The Dancer Upstairs

Dwhyte Star

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Registered, WGAe

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

A fourteen year old boy sits on the floor of his living room, blood runs down his head.

The door to his apartment opens and an elderly woman runs in.

She turns to the boy and kneels down; he stares off to the side.

She follows his eyes and covers her mouth in fright.

The elderly woman runs over to the boy and wraps her arms around him, trying to turn his face away from what he is looking at.

The police run into the apartment.

The boy stares ahead, his eyes water.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - ESTABLISHING

Soft music plays, it can barely be heard.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The music grows louder.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A bowl of ravioli spins in a cheap microwave, the soft music resonates from another apartment upstairs.

The seconds on the microwave count down; 4, 3, 2...

The microwave dings and goes black.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A projector sits on a table.

A taped up box sits on the ground.

The living room has been decorated by a man; no pictures hang anywhere, no unnecessary furniture to add to the décor. Just a television on a small table, a couch and...

FRANKLIN MELBOURNE, lanky but handsome - 27, he sits in his recliner watching Jeopardy on television. The projector next to him.

FRANK

Kennedy.

The contestant on the television smiles.

CONTESTANT Who is Jimmy Carter?

Alex Trebek nods and smiles back.

Frank gets up from his chair and walks into his kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Frank walks into the kitchen and opens the microwave door, he attempts to take the bowl out but it burns his fingers.

FRANK

Ow!

Frank looks around the room. His dish rack holds only one of everything; one large plate, one small saucer, one tea cup, one long glass, one spoon, a knife and a fork.

He looks up towards his ceiling where the soft music resonates from.

Frank places his hand underneath his shirt and uses this like an oven mitten, pulling the bowl of ravioli out of his microwave and placing it on the counter.

He takes his fork and places it in the bowl.

He walks over to his refrigerator and opens it.

The fridge is bare save for half a loaf of bread, a stick of butter, milk and a six pack of soda.

Frank pulls one of the sodas loose.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frank exits the kitchen with his bowl of ravioli on his saucer and a can of soda.

He sits down on his recliner and sets his food on the floor.

Frank stares up at his ceiling again; the music is low but can still be heard.

Frank reaches for his remote and clicks his television off.

Frank stares up at the ceiling, the soft music; some creaking caused by someone's steps is heard.

He smiles to himself, picks up his food and eats.

SCREEN BLACK

MARY (O.S.) Thank you Frank.

FADE IN:

Frank, in a short sleeve shirt and tie - wheels the mail cart down the hallway. He looks back and MARY, 31 - pretty.

She smiles at him and waves her mail; Franklin nods and quickly turns away.

When Frank turns around he nearly runs into LENNY, handsome - 30. Lenny catches the cart before it hits him.

LENNY Whoa there Franky.

FRANK I'm sorry. I'm sorry Lenny.

Lenny smiles at him and places a hand on the cart.

LENNY Day dreaming again?

Frank nods and offers a weak smile.

FRANK No. No I was just talking to Mary.

Lenny looks past Frank and stares at Mary. She smiles. Lenny winks at her then returns his attention to Frank. LENNY You dog. She has a little junk in her trunk but after watching some of these rap videos, it's growing on me. Frank nods. LENNY You like rap Frank? FRANK Um... Eminem is good. I like Nas ... LENNY Enimen's good. Never heard of Nas, 50 cent is the man. Frank stares at Lenny's lips as he licks them. LENNY I'm going to catch you later Franklin buddy. I got work to do. Frank offers a weak smile and allows Lenny to pass. LENNY Hey Mary, whatcha working on girl? Frank continues on his mail route.

INT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Frank sits down at a bench with a hotdog and a Snapple. He sits them down next to him and reaches into his pocket for a napkin.

He picks up his hotdog and takes a bite.

Some teenagers on roller-skates do tricks to impress each other and laugh.

Frank takes another bite of his hotdog and watches them. An OLD MAN walks around the bench and sits next to him.

> OLD MAN These kids are going to break their necks.

Frank nods and sips his Snapple.

FRANK

Yeah.

Frank watches the old man take out a paper bag and unravel the top.

The old man digs in and throws down a handful of seeds.

OLD MAN They think risking their necks is cool. It's cool to do whatever you shouldn't be doing...

The old man smiles a toothless smile at Frank.

OLD MAN It's like that for every generation though isn't it?

Pigeons and sparrows fly down and peck at the seeds.

Frank takes a bite of his hotdog and some mustard falls onto his shirt.

The old man begins to laugh.

Frank turns to the old man and smiles.

OLD MAN

When you get to be my age you realize what a waste of time it was... trying to be cool.

Frank looks at the old mans hands, they are covered in liver spots and he trembles a little with every movement.

He looks back up at the old mans face.

OLD MAN

You... have your fun and then the guys who didn't worry about cool... they create light bulbs.

The old man throws some more seeds down for the birds.

OLD MAN

And go into space... and us cool guys?

He shakes his head and stares at the pigeons, Frank smiles at him.

OLD MAN We end up close to death, with nothing to be remembered by.

Some girls run through the park being chased by boys.

A man jogs past being led by his dog.

Frank takes a drink from his Snapple and smiles.

FRANK

I'm Frank.

The old man does not look at him.

FRANK

My names Frank.

The old man shakes his head and stares at the pigeons.

OLD MAN

We fought and lost so many men and what did we do? We let the Russians have him.

He throws down some more seeds.

OLD MAN Those sneaky bastards probably let him go free.

The old man locks eyes with Frank.

OLD MAN

Fucking government.

Frank stands up, pocketing his Snapple.

He walks away as the old man continues to mumble to himself.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Frank walks down the sidewalk late at night; he carries a small grocery bag in his hand.

People on the street corners curse and laugh loudly.

Frank passes by an alley where a MAN is receiving oral sex from a prostitute.

Frank slows down when he notices.

The man lays his head back as he enjoys the woman's mouth.

The woman's head moves back and forth, the man places a hand on the back of her head and aids her movements.

Frank stares.

The man opens his eyes and looks at Frank.

MAN

Get the fuck out of here!

Frank quickens his steps and walks down the sidewalk staring at his own shoes.

EXT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Frank reaches the corner across the street from his building; simultaneously the bus pulls into its stop.

Frank pauses and watches.

The bus pulls away from a pretty young brunette - the DANCER. She is in a leotard and a leather jacket, she walks up to the building entrance.

Frank watches her pull out her keys and open the door, some guys standing on the stoop mouth something but she ignores them. She enters the building and doesn't look back.

Frank stares at the men on the stoop as they laugh.

One of the men gestures sex and his buddies bust out in obnoxious laughter.

Frank looks up at the fourth floor; the light in the apartment above his comes on.

The silhouette of the dancer as she moves past the shade.

Low music begins to play.

She moves around gracefully to the tune.

Frank smiles to himself and walks up to the building entrance.

The man who made the sexual gesture - ARTHUR, 39; he takes a drink from whatever is in his brown paper bag and smiles at Frank.

ARTHUR

Hey man, every night I see you walk in here with a grocery bag. All by yourself... you don't like pussy?

Arthur's friends bust out in laughter again and Frank walks past him, never making eye contact.

ARTHUR

I'm just playing with you man. Whenever you want to have a drink just come downstairs.

Arthur turns to his friends as Frank enters the building.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) He's a cool guy. Seriously; he just needs to have some fun...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A bowl of ravioli spins in the microwave.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The living room is empty. The television shows the Honeymooners but it is on mute.

The projector spins but it is empty.

The reel sits on top of the box.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

An open can of cat food sits on the fire escape. The soft music plays.

Frank stands by the rail of the fire escape looking out on the neighborhood.

A cat climbs up the stairs and digs into the food.

Frank turns around and smiles.

FRANK Hello friend.

The cat eats.

Frank sits down on the steps.

FRANK (CONT'D) I almost thought you weren't coming tonight.

Frank watches the cat enjoy its food.

FRANK (CONT'D) That's your favorite right?

The cat continues to eat, Frank smiles at it.

He looks up and closes his eyes. The music plays.

FRANK (CONT'D) One of these days I'm going to work up the nerve to talk to her.

The cat looks up and meows.

It moves over to Frank and he gently rubs its head. The cat's eyes close and he hops onto Franks lap. Frank pets the cat and closes his eyes to the sounds of the purring and the music mingling together.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A stack of envelopes.

Frank lifts the stack and places it on his cart.

INT. BREAK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Coffee drips from the nozzle of the coffee maker.

Lenny pours himself a cup of coffee.

Lenny turns around to his co-workers and smiles.

LENNY

So I heard the fat guy on The Island is going to get killed.

Mary and some other workers sit at a round table enjoying their McDonalds meals.

MARY That's the rumor.

CO-WORKER

I don't understand why you guys watch that show. Isn't the monster thing getting tired?

Lenny approaches the table.

MARY It's about more than the monster. It's a whole bunch of stories.

Frank passes by the doorway of the break room with his cart.

Lenny puts his cup down.

LENNY There's my guy.

MARY Leave him alone. Lenny turns back to her and smiles.

LENNY Hey, I'm trying to do a civic duty.

Mary turns to her co-worker and smiles, shaking her head.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lenny pokes his head out into the hallway.

LENNY

Frank!

Frank continues to walk but he turns around.

LENNY Frank. What are you doing man?

Frank looks around.

FRANK I'm doing the mail.

LENNY It's lunch time Frank, don't you eat food?

Frank smiles and nods.

Lenny gestures for him to come over.

LENNY (CONT'D) Come on over here man.

Frank looks at the cart.

LENNY (CONT'D) Leave it. Park it.

Lenny enters the hallway and places an arm around Frank's shoulder, turning him around and leading him into the break room.

INT. BREAK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lenny enters with Frank.

This guy. This guy here doesn't know the meaning of relax.

Mary smiles.

MARY

Hey Frank.

LENNY

Frank man, what are you doing still working? You don't pay to work during lunch.

FRANK

I got a little behind on some of the stuff from upstairs.

Lenny returns to the table and picks up his coffee.

LENNY

No. The pricks upstairs go a little behind, if they can't give you shit on time man then let them get off their fat asses and bring it down themselves.

Frank smiles. Mary and the co-worker both laugh.

Lenny looks around the room.

LENNY (CONT'D) Those guys tell you that you have to work during lunch for their mistakes...

Lenny looks at Frank.

LENNY (CONT'D) Right? They tell you that next time, tell them to suck your...

Lenny looks at Mary.

LENNY (CONT'D) Well. You know what I mean. We don't say things like that in the office Lenny. P.C.

Lenny nods and sips his coffee. Frank stands in the entrance of the room looking around.

LENNY

Yeah yeah. You know what I'm trying to say though.

MARY

All the same, don't tell him to say things like that. He's going to get fired listening to you.

LENNY

I'm sure he can make due. Frank is probably sitting on a gold mine - he doesn't spend his checks. Look at his clothes.

Mary covers her mouth and laughs. Lenny laughs and sips some coffee.

Frank stares into Lenny's eyes. He looks into the eyes of everyone in the room, one by one.

Lenny looks up at Frank and smiles.

LENNY I'm just messing with you Frank.

Frank smiles.

MARY

Did you see the email Jennifer is sending to all the receptionists?

LENNY Do I look like a receptionist?

CO-WORKER What did it say?

MARY Don't let this out of the room, it's a bit racial.

LENNY

Blacks?

MARY

Yeah.

Frank slowly turns and exits.

LENNY A joke is a joke. They make fun of our dancing skills!

MARY This has nothing to do with dancing!

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Frank walks back to his cart and starts to wheel it down the hallway as laughter breaks out in the break room.

Frank places a large envelope onto a desk and pauses to stare at his clothes.

Frank examines his tie.

He snaps back to attention when a man in an expensive suit passes by.

The man nods at Frank.

Frank nods and continues on his route.

EXT. THEATER - LATE AFTERNOON

A few kids stand outside of a theater sharing a cigarette.

Frank walks past them and enters the theater.

INT. THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Frank sits in the theater staring ahead, unblinking. Soft music plays.

There are not many people in the theater.

The light from the movie reflects on his face.

Frank smiles.

On the screen is a black and white movie, a woman moves gracefully across the ball room with a man.

He stares at the screen and does not move.

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Frank walks up the animal care aisle with a basket in his hand.

He stops in front of the cat food section and picks up a container, he throws it in.

The can food aisle.

Frank enters the can food aisle and picks up a can of ravioli; he tosses it into his basket.

The LADY at the register leans over her counter reading a magazine.

Frank walks up to the register and empties his baskets contents. A can of cat food, a can of Ravioli, a roll of toilet tissue and a six pack of cola.

The lady at the register flips the page.

Frank looks at her.

She turns another page.

Frank rearranges his items.

She looks up and stares at him and then places her magazine down.

She flips the switch and the items move down.

She stares at him as she scans the items, he does not make eye contact with her.

LADY

Eight ninety five.

Frank counts off eight dollar bills and places them on in her hand.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the exact change; she takes it and smiles at him.

LADY You know, I'm starting to think you like me.

Frank bags his own groceries.

LADY (CONT'D) You can save yourself some trips by buying seven cans of ravioli for the week, but you choose to come here every night.

Frank looks at her.

LADY (CONT'D) Are you ever going to talk to me?

FRANK

Hello.

Frank turns and leaves with his bag. The lady watches him leave and shakes her head.

EXT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The bus pulls off and the dancer runs up the steps to the building entrance, Arthur and the drunks make some remark to her but she pays no attention.

Frank stands on the corner and watches the fourth floor window.

The light eventually comes on.

Her silhouette moves past and then the music starts.

Frank watches her move across the floor gracefully.

He crosses the street and enters his building.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The box sits on the floor; it looks like someone messed with the tape.

Jeopardy plays on the television.

The contestant smiles and nods at Alex Trebek. He has apparently won twenty three thousand dollars for the night.

Frank finishes his bowl of ravioli and gets up from his chair.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The grocery bag sits on the counter.

Frank washes out his bowl and places it in the rack.

He reaches into the grocery bag and pulls out the cat food.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

Frank opens his window and steps out onto the fire escape, he lays the cat food down and walks up to the railing.

Frank looks out at the city. The soft music plays.

The cat comes up the steps and digs in.

Frank turns around and smiles.

FRANK I tested you. I wanted to see if you would wait...

Frank sits down on the steps.

FRANK (CONT'D) That's why I'm late.

The cat eats. The music stops.

FRANK (CONT'D) You're not mad at me are you?

DANCER (O.S.) So you're the one!

Frank jumps up and turns around.

The dancer stands at the top of the stairs.

DANCER (CONT'D) I don't believe this.

Frank steps out of her way and she comes down the steps.

DANCER (CONT'D) He disappears every night and when he finally comes home he won't eat the food I buy.

She turns to Frank.

DANCER (CONT'D) Honestly.

Frank looks around nervously.

FRANK

I'm sorry.

She stares at him.

DANCER

Really?

Frank nods.

FRANK I didn't know he was your cat. I'm sorry.

She stares at him and then looks at her cat.

DANCER Don't be, I don't blame you. she's the charmer... Ms. Manipulator.

She kneels down and picks up her cat.

DANCER (CONT'D) Did you use the old hop on your lap trick?

Frank rubs his arm and looks away.

She whispers something in her cats' ear and then she turns to Frank.

Frank looks at her and then quickly looks away.

She smiles.

DANCER (CONT'D) Did she use the jump on the lap trick on you? Frank nods. DANCER (CONT'D) I'm not mad at you. Honestly, you look like I was going to kill you. She stands up with her cat in arm. DANCER (CONT'D) I was just worried about her not eating the food I bought. I thought she wasn't eating. Frank looks out at the city. She watches him. She shivers. DANCER (CONT'D) It's cold. I think I'm going to go up. Frank looks at her briefly. FRANK Okay. Sorry. She nods and walks up the stairs. DANCER Don't be. It's perfectly alright. Frank turns and looks up at her as she climbs into her window and shuts it. After a few seconds the music comes on again. Frank climbs into his apartment. INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He runs a hand through his hair.

He paces up and down cracking his knuckles. He looks up at the ceiling, the music stops. He stares at the ceiling for a few moments. Someone knocks on his door. Frank stops and stares at the door. Someone knocks again. Frank looks at his box. They knock again.

Frank slowly walks over to the door and looks out the peep hole.

Darkness.

Frank opens his lock and opens the door slowly.

The dancer stands in the hallway with her hand over the peep hole. She smiles.

DANCER

I'm sorry. You kept apologizing and it made me realize that I probably sounded rude or something.

Frank swallows hard.

FRANK No. No you didn't.

DANCER Yes I did. I just wanted to apologize, for that and for being a bad neighbor.

Frank looks down the hall, avoiding eye contact.

She looks back to see what he is looking at.

An elderly man - MR. PARKER, 68. He peeks out of his apartment.

She waves at him.

He quickly closes the door.

She turns around and smiles at Frank.

DANCER

Can I come in?

Frank stares at her.

He looks back into his apartment.

He stares at the box.

He turns back to face her, she is still smiling.

DANCER I'm not going to rob you.

Frank opens the door wider and she gingerly walks in, surveying his living room.

He closes and locks his door.

Frank quickly walks past her and picks his box up, sticking it into a closet and closing the door.

She stands in the center of the living room and smiles at him.

DANCER

Ηi.

Frank stares at her.

FRANK

Hello.

DANCER I was saying that I've been a bad neighbor. I don't want you to think that I mean to be.

FRANK

I don't.

DANCER I see you all the time you know. Frank does not move.

DANCER (CONT'D) You watch me get off the bus every night.

Frank looks away quickly.

She steps closer.

DANCER (CONT'D) I noticed you watching me but I never said anything... you want to hear a riddle?

Frank looks at his television.

She looks at the television.

DANCER (CONT'D) Can I sit down?

Frank nods.

She walks over to the couch and he walks over to the center of the room and stands still.

She looks up at him and starts to giggle.

She pats the seat next to her.

DANCER (CONT'D) I'm not very big, I think there's room.

Frank sits down, making sure to leave space between them.

DANCER (CONT'D) You are so quiet.

FRANK

I talk.

She laughs.

DANCER

Well I know that, I'm just saying. You don't seem to do a lot of it. Frank smiles.

DANCER (CONT'D) You have a nice smile.

She stares at him, he watches the television.

DANCER (CONT'D) Oh! The riddle!

Frank turns around and faces her.

DANCER (CONT'D) You like riddles?

FRANK

Yes. I like them...

She repositions herself on the couch.

DANCER

Okay here it goes. One day a king sets out the word across the land that his daughter is ready to be married and is looking for a prince.

Frank stares into her eyes.

DANCER (CONT'D) So hundreds of them come and the king eventually whittles them down to four. He takes these four princes into a large room...

She notices his staring and smiles.

DANCER (CONT'D) ...in this room are five podiums. There is one podium in each corner of the room and one in the center. The princess stands on this podium. I'm thirsty.

Frank stares at her. She giggles.

DANCER (CONT'D) I'm sorry. I mean, do you have something for me to drink, if you don't mind.

Frank jumps up and runs into the kitchen, he comes back with a cola.

FRANK

I have some soda.

DANCER

I usually stick to water but that will do.

He hands her the drink and she opens it with a smile as he sits down.

DANCER

Thank you.

FRANK

You're welcome.

She places the can in between her legs, holding it with her knees and turns back to him.

DANCER

Okay so, she's in the center; the king's guards take each of the men to a podium. All of them are far away from the princess. The princes climb on their podiums.

Frank watches her intently.

DANCER (CONT'D) The king says; if you want to marry my daughter all you have to do is find a way to take her hand without leaving the podium.

She takes another sip of her soda and grimaces at the taste.

DANCER (CONT'D) So three days go by and the princes are dumbfounded. On the fourth day the Princess is married to one of them. How?

She turns to Frank, he stares at her.

DANCER (CONT'D)

How?

FRANK

I don't know.

She smiles.

DANCER

On the fourth day the princess stepped down from her podium and asked one of the princes to marry her.

Frank stares at her.

DANCER (CONT'D)

The point is. Every once in a while a woman needs to step down off her pedestal and make the first move. I said I saw you watching me get off the bus every night but I was always waiting for you to say something.

She takes her can and places it on the ground.

DANCER (CONT'D) I realized I was being a bad neighbor by waiting for you. I could have said hi a long time ago.

She smiles at him.

DANCER (CONT'D)

A man slams a stack of envelopes onto the cart.

Frank moves the hallways towards the elevators.

Frank stands in the elevator staring into space.

The elevator doors open and he pushes the cart out into the pathway between the cubicles.

Lenny stands in front of Mary's cubicle holding a cup of coffee, he smiles when he notices Frank.

LENNY Frank. What's up man?

FRANK Nothing much. Just working.

Lenny nods and smiles, Mary types at her computer.

LENNY That's cool, always gotta make them dollars right?

FRANK That's what it's about.

Frank smiles and hands Mary her mail, she looks at him and appears surprised.

FRANK

Here you are Mary.

Frank wheels his cart down the pathway and smiles.

Mary stands up next to Lenny and watches him turn the corner.

MARY Did he just make a mildly amusing comment?

Lenny turns to look at Mary.

LENNY Guess some of the old charm is rubbing off. INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

The lady at the register watches Frank empty the contents of his basket. A can of cat food, some paper towel, some water bottles and two cans of Ravioli.

She smiles at him.

LADY

Hot date?

Frank shakes his head and smiles at no one in particular. She rings up his items and watches him bag them up.

> LADY Have a nice night.

Frank nods and walks away.

FRANK

You too.

EXT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Frank stands in front of his building with his groceries.

Arthur and his drinking buddies sit on the stoop watching him.

ARTHUR

Waiting for someone?

Frank looks back at them and nods.

The bus pulls up and stops.

Frank stares at the BUS DRIVER and smiles.

The bus driver stares at Frank.

BUS DRIVER

You getting on?

The smile disappears from Franks face.

BUS DRIVER

Hello?

Frank shakes his head and walks away from the door; he walks along the side of the bus looking into the windows.

The bus pulls off.

He watches the bus turn around a corner.

ARTHUR

Who are you waiting for?

Frank turns and slowly walks up the stairs to enter the apartment building.

He looks down the street one last time before taking out his keys and entering.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Late night with Conan O'Brian is going off the air.

The box sits next to the closet, its top opened.

A bowl of Ravioli sits on the ground next to the recliner.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

Frank stands out on the fire escape staring into the city; the cat licks its paws after enjoying its meal.

DANCER (O.S.)

Frank?

Frank turns around and looks up, the dancer stands at the top of the steps with her leather jacket wrapped around her waist.

DANCER (CONT'D) Did Nancy keep you up or something?

Frank shakes his head at the dancer picks up her cat.

DANCER (CONT'D) This is why you can't ever give her anything, she becomes so demanding.

She smiles at Frank; he does not make eye contact with her.

DANCER (CONT'D) She starts to expect it all the time.

Her smile disappears when she notices Frank not looking at her.

DANCER (CONT'D) What's wrong?

FRANK I was... worried about you.

She laughs.

DANCER Oh. I had a date tonight; once in a while I try to join -

Frank turns around and climbs into his apartment.

DANCER (CONT'D) The human race. Frank?

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frank turns off his television and picks up his bowl.

She enters his apartment holding her cat.

She watches him pick up his box and shove it into his closet.

DANCER (CONT'D) Frank, are you alright?

Frank nods and closes his closet door.

She stares at him.

DANCER (CONT'D) Are you upset because I went out on a date?

Frank stares at his wall.

The dancer places her cat on the ground and walks towards Frank.

DANCER (CONT'D) Oh my God. Frank I didn't think that you...

She moves to touch his face and he flinches.

She stops and stares at him.

She places a hand on his face.

DANCER (CONT'D) Frank I was just trying to be a good neighbor...

Frank turns away from her.

FRANK It's late. I have to work.

Frank walks over to his couch and sits down staring at the floor.

She moves towards the door and opens it.

She stops to look back at Frank.

DANCER Your door closes from the inside right?

Frank does not move.

She opens the door and stares out into the hallway; the elderly mans' door shuts quickly.

She steps back into the apartment and closes the door.

DANCER (CONT'D) Frank I really didn't know... I mean I did but...

She turns around and looks at Frank.

DANCER (CONT'D) He didn't even have the decency to walk me home, I took the bus back.

She smiles and rolls her eyes.

Alone.

Frank does not move.

She moves towards him.

DANCER (CONT'D) And you, you wait for me.

She stands in the center of the living room and stares down at him.

DANCER (CONT'D) You want to know something? I feel kind of safe knowing that you wait for me to get off the bus at night. Like...

She takes a step closer.

DANCER (CONT'D) Like you're my protector; A guardian angel...

She steps closer; she is right before him now.

DANCER (CONT'D) I know it sounds selfish but, I was kind of disappointed that you weren't out there tonight. Even though it's so late...

She extends her hand and lifts Frank face up by his chin so that he looks at her.

DANCER (CONT'D) I didn't feel safe.

She slowly slides onto his lap and sits there; his hands fall to his sides so that he doesn't touch her.

DANCER (CONT'D) I'm sorry that I pretended to be so ignorant. I knew you must have felt something, men just don't do nice things because they're nice. I do… I do.

DANCER I'm not accusing you of anything Frank, I'm just saying. If you didn't care you wouldn't be sad right now...

Frank looks into her eyes.

DANCER (CONT'D) You care about me right?

He nods.

DANCER (CONT'D) Thank you. Thank you for caring...

She takes his arms and wraps them around her, laying her head on his shoulder. Frank stares into space.

DANCER (CONT'D) Thank you for protecting me.

The cat hops onto the recliner and curls up into a ball.

INT. KITCHEN - DAWN

A little light shines in through the kitchen window.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The dancer lies on the couch with a pillow under her head and a blanket covering her body.

Frank sits in his recliner with the cat on his lap, staring at the dancer.

The box sits next to the closet.

Frank holds a picture in his hand face down, on the back it says CLARA, 22.

He rubs the picture in his fingers gently.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Frank wheels his cart down the pathway between the cubicles.

Lenny pokes his head out of Mary's cubicle after Frank passes.

LENNY Frank. Bro. Need your input here man.

Frank turns around.

Lenny smiles.

Frank leaves his cart and enters the cubicle.

Mary sits inside with her thick legs crossed underneath her short skirt; she clicks the button on a pen.

Frank stands next to Lenny.

LENNY Ok. Unbiased opinion time.

MARY How is this unbiased? Another man cannot offer an unbiased opinion.

LENNY

Frank here isn't just another man. He is what you chicks like to call - a good one.

Lenny turns to Frank.

LENNY (CONT'D) You're straight right?

Frank nods.

Lenny chuckles and turns back to Mary.

LENNY (CONT'D) Me and Mary here are having a little disagreement about dating etiquette. Frank watches Mary's pen. She clicks the button, the point comes out.

MARY Frank, you know what chivalry is right?

Frank looks at her and nods.

LENNY Let me tell it how it is.

She rolls her eyes. Clicks the pen.

Lenny turns to Frank.

LENNY

Women are always preaching equality right? Right. They want equal pay, equal respect and crap like that. We even let them into the army!

Frank watches the pen. She clicks it.

Lenny smiles.

LENNY (CONT'D)

But at the same time they want us guys to still front the bill when we eat, hold doors open for them...

MARY

It's called being a gentleman. That's what men are supposed to do.

LENNY

So what are women supposed to do? You guys are asking for more stuff and giving us less. What kind of deal is that?

Lenny places a hand on Frank's shoulder.

LENNY (CONT'D) Right buddy? They want us to go out of our way and treat them like equals, but at the same time they want us to treat them like babies and buy them stuff. Treat them to ice cream and crap.

Frank stares at Mary's thigh.

He watches her pen, she clicks it.

Lenny claps.

LENNY (CONT'D) Help me out here buddy. Say something.

Frank nods.

FRANK

Yeah.

Lenny turns to Mary.

LENNY

Yeah! See? Frank here knows that we men are getting the shaft. Take this chick I took out last night - looked nice, but I guess that was the end of her efforts.

Lenny turns to Frank.

LENNY (CONT'D) Thanks Frank. Better get back to that mail, Mary here thinks I'm trying to get you fired.

Mary smiles at Frank as he turns to leave.

LENNY (CONT'D) She wants me to foot everything while she sits pretty. Next time I'm getting it in writing that she's going to put out.
Frank wheels his cart down the pathway. Mary begins to laugh.

INT. THEATER - DUSK

Frank sits in the theater, one of only six people scattered about.

On the screen is the same movie, except the dancer is being grabbed by a big ugly guy.

Her handsome dance partner punches the guy out.

The lights from the black and white movie dance on Franks face.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Frank empties the contents of his basket on the counter; a can of ravioli, a bag of salad, a can of cat food and some water.

The register lady stares at him as she rings up his items.

Frank bags them up and turns around to leave.

LADY You want my suggestion, a lady who likes salad don't like a guy who eats ravioli. Try eating what she likes.

Frank nods at her and keeps walking.

EXT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Frank stands across the street from the building; he looks up at the fourth floor. The light is already on.

Frank crosses the street in a hurry and walks past Arthur and his buddies.

ARTHUR She came home early. If you're getting some of that how about sliding some my way.

Frank pauses at the entrance of the building.

His fist clench.

Arthur's friends laugh.

Arthur takes a drink and looks at Frank.

ARTHUR No seriously, he's cool guy. Leave him alone.

Frank opens the apartment door and enters the building.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The television is off. The cat lies on the couch where the dancer left her pillow and blanket.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A bowl of salad sits on the table, next to it is an open can of cat food.

Frank pours some bottled water into his glass.

The cat meows from the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frank walks into the living room where the cat sits by the door.

Someone knocks.

Frank looks out the peep hole, darkness.

Frank opens the door and the dancer stands there smiling at him.

DANCER Hi Frank. I saw you waiting for me across the street from my window.

FRANK What happened?

DANCER Rehearsal ran a little short. Frank looks at her.

FRANK

You look sad.

She smiles.

DANCER

Can I come in?

Frank steps out of the way and she walks in, picking up her cat and looking around the room.

She sniffs.

DANCER (CONT'D) I don't smell ravioli.

Frank takes her arm, she pulls away from him.

He stares at her.

FRANK

I'm sorry.

She smiles.

DANCER It's okay, you just surprised me.

FRANK I made you something. To eat.

Frank walks towards the kitchen and she follows.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Frank stands over the bowl of salad. The dancer smiles and places her cat on the ground.

She looks up at Frank.

DANCER

My favorite.

She places her hands on her own tiny hips.

DANCER (CONT'D) How did you guess?

The cat hops onto the table and digs into its food.

The dancer has a seat and Frank joins her.

DANCER (CONT'D) Did you already eat?

Frank looks at his can of ravioli sitting on the counter. It is unopened.

FRANK

I'm... not hungry.

She picks up some salad with her fork and holds it out for him.

DANCER

Feel like sharing with me? If you like salad I mean.

Frank lets her place the bit of salad into his mouth and he smiles.

DANCER (CONT'D) Have I ever told you how nice your smile was?

He nods.

FRANK

Yes.

She pinches his cheek.

DANCER Well some people deserve to be told twice.

She eats some of her salad.

DANCER (CONT'D) Did you sleep well last night? When I woke up you were gone.

She points the fork at him.

DANCER (CONT'D) Just like a man.

Frank smiles.

FRANK

I didn't want to wake you, I went straight to work.

DANCER

You make a habit of leaving people all alone in your apartment. I mean...

She sips her water.

DANCER (CONT'D) You hardly know me.

FRANK

I trust you.

DANCER Even people you trust could be thieves.

Frank looks into her eyes.

FRANK

You're so beautiful, you already have everything. What could you possibly want from me?

She stares at him for some time.

She looks away and takes another bite of salad.

DANCER What do you do Frank?

FRANK I work in an office, mail.

She nods.

DANCER

Everybody wants something. That's not always a bad thing, you have something I want. Frank watches her.

DANCER (CONT'D)

I want the chance to be around a perfectly honest and caring man; someone to protect me from all the evil men out there.

Frank smiles at her and opens his mouth as she places another piece of salad inside.

DANCER (CONT'D) What do you want from me Frank?

She looks at her cat.

DANCER (CONT'D) You already got to play with my pussy cat. What else is there?

Frank stares at her.

She shakes her head.

DANCER (CONT'D) I was making a sexual joke. You're not super religious or something are you?

Frank shakes his head.

DANCER (CONT'D) Okay, good. Because I would hate for my sins to rub off on you...

The cat finishes its food and jumps down from the table.

DANCER (CONT'D) Sometimes I think you might be too good for me.

Frank stares at her.

FRANK Don't ever think that.

Frank watches her finish off the rest of her salad and drink some water.

She looks up at him and smiles.

DANCER Do you mind if I stay here tonight?

Frank shakes head.

She stands up and takes his hand, leading him out of the kitchen.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The cat curls up into a ball on the recliner and sleeps.

The dancer leads Frank through the living room.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She takes him into the bedroom and lets his hands go.

She smiles at him and crawls into the bed.

Frank stares at her.

She turns onto her side and closes her eyes.

Frank stares at the door and turns to leave.

DANCER (CONT'D)

Frank.

He stops.

She extends her hand.

Frank walks over to the bed and takes her hand.

She pulls him down onto the mattress.

She drapes his arm over her so that they are in a spoon position.

Frank holds her.

DANCER (CONT'D) When I'm a big star, will you still want to hold me?

Frank looks at her face, her eyes are still closed.

FRANK

Yes.

She smiles.

Frank lays his head back down.

Frank moves his hand and holds it over her thigh, hesitating.

He places his hand on her waist and slides it up her body.

She sighs deeply and moves closer to him.

He places his hand on her shoulder and slides it down.

She flinches when he reaches her forearm.

Frank lifts his head up.

FRANK

I'm sorry. Did I hurt you earlier?

She shakes her head.

He rolls the sleeve of her arm up; there is a bruise on her forearm.

Frank stares at it.

FRANK (CONT'D) What happened?

DANCER

Nothing.

Frank stares down at her.

FRANK

What happened?

She stirs in the bed.

DANCER

When I got off the bus... the guy downstairs grabbed me. He was drunk, I just ignore them. Frank watches her.

DANCER (CONT'D) Tomorrow, when I get off the bus... you'll be there. They'll leave me alone.

Frank stares at her for a long time, her face becomes somber as she drifts into sleep.

Frank lays his head down.

The clock in the room says 2:40.

The ceiling fan spins.

The dancer stirs in her sleep, Frank is gone.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Arthur stands in front of the building with his friends.

ARTHUR There can't be any reason for it. There can't be.

His FRIEND looks up at him.

FRIEND

There is always a reason Arthur. That's your problem, when you drink you don't think straight.

Arthur laughs.

ARTHUR At least I can stand up.

The other drunks laugh along with Arthur.

Arthur grabs his crotch.

ARTHUR Cheap shit beer goes straight to my balls.

Arthur places his brown bag on the concrete and stumbles off.

He walks around to the back of the building.

Arthur leans against a wall with his elbow and unzips his pants.

He urinates against the wall and sighs from the relief.

He zips up his pants.

Arthur turns around, at the corner of the back of the building stands Frank.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) Holy shit!

Arthur holds his chest.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) You scared me man.

Frank stares at him.

Arthur smiles.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) Since you're here, could you do me a favor?

He reaches into his pocket and digs around.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) Could you go to the corner store and get me another beer?

Arthur pulls out some crumpled dollar bills and walks towards Frank.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) Keep the change and get you one too I guess...

He stumbles and braces himself against the wall to catch his balance. He drops the money.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Shit.

He looks down at the money and starts to laugh.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) I didn't fall, that means I'm good to go.

Arthur looks up at Frank.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) Right kid?

Frank moves forward and pushes Arthur, the older man falls backwards and lands on his back.

Arthur looks up at Frank, who stands over him menacingly.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) What the fuck is your problem?

Frank looks around.

He walks over to the dumpster and picks up a stick.

Arthur watches him.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) What the hell are you doing?!?

Frank stalks towards him, Arthur tries to get to his feet.

ARTHUR (CONT'D) Get the fuck away from me!

Frank hits Arthur across the back of the head with the stick.

He goes down.

Frank does it again.

Arthur crawls slowly, blood coming from the wound in back of his head.

Frank walks behind him slowly.

Arthur stops and rolls over onto his back. He stares up at Frank in pure fright.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Please.

Frank drives the sharp end of the stick down into Arthur's neck. He pulls it out and drives it in again, breaking it off. INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS Frank stands in his bathroom staring into the mirror, a small amount of water pours into his sink. Frank grips the sink and shakes with rage. The cat meows. Frank turns around and stares at the cat. It looks up at him. INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS Frank walks into the bedroom where the dancer sleeps. He stares down at her. She sighs. He crawls into the bed and places an arm around her. She stirs. Frank lays his head down and stares at the back of her head. She slowly turns around to face him; she is so close that their lips almost touch. Her eyes slightly open. DANCER I thought you were a dream. Frank stares at her and her eyes close, a smile forms on her lips and she moves closer to him. INT. OFFICE - AFTERNOON Frank parks his empty cart outside of the break room. He pulls a brown paper bag out from underneath and walks

in.

Lenny looks up at Frank when he enters.

LENNY

Hey Frank!

Mary smiles.

MARY

You have some late mail for us?

Frank shakes his head and walks straight to the coffee machine. As he passes the table he drops his bag down next to Lenny's food.

FRANK

No.

Lenny and Mary stare at each other.

Lenny turns around to look at Frank; Frank drinks a cup of coffee in large gulps.

LENNY

What's the haps man?

Frank puts his cup on the counter and stares at Lenny.

FRANK

What?

Lenny smiles.

LENNY

What's happening? What's going on in the world of Frank?

Frank slowly walks over to the table and sits down; he opens his brown paper bag and pulls out a tuna sandwich and an orange juice.

He sets them down, takes the wrapper off his sandwich, taking a large bite and chewing vigorously.

Mary stares at him.

MARY Everything okay Frank? Frank looks up at her.

He stares at her cleavage.

Lenny places a hand on Frank's shoulder.

LENNY Old Frank has finally decided to join us for some lunch.

Frank turns to look at Lenny's hand on his shoulder.

Lenny smiles.

Frank turns to Mary.

FRANK Everything is fine.

Frank watches Mary lick her lips.

Lenny picks up Franks orange juice.

Frank turns to him and takes another big bite.

LENNY O.J! I used to love this stuff as a kid.

Mary dabs her mouth with a napkin, and giggles. Her large breasts bounce up and down with her laughter.

MARY Adults don't drink orange juice?

Lenny shakes the bottle. Frank chews vigorously.

LENNY

Only when you hit 45 and start to worry about things like vitamin and calcium.

Lenny places the bottle down and turns to Frank.

LENNY Frank here must be becoming a man, he needs his energy. Mary giggles.

Frank finishes his sandwich and stares down at the table.

MARY It had to happen sometime.

Frank stares at her.

Lenny slaps a hand down on Frank's shoulder.

LENNY Aw I'm just messing with you Franky.

Frank stares past Mary.

He clenches the muscles in his jaw.

FRANK Could you please stop touching

me all the time?

Lenny stares at Frank.

LENNY

What?

Frank stares at Mary.

FRANK Why do you have to dress like a tramp?

Mary stares at Frank in disbelief.

Lenny's eyes widen and he turns to Mary before busting out in laughter.

Mary stares at Frank as he picks up his orange juice and exits the room.

She places a hand on her chest and looks at Lenny.

MARY I don't believe him. Do you think I dress like a tramp? Lenny shakes his head and stares at her for a few seconds before nodding and shrugging his shoulders.

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Frank empties his contents onto the counter. A big bag of salad, some cat food and some water.

The lady at the counter reads her magazine.

After checking out the last page she smiles at him and rings up his groceries, Frank stares at her.

> LADY How's everything going?

FRANK I'm not sure. Better I guess.

She nods.

He hands her the exact change.

LADY Whenever a woman can get a guy to change his diet, she has him.

Frank offers her a small smile and packs his bag.

She goes back to reading her magazine as he walks away.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Frank exits the flower shop with a bouquet of roses.

He walks down the street with his head a little higher.

EXT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Frank stands across the street, a coroners van pulls away and some cops stand on the corner talking to the drunks.

The bus pulls up.

Frank watches as it pulls away and the dancer stands at the stop, she watches the men being questioned.

She turns around and smiles at Frank when she notices him.

Frank walks over.

Frank!

He hands her the flowers and she grins from ear to ear.

FRANK I have some more salad.

She turns around to look at the officers.

DANCER

What's going on?

Frank shakes his head.

FRANK

I don't know.

She takes his hand and leads him to the building.

DANCER

Come on, let's get upstairs - I have something to tell you.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The dancer digs into her salad excitedly as Frank watches her.

DANCER (CONT'D) So if everything goes great tomorrow I'll have the lead!

Frank smiles at her.

FRANK

I think you deserve it.

She smiles at him and squints.

DANCER Have you ever even seen me dance?

Frank shakes his head.

DANCER (CONT'D) So how do you know I deserve it? He looks up at her.

FRANK

Can I?

She takes a bite of her food and chews it slowly.

He stares at her.

She looks up at him.

DANCER

You'd make me nervous ...

Frank nods.

He looks over at the cat; she is just finishing her food.

The dancer watches Frank.

DANCER (CONT'D) When I get the part as the lead dancer I can invite someone to come and watch for free.

She reaches out and places a finger on the tip of Frank's nose.

DANCER (CONT'D) That someone is going to be you.

She jumps up and takes a quick bite of her salad.

DANCER (CONT'D) I'll be right back. I have to go upstairs and check my messages.

Frank smiles at her and rubs the back of the cats' neck, it purrs.

FRANK

Is it good?

Someone knocks on the door.

Frank stares at the kitchen door.

He rises.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frank walks into the living room. Someone knocks again.

Frank opens the door.

A POLICE OFFICER stands in his hallway.

OFFICER

Sorry to bother you so late sir, I just have a couple of questions.

Frank stares past the officer, the elderly man peeks out of his door.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

Sir?

Frank looks at the cop.

OFFICER (CONT'D) Did you hear anything suspicious last night?

FRANK

No.

OFFICER The men who sit downstairs, did they seem to be having an argument?

Frank shakes his head; he concentrates on the elderly man across the hall.

OFFICER (CONT'D) So you didn't hear anything out of the ordinary?

Frank shakes his head.

FRANK

What happened?

The officer writes something down on a notepad.

Frank stares at the pencil moving across the paper.

He looks back up at the officer.

The officer smiles.

OFFICER

Thank you for your cooperation.

The officer turns and walks away.

Frank watches the elderly man close his door.

Frank does the same.

He turns around to the cat, who is rubbing up against his leg.

FRANK We both care about her right?

Frank stares at the door.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The clock says 3 a.m. Thunder booms outside and rain can be heard pouring down outside.

Frank lies awake on his back with the cat on his chest.

He rubs the cat.

Someone knocks on the door.

Frank rises out of bed and exits the bedroom.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frank opens the door.

The dancer stands in his doorway soaking wet, her hair sticks to her face.

Frank steps out of her way.

She walks in and stops in the center of the room.

He closes his door.

She stands still.

DANCER He called me. Frank turns to look at her; she keeps her back to him. DANCER (CONT'D) He called me and apologized, asked me to meet him ... She turns around and looks at his feet. DANCER (CONT'D) ... I keep making the same mistakes. Running back to people who don't care about me, ignoring the ones who do. She trembles. Frank watches her. DANCER (CONT'D) I wouldn't sleep with him, we had an argument and he kicked me out of his car. I had to walk home Frank... She looks up at him briefly. DANCER (CONT'D) ... and here I am running back to you. I told you that you were too good for me ... She walks towards the door, Frank takes her shoulders. FRANK I'm going to get you a towel. Frank leaves the living room. INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS Frank enters the bathroom and pulls his only towel down. He stops and stares at himself in the mirror. INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frank walks into the living room with the towel.

The dancer stands in the center of the room completely naked, her hair sticking to her face.

She moves to him and kisses him hard.

She pulls him to his recliner and continues to kiss him as she forces him to sit down.

She straddles him and kisses his neck.

Frank's arms stay at his sides.

She looks into his eyes and reaches underneath herself to unzip his pants.

She rises up, never taking her eyes off of him. When she sits back down he closes his eyes and she bites her lip.

She begins to rock back and forth on top of him. Frank does not open his eyes.

She rocks back and forth and then Frank trembles, hesitantly he grabs her hips and holds her steady.

As his trembling subsides Frank stares down at her breasts.

FRANK

I'm sorry.

She takes his chin in her hand and lifts his face so that they look into each others side.

> DANCER It's okay Frank, this time we'll go slow...

She slowly rocks back and forth on top of him, kissing him deeply.

EXT. BUILDING - DAWN

Small rain drops fall from the sky as the storm subsides.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frank and the dancer lay naked on the ground in a spoon position. They are both asleep.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A beautiful thirty year old woman - CLARA MELBOURNE walks through the park.

With her is a 14 year old version of Frank, he carries heavy grocery bags for her.

They walk through the park and Clara smiles at him, she is telling a story that cannot be heard.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAWN

Frank's eyes twitch.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Clara and Frank exit the park and cross a street.

They walk up to their apartment building as she reaches into her bag for her keys.

She opens the door and they walk in.

Clara looks back at Frank and smiles.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAWN

Frank stirs.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Clara stands outside her apartment door and inserts her keys into the door.

Frank turns around and looks back at the staircase, down the hall an elderly woman peeks out at them from her apartment.

Behind him the door opens and a masked man grabs Clara.

Her screams are unheard, Frank turns around just in time to see her get pulled into the apartment and the door slowly closes.

Frank stands still and stares.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAWN

Frank turns over onto his back and kicks his legs.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Frank stares at the door as it opens again and a bigger masked man grabs him by his arm and pulls him into the apartment.

The door closes behind him.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank is tossed onto the ground hard.

He looks up at the man standing by the door, he holds a crowbar.

The man smiles through the mouth hole in his mask.

Frank turns around and fright registers on his face.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAWN

Frank kicks in his sleep.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank watches as the first masked man holds Clara down on the couch and rips away her underwear.

Frank stares in fright.

The masked man rapes Clara, striking her across the face several times.

Frank can not move. Frozen by what he is witnessing.

He watches the masked man get up off his mother and as the other one walks over for his turn she turns to Frank and her mouth opens wide - mouthing the word help.

Frank is frozen.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAWN

Frank sits up quickly from his sleep and balls his hands into tight fist, tears stream down his eyes and he shakes with the anger built up inside him.

> FRANK Whyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy!!!!

The dancer jumps from the scream and sits up.

She places a hand on Franks shoulder and tries to calm him down; he continues to shake with anger.

DANCER Frank! Frank stop!

Frank's fists loosen up and he blinks away his tears, he slowly turns and looks at her.

DANCER (CONT'D) Frank. It was a nightmare. It was a nightmare Frank...

Frank stares at the couch.

FRANK He, he won't stop…

She looks into his eyes.

DANCER

Who?

Frank stares at the couch and shakes his head.

DANCER (CONT'D) I'm here Frank. You're awake now and I'm here...

Frank stares at her.

FRANK Why did you leave me last night?

She looks into his eyes.

DANCER

I told you, Lenny called me and apologized. I thought I still had feelings for him... I'm sorry.

She takes his face into her hands.

DANCER

I'm sorry Frank.

Frank takes her hand.

FRANK

You promise you'll never leave me again?

She nods and kisses him gently on his mouth.

Frank closes his eyes and kisses her back.

She moves her hand down to his crotch.

Frank grabs her hand and looks at her.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Lenny?

She tries to pull her hand free but he holds tight.

She stares at him until he lets go.

DANCER

Yes. He called me, I thought he was a great guy but he wasn't. He was just different from the other guys I dated.

She shifts and crosses her legs.

DANCER (CONT'D) Dead beat starving artists, male dancers who don't want to admit that what they really want is each other...

Frank stares at her.

DANCER (CONT'D) ... and Leonard was different, he had a job. He was an executive and he had a car and he was dependable... or at least I thought he was...

Frank's left hand forms a tight fist.

DANCER (CONT'D) I don't want to talk about him right now Frank... can we just go to bed? Frank nods.

She stands up and takes his hand, leading him into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

The clock says 7:30.

Frank opens his eyes, the dancer is putting on some clothes - she is rushing.

He sits up.

FRANK

Are you okay?

DANCER

I have to go upstairs, shower and get dressed. The audition is today!

Frank watches her run out of the room.

He stares at the clock.

She comes back in and kisses him on the mouth lovingly.

She looks into his eyes.

DANCER

Wish me luck.

She runs out.

Frank turns around and stares at the window.

The cat sits on the ledge licking itself.

Frank stares at it.

FRANK

I have to go to work.

INT. OFFICE - EVENING

Frank parks the cart next to a desk; behind him Lenny laughs and pats a guy in a suit on the back.

Lenny walks into the bathroom.

Frank stares at his cart.

He waits a few seconds and then he turns on his heels and power walks to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lenny relieves himself as he stands in front of a stall.

He turns and is surprised to see Frank.

Lenny smiles at him.

LENNY

Hey Frank man. Couldn't hold it either huh?

Lenny turns back to stare at his work, bouncing up and down and smiling.

Frank stands at the doorway.

Lenny turns and looks at him, Frank steps forward slowly.

LENNY You're not one of those guys who needs to be alone are you?

Lenny shakes his head and laughs.

LENNY If you're small it's your business man - I'm not going to look.

Frank approaches; behind his back he pulls a small blade out from his back pocket.

Lenny whistles.

Frank grips his blade.

WORKER (O.S.) Hey Leonard.

Frank cups his blade in his hand and turns around quickly.

A man in a suit walks over to the first stall and unzips his pants.

Frank turns and slowly walks to he exit.

Lenny turns to look at Frank and appears concerned.

LENNY

Hey Frank, you alright man?

Frank stops and turns around, pocketing his blade.

FRANK

I'm fine.

Lenny zips up his pants.

LENNY Did you cut yourself?

Lenny nods at the floor. There are two drops of blood.

Frank stares at them.

He slowly raises his hand; there is a slice down the center.

Lenny smiles.

LENNY (CONT'D) That's a nasty paper cut.

He walks over to the sink and washes his hand. He watches Frank through the mirror and grins from ear to ear.

> LENNY (CONT'D) Those envelopes are pretty dangerous huh?

Frank stares at Lenny for a few moments before turning and walking out of the bathroom.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Lenny walks out of the bathroom with the other man, they are both laughing.

LENNY Made her walk.

You are a dog man.

Lenny grins.

LENNY

Wooof!

Lenny walks to the elevators and presses the buttons.

The doors open and he steps in.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - EVENING

Lenny exits the building whistling.

He smiles at some pretty women he passes as he crosses the street.

Lenny walks down the street until he reaches a parking garage.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Lenny whistles and walks past all the cars in the garage.

Frank stands behind a pillar; his head turns as Lenny passes from his right to his left.

Lenny stops in front of his car and reaches for his keys.

An alarm goes off and Lenny jumps, turning around he sees a man in the far off distance getting into his car.

The man kills the alarm and starts his car.

Lenny watches the expensive car drive away.

He looks at his own car, it is modest.

He looks back at the expensive car as it turns a corner.

LENNY

Prick.

Frank runs up and drives his blade into Lenny's back, Lenny screams.

Frank stands behind Lenny and wraps his arm around the mans throat, choking him.

Lenny screams in pain and turns his head slightly to look back.

LENNY (CONT'D) Jesus Christ Frank what the hell are you doing!?!

Frank leans in close and places his mouth up to Lenny's ear.

FRANK

I'm protecting her.

He reaches out and slowly drives the blade into Lenny's throat; he draws the blade across - ripping his throat open. Blood pours down Lenny's suit.

Frank holds him and steps backwards, slowly laying him down on the ground.

Frank takes the keys from his hand and unlocks the car.

Frank picks up Lenny by the underarms and drags him over to the trunk.

He lifts the trunk.

He picks the dead man up and drops him inside, scooping his dangling legs in.

Frank stares down at Lenny.

He drives the blade into his chest four more times before slamming the trunk closed.

INT. RESTAURANT BATHROOM - EVENING

Frank washes his face and hands over and over again.

He stares up at himself in the mirror, his eyes are bloodshot.

Frank reaches into his pocket and pulls out a bloody napkin.

He unravels it, inside is the blade.

Frank stares at it.

He washes it off in the sink and then he runs into a stall.

He unrolls a large amount of toilet paper and wraps the blade in it before tossing the blade into the garbage.

Frank stops and stares at himself in the mirror.

He turns the cold water on and scrubs his face and hands vigorously.

INT. THEATER - EVENING

Frank sits in the theater with eight other people spread out in the seats.

On the screen the couple stares into each other's eyes.

Frank does not move, he stares ahead and does not blink.

The couple in the black and white movie kiss.

The images dance on Franks face, a tear rolls down his eye.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Frank exits the flower shop with a bouquet of carnations surrounded by babies' breath.

Frank walks down the street with his head held high.

He enters a men's clothing store.

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Frank steps up to the register and empties the contents of his basket. A large bag of salad, a container of fruit, a cheap bottle of wine and some cat food.

The lady at the register flips the page in her magazine.

Frank stares at her.

She chews her gum and turns another page.

FRANK I need to get home!

She stops and stares at him.

Frank stares into her eyes.

She straightens up and rings up his items.

LADY I'm sorry I didn't see you there.

Frank bags up his groceries.

She smiles at him nervously.

LADY (CONT'D) Those are some nice flowers.

Frank nods and walks away with his bags.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The table is missing from the kitchen. The cat stands in the center of the room eating his can of food.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The furniture is pushed to one side.

In the center of the room is the kitchen table; on it is a bowl of salad with cut pieces of fruit in it. The flowers are on one side and the bottle of wine is on the other.

Two candles are the centerpiece and they burn.

Frank stands next to the kitchen door with his new clothes on, smiling.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The candles are down at the bottom, about to burn themselves out.

Frank stands in front of the kitchen doorway staring at the table.

Someone knocks on the door.

Frank stares at it.

He slowly moves to the front door and pauses.

He looks out the peep hole, the dancer stands waiting.

Frank opens the door.

She stares at him, her eyes tear up.

DANCER Sorry I'm late... can I come in?

Frank steps aside and she walks in, staring at the set up in the living room.

He stares out into the hallway at his elderly neighbor.

Frank slowly closes his door.

He turns around and the dancer spins around to face him, a soft smile on her face.

DANCER (CONT'D) This is all so beautiful Frank... thank you.

Frank stares at her.

She turns around and picks up the flowers.

DANCER (CONT'D) These are the most beautiful flowers I've ever received.

She looks up at Frank and smiles; a tear runs down her face.

DANCER (CONT'D) You're always so good to me...

FRANK

What's wrong?

She turns and stares out of the window.

DANCER

Things always seem to be just out of my reach. It's like that brass ring my father told me about is laughing at me...

She shakes her head.

DANCER (CONT'D) ... you know my whole life I've never been the best at anything. I was smart, but not the smartest.

The dancer wipes a tear from her face.

DANCER (CONT'D) I was pretty...

She smiles to herself.

DANCER (CONT'D) But never the prettiest one.

Frank watches her hands; she slowly clenches and unclenches the bouquet of flowers.

DANCER (CONT'D) I wrote poetry but it was never...

She stares out of the window.

DANCER (CONT'D) Edgar Allen Poe…

She walks up to the window and looks out, placing a hand against the pane.

DANCER (CONT'D) I sang but I didn't…

The dancer turns around and stares at Frank.

FRANK

What happened -

DANCER

She was everything Frank. She was everything anyone has ever wanted to be...

She stares past him.

DANCER (CONT'D) She was beautiful and tall and long legged and blond...

She laughs and shakes her head, running a finger through her hair. DANCER (CONT'D) ...it was like she was built to make music move! She leans back against the wall and stares against the ceiling, Frank moves closer to her. DANCER (CONT'D) I didn't get it Frank. I didn't get it ... Frank moves closer and stands in front of her. DANCER (CONT'D) They called us both back in... at the end of the week I have to go up against her. Frank places a hand on her shoulder. DANCER (CONT'D) And she's so good. She practices till early morning, just practicing. I could have beaten her though; I know I could be better than I was tonight ... She shakes her head and closes her eyes. DANCER (CONT'D) I should have practiced. I should have been upstairs practicing instead of down here wasting ... Tears stream down her face. FRANK I'm sorry. DANCER ... I should have been upstairs dancing instead of wasting time.

She drops the flowers onto the ground and walks past Frank.
DANCER (CONT'D) I have to go.

She opens his door and slams it shut.

Frank turns around and stares at his living room, the candles are down to nothing.

FRANK

I'm sorry.

Frank walks over to his recliner and sits down, the closet door is slightly open and the edge of the box sticks out.

Frank stares ahead at nothing in particular.

He slowly turns to look at the box in the closet.

He lowers his head and closes his eyes.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Frank wheels the mail cart down the pathway.

Mary steps out from her cubicle.

MARY

Oh. Hi Frank.

Frank nods at her and readies her mail.

Mary looks around uncomfortably.

Frank hands her the mail.

MARY (CONT'D) Thank you.

He nods and continues to wheel the cart.

Mary turns to look at him.

MARY (CONT'D) Frank. Did you see Lenny this morning?

Frank stops and waits.

MARY (CONT'D) He didn't come in but if he doesn't then he usually calls out...

Frank stares down at his mail cart.

Mary waits.

Frank turns around and looks at her.

FRANK No Mary, I haven't seen him.

Mary smiles.

MARY

I guess I'll try calling his house again; he probably had another drinking night.

Frank nods and turns to walk away.

MARY (CONT'D) Are you alright?

She rubs her hands together nervously.

MARY (CONT'D) Your hand.

Frank stares down at the bandage on his hand but he keeps walking.

Mary slides back into her cubicle.

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Frank sits down on a bench and stares into space, the old man sits next him throwing seeds at pigeons.

OLD MAN They have a new way of invading your personal life.

Frank stares at the pigeons.

OLD MAN (O.S) And the kids and all the business people just let them do it. They don't know what the government has up its sleeve.

The pigeons peck at the seeds.

OLD MAN (O.S) They're ignorant to the tests and the experiments. Cell phones. They listen to these goddamned cell phones.

The old man tosses out more seeds.

OLD MAN (CONT'D) What do you think the rush was to get all these satellites into the sky?

He smiles.

OLD MAN (CONT'D) And they have cameras in the stop lights. They watch you but they call it protection...

He turns and grimaces at Frank.

OLD MAN (CONT'D) Protection? Who the hell are they protecting?!? They can't protect shit.

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Frank walks through the animal care aisle and picks up a can of cat food.

He turns a corner.

Frank enters the can food aisle and picks up a can of ravioli.

He turns around and stares at the bags of salad.

He picks one up.

The register lady reads her magazine.

She turns a page.

Frank walks up with his basket.

She straightens up and waits for him to empty his items.

She smiles and rings them up.

Frank does not make eye contact with her.

He bags his items and walks away.

She turns to look at him.

LADY Enjoy your salad.

Frank continues to walk.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Frank stands on the corner across from his building; the stoop is devoid of the usual drinkers.

There is a flash of lighting in the sky.

Frank stares ahead, unblinking.

Thunder booms overhead.

The bus pulls into the spot.

Frank waits, gripping his bag.

The bus pulls away, leaving the dancer standing at the stop.

She digs into her bag for her purse.

Frank watches her.

She turns around and notices him.

They stare at each other.

She turns away and starts to walk up the stairs.

Frank crosses the street.

I... got some salad for you.

She stops at the door with her keys in her hand.

Frank runs up to her.

FRANK (CONT'D) I got some salad for you, if you want to come up.

She turns to Frank.

DANCER

Frank...

She shakes her head and stares into the sky, drops begin to fall.

DANCER (CONT'D) Frank I told you I have to practice. I have to keep dancing and I...

She looks into his eyes.

DANCER (CONT'D) She's really good Frank. Antoinette is really good and I have to practice, as long as she's around...

Frank watches her mouth move.

DANCER (CONT'D) ... Frank, I don't really have any time for you.

She turns and opens the building door, running inside.

Frank stares at the door.

The rain drops fall harder and Frank waits.

Eventually he enters the building too.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The box sits in the center of the living room, the top is open and some envelopes sit on the ground.

An envelope, it is addressed to Clara.

A bowl of uneaten ravioli sits next to the recliner.

The storm rages outside and a flash of lightning illuminates the room.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The bag of salad is open; the salad is dumped out onto the kitchen table.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

The can of cat food sits uneaten.

Frank stands on his fire escape staring out at the city; the storm pours down on his head.

He stares ahead as the rain water washes down his face.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY - FLASHBACK

A 14 year old Frank sits frozen on his floor.

The big masked man steps stands over Clara, he strangles her.

Her eyes are fixed on Frank as the life slowly fades from her.

Frank stares into the eyes of the other criminal; he smiles at Frank and raises the crowbar.

He brings the crowbar down across Frank's face.

Frank collapses to the ground, blood running down his forehead.

He stares into Clara's eyes as she passes away. There is the sound of thunder booming.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Frank stands out in the storm staring up at the building.

Up on the fourth floor the light is on, the soft music can be heard lightly.

Her silhouette moves past the window as she dances.

A flash of lightning illuminates the street corner, Frank is gone.

EXT. DANCE STUDIO - NIGHT

The lights of the dance studio are still on, music plays inside as the storm rages on.

Frank walks up to the corner across the street from the studio.

He stares at the doors.

In his hand is a long knife.

INT. DANCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A small radio plays music from a cassette, soft beautiful music. The radio runs on batteries.

ANTOINETTE sits in the center of the floor with her legs crossed and her eyes closed.

Her hands rest on her knees and they do not move.

A long table with four empty chairs is on the left side of the room.

A rack full of costumes sits in the corner.

A duffle bag sits on the ground.

Her chest moves up and down slowly, deep full breaths.

Antoinette opens her eyes and stares at the table.

She rises to her feet and slowly walks over.

She stops in front of the table.

She stares at one of the seats.

ANTOINETTE I am Antoinette Massalone. I am twenty one years old... She looks to the next chair.

ANTOINETTE (CONT'D) I am five foot eleven inches.

She stares at the next empty chair.

ANTOINETTE (CONT'D) This is my passion and -

A noise far off draws her attention.

Antoinette stares off towards the dressing rooms.

ANTOINETTE (CONT'D)

Hello?

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

She walks past the long table and towards the hallway that leads to the dressing room.

It is a long corridor with several rooms; all of the doors are closed with their lights off.

She walks further down into the hall.

ANTOINETTE (CONT'D)

Hello?

She stops in the center and turns back around.

INT. DANCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Antoinette walks back into the room; the front door is slightly open - water from the storm raging outside leaks into the studio.

She walks over and closes the door.

Thunder erupts louder than before, Antoinette walks over to the table and turns up her stereo.

She walks back over to the long table and stops in front of the third chair.

She takes a deep breath.

ANTOINETTE This is my passion; dancing and the theater are my life.

She moves to the last chair.

ANTOINETTE (CONT'D) My oxygen and my water.

Lightning illuminates the entire studio as the power goes out.

Antoinette sighs loudly.

She moves over to the duffle bag and unzips it, behind her Frank's outline moves behind the rack of clothes.

She pulls out a set of round candles.

Antoinette sets one candle on each end of the long desk, her soft music still plays.

She lights them and they shed a small amount of light on the room.

She returns to the center of the room and closes her eyes, the song that was playing ends.

Frank stands behind the rack of clothes watching her.

He grips his knife.

After a few moments another song begins to play, a softer one with small moments of trumpets.

At the sound of a violin Antoinette begins to move.

She immerses herself into the sounds of the music, gliding across the floor in tiny steps.

The light causes shadows to bounce off her long slender frame as she spins on her heels.

A set of light piano notes sound and she rises on her heels, tip tapping across the ground like a swan on water.

Frank's eyes dance with the flames from the candles.

A loud trumpet signals the rise in tempo of the music and she flies off her feet gliding across the room and landing several feet away.

Antoinette continues to dance to the song, catching every note with a movement as beautiful as the next.

Franks grip on his knife slowly loosens.

Tears form in Frank's eyes as he watches her turn a song into a story with her dancing.

The flames from the candles cause shadows to bounce all over the room.

Antoinette spins and leaps with the music and as the song finishes she brings her dancing to a graceful end.

She folds her arms over her chest and holds herself as she slowly lowers herself onto one bended knee.

The music stops and tears stream down Antoinette's face.

The sound of the knife hitting the floor opens her eyes.

Antoinette rises to her feet and turns around.

ANTOINETTE

Who's there?

She turns to the rack of clothes.

ANTOINETTE (CONT'D) Who's in the room? I don't have any money so...

She slowly approaches the rack when she notices one of the costumes swaying.

ANTOINETTE (CONT'D)

Hello?

She stops and stares at the costumes.

Frank comes from behind the costumes and grabs her by her throat.

She screams and beats her fists against his chest.

Frank forces her onto the ground and tries to restrain her arms.

She fights and kicks at him.

Frank places his hands on her throat and squeezes.

She continues to struggle, scratching at his face.

Frank squeezes harder.

Her eyes open wide and she looks up at him.

Frank stares into her eyes as she begins to fade away.

Frank shakes.

Underneath him is Clara.

FRANK

No!

Frank jumps off of her and covers his ears.

FRANK (CONT'D)

N0000000!

Frank stares down at Antoinette; she lies motionless on the ground.

Frank hits himself in the face and falls to his knees; shaking and rocking back and forth.

FRANK (CONT'D) No. No. No. No.

The stereo clicks and another song begins to play, this one with strong overtones and aggressive violins.

Frank jumps up and runs out of the studio and into the storm that rages outside.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

The clock says 9:38.

Frank lays on his back staring up at the ceiling.

The ceiling fans spins.

Frank's eyes are bloodshot, he blinks.

The door to Frank's bedroom slowly opens.

Frank does not move.

The door opens and the dancer walks in.

DANCER

Frank.

Frank does not move.

She moves closer.

DANCER (CONT'D) Today is the big day.

She smiles.

DANCER (CONT'D) I tried to come by last night but...

She moves closer to the bed.

DANCER (CONT'D) ...but you weren't home.

She stands over him.

DANCER (CONT'D) I know I acted a little...

Frank blinks.

She gently slides onto the bed, sitting by his feet.

DANCER (CONT'D) Don't think it wasn't hard on me too Frank, not seeing you.

She places a hand on his leg.

DANCER (CONT'D) But you have to understand, this is it for me. Dancing is all there is left - She slides her hand up and slides up on the bed until she is up by his waist.

DANCER (CONT'D) If I can't succeed at this then I don't think I'll be able to live...

She touches his chest and slides up on the bed so that she is up by his arm.

DANCER (CONT'D) ... but I am happy I have you Frank. I have you watching over me...

She touches his face, his scratches.

DANCER (CONT'D) Watching over me to make sure I'm safe, protecting me.

She places a soft kiss on his lips.

DANCER (CONT'D) Wish me luck.

She rises and walks out of the bedroom.

Frank stares at the ceiling.

The fan spins.

He closes his eyes.

INT. OFFICE - AFTERNOON

The elevator doors open and Frank wheels the cart down the pathway between the cubicles.

The first cubicle is empty, he lays down some mail.

Frank wheels the cart two cubicles down.

He enters, it is empty.

Frank places the mail on the desk.

Frank wheels cart down to Mary's Cubicle, she sits inside squeezing her own hands together and staring at the computer.

Frank stares at her, his eyes are bloodshot.

Mary does not look at him.

He picks up her stack of envelops and places them in her desk.

She turns and screams.

Frank is startled.

Mary covers her mouth and closes her eyes.

Frank stares at her.

MARY

Oh... oh Frank...

She stands up and reaches out to him, Frank steps back.

Mary stares at him, tears in her eyes.

MARY (CONT'D) Oh my God you don't know. You weren't here this morning you don't know.

Frank watches her.

MARY (CONT'D) It's Lenny Frank. I kept calling his house, I called his friends and they went to check on him.

Frank sticks his bandaged hand into his pocket.

MARY (CONT'D) They said he didn't come home, they found his car in the garage Frank. Exactly where he left it...

Frank avoids making eye contact with her.

MARY (CONT'D) ...they found him in the trunk Frank! Lenny is de-

She collapses back into her seat.

Frank shakes his head and turns around.

He wheels his cart away as her sobs grow louder from her cubicle.

Frank wheels the cart down and places the last bit of mail into another empty cubicle.

Frank looks up, two men in suits - detectives BOWLER AND LANSKY, stand talking to one of the executives.

Frank turns around and takes his cart.

He wheels it quickly to the elevator and presses the button.

The detectives turn around and begin looking around the office.

Frank grips the handle of his cart and waits.

He presses the button three more times.

The elevator doors finally open and Frank wheels the cart in.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

When Frank turns around to press the button the detectives step into the elevator.

Frank moves over to let them in, avoiding eye contact.

Bowler presses the second floor and waits for the doors to close.

Frank stares down at his cart.

Bowler turns around to look at Frank.

His mouth moves but Frank does not hear what he says.

Frank stares at Bowler.

FRANK

What?

BOWLER

What floor?

Frank looks down at his cart.

FRANK

Lobby... lobby.

Bowler nods and presses the L button.

Frank turns his face so that his scratches are not visible; Lansky turns to look at Frank.

Lansky stares.

The elevator dings and Lansky looks down at Frank's cart.

LANSKY

My nephew does mail.

Frank does not answer or look at him.

Bowler exits the elevator when the doors open.

BOWLER

Lansky.

Lansky looks at Bowler and turns back to Frank.

BOWLER

Everything okay?

He steps forward and catches the door, holding it open. He looks at Frank and then at his partner, then back at Frank.

FRANK Does he work downtown?

LANSKY

No. No he works up on 96 I think, have a nice day.

Lansky turns and exits the elevator.

The doors close and Frank trembles.

He slowly removes his hand from his pocket; he turns it over and opens his clenched fist. His nails were dug into his palm. Frank stares at the wound he ripped open with his own nails, having torn through the bandage. INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS The elevator doors open and Frank squeezes past two executives, leaving his cart in the elevator. Frank power walks out of the building. EXT. BUIDING - CONTINUOUS Frank exits the building and walks guickly down the street. The sun shines bright in the sky. EXT. THEATER - DUSK Frank sits in the theater, he is alone. He stares at the screen, it is black. He stares down at his hands. His hands shake. A light shines in Franks face. AGENT (O.S.) Hey. Frank looks up; the TICKET AGENT stands at the end of the aisle with a miniature flashlight. AGENT The next black and white doesn't start until seven thirty. You have to buy another ticket ... Frank reaches into his pocket.

The agent waves the light at him.

AGENT (CONT'D) At the ticket booth.

Frank stands up and exits the row of seats.

The ticket agent follows him up the aisle.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Frank walks slowly down the street, his tie is loosened.

He stops in front of the flower shop and stares inside.

Frank walks in.

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Frank walks up to the register with his basket and empties the contents; a can of cat food, a large bag of salad, some French dressing, a container of chopped fruits, a cheap bottle of wine, some water, and a box of candles.

The register lady looks up and smiles.

Frank stares into space.

LADY You don't look like someone who's about to celebrate.

Frank stares at her.

She tilts her head to the side.

LADY (CONT'D) One of those days huh?

She rings up the items.

LADY (CONT'D) Just like my birthday last year. The whole day went to hell but I cheered up as soon as I reached my doorstep.

She looks up at him as he hands her some money.

LADY (CONT'D) Do you want to know why?

She hands Frank his change and smiles.

LADY (CONT'D) Because I snooped around and found out about my surprise party. So I had something to look forward to, and judging by the looks of your shopping bag ... Frank bags his items and watches her. LADY (CONT'D) You have something to look forward to at home as well. Frank looks down at his bag. He looks up at her and he has a small smile on his face. FRANK I'll finally get to see her dance. The lady nods and claps her hands. LADY There you go. Frank turns and leaves. LADY (CONT'D) Have a nice night! EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT Frank stands across the street from his building. He looks up at the forth floor. The light to her apartment is off. Frank walks up to the building entrance. INT. HALLWAY Frank walks up to his apartment door, a door slams shut behind him. Frank turns around and stares down the hall. He turns back around and opens his door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frank walks into his apartment and closes the door.

He stares at his projector.

He turns to look at the reel on the ground next to his open box.

Frank takes his bags into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Frank places his groceries on the table.

Frank takes out the can of cat food and opens it.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

The open can of cat food sits on the fire escape.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The table is gone from the kitchen.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The television is moved to the corner of the room.

The couch is pushed aside and the table sits in its place.

On the table is a large bowl of salad filled with chopped fruits, the bottle of wine and a glass and a single rose. Two candles burn on the edge of the table.

Frank stands by his window, light rain falls outside.

Someone knocks on the door.

Frank turns and walks over, he looks out the peep hole.

The dancer stands in the hallway in her dancing clothes and a leather jacket, her face is emotionless.

Frank opens the door and she walks past him.

Frank closes the door and turns to look at her, she stops in front of the table and stares at it.

They are both quiet for some time.

DANCER

How could you Frank?

Frank stares at her.

She keeps her back to him, staring down at the table.

DANCER (CONT'D) I trusted you. I thought you were going to be...

She shakes her head.

DANCER (CONT'D) ... you promised to be there for me. You said you were going to protect me from everyone who wants to hurt me.

She leans over and picks up her flower.

DANCER (CONT'D) I believed you.

She blows out the candles.

Frank steps forward.

DANCER (CONT'D)

Stop.

She reaches into her jacket pocket and when her hand comes out she is holding a gun.

FRANK

What -

Frank pauses.

DANCER What did you think you were doing? Why Frank?

She squeezes the flower and drops it.

DANCER (CONT'D) Why didn't you kill her?

Frank stares at her as she slowly turns around.

DANCER (CONT'D) You were supposed to kill her.

Frank stares into her eyes, she stares at the ground.

FRANK

I... what are you -

She laughs.

DANCER You don't think I knew what you were doing Frank? You promised to protect me! How!?!

Frank stares at her.

DANCER (CONT'D) Killing drunks? Killing my asshole ex-boyfriend? That's protecting me?

She turns around and pushes everything off the table, Frank's bowl of salad smashes against the floor. The cheap bottle of wine shatters against a wall.

> DANCER (CONT'D) Where were you when it mattered?

She spins around and holds out the gun.

DANCER (CONT'D) You were there Frank! You were right there! You had her and you could have killed her.

She paces up and down.

DANCER (CONT'D) I thought you killed her. Then I saw her walk in with her little fucking neck bruises.

She stops and waves the gun around.

DANCER (CONT'D) I said to myself; okay, maybe her bruises will mess with her. Maybe Frank isn't a total failure!

Frank stares at her, she locks eyes with him.

DANCER (CONT'D) So now I'm her fucking understudy. She danced like she's never danced before and I danced like shit because I missed out on practicing.

Frank shakes his head and places his bruised hand on his chest.

FRANK

I'm sorry ...

DANCER

I missed practicing because I was here trying to make you into a man. Fucking you and pretending to enjoy it!

She shakes her head and laughs.

DANCER (CONT'D) Shit Frank, at least Lenny knew how to use his dick! Do you even know what to do with your dick?

Frank stares down at his hands.

DANCER (CONT'D) Fuck sorry Frank. Sorry doesn't make my dreams come true!

She stares at him.

DANCER (CONT'D) Do you love me Frank?

Frank stares at his hands.

She steps forward and slaps him across the face.

Frank nods.

She smiles.

DANCER (CONT'D) Good, then it's not too late.

She extends her hand and lets the gun dangle on her index finger.

Frank stares at it.

FRANK What do you want me to do?

DANCER Protect me Frank. Kill her.

Frank slowly takes the gun from her.

She watches him.

DANCER (CONT'D) She's at the studio, go to her Frank. You do this and then I promise everything will be good between me and you.

Frank looks into her eyes, she smiles at him.

DANCER (CONT'D) It will.

Frank slowly turns and walks towards his front door.

He opens it.

Out in the hallway the elderly man peeks out of his door, Frank stares at him - the gun in his hand.

The elderly man closes his door.

Frank stares out into the hallway.

He turns around and shuts the door.

The dancer watches him.

FRANK

I can't.

DANCER

What?

Frank shakes his head, staring at the gun.

FRANK

I'm sorry... I can't.

He looks up at her.

FRANK

I'm sorry.

She closes her eyes and looks to the ceiling.

Frank stares at her.

She laughs.

DANCER I don't believe this.

She looks at him.

DANCER (CONT'D) You said you loved me.

FRANK

I do.

DANCER

I knew it. You don't want to protect me. You're useless; you're useless to me just like you were useless to your mother.

Frank stares at the ground.

DANCER (CONT'D) What? You think I didn't know? You think I didn't look into your stupid little box? She stomps over to his closet and pulls the box down from the top shelf, letting it and all its contents fall to the ground.

Envelopes and pictures of Clara litter the ground.

DANCER (CONT'D) Look at this crap!

She stomps on the pictures, reaching down and picking up one of the envelopes.

DANCER (CONT'D) Pictures of the bitch! Stupid letters of how you wished you could have saved her stuffed into envelopes!

She waves the envelope around.

DANCER (CONT'D) Where were you going to send them Frank? To Jesus? What's the postage cost?

She laughs and rips the envelope in half. Frank slowly raises his hands to his head and covers his ears.

DANCER (CONT'D) You were supposed to take care of me Frank! But you failed; you failed me just like you failed her.

Frank rocks back and forth on his heels, shaking his head and covering his ears. He mouths the word no over and over again.

> DANCER (CONT'D) You're useless and you're a coward!

She throws the ripped pieces him.

DANCER (CONT'D) You're a fucking coward Frank!

She laughs and shakes her head.

DANCER (CONT'D) No wonder you let her die.

Frank raises his gun and fires a shot into her chest.

FRANK

Stop it!

The dancer stops and stares at her chest, blood stains her shirt.

Frank stares at her in shock.

FRANK (CONT'D) No. No. No I'm sorry!

Frank runs over to her and catches her as she collapses.

FRANK (CONT'D) I'm sorry. I'm sorry come back...

He stares into her eyes as they roll back into her head.

Frank lays her on the ground.

He stands up and walks back and forth, holding his head.

FRANK (CONT'D) No. No, don't go...

Frank stops and stares at his box, the reel sits on the ground.

Frank walks over to it and picks it up.

He stares at it and tears stream down his face.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

The storm pours down in wild torrents as the police cars screech to a halt in front of the building.

The police officers run out of the car and enter the building.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The elderly man opens his door and points at Frank's door, a police officer helps him back into his apartment as the rest of them run down the hall.

One of the cops bang on the door; He shouts but he can not be heard.

The elderly man tries to push past the cop; the officer pushes him back into his apartment.

The cop continues to bang on the door.

The cop continues to scream, the only sound that can be heard is a gun shot.

He steps back and one of the other cops kicks the door in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The police officers slowly walk in with their guns drawn.

Frank sits in his recliner, his head is tilted to the side and blood runs down from his temple. His eyes are open.

The police officers holster their guns and approach.

The projector spins.

Frank is holding the dancer's lifeless body; she slumps down on his lap with her eyes closed.

On the wall where the television used to be are the images from the projector. A young Clara dances around her living room with all the furniture pushed to the side.

She is smiling and laughing and full of life.

She reaches out and takes the hand of an eight year old Frank, pulling him into the picture and forcing him to dance with her.

They spin and twirl and laugh.

Frank's dead eyes stare ahead as the light from the images dance on his face.

FADE OUT