts.

NICK: Now that's one I haven't heard before. Where you from, Harry Potts?

ANDROPOV: It doesn't matter where I'm from.

ZIGGY: At least he isn't wearing a cloak, Mr. Nick.

ANDROPOV: My cloak is in the cloakroom, where else?

NICK: Oh, brother. So what brings you to Nick's Place?

ANDROPOV: I have heard you need a cook.

NICK: Where'd you hear that?

ANDROPOV: From your cook who quit this afternoon.

NICK: Ziggy, what do you know about André quitting?

ZIGGY: I forgot, Mr. Nick. He...he has opened his own café in the marketplace.

NICK: That rat.

ANDROPOV: You just can't trust anybody these days, Mr. Nick.

NICK: So what can you cook, Harry Potts?

ANDROPOV: Anything and everything. You name it.

NICK: Go rustle me up some eggs. Eggs Benedict.

ANDROPOV: Eggs Benedict?

NICK: Yeah...light on the eggs, heavy on the Benedict.

ZIGGY: We'll see if you can cook or not...making me chase you all over the city....

ANDROPOV: You were chasing me?

NICK: Had something to do with a girl—a girl wearing a blue cloak.

ANDROPOV: Stay away from her. She is—how do you say?—
bad news.

NICK: Show Mr. Andropov where the kitchen is, Ziggy.

(Ziggy leads Andropov off SL.)

ZIGGY: *(As he exits. To Andropov.)* And you have to clean up every bit of mess you make. We don't tolerate messy cooks at Nick's Place.

(Lola enters up right.)

LOLA: Nick? Nick, darling...

NICK: Say, Lola...you get settled in and everything?

LOLA: As settled in as I'm going to get.

NICK: So what's that supposed to mean?

LOLA: I'm not sure.

NICK: What'd you come here for, Lola?

LOLA: I'm not sure of that, either.

NICK: You just like to open up old wounds and pour salt in 'em?

LOLA: Oh, Nick. I'm so...so sorry I hurt you.

NICK: I'm supposed to believe that?

LOLA: You don't have to forgive me. But I'm not lying when I say never a day's gone by that I haven't thought of you...that I haven't regretted leaving you.

(Nick looks her over.)

NICK: Looks like you've done all right for yourself.

LOLA: Oh, Nick, I've accumulated wealth and good times...but I've never had love. Not until...now.

NICK: What are you talking about?

LOLA: Oh, Nick...I'm so sorry I didn't know then what I know now.

NICK: What do you know now?

LOLA: I guess it's not important. It's more important to know what you know.

NICK: I don't know what you're talking about, Lola. Why don't you make sense?!

LOLA: Don't yell at me.

NICK: I'm not yelling. But you talk like a dame.

LOLA: Oh, Nick. I...I don't know how I can...do this to you.

NICK: Do what? What are you gonna do to me?

(Lola races off up right. Nick moves up right after her. Chantelle enters down right.)

CHANTELLE: Ah, Mr. Nick. At last I have found you.

NICK: Didn't know you were looking for me. If I did, I'd have made myself more available.

CHANTELLE: Of course I'm looking for you.

NICK: What do you have on your mind?

CHANTELLE: What every woman in Beauvais has on her mind.

NICK: What might that be?

CHANTELLE: A chance to sing at Nick's Place.

NICK: I think you're overestimating your audience, lady.

CHANTELLE: Chantelle, remember?

NICK: How can I forget?

CHANTELLE: Let me sing for you. *(Chantelle begins to warble horribly.)*

NICK: Thanks, Chantelle. Thanks a bunch.

CHANTELLE: You see? *(Chantelle moves right.)* You see the people outside stopping, staring at the windows? They have heard Chantelle. They are enchanted. They want more.

NICK: Chantelle, they think there's a snake charmer in here who got bit.

CHANTELLE: A snake charmer?

NICK: Yeah. *(Thinks.)* Yeah, now there's an act we can use. There are singers everywhere, but a snake charmer...

CHANTELLE: Are there singers up at the garrison?

NICK: What do you know about the garrison?

CHANTELLE: Do you think everyone in Beauvais is a fool?

NICK: No. Just most of 'em.

CHANTELLE: The soldiers there...how many do you say there are?

NICK: If you sang up there, and were any good, and each soldier threw a coin at you...you'd be pretty bruised up.

CHANTELLE: That's a bit vague.

NICK: And you'd be very, very rich.

CHANTELLE: That's better. But there are rumors.

NICK: What kind of rumors?

CHANTELLE: That you're lying.

NICK: Nick doesn't lie. I don't have any reason to lie.

CHANTELLE: *(Indicating the café.)* I would say this is reason enough.

NICK: I don't know what your game is, but I think you'd better get lost...before somebody gets hurt.

CHANTELLE: I guess I don't get the job.

NICK: Scram.

(Chantelle exits down right. Sissy and Lady enter up right.)

SISSY: Why, Mr. Nick, you do got the loveliest li'l ol' town here.

NICK: Glad you like it, but I can't take all the credit.

LADY: Not what I hear.

NICK: Oh, and what have you heard?

LADY: Only that thanks to you...this town is still free.

NICK: But the drinks aren't. What'll you have?

(Sissy and Lady sit at down center table.)

LADY: I should like a spot of tea.

SISSY: And I'll have a Texas Bull's Horn.

NICK: I ain't never heard of that, Ms. Blaine.

SISSY: Oh, go on. Anybody who's for the red, white, and blue knows what's in a Texas Bull's Horn.

NICK: One tea and one Texas Bull's Horn coming right up.
(Nick exits SL.)

SISSY: Now we'll see Mr. Nick's true colors.

LADY: You certainly have a way with men.

SISSY: Yeah, well, I'd like to send most of 'em away.

LADY: I know what you mean. Here I am engaged, and I'm running away like a frightened rabbit.

SISSY: He's a little too much for you, huh?

LADY: On the contrary. He's not enough for me.

SISSY: Huh?

LADY: He's just so...so...dull.

SISSY: Really?

LADY: We met in the checkout line at the library.

SISSY: I think that's downright romantic. What book did he have? Romantic poems? Wild love stories?

LADY: "Plumbing Problems Made Easy."

SISSY: Oh, well, maybe he had to fix a leaky drain.

LADY: I thought that, too, and I thought...hmmm, he's handy around the house.

SISSY: He didn't have a leaky drain?

LADY: He said he liked looking at the pictures.

SISSY: Why, shucks. That's like a real red flag, sister.

LADY: I know, I know. But as I got to know him, he did have a few endearing qualities.

SISSY: Like what?

LADY: A trust fund. A large trust fund, and a huge country house, and a flat in the city, and a Bentley.

SISSY: Sounds like my kind of man.

LADY: You can have him.

SISSY: Where is he?

LADY: I left him in London. Of course, he wouldn't bother to chase me all the way down here. He doesn't have the spirit of adventure to do such a thing. He's just holed up there waiting for me to return.

SISSY: I wish I had that problem. I got one on my tail, and he won't leave me alone. I'm almost sure he's somewhere in Beauvais...but this is the end of the line. I can't run anywhere else.

LADY: Maybe somebody new will come along and catch his eye.

SISSY: I think this guy's got blinders on.

(Reggie enters up right, unseen by Lady or Sissy.)

LADY: So, might I ask...are you here only to find romance?

SISSY: Why, honey, that's for me to know and you to find out.

And yourself? Are you really fact findin' for the King?

LADY: After a fashion.

SISSY: We're what they call a couple of...e-nigmas.

(Reggie, horrified, exits, still unseen. Nick enters with a cup of tea and a glass.)

NICK: Here we are, a cup of tea and a Texas Bull's Horn.

(Nick serves Sissy and Lady.)

LADY: Thank you ever so.

SISSY: Yeah. Past the lips, over the gums, look out, liver, here it comes.

LADY: Cheers.

(Lady and Sissy drink.)

SISSY: *(Disappointedly.)* Say. This is tea.

(Lady's eyes bug out. She jumps up and almost screams.)

LADY: Texas. Texas. *(Lady runs off up right.)*

NICK: Ziggy. Ziggy. You switched the glasses. *(Nick exits SL.)*

SISSY: Well, I'll be. That's more drink than Lady Carrington's ever had in her life.

(Natalia enters SR. Sissy glares at her and Natalia glares back. They circle one another, then Sissy exits up right. Nick enters SL.)

NICK: Sorry, you two, but— . Hey...where'd they go?

NATALIA: Who cares?

NICK: So, you're back again.

NATALIA: Oh, Mr. Nick, I...I need your help.

NICK: What kind of help?

NATALIA: *(Looks left and right.)* I...I want to leave Beauvais.

NICK: Don't we all.

NATALIA: But you don't understand. This is a matter of life and death.

NICK: I've heard that one before.

NATALIA: They told me you can get a person out of here.

NICK: Who's "they"?

NATALIA: It doesn't matter. I have money...I can pay.

(Natalia hands Nick a purse.)

NICK: Say, what is this?

NATALIA: It is gold. Gold coins of the Tsar.

(Andropov enters carrying a plate.)

ANDROPOV: Ah, Mr. Nick.

(Natalia grabs the bag and hides it. She rises, but Nick grabs her arm.)

NICK: Looks like you've got those eggs Benedict, huh?

ANDROPOV: Just as you want them, Mr. Nick.

NICK: Meet our new chef, Miss...Miss...

NATALIA: Smith.

NICK: Miss Smith.

ANDROPOV: I am very pleased to make your acquaintance,
Miss Smith.

NATALIA: The eggs look runny.

NICK: That's the way I like 'em.

NATALIA: I...I have a headache. I am going to my room.
(Natalia exits up right.)

NICK: Seems you made Miss Smith a bit nervous.

ANDROPOV: Will there be anything else, Mr. Nick?

NICK: I don't think so, Andropov. Go take a load off.

(Andropov exits SL. Mirella enters up right.)

MIRELLA: Ah. Mr. Nick.

NICK: Mirella, what are you doing here?

MIRELLA: Here to thank you.

NICK: Any time.

MIRELLA: And here to warn you. Those eggs are runny.

NICK: Thanks. Got a new chef. He's a bit green.

MIRELLA: So's the toast. Watch him, Mr. Nick. The cards
gave me another warning.

NICK: I hope it's better than their last news brief.

MIRELLA: No cloak or dagger?

NICK: Too many cloaks and daggers.

MIRELLA: Oh, I was afraid of that. And now the cards...they
say...death.

NICK: Death? Whose death?

MIRELLA: I cannot say.

(Lee enters up right.)

LEE: I'm going to kill you, Mr. Nick.

NICK: I guess that answers the question.

LEE: You got Angélique on a plane to Lisbon.

NICK: I did not. She got on all by herself.

LEE: But you arranged it. My associates have seen her in London.

MIRELLA: *(Under her breath.)* Thank goodness.

LEE: You know something about this?

NICK: *(Angrily, covering for Mirella.)* She doesn't know nothin' about nothin'... *(To Mirella.)* Go on, you old beggar. Get some bread in the kitchen.

MIRELLA: Beware, Mr. Nick. Beware. *(Mirella exits SL.)*

NICK: There's one born every minute. So, Mr. Lee, I guess you're out 500 dollars for your carpet.

LEE: Yes. An unwise investment. And now I need that money back.

NICK: I'm afraid I can't help you.

LEE: Come, come, Mr. Nick...I know you have...resources. You can get any amount you want.

NICK: Why should I?

LEE: Because you have helped that woman abscond with my rug.

NICK: I don't think she took any rug on that plane.

LEE: You know what I mean.

NICK: Yeah...I'm afraid I do. We keep tiptoeing around the truth, Lee. What is it you really want?

LEE: I...I want money. I want to get out of here. Five hundred dollars will buy me passage on the African Queen, which is leaving tonight for Lisbon.

NICK: But I thought—

LEE: I don't care what you think. I need that money. I need it now.

NICK: Look, Lee, I'd like to help you, but I don't do charity.

LEE: But you'd gladly buy important information, wouldn't you?

NICK: What kind of important information?

(Lee looks left and right.)

LEE: *(Whispers.)* You are looking for someone.
NICK: *(Indicates he didn't hear.)* What's that?
LEE: *(A bit louder.)* You are looking for someone.
NICK: *(Shouts.)* I can't hear you!
LEE: *(Loudly.)* You're looking for a spy!
NICK: Shhhhh. You want everybody in the whole place to hear you?
LEE: I know who you are looking for.
NICK: You know who the spy is?
LEE: Yes.
NICK: Who?
LEE: It will cost you 500 dollars.
NICK: How can I be sure?
LEE: I have a picture of the spy I will give you when you give me the money.
NICK: A picture, huh?
LEE: Signed by the spy.
NICK: Five hundred dollars.
LEE: Make up your mind.
NICK: What have I got to lose?
LEE: Five hundred dollars.
NICK: I wish you wouldn't have said that. *(Nick moves right.)*
LEE: Where are you going?
NICK: You don't think I carry that kind of change in my wallet, do you?
LEE: Then hurry. Hurry, please.
NICK: This better not be a trick. I don't like getting stabbed in the back.

(Nick exits down right. Blackout.)

LEE: No! No! Get away from me! No!

(Lee screams. We hear a thud, followed by footsteps. Pause. Lights up. Lee lies across the down center table, a dagger sticking out of his back. Nick enters SL holding bills.)

NICK: Here you go, Lee, five hundred— *(Nick notices Lee is dead.)* Uh-oh.

(Mirella, Ziggy, and Andropov enter SL. Chantelle, Sissy, and Lady enter up right. Natalia and Lola enter down right. Reggie peeks in down right.)

ZIGGY: Mr. Nick, he doesn't look so good.

NICK: You wouldn't either with a dagger in your back.

MIRELLA: The cards, they never lie.

NICK: All right, so who's the wise guy. Who killed Mr. Lee?

(All look one to another. Blackout. Intermission.)

[END OF FREEVIEW]