

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE

THE CURTAIN RISES: The same, a little past ten o'clock that night. The tables are covered with brown paper and piled with crab shells. Pitchers of beer glow on the tables like fat, amber lamps. The tables have been pushed together down center.

JOYCE wears one of ALICE's tacky, sexy numbers--leopard spots on a short, slit sheath with a single strap top.

ALICE is wears a light, short summer dress that is probably a size too small, and sandals. She's a grown-up Lolita who knows how to turn heads without getting kicked out of the bar.

BEVERLY wears a light and lovely summer dress. The look is modest, but very attractive.

The men are dressed casually: HARLEY in jeans and a Hawaiian shirt, MAL in tan pants and short sleeve shirt. EDDIE wears light slacks, powder blue polo shirt. GEORGE wears an apron that says "Crabs! The Eatin' Kind."

At Rise: laughter.

EDDIE

So, I'm in Baltimore—What? Okay Bal'mer, I'm not a local, okay? So, I'm in Baltimore. I hail a cab. It's Harley. I got some business at the harbor; he's talkin' boats all the way. Does this guy know boats! What do I know? Fishing in Florida--the skipper takes you out--you hang your pole--maybe your get lucky. But with Harley it's an adventure: he's got a boat; he's got a friend who owns a spot on the Bay--

HARLEY moves to the bar and sits heavily on a stool. He is sullen and has been drinking a lot.

EDDIE

--everything falls into place. For once in my life, a real vacation.

ALICE

I think that's great.



JOYCE

I don't understand this urge to get up early in the morning and drag bait through water.

ALICE

I'll try anything once.

EDDIE

Some day Harley's gonna take you fishing. If he doesn't, I will.

ALICE

I've never gone fishing in my entire life. Can you believe that?

GEORGE

You don't want to catch a fish; you want to eat one. You sure did a job on those crabs.

ALICE

The way you fixed 'em, George, I'd swear they come straight from heaven on a platter.

GEORGE

You just love my crabs.

ALICE

I do! You make it sound dirty, but I do!

GEORGE

Alice, you're okay.

ALICE

I'm gonna kiss you.

GEORGE

Oh, the hell you are!

ALICE

Oh, the hell I'm not! Don't you run away from me.

She gives him a big smack on the lips--  
genuine, but playful.

GEORGE

Oh honey, if you gonna to pay like that, I can head back in the kitchen and steam another dozen.

MAL

Alice, why don't you pick a tune on the box? Maybe we can all have a dance before the party breaks up.

ALICE crosses to the jukebox.

JOYCE

(Moving out onto the floor)

Mal, when I write about this place--and I certainly shall--that jukebox will be the hook on which the whole story hangs.

JOYCE sways to music heard only by her.

EDDIE

I think she means you got a lot of old records. Classy, but they are old.

MAL

That jukebox was here when I bought this place.

BEVERLY

We could use some new selections.

MAL

I think some of the Tony Bennett records are recent.

ALICE

Rock and roll!

JOYCE

Yeah.

ALICE

All my dance routines are set to rock--heavy beat, you know? It's more or less expected.

EDDIE

That's too bad. Doesn't leave much room for subtlety or imagination.

ALICE

Foxy, the customers don't want anything subtle. And they've got too much imagination as it is.

ALICE laughs, turns back to the jukebox.

HARLEY

That's why God created bouncers.

BEVERLY

Joyce? Are you okay?

JOYCE

I'm dancing to beautiful music.

BEVERLY

Dear, the music hasn't started.

ALICE

That outfit is bringin' out the beast in you, honey.

JOYCE

I live in a jungle. I was born to live in a jungle. This is the real me. Bev, what do you think?

BEVERLY

I think you better change your name.

JOYCE

True. Nobody ever craved a passionflower named "Joyce."

ALICE

You can borrow "Sheena," if you like. I don't mind.

JOYCE

I'm already wearing your clothes, dear. I don't want to wear your name, too.

HARLEY

Not to worry; I happen to know that both slip off real easy.

ALICE

Oh my! Look what I found.

BEVERLY

What?

ALICE

Wait a minute.

She takes a coin from a dish on the jukebox and punches a selection. She slinks over to EDDIE and draws him onto the dance floor, as the introduction plays.

EDDIE

(Laughing.)

Hey, whaddaya think you're doin'?

ALICE

Dance with me.

EDDIE

Ah, c'mon. I got two left feet.

ALICE

Doesn't matter. Just stand right here. Look bored, but very *macho*--know what I mean?

EDDIE shrugs, tries a bored, *macho* look.

MUSIC: Ezio Pinza singing "Some Enchanted Evening." (Use only the introduction, third verse, and final chorus.) During the first verse, ALICE dances a sultry ballet all around EDDIE.

At the beginning of the final chorus, EDDIE really starts to dance with ALICE. The man can actually dance. They end the final chorus in a dramatic embrace.

JOYCE

Me next! I get to dance with Eddie next!

ALICE

Two left feet! You stinker!

EDDIE

I want you to know that I owe my success to my beautiful and talented partner.

ALICE

Oooh! Where'd you learn to dance like that?

EDDIE

Where I grew up that's how people danced. We enjoyed hangin' on to each other.

BEVERLY

Eddie, you're a man of hidden talents.

HARLEY

Oh, yeah, he's full of surprises.

JOYCE

My turn with Eddie. Somebody play something slow.

JOYCE goes to EDDIE, puts her arms around his neck.

ALICE

(Holding out her arms to HARLEY)

Come on, Harley, let's dance.

HARLEY

I'll sit this one out, if you don't mind.

ALICE

Yeah. I mind. Come on.

JOYCE

Somebody play a slow one.

MAL

Harley, join the party. Pick a tune for us.

HARLEY

Sure, Mal, whatever you say.

JOYCE

Something slow, please, Harley.

HARLEY

I thought you like things fast.

JOYCE

Not tonight, okay?

HARLEY

What's so special about tonight? I mean, you're either fast or your not--what's it gonna be?

JOYCE

(Crossing to jukebox)

Never mind! I'll pick out the song myself.

HARLEY

(Roughly shoving her away)

Like hell you will!

JOYCE

Hey!

HARLEY

Think I can't pick out a lousy song? Something slow, so you can rub up against Eddie?

MAL

Harley! You're out of line!

HARLEY

"Adagio Serenade"--there's a jungle name! I mean, who the hell in *advertising's* gonna know any better? How about: "Come To Me, My Honey-Suck-It-Rose!"

MAL

(Grabbing Harley by the collar)

What the hell's the matter with you?

HARLEY

I don't know! I wish I knew, I-- Too much to drink.

EDDIE

Then you better lay off.

HARLEY

I'll play some music. Sorry, Joyce, I didn't mean to get rough.

(He turns to the jukebox)

I miss the piano.

MAL

Jesus Christ.

HARLEY

What'd you go and sell it for?

BEVERLY

We'll get another one, Harley.

HARLEY

You will, huh?

MAL

Sure. First thing. I promise.

HARLEY

'cause I could be playing it right now. I'd play "Mona Lisa." I'd play all the songs.

ALICE

Honey, why don't you call it a night? Sleep it off. You'll feel better in the morning.

HARLEY

I'll bet that's what you told Cody. "Sleep it off, kid. You'll feel better in the morning."

ALICE

Don't start.

HARLEY

Why not?

ALICE

You've got it all wrong.

HARLEY

I got it wrong. That's pretty good. You do it with my son--

ALICE

Harley!

HARLEY

-- and I got it wrong.

She attacks him. HARLEY stands like a dead man, receiving the blows. EDDIE quickly pulls her away.

HARLEY

Now she's gonna cry. She's real good at that.

GEORGE

How about you and me take a little walk, Harley, how about that? Nice an' cool outside.

HARLEY

I was gonna play "You Belong To Me." Remember that one?

GEORGE

Sure. Come on.

HARLEY

"Fly the ocean in a silver plane.  
See the jungle when it's wet with rain."

GEORGE

That's very good.



HARLEY

It's a beautiful song.

MAL

(Supporting Harley)

Come on, off to bed.

HARLEY

You did that. You flew oceans in a silver plane..

MAL

(Helping HARLEY to the door.)

That's what I did, all right.

HARLEY

What a marvelous life. High above it all, in a silver plane.

MAL

Watch your step..

Exit HARLEY and MAL.

GEORGE stands looking after HARLEY and MAL, just staring at the door. BEVERLY sits quietly at the table. EDDIE looks at his watch, taps it, shakes his head.

EDDIE

What time you got, George?

ALICE

It wasn't like he said.

BEVERLY

What happened?

ALICE

Oh, last month! I was taking a shower--getting ready for my job at the club--and all of a sudden in stepped Cody. I mean, he just pulled back the curtain and stepped right in.

Well, I was startled! There he was -- big as life and grinning like the devil. I just laughed out loud, and he did, too, and one thing led to another..

JOYCE

I don't understand. You and Harley's kid--?

ALICE

Seventeen years old! Yeah, some kid.

Of all the times for Harley to knock off early! He didn't catch us in the act, exactly, but it was obvious what happened. Of course, he didn't blame Cody; he laid it all on me, like I was some evil seducer. Packed Cody on a Greyhound bus, back home to mamma. Not before they had a real, nice heart-to-heart. It was very inspirational.

GEORGE

Sometimes the best you can do is call it quits. Just pack your things and go.

ALICE

Sorry. I didn't mean to bust up your party.

(Half crossing to the door.)

I followed Harley -- came here -- to give him a choice. We could kill the past, and go on-- But I could just go on alone, like you say. Maybe to Florida, maybe California. It's Harley's choice. I owe him that.

Exit ALICE.

JOYCE

Somebody ought to look after her. Any volunteers?  
Okay, Joyce, you just volunteered.

EDDIE

I thought we were gonna have that dance?

JOYCE

No, I'm not in your league. I'd just step on your toes

EDDIE

Another time. Don't worry, my toes will keep one step ahead of your shoes.

Enter MAL.

BEVERLY

Tomorrow, we'll spend the whole day together, okay?

JOYCE

Okay. Look at me. I'm leaving a party and I'm actually sober.

BEVERLY

Joyce! After all, you are not that bad.

JOYCE

I'm calling this sober. You figure it out.

Exit JOYCE.

BEVERLY

You boys turn in. I'll straighten up in here.

EDDIE

What time is it?

MAL

Little past ten-thirty. Three hours to go.

EDDIE

Harley is a mess. I don't know if we can count on him.

GEORGE

We can. What about you?

EDDIE

I count him baggage: strictly overhead.

MAL

That's the price of doing business. Personally, I never liked carrying passengers. That's what you are, Eddie. You're the baggage I've got to carry.

EDDIE

Baggage? No. Dangerous cargo, Mal. Handle with care.

EDDIE turns to exit.

MAL

How many people know about this deal? Who else is in on this job?

EDDIE

We are a private club, Mal, very exclusive.

MAL

That call you got about the Veronica heading for Adlee --

EDDIE

What about it? You worried about that? I paid a guy to make the call. Not much, because he owed me. Nobody wants to owe me.

(Blowing BEVERLY a kiss)

Lady of the house.

Exit EDDIE. MAL turns to help BEVERLY.

GEORGE

Eddie means business, you can bet on that.

MAL

George-- get some rest.

GEORGE

That man could go crazy. He could do anything.

MAL

You talking about Eddie or Harley?

GEORGE

Harley's gonna come through for us, you'll see. He'll do his job.

MAL

So will we.

GEORGE

Okay. You're the captain.

Exit GEORGE.

MAL

One hell of a party.

BEVERLY

Don't go. Get out of it; leave it to the others--

MAL

I can't do that.

BEVERLY

Those men with the business card--call them. I don't care how long it takes; we can manage.

MAL

You said it yourself: we need money. Now.

BEVERLY

I didn't mean *now*! I know what I said. I didn't mean now, I only meant we should approach our problems reasonably. We should be reasonable. Oh, Mal, please-- I know you've done risky things--

MAL

Eddie frightens you.

BEVERLY

You all frighten me! I don't care about the others, but you--

MAL

I haven't changed. I haven't changed at all. That's why I'm doing business with Eddie.

BEVERLY

Oh, Mal.

MAL

You'd better think about that.

Exit MAL.

BEVERLY is alone on stage.

FADE OUT.