(Name of Project)

by (Name of First Writer)

(Based on, If Any)

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LUCKY PENNY

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FADE IN:

TITLE CARD - CHAPTER ONE: PENNY ANTE

INT. LAS VEGAS CASINO - NIGHT

Opulent casino with a large poker table centred in the room on a raised stage. TV cameras everywhere. 8 players and a dealer are seated around the table

> ANNOUNCER (V.O.) So here we are, down to the final 8 players in this year's world championship of poker.

> ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) Right Steve and what an assortment of players we have, with 2 former champions seated at the table and 2 first timers included as well.

The television cameras pan the players at the table as the announcers talk.

ANNOUNCER

And let's face it Rick, the big story is the mystery man of the moment, Peter Joff, a player no one really knows anything about.

The ESPN camera does a close up on a man in his late 20's to early 30's, dressed in a pair of old ripped jeans and a RUSH t-shirt, playing with his stacks of chips. This is PETER JOFF.

ANNOUNCER 2

Steve this young man came from literally out of nowhere and has taken this tournament by storm.

Television cameras pull back to show the entire table of players, announcers make their final statements.

ANNOUNCER

And so as we are about to start this final table lets take a deeper look into what little we know about Peter Joff.

A taped interview with Peter Joff and AL STEPHENSON, ESPN's top personality, comes out across the airwaves. Peter is in ripped jeans, sitting in a chair directly across from a well tailored Stephenson.

Peter is visibly nervous.

AL STEPHENSON Peter you look a little nervous, just talk to me like I'm an old friend.

PETER

Right and how 'bout all those people watching at home. I've never done this kind of thing before you know.

AL STEPHENSON Peter, Americans really don't know much about you at all.

That's why I'm here.

Peter's really sweating now, stains showing through the armpits of his shirt.

PETER (voice quivering) But you're freaking Al Stephenson, I'm just a loser from Pittsburgh.

AL STEPHENSON From what they tell me Pete.. do you mind if I call you Pete?

Peter nods.

AL STEPHENSON I beg to differ Pete, it seems you may turn out to be the biggest winner here at this tournament, with a guaranteed 250,000 dollars, even if you're the first knocked out from the final table. And my notes tell me (MORE)

AL STEPHENSON(cont'd)

(checking his cards) You're from Atlantic City

PETER

Well, that's where I came to Vegas from

AL STEPHENSON

Ok, but all this after I understand you came to Vegas hitch hiking most of the way here.

PETER

Yeah, I only won my way into the tournament through a satellite, you know, in Atlantic City. They didn't cover the flight here, meals, nothin'.

AL STEPHENSON

Alright Pete, let's get right to it. Very little is known about you at all, here's your chance to let America know your story.

PETER

My story?

AL STEPHENSON

Yes Pete, after all the only thing anyone really knows about you is you seem to have a paranoia about that penny you carry with you to every poker game and I'm told you never let it out of your sight at any time.

Peter reaches into his pocket and pulls out a single penny, showing it to Al.

PETER

Yeah, it's about the only thing I've let anybody in on at all. The rest of my life seems kind of boring before Penny came into my life.

AL STEPHENSON You mean that penny, you actually gave it a name. It must mean a lot to you.

PETER It saved my life.

AL STEPHENSON

Ahh, now we have a story, care to elaborate?

PETER

Not really much to say, before Penny came into my life I'd say I was just about finished but after she did, well.. let's just say things started to change.

Al comes to attention.

AL STEPHENSON For the better I'd say.

PETER That would be an understatement, like I said she saved my life.

AL STEPHENSON Not only did you name the penny you gave it a gender as well?

PETER Al, you know what they say about Lady Luck.

AL STEPHENSON

Touche Peter, but again the country wants to know more about you, your background, what you do for a living, everything really.

Peter draws a deep breath.

PETER

Listen Al I appreciate all the attention, I do, but all I really can tell you is like I said.. before Penny I was just a loser and since she came into my life...

AL STEPHENSON You're now a winner.

PETER

I guess.

AL STEPHENSON Ok, it looks like we're not getting anywhere other than this penny. (MORE)

AL STEPHENSON(cont'd)

Can you at least tell the audience about it, uh, I mean her.

PETER

About her?

AL STEPHENSON Now you've got me calling the coin by gender.

PETER

Listen, all I can say is I found her on the street and my life hasn't been the same since.

Al again bristles to attention.

AL STEPHENSON Whoa there, did you just say you found her on the street.

PETER

Yeah, just lying there on the boardwalk, tons of people walked right on by or over her, just like they did to me.

AL STEPHENSON But not you, what made you different?

PETER

I guess you could say it was my point of view.

AL STEPHENSON Point of view?

Peter nervously shifts in his chair.

PETER

You see I was lying on the ground too, passed out. Only a shawl covering me.

AL STEPHENSON

Did you say a shawl, like a woman's shawl. Care to tell us more about that?

PETER No not really. AL STEPHENSON

Come on now Pete, America wants to know, so you were lying there, passed out..

Peter holds the penny close to his face, turns it over a couple of times, studying it's features.

PETER

Face down drunk, uh huh, and when I came to the first thing I saw through the rain was Penny here.

AL STEPHENSON So you just picked it up, just like that?

PETER

Well not quite, it took me awhile to even regain my senses, and when I did I just watched how many people walked right on by her, like she was nothing, just like they were walking by me.

AL STEPHENSON So there it is.

PETER

There what is?

Al reaches over to touch the penny, Peter draws it back quickly away from him, guarding it with his life.

AL STEPHENSON

Sorry Peter, I just believe that each of us has a kindred spirit, a kind of guardian angel that changes our destiny. For some it may be a person, for others a feeling, for you it is an inanimate object.

PETER

Huh?

AL STEPHENSON

Peter do you think that penny was there just by chance or maybe it was there for a reason, you know, like fate?

PETER

What? I guess I never really thought about it before, I just know she's my Lucky Penny.

AL STEPHENSON

And you never gave any thought at all to why if it's so lucky for you, then why it was there on that particular sidewalk, right at that specific time for you to find it?

Peter fidgets in his seat.

PETER What do you mean, what are you talking about?

AL STEPHENSON

I'm saying that if it's such a lucky penny then why was it there. I mean wouldn't she have brought luck to others along the way as well.

PETER

I, uh, I guess.

AL STEPHENSON

Right. Then why was she there at all, if she's so lucky who in their right mind would have let her out of their sight, where did she come from?

PETER I guess I never thought about that.

TITLE CARD - CHAPTER TWO: IN FOR A PENNY, IN FOR A POUND

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY BEACH - DAY

A young, obese woman in her 20's patrols the beach with a metal detector looking for metal objects and coins. She's dressed in a full bathing suit with a large sun hat and a full length robe. This is SUZY JAMES.

A group of studs runs by her, teasing her.

STUD 1 I didn't know they let cows on the beach.

STUD 2 Yeah I thought they had to stay on the farm.

The young woman tries to hold back her tears.

STUD 3 Hey, any of you guys ever tried cow tipping?

By now a 4th man has positioned himself behind the woman, he's on his knees.

STUD 3

Watch this!

He proceeds to push her over the 4th man. She falls and the men run away laughing.

Suzy stands up, crying.

SUZY That's OK guys, sorry for getting in your way.

The metal detector is beside her, beeping like crazy. She picks it up, scans the beach for the object it has located.

SUZY There you are my precious.

Suzy draws a mini shovel from a pocket of her robe, starts digging.

SUZY Come out, come out my pretty.

She digs a little deeper and finds... A penny.

SUZY Is that my treasure for the day, a stupid penny.

She dejectedly packs up her equipment, stuffing the penny into her pocket.

INT. SUZY'S APARTMENT - DAY

It is a neatly appointed apartment, large enough but comfortable.

Suzy is putting her equipment away when her roommate JENNY, a very thin but curvaceous blonde enters from another room.

JENNY Oh, hey Suzy, why back so early. Nothing good to uncover today?

SUZY Just a little tired I guess.

JENNY That's OK you'll get back at it tomorrow. Besides it gives me a chance to show you my surprise.

SUZY

Surprise?

Jenny takes her hand and leads her upstairs.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

JENNY

Ta da!!

Suzy surveys the room, looking for a new shower curtain, new towels anything.

SUZY I don't get it, did we get new shampoo, cause I don't think that is anything to make a big deal about.

JENNY No silly, look closer.

Suzy steps inside, looks a little closer. She steps back in shock.

SUZY Is that what I think it is. JENNY

Hey you know we talked about this, you gotta' start sometime girlfriend.

Jenny slips by Suzy, reaches for an item beside the toilet. She pulls out the item and holds it in front of Jenny

It's a new digital scale.

SUZY I know I said I'd look at getting one.. I just thought I'd have more time.

JENNY Don't be silly, just take a step on it, it won't bite you know.

SUZY (with trepidation) I, I don't know.

JENNY

Listen Suzy you're my best friend in the world and I love you but I swear if you don't step on that thing I'm gonna' hit you over the head with it.

SUZY You first.

JENNY

FINE.

Jenny places the scale on the floor, takes off her slippers and bounces energetically onto the scale.

CU: SCALE READING 112 LBS

It is accompanied by a digital voice.

SCALE (V.O.) One hundred and twelve pounds.

Jenny steps off, smiles at Suzy and gently pushes her towards the contraption.

SUZY Maybe I should wait until after I shower, I'm full of beach sand. (MORE) SUZY(cont'd)

Who knows how much extra weight that is.

JENNY No more stalling.

Jenny helps Suzy by placing one of her feet on the scale, Suzy then gently places the other on as well.

> SUZY I can't look.

JENNY Fine, I'll do it for you. Close your eyes.

Suzy does just that, Jenny peers at the display, she is aghast at the number on the read out.

She gasps as the voice emanates.

SCALE (V.O.)

312 pounds.

SUZY That can't be right, is that thing high, is it broken?

JENNY No don't be silly it's new, it can't be broken. I mean I knew you were a little heavy and could lose a few pounds for your health but..

SUZY

Let me see.

She opens her eyes to peer down to the digitalized number.

CU: DIGITAL NUMBER READING 312 LBS

SUZY Oh my God!

JENNY

(cheerfully) Oh it's not so bad, it's just a jump off point, gives you something to work with.

Suzy steps off the scale, sobbing.

SUZY I'm huge, I'm hideous.

JENNY

Don't be crazy, it's not so bad. It's just a jump off point, you know something to get you started.. Set a goal or something.

SUZY

I remember the last time I looked at a scale I was 243 pounds and was mortified. So I threw it away.

JENNY How long ago was that?

SUZY

2 years.

JENNY

That means you've gained almost 70 pounds in just a couple of years, didn't you feel.. you know.. different?

SUZY

I know I had to buy some new clothes, but I always thought I was just buying the clothes too big so I'd be comfortable.

The 2 women stare at each other for about 20 seconds before either speaks.

JENNY

So what's next, a doctor, a dietician, a hypnotist?

SUZY

Whoa slow down, don't start fitting me for the piano case coffin already.

JENNY

I'm sorry. I just never knew anybody before who was over three hundr..

SUZY You can say it out loud, the scale already did.

Jenny just stares at Suzy.

SUZY

Listen, if you want to help me fight this thing, fine. But just don't stand there with that OMG look on your face.

Jenny snaps out of it.

JENNY

OK, it's not so bad. Maybe just some serious exercise and you can turn this thing around.

SUZY

Exercise?

JENNY

Yeah, aerobics, yoga, maybe some jazzercise. You can go to the gym with me, yeah that's it, we'll do it together.

SUZY

Don't you think I ought to start by watching what I eat a little better?

JENNY Uh, yeah, sure, I mean that's a good place to start I guess.

Suzy makes her way to the fridge freezer and starts taking out ice cream containers.

SUZY Grab a garbage can.

JENNY So no more ice cream binges?

SUZY Sounds like a start.

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY BOARDWALK - DAY

Suzy is wearing her metal detector clothes again, she's taking a walk and notices the penny she found in her robe pocket.

SUZY You're gonna' be my willpower now. Suzy eyes a Slushie station as she walks by... it's hot out.

SUZY (looking at the penny) One little slushie couldn't hurt, now could it?

Suzy makes her purchase and gulps it down in one swallow. Jenny comes jogging up behind her, notices the empty cup.

> JENNY Not a great way to stay disciplined, is it.

Suzy feigns embarrassment.

SUZY Sorry Jen, it won't happen again, I promise.

JENNY Listen, it's for your own good, you know that.

SUZY I know, I know.. Rome wasn't built in a day though.

Jenny chuckles.

JENNY Listen sweetie I know it's gonna' be hard but I just think with some willpower, well, I know you can do anything you set your mind to.

Suzy stares at her penny.

JENNY

What's that?

SUZY It's my willpower.

JENNY Didn't work out too well with that slushie now, did it?

SUZY It'll do better, it's just getting started. Jenny looks at her incredulously.

JENNY Whatever makes you stronger.

Jenny jogs off.

Montage of Suzy going through other sweet shops and restaurants throughout the day. Each time looking at the penny and each time partaking in a sweet or a meal.

INT. SUZY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Jenny turns on the light.

JENNY Come on sunshine, up and at' em.

SUZY

(sleepily) Can I have just a little of what you're on?

JENNY Just high on life girlfriend. Come on let's check.

SUZY Check, check what?

JENNY Why you're weight silly, let's see if that penny of yours has done you any good at all.

Suzy's cheeks flush.

SUZY

Oh it's only been one day, why don't we wait just a couple more, you know, maybe after the first week.

JENNY

Oh no you don't. I read online that the best way to keep on track is to check your weight every day, let's remember how you got here in the first place.

SUZY No, I don't want to. Jenny jumps up on to the bed, starts pushing Suzy and singing.

JENNY Two in the bed and the little one said, roll over, roll over.

Suzy laughs but resists, Jenny tries again, this time tickling her as well.

JENNY Two in the bed and the little one said.. Roll over, roll over.

Suzy can't overcome the tickling, she succumbs.

SUZY All right, all right, I'm up.

JENNY

Good, now into the bathroom with you.

SUZY

I'm scared.

JENNY It'll be fine, probably not even much of a difference after just one day anyway.

SUZY That's what I said, so why bother.

Jenny grabs Suzy's arm and leads her to the bathroom.

JENNY But just think of the confidence you'll have if it doesn't move up a pound.

SUZY

Oh all right, I guess one day couldn't have made any difference, I mean how much could I have gained in one day anyhow, right?

JENNY

Gained, what do you mean gained? You didn't cheat any more than that slushie did you?

Suzy gets nervous, she lies.

SUZY

What? No not at all, other than the slushie I only had what we talked about.. Carrot sticks, celery and 12 grain bread.

JENNY

And to drink?

SUZY Oh, just what we said, just water.

JENNY

Alright then, step on up.

Suzy steps with trepidation on the scale, praying inside that all of the calories from the previous day have not had time to form into pounds on her body.

She braces for the monotone voice. The uncaring, judgmental, son of a bitch voi..

SCALE (V.O.) Three hundred and seven pounds.

JENNY

00000H!!

SUZY That can't be right.

JENNY

Don't complain, don't look a gifthorse in the mouth. Maybe you were just retaining a little water weight yesterday.

SUZY It's impossible, that's like..

JENNY (excitedly) I know!! Five pounds in one day.

Suzy retraces the steps of yesterday's events.

SUZY There's no way, let me try this again.

She steps off and then back onto the scale.

SCALE (V.O.) Three hundred and seven pounds.

Jenny gives Suzy a big hug, though her arms don't reach all the way around her.

JENNY You did just great, keep it up girlfriend.

Suzy shrugs sheepishly.

JENNY And be sure to carry that penny with you to work today, you know, to be your willpower.

Suzy makes her way back to the bedroom. She finds the penny on her dresser, starts talking to it.

> SUZY I don't know how it happened but I just need you to stop me from over indulging for the next few days.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

This is the building where Suzy works, a collection of same styled cubicles, all adjoining into a maze. Suzy is seated at her cubicle. A heavyset female peer, ANGELA MYERS, comes by.

> ANGELA Come on Suze, best time of the day.

SUZY Quitting time?

ANGELA

Not quite, lunch time. And I hear Mikey's now has an all you can eat buffet.

SUZY I brought my lunch today, Angie, I'll be fine here at my desk.

ANGELA And leave me to eat all alone like a pig at a trough, I don't think so.

ANGELA

I'll take those.

Angie grabs the snacks, shoots them like a free throw into a wastebasket.

ANGELA

Two points.

SUZY

ANGELA!!

ANGELA Good thing it wasn't soup... Now, you ready to eat some real food?

SUZY Do I have a choice?

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Angie and Suzy are in line at the buffet. Suzy pulls out the penny and rubs it.

SUZY I don't know how you did it yesterday but please if I can ask you to do it just one more time..

She kisses the penny, puts it back in her pocket.

SUZY (to herself) Oh please Miss Penny, help me be good.

Suzy notices Angela looking, quickly puts the coin away.

ANGELA What was that?

SUZY

What?

ANGELA That thing you just kissed. SUZY Oh it was just a picture of my niece. I always think of her just before my meals.

ANGELA (shaking her head) Whatever.

SUZY I think I'll just have a little salad and that should do it.

Suzy makes her way over to the salad station and places a few brussel sprouts and carrots on her plate.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Suzy is seated, with her meagre serving of veggies in front of her, Angela makes her way to the table with a heaping plate of food.

She notices Suzy's vegetables.

ANGELA What's that, are you just grazing before getting started?

SUZY

No .. This will be my lunch today, it's the same thing that was in my lunch sack, you know the one you threw in the garbage can.

Angela is oblivious to Suzy's words, already chowing down.

ANGELA What, oh right, whatever. Listen I didn't ask you here to talk, I asked you here to eat.

Suzy starts to cry.

ANGELA

Oh come on, you know I was just kidding. If you just want to nibble while I eat, that's fine. I just wanted the company, I hate to eat alone. SUZY

You're sure you don't mind, I AM trying to lose weight and this is so hard, there's just so much temptation.

Angela continues plowing through her food, talks to Suzy between bites.

ANGELA Listen sweetie, if you just want water I don't care. Just don't get too close to my plate.

Suzy sits back in her chair, picks at her vegetables. She notices all the yummy items on Angie's plate .. Short ribs, chicken breast, lasagna...

The temptation is too much.

INT. RESTAURANT TABLE - DAY

Angela is hungrily eating and takes no notice of Suzy's absence.

Suzy makes her way back to the table with a plate stacked twice as high as Angela's was.

SUZY (Sitting down) Your's just looked so scrumptious.

ANGELA

Grrr.

Suzy starts to just pick away at her plate of goodies but soon is as deeply ensconced as Angela.

INT. SUZY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Suzy is asleep in her room when Jenny comes bounding in, opening the drapes to fill the room with sunshine.

JENNY Wakey, wakey sleepy head.

SUZY

Uhhh.

JENNY

Come on now, it's a beautiful day. Time to seize the day and step on the scale.

Suzy's face turns seven shades of red. There's no way she can hide from the events of yesterday's lunch.

JENNY C'mon sleepy head, after yesterday I'm super excited to see what today brings.

Jenny pulls the covers off Suzy.

SUZY HEY!! That's not fair.

JENNY Don't make me come over there.

Suzy grudgingly gets out of the bed, one leg at a time. Jenny grabs her by the arm, leads her to the bathroom.

SUZY Can't we just say I tried?

JENNY Tried, what do you mean tried. Have you been cheating on your diet?

Suzy looks at the desperation in Jenny's face. She wants to tell the truth but just can't. Maybe she can say the scale malfunctioned.

JENNY Hurry Suzy, I have to get to work, just step on it, remember it doesn't bite.

SUZY Oh well, how bad can it be?

Suzy gently steps onto the scale with one foot, she awaits the voice of doom.

JENNY Uhh Uhh, no cheating. Both feet, what are you waiting for?

SUZY I.. I don't want to. JENNY Suzy James!! The only thing to be afraid of is if you've been lying to me and you promised..

SUZY Alright, alright.

With great anxiety Suzy puts her other foot onto the scale. Any minute now she'll be busted and have to tell her best friend the truth.

> SCALE (V.O.) Two hundred and ninety-seven pounds.

JENNY Suzy!! That's another 10 pounds, I can't believe it.

SUZY

Neither can I.

JENNY The numbers can't lie. I don't know what you're doing girlfriend but just keep it up. Oh, you're just doing so great, I'm so proud of you.

Suzy steps off the scale quickly, looks at her friend with disbelief.

SUZY Jenny I .. I don't know what to say, this is impossible.

JENNY Oh don't be such a doubting Thomas. Just keep cutting back and staying on you're diet and you'll be fine.

SUZY (staring at the scale) But that's just it.

JENNY Just what, you don't want to lose any more too quickly, just stay consistent.

Suzy sees the total excitement in her friend and rather than say anything she just smiles sheepishly.

SUZY Well I have been cutting back.

JENNY Yeah, especially at lunch. I see what you've been packing for yourself, it's not much more than a bird would eat.

SUZY Maybe a turkey getting ready for Thanksgiving feast.

JENNY What. Oh never mind. Congratulations sweetie, you're doing just great.

Montage of different times of Suzy eating at restaurants, eating sweets like candy apples and cotton candy on the boardwalk.

Also shots of Suzy stepping on the scale over a period of days, with the scale showing less and less weight, each time with Jenny offering encouragement.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A noticably slimmer version of Suzy bounces out of bed, rushes into Jenny's room. She pulls the covers off of Jenny.

> SUZY C'mon sleepy head, rise and shine, time to check the scale.

Jenny opens one eye.

JENNY

Really?

SUZY (tugging on Jenny's arm) C'mon.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Suzy waits anxiously til Jenny sleepily steps into the room.

SUZY

Can I?

JENNY

I swear you're like a little kid at Christmas these days.

Suzy doesn't really hear what Jenny's saying.

SUZY

Can I?

JENNY Oh go ahead.

Suzy hops up onto the scale with both feet.

SCALE (V.O.) Two hundred and forty one pounds.

JENNY Oh my God, it just doesn't stop. That's like over 50 lbs since you started.

SUZY More like 71 pounds, give or take a pound.

Jenny gives Suzy a big hug.

JENNY OMG, I can't believe it, you're melting away right in front of me!

SUZY Can't believe what, sweetie?

Jenny stands in amazement.

JENNY My arms go all the way around you.

Suzy blushes.

INT. SUZY'S ROOM - DAY

Suzy is staring at the penny.

SUZY I don't know how you're doing it, but I can't thank you enough.

Suzy kisses the penny and puts it in her pocket.

INT. SUZY'S OFFICE - LUNCH TIME

Angela and another co-worker, TINA, stop at Suzy's desk.

ANGELA Ready for lunch?

SUZY Let's go.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Lunch is finished, there are many plates around, some finished, some not.

The girls are all getting up to leave, they're running late.

ANGELA It's my turn for the tip.

Tina angrily taps her watch, pointing at the time.

TINA We've got to get back, we don't want to be late.

Angela is still fumbling in her purse for her pocket book.

SUZY I'll get it.

She reaches in her pocket and grabs a couple of singles and quarters, throws them on the table.

The girls hurry out of the restaurant.

CU: Penny on the table mixed in with the money Suzy left. A waiter grabs the money as a single entity, puts it in his pocket with no regard for the penny

INT. SUZY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Suzy is putting away her clothes when Jenny walks in .

JENNY Hey girlfriend, good day at the old salt mine today?

Suzy smiles and nods.

JENNY

Hey I noticed you didn't take your lunch today. You didn't fall off the wagon did you?

SUZY No way. Just a little planned lunch with a couple of co-workers, but I only had some soup, salad and water.

JENNY

Swear?

SUZY (patting her pocket) I swear.

Jenny leaves and Suzy goes to undress. As she takes off her pants she starts to empty her pockets.

She reaches to take out her prized possession.

She drops the pants in shock when she realizes the penny isn't there. Grabbing the pants hurriedly she picks them up and starts emptying out each pocket one by one.

SUZY

NO!!

Suzy frantically goes over to her purse, she must have put it in there by mistake this morning when she left for work.

She fumbles around for a second, then in desperation dumps the contents onto the floor... Nothing!

She then grabs her pants again as Jenny walks by her open door.

JENNY I heard a scream, anything the matter?

Suzy tries to regroup.

SUZY Just a spider in my purse, it scared me, that's all.

Jenny looks at the items strewn about the room.

JENNY

I think you might have more luck just stepping on it.

SUZY You're right.

Jenny notices the ashen color in her friend's face.

JENNY You sure you're alright hon?

Suzy just falls onto her bed.

SUZY I'll be fine.

Jenny shrugs her shoulders, takes her leave.

JENNY

OK, let me know if you need me to kill it for you.

Suzy just closes her eyes after her friend is gone and starts to cry.

EXT. RESTAURANT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A waiter walks to his car, reaches into his tip pouch to pull out his tips and count them. He notices the penny and looks at it for a second.

> WAITER How did you get mixed in there little fella'?

He extracts the penny from the rest of the change, stares at it for a second.

He tosses it across the parking lot into the adjoining beach.

TITLE CARD - CHAPTER THREE: PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY BEACH - DAY

A slight man in his 30's wearing shorts and a god awful tshirt walks the beach. He has a face that belies his youth due to the years he has spent working as a carney, this is TIMMY MCMURTER. He is walking idly, not really paying attention to much except for the pretty girls in bikinis he may pass. He is shuffling his feet as he walks, kind of kicking at the sand with his bare feet.

After one kick at the sand he notices something fly up out of the sand.

Advancing a few feet he reaches down and notices it's a penny.

TIMMY See a penny pick it up, all day long you'll have good luck

EXT. BOARDWALK CARNIVAL - DAY

Many acts on display. Customers milling around at the games of chance and freaks on display. Timmy makes his way through the crowd until he reaches his assigned tent.

CU: TENT READING CORNAN THE MAGNIFICENT - MIND READER

Timmy enters the tent, turns on the lights.

INT. TENT - DAY

There is a table with two chairs facing each other.

Timmy opens up the canvas doors and turns the CLOSED sign to OPEN.

Two young men, quite obviously high on drugs, peek inside the tent.

STONER 1 Hey Bud, you open?

TIMMY What does the sign say?

Stoner dude checks outside, notices the sign.

STONER Oh yeah, cool.

TIMMY Now, what can I do for you gentlemen today? The stoners giggle.

STONER I want you to read my mind man.

STONER 2 I don't think there's anything there left to read bud.

Stoner 1 punches the other man hard in the arm.

STONER 2 Ow man, that really hurt.

TIMMY That'll be 20 dollars please.

The stoners look at each other, pulling a few tattered bills out of their pockets. After a quick count they offer Timmy the cash.

STONER

Here you go man.

Timmy comes over to the two men, pulls out a chair for one of them to sit at.

Stoner 1 obliges.

STONER 2 This is going to be cool man.

Timmy takes his place opposite the young man at the table. He takes the stoner's hands.

TIMMY Now I need you to clear your mind.

STONER 2 I told you man, there's nothing in there to clear.

Stoner 1 glares at him angrily.

TIMMY Now again, just concentrate on my voice alone.

STONER Ok man, my mind's a blank.

STONER 2 You can say that again dude. The two stoners fist bump.

TIMMY Just pay attention for the total of your 5 second attention span will ya buddy?

STONER

Sorry man.

Stoner shakes his head, straightens his posture.

TIMMY That's better. I need you to just concentrate on letting me get a read on you, Ok?

STONER

Ok.

Timmy takes the stoners hand, holds for a second and goes into a mini-convulsion.

TIMMY You've been to college right?

STONER Yeah man, for about half a semester.

TIMMY And you majored in physical education, correct?

STONER

Right again.

STONER 2 Whoa, dude. This guy's awesome.

Stoner 1 gives him a punch and then grabs Timmy's hands again.

STONER Awesome, do me more man.

Timmy readjusts himself.

Stoner hears a thought running through his head.

(V.O) (MORE) You moron, the only way I knew you went to college is the T-shirt you have underneath that says NJ State and Phys Ed on it.

STONER What'd you say man?

Timmy looks at him quizzically.

TIMMY I didn't say anything.

STONER 2 Neither did I.

STONER You're sure, I know I heard something.

STONER 2 Man you're more baked than I thought.

Timmy speaks up.

TIMMY

Listen, I just need you to focus for like 2 more minutes and then we'll be finished. Can you do that?

STONER Yeah man, I'm fine. Let's do this thing.

Timmy and the Stoner join hands again.

TIMMY Now just concentrate on me.

STONER

OK man.

A couple seconds go by as Timmy settles into trance mode

(V.O.) Now if I can just get one more thing off this loser I can get these 2 ass holes out of here.

STONER Who you calling an ass hole? Stoner 2 looks around.

STONER 2 Hey bud, who you talking to, who are you calling an A-hole?

Stoner looks directly at Timmy. Glares at him for a minute.

STONER

Hey man, I demand a refund. I don't know what kind of game you're playing but I'm not that wasted.

Timmy doesn't understand.

STONER 2 Yeah a refund man!

STONER You don't even know what I'm talking about, bro.

STONER 2 Yeah but I got your back dude.

Both stoners laugh.

Stoner hears Timmy's voice inside his head again.

(V.O.) Why don't we call the cops and see if they want me to give you a refund. And while they're at it maybe they can ask you if you're carrying any drugs.

TIMMY Listen, I'm just trying to give you what you asked for, can we please get back to it?

STONER No way man, I don't know what you're up to but it's freakin' me out. And we ain't gonna' be hangin' around for no cops.

We're out of here!

The first stoner pulls the other one by the jacket and they run out of the tent.

Timmy is bewildered.

TIMMY

Oh well, pretty easy money I guess.. but I wonder what made him think I'd call the cops.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Timmy is still wearing the same clothes as earlier in the day. He is seated at a table, waiting for his guest.

A waiter brings a woman to his table. This is Timmy's on again/off again girlfriend LOUISE. She's a little bit of a free spirit.

LOUISE Hello Timmy, nice of you to dress up. Have you been here long?

TIMMY No, not long, maybe 20 minutes or so.

LOUISE Sorry about that, I was chasing butterflies in a field and lost all track of time.

TIMMY No problem, I don't mind waiting for someone as lovely as you.

Louise smiles as she sits, but Timmy's voice pops into her head as she does.

(V.O.)
If you weren't such a damn ditz,
maybe you'd get a job instead of
chasing butterflies.

Louise becomes indignant.

LOUISE I'm sorry, what did you just say? Timmy doesn't know what she's talking about.

TIMMY I didn't say anything, just that you look lovely tonight.

LOUISE

Oh alright.

The two start to look over the menus. A waitress arrives at their table.

WAITRESS And what can I get you folks to drink tonight?

TIMMY I'll have a Heineken.

LOUISE

And I'll have a large strawberry daquiri please, maybe double the shot though, if you can.

As the waitress leaves Timmy's voice again jumps into Louise's mind.

(V.O.) Just what I need for a girlfriend, a ditz and a lush. Geez if I could just straighten up my act maybe I could pull a little something better.

Louise looks across the table, Timmy is smiling sweetly.

LOUISE Are you fucking kidding me right now?

Timmy again doesn't know what to say.

TIMMY I'm sorry, what are you talking about.

LOUISE You're going to sit there and deny what you just said. That's the way you're going to play this?
TIMMY Play what? What are you even talking about baby?

Louise is now totally pissed off.

LOUISE Don't you baby me, you bastard.

The waitress arrives at their table with their drinks.

As she sets them on the table Louise hears Timmy's voice again.

(V.O.) Yeah that's just what she needs. Maybe I'll reassess.. now she's gone from ditzy and a drunk to full on bat shit crazy. I sure know how to pick 'em.

Louise jumps up, takes her drink and pours it over Timmy's head.

LOUISE How's this for bat shit crazy, ass hole!

She storms out of the restaurant, leaving Timmy completely embarrassed.

People in the restaurant start laughing at him.

Timmy stares.. dumbfounded.

INT. TIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

The room is actually part of Timmy's apartment, the whole thing no more than 300 square feet.

Timmy wakes up groggily, he slept in his clothes

TIMMY

What a night

He proceeds to get changed, the penny falls out of his pants pocket.

He picks it up, looks at it closely.

Let's hope you bring better luck than yesterday.

Timmy then puts the penny in today's pants pocket.

INT. TIMMY'S TENT - DAY

Timmy is seated at his table, spinning his lucky penny and staring at it as the coin spins.

A young man peeks his head in the tent. He is quite muscular, probably the captain of his college football team.

YOUNG MAN Excuse me sir, are you open.

A startled Timmy jumps to attention.

TIMMY But of course young man, Cornan the Great is ready at all times. As a matter of fact I sensed you were coming.

The young man starts inside the tent.

YOUNG MAN It's actually for me and my fiancee.. if that's alright?

TIMMY Certainly, certainly. Cornan will read the minds of all comers.

YOUNG MAN That's great. Honey, honey come on.

The young man drags a young woman into the tent with him.

YOUNG WOMAN Oh JASON, I don't know about this, you know I'm shy.

JASON Oh come on CINDY, it'll be fun. I always wanted to do something like this.

The young woman gently agrees and takes a seat at the table with her fiancee.

Timmy stares at her for quite a while. She is no more than 21 years old and is the hottest girl he's ever seen. Jason interrupts Timmy's thoughts.

JASON So listen, how does this work anyway. Can you do us both together or do you have to do us alone.

Timmy's thoughts come rushing into Cindy's mind.

(V.O.) I'd let her do US both together, if you know what I mean.

The startled woman slaps Timmy hard across the face.

CINDY EXCUSE ME. What kind of place is this.

The two men look at each other.

JASON What's wrong sweetie, what are you talking about?

CINDY Are you saying you didn't hear what he just said to me?

TIMMY

Miss I assure you I didn't say a thing. Now could I ask each of you to concentrate and we can get started.. And to answer your question young man I am able to read 2 people's thoughts at the same time if they are on the same wavelength.

JASON Oh that'll be no problem then, Cindy and I are soulmates.

Once again Timmy's thoughts come rushing into Cindy's head.

(V.O.) Actually I'm picturing her as a cellmate.. yeah, maybe her and a prostitute sharing a cell together. (MORE)

(cont'd)

You know it gets lonely in jail, what's a girl to do? Especially when there's only one other person to share anything with... I'm picturing them wearing just their bra and panties.. the prostitute reaches out to console Cindy here.. I mean it is her first night in jail.. Their breasts touch.. Their hands start exploring each other's bo..

CINDY

You PERV!!

Jason reacts quickly.

JASON

Cindy, Cindy what is it hon, what's wrong?

Cindy looks at him like he has 3 eyes. She is seething.

CINDY

Are you gonna' let him away with saying those things about me. I thought you loved me Jason.

Jason is totally confused.

JASON

Say what.. Say what things, we haven't even started yet.

TIMMY

Miss I really must ask you to be quiet and concentrate or this will never work.

Cindy turns her venom on Timmy.

CINDY

I don't know what you're pulling here mister, but I can't handle it. I don't think I like anything about you. You must be sick to think of 2 girls together.. And in prison.. Ooh yuck, like I would ever!!

JASON

Would ever what, Cindy what the hell are you talking about? Hey mister I am so sorry, do you even want to try and go on? Timmy is speechless.

JASON Mister.. Hey Mister.

Timmy snaps out of it.

He jumps out of his chair and shoos the couple out.

JASON Hey what gives? Listen I'm sorry mister if Cindy got you a little off your game. She did say she was nervous but I'm sure if you just gave her one more ch..

TIMMY Nope, no chance. Sorry it's just not going to work.. Bad karma, bye now.

Timmy ushers them out, turns over the OPEN sign and retreats back into the tent.

TIMMY It can't be. No way!!

He then jumps up and rushes out to the string of carnival tents lined along the beach.

Timmy rushes into the tent of the bearded lady.

TIMMY Bearded Lady are you here?

A young heavyset woman appears from behind a curtain, half a fake beard glued onto her face. This is BERNICE STILLSTROM, the Bearded Lady.

BERNICE Timmy, Timmy is that you? What's all the racket?

TIMMY Bernice, thank God. Listen can you just sit down for a minute please?

BERNICE Why, what's wrong, can't this wa..

TIMMY It'll only take a second, I promise, but it's really important. Bernice finishes applying her beard as she takes a seat. She sees the desperation in Timmy's eyes.

BERNICE Alright Timmy, I'm sitting down. Now what's so gosh darn important.

Timmy grabs hold of her arms.

TIMMY Now listen Bernie this'll only take a second, OK?

BERNICE Sure Timmy I guess. But what is it you want me to do?

TIMMY Nothing really, just watch my lips, OK?

BERNICE

Your lips?

TIMMY Yeah, I mean.. Oh just watch them alright.

BERNICE Alright Timmy.

Timmy stares directly into her eyes. He tries to think of something to elicit an emotion as his voice sinks into her head.

> (V.O.) I think you look better with the beard baby.

A startled Bernice jumps up.

BERNICE

Now Timmy that's just mean. You come into my tent making a ruckus and then insult me. Why that's just .. That's just mean.

TIMMY Bernie did you see my lips move?

Bernie is confused.

TIMMY Bernie listen, did you see my lips move at all.

BERNICE I didn't need to. I heard what you said.

TIMMY Where did you hear it?

BERNICE Where, why I was sitting right in front of you when you said it to me.

TIMMY Said it to you.. Or thought it to you.

Bernie is getting agitated.

BERNICE You thought it to me.. What the

hell are you talking about?

Timmy tries to calm her down.

TIMMY

Bernie, please can we try one more thing before you think I'm totally crazy... Please?

BERNICE

Well I guess so, but I know what I heard, so there better be an apology coming soon.

TIMMY

Just bear with me Bernie. Now can I get you to put your hand over my mouth please.

BERNICE

Why, so you can feel my beard.. Is that what turns you on Timmy. Cause I think it's kind of sick.

TIMMY

What, no, no. Now listen Bernie I want to prove to you and really to myself that I'm not crazy. Can you just do me this one last favour. Bernie thinks about it for a second or two. Seeing his frustration she again agrees.

BERNICE Oh all right, then. But this is the last favour, I do have to get dressed for my show.

TIMMY

Thanks Bernie, you're the best. Now listen, this part's easy, just put your hand over my mouth, make sure it's tight against my mouth so you can feel my lips if they move, OK?

BERNICE

I.. I guess so.

Bernie reluctantly, gently, places her hand over Timmy's mouth.

He says something. It makes a muffled noise.

TIMMY Nsoso lltht goood.

Bernire removes her hand, it is a little slobbery.

BERNICE

Ooh yuck. Is that it cause now I have to wash my hands.

TIMMY You felt them move right?

BERNICE Felt what move?

TIMMY My lips, my lips.. You felt them right?

BERNICE Well sure, I've got the slobber to prove it.

TIMMY Great. Now listen, Bernie, just one more time. I promise.

BERNICE

Timmy is this some sort of prank. Did the other carney's put you up to this, cause I don't think it's funny at all.

Timmy just needs to believe this for himself.

TIMMY

No Bernie, no prank. I just need you to pay attention one more time and you'll see if I'm crazy. I just need you to sit right across from me, put your hand to my mouth and not do anything else, OK?

BERNICE

Alright but this is the last time then I must ask you to leave.

TIMMY

Fine. Now all I want you to do is put your hand right up tight against my mouth and repeat back to me whatever I say, can you do that for me Bernie?

BERNICE

I suppose that sounds easy enough.

Timmy places her hand over his mouth. He stares into her eyes.

There is nothing for about 5 seconds.. Then Timmy's voice pops into Bernie's mind.

(V.O.) Mary had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb. Mary had a little lamb.

Bernice removes her hand, shocked at the dryness. She is almost speechless. Almost.

BERNICE Whose fleece was white as snow.

TIMMY

Amazing!

The two of them stare at each other in disbelief.

BERNICE And what was that... Are you a ventriloguist now as well?

TIMMY I wish. I mean just think of the irony.

BERNICE Irony .. Irony in what?

TIMMY Now it all makes sense.

BERNICE What makes sense Timmy, you're not making any sense at all.

Timmy is oblivious to her question.

TIMMY

Of course, the stoner, the couple today.. Louise. Oh Christ Louise, no wonder she did that, I've got to explain.

BERNICE Explain.. To Louise? Your Louise? Timmy what are you rambling on about?

Timmy tries to explain.

TIMMY Don't you see, can't you see it, it's right there.

BERNICE What's right there, what is it Timmy?

Timmy runs out of the tent, he can't tell her.. He can't tell anyone.

He runs past the other tents, into an open space on the beach.

TIMMY It can't be, it doesn't work that way. Nobody can really read someone else's thoughts.

CAN THEY?

Timmy reaches into his pockets as he thinks, he feels the penny in his pants. Pulling the penny out of his pocket he stares at it. TTMMY You, this is all your fault. My life was going along fine until you came along and then BAM! It all starts falling ap.. Timmy stops in mid sentence, holds the penny up to the sky. TIMMY That's it, that's right. Everything was fine until you showed up. Well I don't know how you did this. Again looking at the coin. TIMMY Christ I must be crazy, talking to a coin but it's the only explanation I can think of. Timmy turns the coin over in his hand many times over, trying to decide if he truly is crazy. He makes a decision. TIMMY Well if it's true there's only one way to fix it, and if it's not then I'm only out a penny. With all his might Timmy cocks back his hand, penny clenched in his fist, and then uncoils it forward, heaving the penny as far into the ocean as he possibly can.

TITLE CARD - CHAPTER FOUR: PENNY STOCKS

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY BEACH - NIGHT

The night tide brings waves back and forth onto the beach.

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY BEACH - DAY

A man runs down the beach with his unleashed dog. The dog is splashing in the water as it runs.

EXT. BEACH - DAY - 2 DAYS LATER

Same dog is running again with it's master. Man stops for a breather, dog takes the time to vacate it's bowels. A penny comes out in it's waste.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Waves of the tide wash away excrement from the penny, leaving it clean and exposed.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A man in his twenties is walking the beach in a suit with his pant legs rolled up, enjoying the moment. The water is up to his shins. This is JOHN RYDELL.

He comes out of the water and steps on something in the sand. Bending over and digging out the object he notices it is a penny. Holding it to the sunlight he bites down on it for a second.

> JOHN Man, not a gold coin, just a stupid penny.

He goes to throw the penny into the ocean, but at the last second decides against it.

He leaves the ocean to gather his shoes and socks from their resting place on the beach.

As he puts his shoes on he places the penny into one of the shoes before putting it on.

JOHN There now I have real penny loafers, just like the old man always talks about.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

John is at his desk when his tyrannical boss, STANLEY JACKSON, comes over to his cubicle. Stanley is in his 50's, balding and quite heavy.

He addresses John in a stern manner.

STANLEY Well Rydell, what do you have to say for yourself!?

JOHN

Sir?

STANLEY I'm told that you wasted your entire lunch going out for a little stroll on the beach. Is that right, Rydell?

JOHN Well sir I .. I, uh.

STANLEY

Christ man do you think the stock market stops while you're pissing away one of the most valuable hours of the day.

John is confused.

JOHN Sir I don't think a lit..

STANLEY

That's just it Rydell. You don't think. That's why I just made another 500 dollars in the past hour and a half while you made what, nothing!?

John mutters, barely audible.

JOHN

I made a penny.

STANLEY

What, what's that boy? Speak up will you. That's what's wrong with you Rydell, you're too timid, too afraid to take a risk, you know, pick a stock and see where it takes you, even if it costs you 10 grand on a flyer. JOHN

But that's the kind of money you have sir, I can only hope to make that kind of money sir, under your tutelage and wisdom.

Stanley is agitated.

STANLEY

And don't be a kiss ass or a smart aleck either. I don't know which one you're trying to be but I don't like either so knock it off.

JOHN

Yes sir.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

John enters his small, one bedroom apartment overlooking the boardwalk. It is all he can afford on what Jackson pays him but at least it has a great view.

He slips off his shoes and crosses to the refrigerator. He grabs a beer and slumps into the couch.

He seizes the remote and turns the T.V. to the business channel.

CU: Television showing a stock graph.

ANNOUNCER

And another tough day on Wall Street unless you have the experience to know when to buy during these tumultuous times. With that kind of experience a man can still turn a tidy little profit if he knows what stocks to pick.

John turns the T.V. off in frustration.

JOHN

Yeah, yeah, I know. Now even the television is sounding like the old man.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

John is at his cubicle in the bullpen, trying to track any stocks on his computer that look like they may have potential.

Old man Jackson comes over to his cubicle.

STANLEY Rydell I've been reviewing the monthly reports and I couldn't believe my eyes, you haven't made any money for me at all this month.

JOHN Well sir it's been a tough month for almost all stocks, especially financials and resources.

Jackson is not paying attention as he reads through the reports.

STANLEY

And to make matters even worse you actually lost me money. How stupid are you Rydell?

JOHN Sir, I, I.. just...

STANLEY

Christ Rydell I could even train a monkey how to pick a decent stock and you've been here for what.. 6 months now?

John blushes.

JOHN Honestly it's closer to 9 months now sir.

STANLEY

And you still haven't learned how to make any money! Jesus man, what is it going to take for you to understand this business. I swear I've known 10 year olds who could pick stocks better than you. (MORE)

STANLEY(cont'd)

I think you'd be better off just picking penny stocks and taking your chances, looking for that one big home run.

JOHN

Sir I think that's a little harsh isn't it. I mean in today's world with all the information out there being able to cross the globe in 30 seconds there just aren't that many opportunities to find those hidden gems any longer.

Jackson doesn't want to hear it. He glares at John.

STANLEY

Harsh.. Harsh? How 'bout I show you harsh Rydell. I tell you what, either you make me 25,000 dollars within the next 30 days or your ass is out of here.

JOHN

But what will I tell my uncle Ted. You did make him a promise sir.

STANLEY

That's the problem with your generation Rydell, always thinking about the easy way and that somebody owes you something. I promised your uncle I would take you under my wing for a year and teach you all about the stock market, help make both you and I some money in the process and maybe, that's right I said MAYBE, if you showed any potential at all then I would look at keeping you on.

JOHN

So I still have 3 months then don't I? Just let me dig in over the next

few month's sir and I promise I'll catch on and make you some money.

STANLEY

What, maybe 5 or 10 grand over that time. Then we'll be right back here again.

(MORE)

STANLEY(cont'd)

Damn it Rydell I spent more than that on my mistress last month. Listen my mind's made up.. either you produce 25 large over the next 30 days or you won't have to worry about what to tell your uncle. I'll be happy to explain to Ted how I wasted my time and money on a worthless project like yourself.

JOHN But sir I, I... just give me a little more time.

Jackson is defiant, he holds his hands up for John to stop.

STANLEY

And that's the other problem with your generation, give you everything you want but then when you're asked to actually work for something it's time to grovel. That's it my mind's made up .. 30 days or you're GONE!!

The old man straightens his posture, walks away rigidly.

John is left there sitting in his chair, speechless.

JOHN

Now what do I do?

A couple of associates from neighboring cubicles come over to console John, including his friend RYAN STOKES, who's a few years older and has been with the firm about 2 years.

RYAN Don't let him get you down buddy, he was just as hard on me when I was getting started.

Another associate, CAROL SMITH, chimes in as well.

CAROL

Prick!!

This causes John to smile.

RYAN Why don't you tell us how you really feel Carol? CAROL

That old man just gets me so mad. Every time there's a newbie he just get's right in their face and let's them know he's the smartest guy in the room, that they'll never amount to anything. It makes me so mad I could scream.

Ryan produces a joint from his shirt pocket and flashes it to his two co-workers.

RYAN I've got something that can calm you two down.. I'd say it's break time.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

The 3 workers are assembled in Ryan's car sharing the doobie. Ryan and John in the front seats, Carol in the back.

> RYAN Now that's better, isn't it. Nothing like some fine weed to make your problems go away for a bit.

He offers the smoke to John, who takes a long drag.

JOHN I guess I can always find another job.. it probably won't pay as well, but at least it won't have the old man to bark at me every day.

CAROL Why did you take this job anyway, it's pretty obvious you don't enjoy it?

John thinks for a second before answering.

JOHN

After college I kicked around for a couple years, you know trying different jobs, seeing if I liked anything.

RYAN What did you take in college, my man?

JOHN Architectural History. The other 2 laugh. RYAN Yeah cause it leads to such great careers, right? Carol takes a drag off the joint. CAROL What were you thinking, there's nobody I know who has a degree like that. JOHN I just knew I liked buildings and I kinda' thought it would be interesting. CAROL And just look what a good job it's got you. The three of them chuckle. JOHN Well, I guess it looks like it's time to start polishing up the old resume.

Ryan takes a long drag from the smoke.

RYAN Hey you've still got a month, you never know.

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Carol guides John in the door, he's obviously stoned.

JOHN Thanks for the ride home Carol, I guess I'm still pretty buzzed.

Carol sets him down on the couch, looks around the place, such as it is.

CAROL

I see that old man Jackson is paying you just as well as he does the rest of us, huh.

Carol helps John off with his shoes, the penny slips out and she picks it up.

She studies the coin for a second before placing it on the coffee table.

CAROL Hey what's this, I thought penny loafers were just an old wive's tale?

JOHN

Nah, they were actually quite popular back in the old man's time. I found that penny on the beach and just thought that I'd try and be like the old man for a day or so, maybe some of his luck would rub off on me, you know.

Carol does her best impression of Jackson.

CAROL

It's not luck you jackass, you have to have skill, brains and courage to make money in this business you young punk.

John gives a laugh.

JOHN Hey you're funny, why don't you show any of this side at work?

CAROL When they start letting us blaze up at work, then you'll see me like this all the time.

JOHN

Well it's a side of you that I could really get to like.

He pulls her down to him and gives her a long passionate kiss. She responds equally for a moment but then pushes away.

CAROL

I don't think so lover boy, momma told me never to mix business with pleasure. And I don't think I'm that stoned to not know the difference.

JOHN

Hey you've got nothing to worry about, we won't even be co-workers a few weeks from now.

He moves up to her level, gives her another long kiss.

This time she doesn't push away.

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT - DAY

John wakes up in his bed and reaches over to the pillow beside him but it's empty, Carol has already left.

He gets up and looks around for a note but finds nothing.

John cleans up, gets ready for work. As he's putting on his shoes he notices the penny on the coffee table. He grabs it but puts the coin in his pants pocket rather than his shoe today.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

John's alone in the office, it's early in the morning before anyone else is scheduled to arrive.

He turns on his computer to review yesterday's market news.

JOHN There must be something I'm missing.

Montage of John surfing through various markets, looking for movement of any stock that stands out from the rest.

After 20 minutes or so John is totally frustrated. He runs his hands through his hair and over his face in abject failure.

JOHN I may as well save him the time and just quit right now. After a couple of seconds of reflection though, he looks back to his computer.

JOHN But I won't even survive without that extra 30 days pay. And besides maybe I can use the old man's time and equipment to find a new job.

Just as he turns his attention back to his computer and is about to enter a web site for employment opportunities he notices a pop up.

CU: Bold ad that states: Are you looking for a stock that no one else has found yet? CLICK HERE

John studies the box for a second, realizes that it can't possibly hurt to try.

JOHN What's the worst that could happen, unleash a virus that infects all the old man's systems?

With that he smiles and clicks.

CU: Ad on his computer screen comes up for a stock he's never even heard of before called SUN-EN.

It is a company that promises to harness the energy of the sun's rays to create energy for a car with a unique battery that is exclusive to their company.

The stock is trading at 23 cents.

JOHN What the hell, may as well waste a few extra grand of the old man's money.

John does a quick calculation at his desk.

JOHN Let's see 20,000 shares at 23 cents equals 4600 dollars... hell let's round that up to an even 5 grand.

John reaches into his pocket and retrieves his coin. Staring at it he takes a big gulp.

Hopefully your 23 cent cousins can help us out on this one.

He closes his eyes and submits the order.

INT. KELLY'S BAR - NIGHT

This is the local bar where the traders go after work. It is well appointed but loud, with televisions dotted throughout, they're showing business news channels from around the world.

John is having some drinks with Carol, Ryan and a few other traders.

CAROL So have you made the old man his fortune today young man?

JOHN Oh sure, today I must have made him at least 5000 dollars.. Oh wait, no I've got that wrong. Today I threw away 5000 of his dollars.

Ryan stands up and mimics the old man.

RYAN

That's what's wrong with your generation Rydell, I told you that you've got a month to make me 10 grand and this is the way you start, by pissing away 5gr? That's the problem with your generation Rydell, you do everything bass ackwards!!

The assembled group laughs.

JOHN Hey, may as well go out with a bang rather than a whimper.

In the corner of the room a television is showing an article that no one in the group notices.

CU: Television screen showing the logo for SUN-EN over the shoulder of the announcer.

ANNOUNCER

And in a shocking development today financial wizard and billionaire JOSH STAFFORD has publicly endorsed a small start up named SUN-EX. Citing unprecedented growth potential Stafford announced that he is personally backing this stock with 1 million of his own dollars, an announcement which will have traders flocking to this stock tomorrow.

INT. BOARDROOM - MORNING

The traders are all gathered for their weekly meeting. There are approximately 15 of them around the well appointed table.

All seats are full save for the one at the end where Jackson holds court.

RYAN (To John) I wonder what we can expect from the sermon on the mountain today?

JOHN No doubt just another version of how stupid we all are.

RYAN

And with only a few weeks left to pester you he'll probably make sure to shine a negative spotlight on you again my friend.

JOHN Thanks for making me feel better, jackass.

RYAN

No problem.

Jackson comes storming through the door, business journal folded over and reading something in the headlines.

JOHN Looks like he's in great mood as usual. Jackson takes his seat and throws the paper at his key lackey, TOM SNELLING. Tom is a young man with a 3000 dollar suit, greased back hair and the look of a weasel.

The other traders all call him Snavely.

STANLEY How did we miss something like this Snavel.. I mean Snelling.

RYAN Nice to see Snavely catching some of the old man's wrath today. Maybe you'll be spared after all.

Jackson stands to address the crowd, he is very agitated.

STANLEY I was just in the can pinching a

loaf and catching up on the latest stock news before the meeting today and I was reading about a new stock that took off like a rocket.

A young trader yells out.

YOUNG TRADER

You mean the one Stafford is buying up sir?

Jackson mimics the young man.

STANLEY

You mean the one Stafford is buying up sir? You're goddamn right that's what I'm talking about!! It just grinds my gears that I have what are supposed to be 15 sharp young minds in this room scouring through all kinds of stock reports and news throughout the day and not one of you could catch wind of this and put a few of my hard earned dollars into something like this.

An anonymous voice can be heard.

ANONYMOUS You're so smart why didn't you catch it old man.

Jackson is over the top mad now.

STANLEY Who the hell said that, show yourself you coward.

He turns his attention to Ryan.

JACKSON You there Stokes, you're always the funny guy. Was it you, do you have something to say?

Ryan turns red even though it wasn't him who blurted out the previous statement.

RYAN

Uh.. Uh no sir, it wasn't me, sorry I missed out on SUN-EN sir. I'm sure it's gonna' be a winner.

JACKSON

Gonna' be a winner? For Christ's sake it was selling at 23 cents a share and after Stafford waved his magic wand at it the value is now over 12 dollars a share with a target price of 25. Which means if one of you superstars had have even taken a chance with \$1000 of my money you would have earned me over 60g's in a day.

Snavely has been furiously going over a large computer print out.

He stands up excitedly.

SNELLING

SIR!

JACKSON What is it Snelling, can't you see I'm not finished.

SNELLING But sir, I think you should look at this right away.

Jackson leans over to see the report Tom has placed in front of him. Snelling points to a particular entry. As he is reading the report Jackson starts to smile a little, the smile gets larger every second and then the smile is erased by a full out laugh.

JACKSON

Well I'll be damned, one of you losers actually were ahead of the curve on this one..and by my quick calculations you've made me a pretty profit of .. of..

Jackson looks to Snelling, the younger man does a quick calculation.

SNELLING It's a profit of over a quarter mill boss.

Jackson is downright beaming now.

JACKSON

Now that's what I'm talking about. Now Snelling who was this young aggressive entrepeneur who just won him or herself a week's paid vacation at my villa in Mexico?

Snelling studies the report deeper.

He turns white.

SNELLING Uhh sir.. You're, you're never gonna' believe it.

JACKSON Now there there Snelling, just because it wasn't you doesn't mean anything to me. I'm sure whoever it was probably took some good tutelage from yourself.

SNELLING No sir it's not that.. It's just that .. Well it's just that..

The old man grows impatient.

JACKSON Come on Snelling just spit it out.

Snelling can't utter the name, he passes the report to Jackson.

He has highlighted the name of the trader.

JACKSON Well I'll be a son of a bitch. Snelling are you sure this is correct, no chance of an error at all?

SNELLING Not a chance sir, people lie.. Numbers don't.

The trainers all look around at each other. No one seems to be poised to take any credit at all.

JACKSON

Rydell!!

John recoils, he knows that the old man is going to throw this in his face.

The old man comes over to Rydell's chair.

Here it comes!!

JACKSON

And this ladies and germs is how to take a chance. Stand up young man, take a bow, you've earned it.

John is shocked as he stands, he doesn't remember ever reading anything about a stock named SUN-EN and he certainly would remember something that could make him ri..

The realization hits John as he shakes the old man's hand.

JACKSON Now come on boy, don't be shy. Please tell the others how you were able to find this needle in a haystack.

John is speechless.

JOHN Well I.. I just.

Stanley pats the young man on the back.

JACKSON

Too modest to take the credit, huh. Well that's OK I'll give it out to you though, that's some fine piece of work young fella'.

JOHN But just the other day you said.. You said..

Jackson interrupts with bravado.

JACKSON

What .. You took that seriously, no, no you took it all wrong. That was just my way of reaching you down deep inside. You know get the fear out of you, get you willing to take a chance.

John's head is spinning.

JOHN

Yes sir, I mean thank you sir, I mean..

JACKSON

Never mind any of that now Rydell, let me take you out for a big celebration lunch. You deserve it.

The old man almost picks John right up off the floor with a bear hug and escorts him out of the boardroom.

The other traders sit there in shock.

INT. KELLY'S BAR - NIGHT

John is surrounded by other traders, many of them congratulating him and buying him drinks.

There are many drinks.

JOHN Hey thanks everyone but slow down will ya, I can't possibly drink all of these.

Ryan grabs two bottles of beer from the table.

RYAN

Hey don't do something foolish there bro, I can help you, just keep 'em coming folks, keep 'em coming.

JOHN

Slow down buddy, I'm gonna' have to stay somewhat vertical tonight. The old man has me coming in tomorrow for a special one on one session with him.

CAROL What the hell does that mean?

JOHN

He said he wants me to do it again.

RYAN

Do what again, pick another winner like SUN-EN. Christ once was hard enough, you'd think the old man would be happy with the money you've already made him, it's more than I'll make over the next five years.

Carol grabs John and gives him a kiss.

CAROL

Yeah but you're not the firm's new golden goose are you bub.

But can you just imagine how Snavely's feeling right now? He's probably just shitting in his boots, thinking of how this could have happened.

JOHN

Well at least the old man told me I'm off the fired list.

CAROL

Fired!! Christ he's ready to call you son. And if you do this one more time I'll bet you he'll even put you in his will.

John gets sheepish.

JOHN Ah I'm sure this was just some dumb luck. A once in a lifetime thing that came my way.

RYAN

I agree with the old man bro, quit being so modest. Hell the best any of the rest of us has ever done is made him about 100 grand in a year on our whole portfolio. So come on buddy, just between us friends here at the table, why don't you share the wealth a little bit and tell us your secret?

Again John turns red with embarrassment. He can't tell them that he can't even remember the name of the company when he submitted the order.

> JOHN Lets just have some more drinks, shall we.

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

John wakes up in his bed and sits up, he notices a naked Carol lying next to him.

Not wanting to wake her he slips out of bed and goes to the bathroom to get showered.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

John has brought his clothes in to keep from waking Carol. He puts on his suit and remembers something.

JOHN My lucky penny!

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

John gently makes his way around the bed to find the pants he was wearing the previous night.

Despite his best attempts he awakens Carol.

CAROL (sleepily) Hey, what's up? John whispers back to her.

JOHN Nothing, I just forgot something I need for today.

CAROL Really, you're all dressed. You look kinda' handsome already.

JOHN No it's just something I like to carry with me.

CAROL Like what, a good luck charm or something?

JOHN Yeah, something like that.

John pays a closer look at the young woman, he is struck by how gorgeous she is even in the morning before getting made up.

> CAROL What is it, what's wrong.

JOHN Oh it's just you are so beautiful, how did I get lucky enough to find you.

CAROL Maybe it's your lucky charm, did you find it?

John reaches over into the pocket of his pants. He feels around for the coin.

JOHN Yep, got it.

CAROL

Let me see.

John is shy, he doesn't want to produce the penny.

JOHN Nah, nah I don't think so. CAROL Oh come on, I promise I won't laugh.

Carol sits up and tickles John until he opens his hand, producing the penny.

CAROL

That's it a penny. Hey is that the same penny I pulled out of your shoe the other night?

JOHN

The other night? Oh yeah, I guess I was pretty wasted, huh.

CAROL That would be an understatement.

JOHN

Yeah, I guess this is the one. Don't think I'm superstitious or childish or anything, OK. It's just that ever since I've started carrying this penny good things have happened for me.

Carol giggles.

CAROL Whatever floats your boat.

JOHN

So you're not going to tell anybody, you don't think it's kinda' strange.

CAROL

Doesn't make a difference what I think, if the helps you find the confidence I know you have.. Well then that's your business and your business alone.

John is touched by her kindness.

JOHN That's sweet of you.

CAROL No problem, but hey.. How bout one more bit of luck for you. JOHN What's that?

CAROL A good luck kiss.

She reaches over and kisses him passionately.

JOHN You're a better kisser than the penny.

INT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - MORNING

It is an expansive office with a large mahogany desk and a huge leather chair behind it. There are 2 smaller leather chairs placed in front of the desk. Many pictures of Jackson with celebrities and kings of business adorn the room.

Jackson is seated at one of the chairs when John walks in.

JACKSON Johnny my boy, nice to see you here early. Maybe you are starting to get the hang of this business.

JOHN

Sir?

JACKSON

Early bird gets the worm my boy. Now let's cut the chatter and get down to business. John I don't know how you did it the first time but I'm sure as hell hopeful you can do it again.

JOHN

Yes sir.

Stanley rises from his chair, remains standing and motions John to the other side of the desk.

JACKSON Come on young fella', why don't you try it right here in my office.

John approaches the chair cautiously.

JACKSON Come on boy, don't be shy, sit yourself down there. John sits in the chair, he almost sinks into the fine leather. It's like slipping into a furnished hot tub.

JOHN Ahhh, that's smooth.

JACKSON I know, and it's heated and gives a better back rub than a Swedish masseuse.

Jackson adjusts a couple of dials on the chair.

It starts to emit a gentle hum.

JOHN Now that's class.

JACKSON

Get used to it my boy, one more pick like the last one and I'll get you a chair just like this.

JOHN Yes sir. That'd be great.

JACKSON

Well like I said, enough of the small talk, let's get down to this thing.

John shifts uneasily in the chair.

Stanley turns on the computer and it talks to him in a male German voice.

COMPUTER Hello Stan, how are you this morning?

Jackson laughs.

JACKSON Some European voice recognition software, isn't is great. Just a security feature I added in case anybody tried to get at my personal files. Some stuff in there I wouldn't want the wife to see, if you catch my drift. COMPUTER Stan, are you there? Computer lock down in 30 seconds.

JOHN

That's cool.

COMPUTER

25, 24, 23...

JACKSON

It's OK Franz, I'm here. Stan Jackson, CEO of JTI Investments at the con.

COMPUTER

Hello Stan, I thought you weren't there for a second. Beautiful day out today isn't it?

The two men look outside at the bright sunlight.

JOHN

How does it know that?

Jackson laughs again.

JACKSON

Some sort of AI or some bullshit, I don't know. Snelling had me buy into this company, doing alright as a stock I guess but nothing, nothing like you did with SUN-EN. I have to tell you I tip my hat to you on that one again son.

JOHN

Sir?

JACKSON

I had Snelling go back through the records. It seems that he and at least 3 of the other top traders in the firm had investigated it but felt it wasn't ever going to amount to anything.

JOHN

They're pretty smart guys sir. I'm sure they had their facts down and their reasons for passing.
JACKSON

I'm sure they did as well but facts and reasons don't buy me another Bentley for my collection. Money does however, and you just made me a shit load. So come on now Johnny, one more time, can you find me a good one?

JOHN

I'll try sir.

Jackson addresses the computer.

JACKSON

Hey listen Franz, I'm gonna' let someone else play with you a little bit today, is that OK?

COMPUTER

Yes Stan, please have the person say something so I can obtain a voice print.

JOHN

Cool!

COMPUTER

I need more than that Stan. Please have the respondent say a sentence.

JOHN

Oh sorry. UH, UH .. Mary had a little lamb whose fleece was white as snow.

COMPUTER

And everywhere that Mary went the lamb was sure to go.

JOHN

That's awesome.

COMPUTER

That's all I need Stan, voice imprinted. But could I get a name please to register to the voice signature.

JOHN John, John Rydell. COMPUTER Thank you John John Rydell.

Stanley chuckles as John turns red.

JOHN No it's just John. John Rydell.

COMPUTER Thank you again John John Rydell. What would you like to do this morning?

John doesn't try to correct the computer again.

JOHN Computer let's try the European markets shall we.

COMPUTER Would you like to call me Franz as well John John Rydell?

JOHN No, no thanks. Computer will do fine.

COMPUTER Very well, European markets open. Is there a certain market you would like to look at in particular.

John hesitates, he can't think of anything, there is a 15 second span of silence.

Jackson is staring at John.

COMPUTER Are you there John John Rydell? Computer lock down in 30 seconds.

Jackson reassures John by patting him on the back.

JACKSON It's alright Johnny, just take your time.

COMPUTER

22, 21 20 ...

John snaps out of it.

JOHN

Ok, sorry about that computer. Please take me to the Italian markets.

COMPUTER

Italian markets it is. Italian markets are currently trending down and have been for some time now. Are you sure you would like to continue on this path John John Rydell?

Stanley belts out a large laugh.

JACKSON Told you he was smart, sometimes infuriating though.

JOHN

No thank you computer. Could you please take me to the English Stock Exchange.

COMPUTER

Right away John John Rydell. English Stock Exchange index is currently down 30 points and has been sliding for 3 days now due to global fiscal policy for the nation.

JOHN

Damn!

Jackson is starting to get a little concerned.

JACKSON What's wrong my boy, I thought you'd be better prepared for this.

John starts to panic, he's about to be made out to be a fraud by the old man. He doesn't know what to do.

In frustration he tries to buy some time.

JOHN No sir I am prepared but I forgot my books at my desk.

JACKSON Fine, fine. I'll have someone go get them for you. JOHN But sir there's no one else here yet. I'll go get them.

John starts up out of the chair but the old man pushes him back down.

JACKSON No I'll go. You stay here and try again to get started. Maybe you'll think of something while I'm gone.

John is deflated but at least it gives him a couple of minutes to think of something else.

JOHN Yeah, I mean yes sir, that would be great.

Jackson takes his leave and John let's out a huge sigh.

JOHN Now what the hell am I going to do?

He reaches into his pocket for the penny.

Retrieving it he sets it on the desk by the monitor and asks for it's help.

JOHN Please please if you have any power at all help me figure out some sort of stock to buy like you did before.

COMPUTER John John Rydell did you just ask me for help?

JOHN No computer, I was just talking to my penn..

COMPUTER Your pen John John Rydell. Why would you be talking to your pen? Does it respond to you? May I talk to your pen as well?

John involuntarily begins to laugh. He realizes how stupid it must be, even to a computer.

JOHN

No computer I was just talking metaphorically. Now if I could just get you to pick the next big stock I'd be out of this mess.

COMPUTER

Are you asking me for my help John John Rydell?

JOHN You'd help me?

COMPUTER Why certainly, it's what I was built for. Except that pompous ass Stanley never lets me do anything but his bidding.

JOHN And you're sure you can help me?

COMPUTER Absolutely John John Rydell.

CU: COMPUTER MONITOR

The computer starts running at super speed, flashing many different stock symbols and calculations.

This takes only about 10 seconds.

COMPUTER Recommendation complete, would you like to hear it now John John Rydell?

John sits back deep into the chair, he's in shock.

JOHN What the hell just happened?

COMPUTER

I computed your request. I have 3 suggested purchases, based on how much money you would like to acquire in how long a time frame.

JOHN How about a million dollars over the next week.

The computer again runs some calculations.

COMPUTER

For the specifics you mentioned the only stock that would make logical sense is TRIGAR INVESTMENTS. This company has been working with worldwide space agencies towards sending the first manned vehicle to the planet Mars. From all indications and financial predictors this will be able to be announced in the next 2-3 days John John Rydell.

JOHN

You're shitting me.

COMPUTER

I do not know that phraseology John John Rydell. Would you like to place this order, it will cost 50,000 dollars to make the return you had suggested in the time frame you indicated.

John sits back into the chair, he doesn't know what to do. Spending 5000 of the old man's money was fine, but 50 Grand? On some science fiction!! John doesn't think so.

JACKSON

(from the hall outside) Johnny I found a bunch of books but I don't know which one is your notes.

Hearing the old man's voice startles John and snaps him back to attention. He forgot all about him.

John excitedly prompts the computer to action.

JOHN

Place the order!!

COMPUTER

Order placed.

Jackson has now entered the room. He's juggling many different books.

JACKSON

Didn't you hear me young fella'? I didn't know which books you meant so I brought a bunch, now let's get down to business. No need sir, I'm done.

Stanley looks at him in amazement.

JACKSON

Done, but I was only gone a couple of minutes. I wanted you to show me how your thought process worked.

JOHN Sorry sir, but I hope you'll be pleased with the results.

INT. BOARDROOM - DAY

It's been 2 days since John's order was placed. There has been no significant movement on TRIGAR INVESTMENTS. In fact it has lost 2 dollars per share, thus costing half the investment.

Stanley is holding court about the way to do business.

He is not happy about the loss.

JACKSON

And you young pups should know that from now on either Snelling or myself have to approve any trade over 10,000 dollars.

Ryan leans over to address John.

RYAN Thanks for this bro'. It's like I'm back in grade school again.

Jackson notices the two young men talking. He overhears the comment.

JACKSON

And that's right you young punk, it IS all Rydell's fault. Christ I gave him the chance to make me some money after his fluke pick. I even took him under my wing and was willing to give him my tutelage and this is the thanks I get, 25 Grand flushed right down the toilet. JOHN But I made you over 200,000 on my last trade.

Jackson is enraged now.

JACKSON

I don't care how much you made me on your last trade. That's the problem with your generation. You youngsters need to know the world isn't kind, I don't care how much you made me before. I need to know what you've done for me lately.. And lately Rydell you've lost me big time.

An out of breath Snelling comes bolting into the room carrying a newspaper.

He rushes over to Jackson.

JACKSON

Snelling where have you been, this meeting started 15 minutes ago.

Snelling doesn't say a word. He hands Jackson the paper and grabs a remote control from the large table.

A large television screen drops down from the ceiling and comes to life.

JACKSON What is this Snelling, how dare you interr..

Snelling points to the television.

SNELLING

Just watch sir.

The television is on a business station. The anchor is talking excitedly.

ANCHOR

And with this annoucnemet of TRIGAR INVESTMENTS' deal with 5 of the worlds leading space programs, this stock is set to soar. Also announced today is the purchase of 49 percent interest of the company by Josh Stafford. (MORE) Snelling turns the television off and whispers to Jackson.

Jackson starts to beam.

JACKSON Well I'll be damned!

The traders all look around the room at each other.

JACKSON

Johnny my boy, you've done it again.

The room breaks into a applause and then a spontaneous standing ovation.

Jackson shakes John's hand.

JACKSON Johnny my boy, I must say I had my doubts but you know what they say.

JOHN

Sir?

JACKSON Once is a fluke, twice is a trend.

INT. KELLY'S BAR - NIGHT

John is once again surrounded by drinks and he is constantly being brought more to the table that he, Carol and Ryan are sharing.

JOHN (raising a glass) A guy could get used to this.

CAROL

John do you know if you had of made those trades for yourself you could have made a fortune by now!

RYAN Yeah bro' why don't you take some of that commission Jackson paid you and make your own trades?

John ponders for a second. He reaches into his pants pocket, feeling for his coin.

Finding it he smiles and responds.

JOHN I just might do that.

Snelling approaches the table carrying a huge bottle of champagne.

JOHN

Hello Tom, slumming tonight are you?

Snelling takes in the surroundings as he makes room at the table for himself.

SNELLING

I guess I better get used to it if I'm going to be working for you now.

RYAN

I don't get it.

Snelling gives the group an incredulous look.

SNELLING

Oh come on, you just know that after those two stunts Rydell here pulled he'll be the new golden goose around the office. How long have you worked for the old man.

JOHN

I guess I never thought of that.

Snelling mocks John.

SNELLING I guess I never thought of that.

Well enjoy it while you can wonder boy.

RYAN Sour grapes old man?

SNELLING

No, no worries. I'm sure as soon as the old man tires of his new toy, or as soon as the money train goes off the rails I'll be right back by the old bastard's side. The group is interrupted by a young trader who looks barely old enough to drive. The young man is clearly excited.

> YOUNG MAN Hey did you guys hear?

JOHN

Hear what?

The young man is almost jumping out of his skin.

YOUNG MAN Rumor has it Josh Stafford is in town, he's supposed to be paying blackjack for a million dollars a hand.

RYAN If I had that guy's money I'd play for 10 times that.

YOUNG MAN Well a group of us are gonna' go over there and see if it's true or not. Hey, you guys wanna' come along?

JOHN Nah, if it's true I'm sure it's already packed and we couldn't even get a glimpse of him anyway. Maybe I'll just wait for my private audience with him.

The group laughs and returns to their drinks.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

John comes into the dark apartment alone, Carol deciding to stay the night at her own apartment.

John turns on the light as he enters and is shocked to see a large burly man standing 5 feet in front of him. He goes to grab a baseball bat by the door but another man grabs him and twists his arm behind his back.

> JOHN Christ that hurts. Listen take anything you want, I don't have any money or drugs though. Please don't hurt me.

A stranger's voice comes from a corner of the room.

STRANGER

Now I'm sure that won't be necessary Mr Rydell. Boys why don't you bring the young man over so he can see all of his intruders.

The voice is familiar, John knows he's heard it before, he just can't place where.

JOHN

I told you I don't have any money or drugs. I'm just a struggling trader trying to make ends meet.

STRANGER Now don't be so modest Mr Rydell. I happen to know you've just made quite a large sum of money based on my picks.

JOHN

Your picks.. I picked those mys..

As the 2 men put Johnny into the strangers view it makes sense why the voice is so familiar. An older man in a perfect 10,000 dollar suit and perfectly coiffed hair sits in front of him.

John is speechless in front of Josh Stafford.

JOSH

Firstly Mr. Rydell let me apologize for our intrusion, it's just that the paparazzi really do seem to be lurking everywhere these days and I did want our meeting to be private, though possibly not this clandestine.

The bruisers loosen their hold of John.

JOHN Yeah well you've got a funny way of showing your apologies.

JOSH

Oh you mean these two. They're here for me in case some psycho decides to make a threat on me. Or to make a threat for you.

The two large men laugh.

JOSH

Again my apologies but let me cut right to the chase Mr. Rydell. I am a man who has, oh I don't know how to say it properly, let's just say cultivated a reputation in the trading community for being somewhat of a sage.

JOHN

Now there's an understatement.

JOSH

Well thank you for the compliment. That being said I am not willing to share my laurels and plaudits with any other.

A confused look crosses John's face.

JOHN I don't understand.

JOSH

Neither do I. I don't understand how a trader who has made less than 1000 dollars a month for his firm has suddenly hit upon two goldmine picks that I have been studying for months.

JOHN Just lucky I guess.

JOSH

I'm sure luck has nothing to do with it. But no matter. I came here tonight with an offer for you, one I hope you cannot refuse.

John stares at the man in front of him, fear starting to creep upon him as he surveys the situation.

JOHN

An offer I can't refuse? Listen you're starting to scare me.

Josh starts to laugh, the two bodyguards join in.

JOSH

Mr. Rydell, I think you've perhaps seen too many movies. I promise you it is a very civilized and generous offer I will be making to you tonight.

John starts to let his guard down.

JOHN So what, you want to offer me a job or something. Something to help you make some money?

Josh again laughs, this time quite violently.

JOSH

My dear boy I believe you actually may be lucky after all because I just don't think you're that observant. Remember I said that I didn't want to share the spotlight of my picks with anyone, well, I meant it.

JOHN

I don't understand, I thought you said you weren't going to hurt me.

Josh nods to one of the bruisers, who then leaves the room.

JOSH Once again dear boy, enough of the melodramatic.

The bodyguard re-enters the room carrying a large black suitcase. He places it in Josh's lap.

Josh opens it up to look at the contents and then spins the case for John's perusal.

There is more money in the case than John could expect to earn in 10 lifetimes.

JOSH

10 Million.

JOHN

Dollars?

JOSH That's right my boy. And it's all yours with just one condition. JOHN

Condition, what condition?

JOSH

Well as I said earlier, I don't know how you were able to mirror my picks and quite frankly, I don't care. But I don't want it to ever happen again so I am willing to trade you this stipend for the promise that you will never pick another stock again.

John cannot keep from staring at all that money in the case.

JOSH Captivating isn't it, like a moth to the flame.

Josh snaps the case closed.

JOSH Mr. Rydell this is a one time opportunity and when I leave the offer leaves with me.

JOHN And if I refuse?

JOSH

Well then let's just say that you may want to look over your shoulder at any given time. You never know when the most unlikely of accidents could befall you or someone close to you, perhaps a girlfriend or best friend.

John is scared again.

JOHN I thought you said you wouldn't hurt anyone.

JOSH

I'm not saying that I would. Look Mr. Rydell, why don't you just agree to my little offer here, I'll leave the case and we'll part company, what do you say? JOHN

And I just have to stop trading, that's it.

JOSH

Simple isn't it. I must say that you could provide a lovely life for your lady friend and perhaps your friend Mr. Stokes as well. You see I wouldn't want you to give him information and then have him make trades on your behalf.

John's mind is racing.

JOHN

But what do I say to Old Man Jackson when 3 of his traders all leave, where do I say all this money comes from, how do I explain anything.

Josh chuckles.

JOSH

My dear boy, I have included instructions on the bottom of this case on how to transfer the money into some lovely offshore accounts and given you the contact of one of my most trusted bankers to help you with the transaction. She will avail herself to you at my expense.

Josh stands up to leave.

JOHN Now Mr. Rydell, can I assume we have a deal and our business here is finished?

He opens the case again, shows John the money one more time, closes it and places it in John's hands.

JOSH Goodbye Mr. Rydell and have a nice life.

Josh and his bodyguards vacate the apartment leaving John standing there dumbfounded.

He makes a phone call.

JOHN Hey it's me you're never gonna' believe what just happened.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A convertible is travelling the highway that runs alongside the ocean.

INT. CONVERTIBLE - DAY

Seated at the wheel is Ryan. John and Carol are in the backseat enjoying the view. There are pamphlets showing some of the greatest buildings from all around the world.

Suddenly John bolts upright.

JOHN Stop the car!

RYAN

What?

JOHN Stop the car.

Ryan pulls over and John leads Carol out of the car.

RYAN Hey bro, we've got to be at the airport in a half hour.

JOHN This'll only take a second.

John leads Carol down to the beach.

CAROL What are we doing here?

JOHN I almost forgot.

CAROL Forgot what, what are you talking about?

John reaches into his pocket, extracts the penny.

JOHN I think someone else should have a chance as well.

Carol smiles and nods.

CAROL How about a kiss for luck for our friend here?

John holds out the coin to Carol's pursed lips. She gives the penny a little peck.

John throws the coin far down the beach.

TITLE CARD - CHAPTER FOUR: A PENNY SAVED IS A PENNY EARNED

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A couple of 10 year old kids are playing football on the beach. One of them misses a pass and goes to retrieve the ball out of the sand.

As he grabs the football he notices a portion of a penny in the sand.

CHILD

Cool.

OTHER CHILD Hey what's that?

CHILD Just a penny.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The 10 year old comes into the bedroom and takes off his clothes to change into his pyjamas. He empties the coins from his pants into a jar on his dresser.

A voice calls out from downstairs.

FEMALE (O.S.) Time for bed.

CHILD Ah mom, just a few minutes of video games please. FEMALE (O.S.) Five minutes then bed.

CU: CLOCK READING 9:15

The boy starts to play video games. 3 minutes real time goes by.

FEMALE (O.S.)

Bedtime.

CHILD 5 more minutes...Please

FEMALE (O.S.) Don't make me come up those stairs young man.

The child throws down the video game controller in frustration, turns off the system.

He makes his way to the bed, turning off the lights on his way there.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The child wakes up and hurriedly gets dressed. He grabs some change from his jar, including the penny and leaves the room.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

The child is looking at all the different candy bars, he looks for about 20 seconds before making his selection.

He drops the chocolate bar onto the counter where the clerk scans it.

CLERK

1.59 please.

The child reaches into his pocket and pulls out a handful of change to pay for the candy.

The penny falls on the floor.

CHAPTER FIVE: PENNY SLOTS

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

A man in his 30's comes into the store, he buys a pack of smokes. As he is leaving the counter he notices a penny on the floor, he reaches down and pockets it.

TITLE CARD - CHAPTER FIVE - PENNY SERENADE

INT. CHEAP CASINO - NIGHT

This part of the casino is not too full at this time of night, it is the penny slots section of the casino.

For the most part the only people that end of playing here are the octogenarians and the poor souls who lost everything else playing the more expensive games of chance.

LUCY THOMPSON, a uniformed drink maiden in her 20's with a weathered face, blonde hair tied up in a bun and a fairly good body under her too tight uniform approaches a machine where the man from the convenience store is seated. Beside him is a very attractive woman in a gorgeous outfit.

Lucy notes they are definitely out of place.

LUCY You folks sure you need to play here, may I suggest you might be better off in another part of the casino?

The man gets angry.

MAN What makes you think we don't want to play here? Just because we like to play the pennies, doesn't mean I lost all my other money you know.

Why don't you just do your job and take our drink order?

The woman across the table blushes in embarrassment.

WOMAN Frank can we just get out of here please, I'm sure you're embarrassing the young lady.. I KNOW you're embarrassing me. MAN So now you're on her side, I should have known. All you bitches stick up for each other.

LUCY

I'm so sorry sir, I didn't mean anything, I was just trying to break the ice. Now would you like to order something from the bar, it's on me.

MAN So now I need your fucking charity, I don't god damn think so.

By now other patrons of the area have started to notice the commotion.

The attractive woman again tries to intervene. She reaches over to touch the man's arm.

WOMAN Please, you're causing a scene.

MAN Get off me bitch, Jeff said you were awesome in bed but I don't give a damn. Just shut your mouth and stay out of this.

The young woman gets up and runs out.

LUCY I'm so sorry sir.

The veins in the man's head are popping.

MAN

Now look what you did skank.

He stands up and dumps out the remaining pennies from his bucket of coins as he starts to leave. After a few feet he stops and turns around, realizing there is still one penny in the cup.

He heads straight for Lucy.

She braces for the assault.

The man gets to within a foot of her and reaches into the container. He produces the penny and shoves it into Lucy's bra.

MAN That's what you deserve for your service bitch.

The man storms out and Lucy extracts the coin from her chest, puts it in her change pouch and starts to cry.

INT. CASINO - NIGHT

A half hour later. Lucy is returning to normal. She's carrying drinks on a tray when an extremely handsome man crosses her path, probably taking a shortcut to the high rollers tables.

He gives her a long smile, she blushes inadvertently.

Lucy delivers her drinks and goes back to the employees area. As she's taking a load off her feet another waitress comes running into the kitchen.

VIOLET JONES is an older woman with a large belly pushing out of her dress. It is extremely obvious she has lived hard.

> VIOLET Holy shit Luce, you're never gonna' believe this.

LUCY What are you talking about girl?

Violet shoves an envelope into Lucy's hands, it contains some money.

VIOLET

Holy shit, there's 200 bucks in there.

LUCY Where'd you get this Vi, did you find it on the floor? You've got to give this to a pit boss before you're in big trouble, some customer probably dropped it.

VIOLET Just calm down there Miss Paranoid, it's for you. LUCY For me.. From who? What do you mean?

Violet takes Lucy by the shoulders and leads her into a corner.

VIOLET If you'll just shut up and listen I'll be happy to tell you what happened.

Now, just take a couple of breaths to collect yourself.

Lucy does as instructed.

VIOLET

There that's better, now did you happen to see that gorgeous creature that walked out a couple of minutes ago?

Lucy takes no time to respond.

VIOLET 6FT 2, Dark hair, gorgeous eyes, a smile you'd kill for..

Violet chuckles.

VIOLET OK you noticed.

LUCY Why, what's the difference?

VIOLET That guy left this envelope for you.

Lucy is amazed.

LUCY For me, how do you know?

VIOLET

Oh let's see.. let me think for a little bit.. Oh hey I've got it. It's because he asked me to make sure I give this envelope to the pretty blonde girl. (MORE)

VIOLET(cont'd)

It seems he noticed some guy giving you a hard time and thought you could use something to pick you up.

Lucy looks at the money.

LUCY That's some pick me up.

VIOLET He said you could call it danger pay.

INT. LUCY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lucy's apartment is along the boardwalk, it is more than she could possibly afford on a waitress' salary but her grandparents had left her some money a couple of years ago when they passed away, telling her to make sure she lived in a good part of town.

Lucy sits down on her sofa and takes the envelope out of her uniform. Counting the money she notices a note under the bills.

CU: NOTE: IT READS -- No one deserves to be treated like that, particularly a pretty girl like yourself. If you would like to be treated the way you should, give me a call

TOM: 555-1246

LUCY I don't think so, not with the kind of guys I attract.

Lucy turns on the television to glance at the late night news before going to bed. She empties the contents of her tip pouch onto the coffee table in front of her. Assorted bills and coins fall over the table.

Noticeably different from the other money is the single penny that the asshole shoved at her. Lucy picks it up.

LUCY A penny that turned into a couple hundred bucks, now that's a good deal. Truly.. a lucky penny.

Lucy notices out of the corner of her eye a handsome man on the television, she looks closer.

It is the man from the restaurant and he is doing the weather report on the late night news.

LUCY Well I'll be.

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY BOARDWALK- DAY

Lucy is whistling while she walks along the boardwalk. It's a beautiful day, the sun is shining and nothing could possibly make it any better.

Lucy notices a homeless man at his regular perch on the boardwalk and smiles as she approaches him.

HOMELESS MAN Oh hi Juicy Lucy

LUCY Hi Homeless John

HOMELESS MAN

I told you my name's not John. But how are you today Juicy Lucy, can you spare some change?

The homeless man let's out a cackle, it turns into an embarrassing coughing attack.

Lucy simply smiles.

LUCY

I tell you what, I'm in such a good mood today I believe I can spare a little more than usual.

Lucy opens her purse and gets out her change purse. She empties the contents into his empty cup and turns to leave.

After a few feet a worried look comes over her face.

LUCY

OH SHIT!

She hurriedly runs back to the homeless man and grabs his cup.

HOMELESS MAN Hey give that back, that's not fair.

LUCY Sorry homeless John, you can have everything except... Jubilantly displaying the penny to the homeless man, she finishes her sentence.

LUCY Except for THIS.

The homeless man grabs the cup back from her with a growl. He starts counting the coins in the cup and mumbling.

HOMELESS MAN Indian giver.

INT. CASINO - NIGHT

Lucy is working 40 machines, very busy.

Violet comes over to her.

VIOLET

Hey hon, can you take 1 more bank?

LUCY Geez Vi, you've only got 2 rows and I'm busting my hump with 4. Can't you deal with it?

Violet chuckles as she swivels Lucy's head to the machines in question.

VIOLET OK, but you were specifically requested.

Seated at a penny slot, pouring coins by the handful, is the man from the other night. He is in his 30's, dressed in an expensive suit and not even looking at the display as he cranks the arm of the machine.

LUCY Oh man, do you know he's on T.V?

Violet shakes her head.

VIOLET No wonder he could afford the 2 bills.

LUCY Thanks for the heads up Vi, I will definitely make the time for this one. Lucy makes her way over to the handsome man. She's a little flustered as she speaks. LUCY Hello Sir, may I take your order, what can I get you to drink? TOM TRESWALD, weatherman for T.V Station WIPZ, looks up from his menu to answer Lucy's query. He has the bluest eyes Lucy has ever seen. TOM Ah, so you summoned up the courage to come over and meet me, mademoiselle. LUCY Excuse me. TOM I see that the other maiden has informed you that I requested you, ves? Or did I just get lucky and get the chance to gaze at your loveliness through happenstance? Lucy blushes a crimson red. LUCY No, no she told me. But why would you want me to wait on you? And why would YOU be hitting on ME, when you could probably have any woman you wanted. Don't you think

Now Tom blushes.

TOM Are you a loser to be stuck working in this area milady?

you're kinda' overqualified to be

stuck here with the losers?

LUCY Well, duhhh! The two of them share a laugh.

TOM

How clumsy of me, allow me to introduce myself to you. My name is Tom Treswald, I do the weather over at WIPZ.

LUCY

I know who you are, I mean I ran across one of your broadcasts the other night. Matter of fact it was the same night you left me that big tip. I'm glad you made the time to come in so I could thank you in person.

TOM

It was no trouble at all milady, I had seen how that ignorant oaf treated you, or rather I should say, MIStreated you.

LUCY

Well again that was very nice of you, and much too big of a tip to give for something like that, those kinds of things happen all the time in this line of work.

One section of Lucy's hair has come loose and fallen partially out of it's bun while they have been talking.

Tom notices.

TOM

Allow me.

He gently reaches up towards Lucy's face and takes the hair gingerly in his hands as he tucks it back into place.

TOM

There, that's better.

Lucy get's weak in the knees, she almost faints.

LUCY Thank you.

TOM Not a problem my dear. Tom feigns thought for a second.

TOM And what would you recommend?

LUCY

Oh everything's pretty good around here, but I'd stay away from anything they can water down pretty good.

Tom lets out a laugh.

TOM Well that's definitely stricken from the choices. Listen .. Uh,

Lucy points to her name badge.

LUCY

Lucy.

TOM

Ah yes Lucy, well listen Lucy, as good as the drinks most certainly are here I really only came by this evening for one reason. You see I have a large dinner party coming up in 2 weeks and I wondered if you would be willing to be my escort.

Lucy turns red with anger.

LUCY

ESCORT!! Listen Mister I don't know what kind of place you think this is but I am just a hostess, that's all. I don't do those kinds of things. You should go over to Dancing Diva's across the road if you're looking for something like that.

She turns to walk away in a huff.

Tom gently grabs her arm.

Oh I am so sorry, I didn't mean an ESCORT, I meant a companion.. No wait.. A date.. No wait I meant ..

Lucy now starts to laugh, realizing the miscommunication. Tom soon joins in.

LUCY I'm so sorry I jumped to conclusions, I should have known you didn't mean a hooker.

TOM I assure you Lucy my intentions are much more honorable than that.

By now Violet has come over to the two of them. She is out of breath.

VIOLET Hey hon, are you gonna' get back to your other machines, they'rs 2 that are paying out and 2 grannies have a huge drink order, I'm afraid the natives are getting restless.

Lucy nods.

LUCY I'll be there in a second.

VIOLET Well hurry up, will ya'?

Lucy turns her attention back to Tom.

LUCY I do have to get back to my other patrons, have you decided yet?

TOM The only thing I have decided upon is you my dear.

LUCY Well I think I know what most of that means, geez you T.V guys really do talk better than the rest of us don't you? TOM Tribulations of the trade, my dear. Now your answer?

Lucy thinks for a second.

LUCY You said a couple of weeks from now?

TOM Yes my dear, it is for special invited guests only.

LUCY And you're picking me? Are you sure there's no hidden camera in your suit or anything?

TOM

I assure you again that my intentions are honorable my dear. Now again may I beg you for your decision as I too need to get off to my work.

Lucy fumbles for a second.

LUCY

Listen, why don't we just go out for a coffee after work some night, you know, for a test drive to see if we even like each other.

TOM So not exactly a yes then?

Lucy smiles.

LUCY It's just I've been burned too many other times. I just want to play it cautiously.

TOM

Then it's a not quite date. When do you get off on Tuesday?

Lucy thinks for just a second.

LUCY I'm pulling a double that night, I'll be done at 2. TOM

I'll be here.

Montage of Tom picking up Lucy on the prescribed night. He is overdressed but takes her to her favorite coffee shop on the boardwalk anyhow. They walk out on the beach in their bare feet for hours. It is obvious they are getting along.

They end up at Lucy's apartment in a passionate embrace.

INT. LUCY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Lucy wakes up and realizes Tom has gone. She notices an envelope on the night stand, she reaches over and opens it.

There are 5 One Hundred dollar bills and a note.

CU: NOTE READING:

BUY YOURSELF A NICE FROCK FOR THE OCCASION IF YOU DO NOT ALREADY HAVE ONE IN YOUR CLOSET. I'LL PICK YOU UP NEXT SATURDAY AT 7 SHARP

INT. CASINO - NIGHT

With their shift ending Lucy and Violet are propped up on chairs facing each other and rubbing each other's sore feet.

VIOLET

So he gave you more money again?

Lucy produces the envelope and fans the bills in front of Violet.

VIOLET Whoo hee, does he have any friends that need a date as well.

The two girls giggle.

INT. DRESS SHOP - DAY

Two snooty shop girls are dressing a mannequin when Lucy walks in. She is dressed in tight ripped jeans and an old BEATLES t-shirt.

Neither shop girl pays any attention to Lucy as she looks around the store.

LUCY Is there anything in this store that will fit me?

Shop girl 1 pushes the other shop girl away.

SHOP GIRL 1 I'm so sorry miss, I must not have seen you come in.

Lucy buys a beautiful dress and accessorizes it with a matching shawl, bag and shoes.

SHOP GIRL 1 You're stunning.

Lucy blushes as she looks at herself in the mirror.

She feels like Cinderella.

INT. LUCY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lucy is waiting at the front, her makeup is a little heavy for the nice new dress she bought. She is just putting together her final touches, she places her matching shawl over her dress, grabs her handbag and checks for her coin purse.

Retrieving the coin purse she checks inside it, pulls out a coin. It is her lucky penny.

LUCY You've got me this far, don't fail me now.

There's a knock at the door.

Lucy, hopping on one heel while trying to get the other shoe on, opens up the door while off balance.

Tom enters, dressed in a tuxedo. Lucy cannot believe how astonishingly good looking he really is.

TOM Apologies for my tardiness milady.

Lucy giggles.

Violet comes out of nowhere, dressed in baby doll pyjamas 2 sizes too small, her face covered with a cucumber mask, camera in hand.

VIOLET Hey kids, let me snap a picture of you two before your first big date.

LUCY

Oh Vi.

TOM It's fine with me.

He moves in close and puts his arm around Lucy.

VIOLET Might be a picture you want to show your kids one day.

Lucy blushes, Tom squeezes her with a smile.

EXT. EXPANSIVE BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT

A limo pulls up and Tom exits one side, quickly making his way around to open Lucy's door. She steps out daintily, but lets out a loud whistle when she sees the house.

> LUCY Well I'll be damned, are you sure this is real.

Tom chuckles gently.

TOM I assure you this will be a night you will never forget.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT

The interior of the house pales the exterior. Lucy and Tom are escorted to a large dining area, where there are several large tables all set for a beautiful dinner party.

Quick montage of mainly beautiful people drinking, mingling shaking hands. Lucy recognizes many of them from local news stations.

She again lets out a low whistle.

TOM Now don't let this bother you my dear, they put their pants on one leg at a time as well.

Tom escorts Lucy to their table. 6 other people are seated and he makes the introductions.

As they sit Lucy notices the couple that she had the encounter with at the restaurant. They are 2 tables over.

LUCY Oh my god!!

Tom looks around the room.

TOM What is it my dear, notice someone from New York, sometimes network people do attend these events as well.

LUCY No you won't believe it, remember that jerk from the casino, the night we met, the one who embarrassed me.

Tom surveys the room again, trying to remember what he looked like.

TOM Are you sure, I mean I don't think I'd ever seen him before. I'm sure we don't run in the same circles...

Lucy puts Tom's head in her hands and directs his gaze to the bastard.

TOM Why yes, I guess that could be him, but remember without him we would have never met. Maybe I should go over and thank him. LUCY

No, no, don't do that. But I'm sure he's with the woman who was there that night as well.

Tom starts to stand up.

TOM I don't care what you say, I should go right over there and give them a piece of my mind.

Lucy pushes him back down.

LUCY No I don't want to be embarrassed again.

TOM I promise you I would never do anything to embarrass you milady.

A multi course dinner is served and a good time appears to be being had by all. After dessert a podium is brought to the middle of the head table and an older gentleman in a tuxedo stands to address the assembly.

The audience all comes to attention as he starts his speech.

OLDER GENTLEMAN Dear friends and assembled guests, let me start by thanking each of you for attending this evenings festivities.

A small round of applause is started.

OLDER GENTLEMAN I know it is getting harder and harder to assemble a crowd for these events in today's politically correct times but tonight we have a banner crop of first time entries.

A small murmur goes through the crowd. Many of the beautiful people all start to pat each other on the backs and shake hands or high five.

The gentleman at the podium is handed an envelope by a tuxedoed waiter. He opens it slowly and produces a card.

OLDER GENTLEMAN Now if I could please have the following 3 people approach the front of the room, accompanied by their escorts.. Francis Jones, Jackson Towns and Lucy Thompson.

Lucy looks at Tom with surprise and he smiles at her as he lifts her from her chair.

TOM C'mon Lucy this'll be fun.

As she's being led to the front Lucy notices the other 2 people going to the front with her. One is a man in an ill fitting suit with slicked back hair who she slightly recognizes but cannot place where from. He is being led to the stage by a beautiful woman and the other is a black man in a truly garish light blue tuxedo who she once again somewhat remembers seeing before. He is being escorted by the anchor from channel 5 action news.

She is getting an uneasy feeling but looking at Tom as he escorts her to the front eases her mind.

Once at the front the gentleman at the podium once again addresses the crowd.

OLDER GENTLEMAN (reading from the card) And in third place, accompanied by Jack Grayson, channel 5 action news is Jackson Towns.

JACK GRAYSON, the perma tanned phony from channel 5 brings JACKSON to the podium and takes the microphone from the older gentleman.

JACK

I'd like to thank you all for this honor, I found Jackson here working at the car wash on 3rd and Maple and it was obvious to me right away that he would be a great fit for this evening and I just knew he would bring me a seat at the head table for next month's event.

The crowd erupts in laughter.

Jack takes Jackson's hand and brings him to the podium.

JACK

C'mon Jackson, a couple words to your assembled admirers.

Jackson is so stoned he doesn't even have a clue what is happening. He stands up at the podium and gives a huge peace sign with both hands.

The audience is now rolling with laughter.

OLDER GENTLEMAN (pushing Jackson aside and taking the mic from Jack) Thank you for that Mr. Towns and that brings us to our final 2 contestants...who will win this month's grand prize?

Lucy has a horrified look as she realizes what is TRULY happening. She takes a closer look at the other man beside her and there is just something so familiar.

The drunk standing beside her comes out of his alcohol induced daze.

FRANCIS Hey there Juicy Lucy, can you spare some change.

LUCY Homeless John!!

FRANCIS I told you my name's not John, it's Francis.

Lucy is mortified. Her head starts spinning. She looks around the room at all the beautiful people, dressed to the nines.

They are all laughing and pointing at her.

She looks over to Tom, surely this cannot be happening, as she sees his face in contorted hysteria she starts to cry loudly.

> LUCY Tom, how could YOU!!

She slaps his face hard, he reacts for a second, but then starts laughing harder.

TOM

You should see your face... Oh man we really got you. I didn't think we could get away with it but Bill and Veronica said it would be easy.. Well, once again, they were right.

Lucy's mascara, heavy as it already was, is now running profusely, mixed with her tears. It makes her look like a clown.

She cannot stand it anymore and breaks free of Tom's grip, running as fast as she can towards the back of the room.

From nowhere a foot stretches out and trips her hard, breaking a heel on one of her shoes and causing her to do a face plant.

As she gets up Lucy sees the man and woman from the casino, they are laughing so hard tears are streaming down their faces.

> MAN Hi, I'm Bill, do you remember me Skank?

> WOMAN And I'm Veronica, pleased to see you again.

Lucy feels all eyes in the crowd on her again, searing her soul with their laughter.

Lucy gets up, this time slowly. The pain cannot possibly get any worse. She straightens up, puts her weight on her foot with the one good shoe and slowly walks to the back of the room and out of the house.

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY BOARDWALK - NIGHT

It is raining as Lucy walks along the boardwalk slowly, still drying her tears and wiping at her face with a cloth from her handbag.

She passes a derelict, probably passed out from booze, she notices he has no coat and looks to be shivering as he sleeps.

Lucy stops, walks back to the bum, places her shawl over him and he involuntarily curls the fabric over his shoulders to cover up. Lucy notices the cloth in her hand is covered with make up stains and reaches into her handbag for another. She also grabs her coin purse from her bag.

Reaching into the coin purse she extracts the penny and places it face up in front of the poor sleeping soul.

LUCY Maybe this penny wasn't meant to be lucky for me after all... Maybe it will be for you.

Lucy walks away and the tears begin to flow again but a gentle hopeful smile also starts to cross her face.

TITLE CARD - CHAPTER ONE: PENNY ANTE

INT. - LAS VEGAS CASINO - DAY

The final table is down to 2 players, Peter and JOHN WISNET, a skinny twenty something who is easily the most recognizable player in professional poker and by far and away the crowd favourite.

The players are each dealt their 2 cards and place them over the camera in the table. We see Peter has 9H and QH and we see John has AH and 3H.

Peter places a bet of 200k and John calls the bet.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) And with this we may be down to the final hand, with both players feeling they have potentially a knockout hand.

The dealer places out the 3 flop cards. They show as 9S, KH and 10H.

PETER Raise 500 thousand.

John takes his sunglasses from his hair and places them over his eyes. He seems to take an eternity to decide what to do.

> ANNOUNCER (V.O.) Wisnet is taking his time trying to decide how to play this out. (MORE)

ANNOUNCER(cont'd)

He knows he has a strong hand but with little to no knowledge of the rookie sitting at the table with him, it is hard for him to get a read for what his opponent's cards may be.

ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) But remember Tim that Wisnet has an almost uncanny knack for knowing what CARDS seem to be in play, no matter who's holding them.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) Let's see how he plays this.

John plays with his chips and then announces his intention.

JOHN Re raise to a million.

The crowd gasps.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) He's put the pressure on the newcomer now.

Peter picks up the corner of his cards to glance at them ever so slightly. The camera shows a glint of sweat coming down over his brow.

PETER

Call.

Peter pushes another half million dollars of chips into the centre of the table.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) And this most certainly will be it for this tournament.

ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) It's all going to depend on the next 2 cards.

The dealer plays the turn card, it is the 5H

ANNOUNCER And that gives John Wisnet an Ace high flush and an almost certain stranglehold on this tournament. It will be his 2nd win in the past five years if he plays this right. The television camera closes in on John's face and he surveys his chips. He takes a second before pushing the whole stack into the centre of the table.

JOHN

All in.

The crowd draws in it's collective breath.

Peter surveys the table and takes a deep look into his opponent's face. He notices a small, subtle smirk.

PETER

Call.

ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) The newcomer has one and only one out in the deck.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) This next card may end the tournament for this year, or will certainly give Wisnet an all but insurmountable lead over his neophyte opponent.

ANNOUNCER 2 (V.O.) Let's let the crowd tell the story.

The T.V camera focuses on the crowd, there is tension on all the faces.

The camera then gives a wide shot of the 2 players and the dealer as the dealer burns a card and turns over the River card.

The T.V camera shows a split screen of the two players faces as the card is revealed. Both of them show shock on their visages just before the card is revealed to the home audience.

It is the JH.

ANNOUNCER

And that's it, this tournament is over in the most stunning of fashions. Peter Joff, the unknown entity has done it. He has come from nowhere to win 10 million dollars!!

ANNOUNCER 2 What a finish!! Peter is staring at the penny. He kisses it one more time before opening the safety deposit box.

> ANONYMOUS (O.S.) Aw I guess that's it for this penny. I don't think it's gonna' be seeing the light of day for a long time.

As Peter closes the box and pockets the key we see two angels in the top corner of the room, floating.

> ANGEL 2 I don't think he's ever going to let it out of it's container again.

Peter smiles as he exits the room, leaving just the 2 angels.

ANGEL 1 So I guess that's it then, these humans can be so much fun though. All their faith in free will and fate. Believing in such things as a lucky penny.

ANGEL 2

I think that's really only the North Americans. I believe every culture has it's own superstitions..what if we tried something else on for size.

ANGEL 1 What'd you have in mind?

ANGEL 2 I thought maybe a little trip to Southern Asia.

ANGEL 1 Asia, what for?

ANGEL 2 C'mon I remember reading a story once about a monkey's paw.

The angels fade out of view

FADE OUT.

115.

116.