

Heart of Stone

Trusting the wrong person can be deadly.

A Jessica Quinn Mystery in Two Acts

by James Hutchison

Also available from www.jameshutchison.ca

What the Dickens! *Even Scrooge got a second chance.*

When Marty Fisher gets caught kissing his stage manager Samantha and the actor playing Scrooge shows up drunk Marty has to scramble to save the opening night production of a Christmas Carol and his engagement to his fiancée Tami.

Two Act Comedy, 6M, 3W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

A Christmas Carol – Two versions available. *Every man has the power to do good.*

When Scrooge's nephew Fred finds some letters Scrooge had written to his sister Fan a long time ago the past is unlocked, and Scrooge learns how his fear of poverty and pursuit of wealth have cost him a chance for love and genuine happiness.

CAST OF 10+ - Two Act Drama, 6M, 4W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

CAST OF 25+ - Two Act Drama, 15M, 10W, Multiple Sets, 120 minutes

Under the Mistletoe *Not every romantic evening goes as planned.*

Two couples in their late fifties, one long time friends and the other having just met, try to navigate the tricky road of love, sex and desire while spending a romantic night in the Christmas Themed Suites at the Prairie Dog Inn.

Two Act Romantic Comedy 1M, 1W or 2M, 2W Single Set, 120 minutes

Stories from Langford *Every town has its secrets.*

Six characters from Langford tell stories from their lives: stories about, jealousy, revenge, love and forgiveness.

Two Act Drama, 1M, 1W, Simple settings, 120 Minutes

Death and the Psychiatrist *Even Death could use a friend.*

Feeling depressed about having a job where no one likes him, Death goes into therapy with Dr. Thompson in order to help him cope with his guilt.

One Act Comedy, 3M, or 2M, 1W, Single Set, 50 Minutes

Elvis is Dead *Saving the world takes time.*

Time travellers Dr. Fred Bunson and Commander Robert Frump have travelled back in time to retrieve a lost book and save the universe but when things don't go as planned librarian Sally Knowlton comes to the rescue.

Ten Minute Comedy, 2M, 1W, Single Set, 10 Minutes

Plus, other One Acts and 10 Minute Plays including The Blood of a Thousand Chickens, 500 bucks and a pack of smokes, and Never Give Up.

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James Hutchison writes comedies, dramas, and mysteries. He also interviews other playwrights, actors, and directors about the business and creative aspects of theatre, film, and television. You can read his interviews on his blog and download his plays at www.jameshutchison.ca.

Heart of Stone – A Jessica Quinn Mystery
A Play in Two Acts by James Hutchison

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CAST of CHARACTERS

Jessica Quinn	a detective
Blake Bannister	a reporter
Rodd Steele	a police detective
Colonel McConnell	the patriarch of the McConnell family
Mary McConnell	the Colonel's daughter
Raymond Holloway	the Colonel's Butler
Curtis*	the Colonel's Chauffeur
Alexander King	a Crime Lord
Cornelius Nero	King's right-hand man
Hannah Stark	A young woman
Bartender*	a bartender at the Auburn
Waiter*	a waiter at the Lincoln Park Café
Thug*	one of King's thugs

* Could be played by the same actor

SETTINGS

JESSICA QUINN's OFFICE
POLICE INTEROGATION ROOM
HOME OF COLONEL MCCONNELL
AUBURN SALOON
ALEXANDER KING's OFFICE at the SILVER NUGGET
LINCOLN PARK OUTDOOR CAFE
A WAREHOUSE
CABIN OF A YACHT

TIME

1950

STORY OF THE PLAY

Jessica Quinn is a hard-drinking female detective who gave up her job as a newspaper reporter writing advice columns in order to start her own detective agency and put Alexander King, a local crime lord, out of business. Her most recent case started twenty years ago when Mary McConnell was forced to give up her baby girl for adoption by her father Colonel McConnell. Now a woman by the name of Hannah Stark has shown up claiming to be Mary's daughter and the Colonel's granddaughter. Quinn has been hired to find out the truth. Complicating matters is Quinn's relentless crusade to put King, whom she blames for her father's death, behind bars. There are plenty of twists and turns and a few gunfights as Quinn tries to find out the truth about Hannah and put King in jail.

NOTES

GUNFIGHTS & FIST FIGHTS

Fights need not be staged as described however a professional fight choreographer should be hired to ensure that all necessary safety precautions are taken. In addition, please follow all safety precautions and local laws in the use of prop guns in the production of Heart of Stone.

SMOKING

The time is 1950. People smoked. They smoked at work. At restaurants. At movie theatres. In bed. They did a lot of smoking. There are several times in the play where characters have a smoke but this should in no way limit the number of times people light up in the play.

PRODUCTION

There are several locations so designing the production to move quickly between scenes is essential. There should be little pause in the flow of action. Settings and clothing need not be realistic – they may be stylized in a manner to suggest the time and place.

ACT I

Scene i	Jessica Quinn's Office
Scene ii	Police Interrogation Room
Scene iii	Home of Colonel McConnell
Scene iv	Jessica Quinn's Office
Scene v	Auburn Saloon
Scene vi	Jessica Quinn's Office
Scene vii	Home of Colonel McConnell
Scene viii	Alexander King's Office at the Silver Nugget
Scene ix	Police Interrogation Room
Scene x	Lincoln Park Outdoor Cafe
Scene xi	Home of Colonel McConnell
Scene xii	A Warehouse

ACT II

Scene i	Home of Colonel McConnell
Scene ii	Cabin of a yacht
Scene iii	Home of Colonel McConnell
Scene iv	Jessica Quinn's Office
Scene v	Home of Colonel McConnell
Scene vi	Lincoln Park Outdoor Cafe
Scene vii	Jessica Quinn's Office

For Graham

ACT ONE: HEART OF STONE

SCENE I: QUINN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Setting: There is a large wooden desk and chair along with some filing cabinets and a lounge chair and sofa. The large window behind the desk and the glass in the door to the hallway is lettered: Quinn Detective Agency. It is dark except for moonlight coming in from the window and the desk lamp which casts light in a narrow circle around the desktop.

At Rise: A MAN wearing a trench coat and fedora is searching through the desk drawers.

MAN: Where the hell are they?

After a few moments, we hear two people approaching in the hallway. They are talking but we can't make out what is being said.

MAN: Damn!

The MAN turns off the desk light and hurries into the storage room through the side door just as JESSICA QUINN and BLAKE BANNISTER enter from the hallway.

BLAKE: Jesus Quinn, are you going to be okay?

QUINN: I'll be fine. It's nothing a shot of bourbon won't fix.

BLAKE turns on a light.

BLAKE: You know you're lucky you weren't killed. King is a dangerous man.

QUINN: If he wanted me dead, I'd be dead already. Fix us a drink.

BLAKE crosses to the desk and pulls out two glasses and a bottle of bourbon. He pours two fingers into each glass. QUINN removes her jacket. She is wearing a holster with a Colt 38 Special.

BLAKE: When did you start packing heat?

QUINN: A girl has a right to protect herself.

BLAKE: Maybe you should lie low for a few days. At least until things cool down.

QUINN: I'll be fine. You worry too much.

BLAKE: We could head up the coast. Stay at my Uncle's place. He has that guest cottage we could use.

BLAKE hands QUINN her glass of bourbon.

QUINN: Oh, this is a trip for two, is it?

QUINN takes a nice long drink.

BLAKE: Why not? The paper owes me some time.

QUINN: Sorry, but I'll have to take a rain check. I'm working on a new case.

BLAKE: Anything interesting?

QUINN: Yeah, it could be as a matter of fact.

There is a noise in the other room. QUINN reacts by reaching for her gun.

QUINN: Somebody there?

No answer. There's another noise.

QUINN: Listen buddy, you better come out or you're going to get yourself pumped full a lead.

A shot rings out from the other room. QUINN ducks as the bullet smashes the bottle of bourbon on the desk. QUINN rolls forward and shoots off a bullet as she ducks behind one of the lounge chairs. BLAKE ducks behind the desk.

The MAN in the other room runs into the office and fires off two more shots as he breaks for the door. QUINN fires a shot at the MAN but misses and the glass in the door shatters. The MAN turns and aims his gun towards QUINN, but she kicks it out of his hand. The MAN lunges at her grabbing her arm holding the gun. QUINN's gun fires. The two fall backwards. As they fall QUINN turns her body so the MAN falls on his back. The MAN lets out a loud grunt.

BLAKE comes out from behind the desk as QUINN and the MAN struggle. BLAKE pulls the man off QUINN. The MAN turns and gives BLAKE a hard chop across the chin. BLAKE stumbles back.

QUINN has gotten back on her feet and when the MAN turns to face her, SHE gives him a swift kick in the stomach. The thug bends over. QUINN gives him an upper cut and he staggers backwards. SHE gives him another couple of hard punches across his face and then SHE gives him a final kick in the gut, and he flies back and lands on the floor.

MAN: Groans.

QUINN stands over him.

QUINN: That was 12-year-old bourbon you bastard.

End Scene

SCENE II: INTERROGATION ROOM – NIGHT

QUINN is sitting. STEELE stands over her.

STEELE: So, you've got no idea who this guy is.

QUINN: He didn't introduce himself. He just took a shot at us and then tried to make a run for it. I don't like thugs like him breaking into my office. It ruins my day.

STEELE: That boyfriend of yours is going to have a pretty nasty bruise in the morning.

QUINN: Bannister is not my boyfriend.

STEELE: No? Well then why don't you take me up on that standing dinner invitation Jess?

QUINN: Does asking me to dinner have anything to do with this investigation?

STEELE: What's wrong with a detective taking a personal interest in his cases?

QUINN: Nothing. But I've had a long day. I wouldn't mind getting out of here and heading home.

STEELE: You shoot straight with me and I'll shoot straight with you. Now what's this I hear about you working for Colonel McConnell?

QUINN: Where'd you hear that?

STEELE: I have my sources.

QUINN: Yeah, I'm working for him. What's that got to do with anything?

STEELE: The guy you sent to the hospital is the Colonel's chauffeur. What was the Colonel's chauffeur doing in your office playing tough guy?

QUINN: Beats me. I thought it was one of King's men.

STEELE: You're lucky it wasn't.

QUINN: I can handle myself.

STEELE: Oh sure, you gave this guy a broken nose, a concussion, three broken ribs, and a dislocated shoulder. But what if this had been somebody a little more dangerous? Somebody who knew what he was doing.

QUINN: I told you I can handle myself. Are we done?

STEELE: I don't know. You tell me. There's an all-night diner over on 5th.

QUINN: Sorry Steele not tonight. But that doesn't mean I want you to stop asking. Maybe one of these days – I'll surprise you.

STEELE: Maybe if you dropped the tough gal routine once in a while you might find out there's more to life than being a detective.

QUINN: Not for me there isn't. At least not right now. See you around Steele.

QUINN exits

End Scene

SCENE III: MCCONNEL HOME - MORNING

MARY and her father, the COLONEL, are in the middle of an argument.

MARY: How dare you go behind my back and hire a detective. A detective father!

COLONEL: Mary please.

MARY: Haven't you interfered in my life enough!

COLONEL: I need to be sure.

MARY: None of this would have happened in the first place if you'd only –

COLONEL: Only what! Let you keep the child? Let you disgrace this family. Cause a scandal. For God sake Mary, you had better not jeopardize our reputation. You hear me.

RAYMOND HOLLOWAY, the COLONEL's butler, a distinguished older black man, enters.

COLONEL: What is it Raymond?

RAYMOND: Jessica Quinn to see you Colonel.

COLONEL: Send her in.

MARY: This isn't settled yet father. You hear me. I'm done having you tell me what to do with my life. Done.

MARY storms off brushing past QUINN as RAYMOND opens the door and QUINN enters the room.

QUINN: Your daughter seems to be a little upset.

COLONEL: My daughter tends to be a little emotional.

RAYMOND closes the door, but he stays in the room.

QUINN: I tend to get a little emotional myself. Especially when my client's chauffeur pays me a late-night visit and takes a shot at me.

COLONEL: I don't know anything about that.

QUINN: Come on Colonel, I don't know what sort of game you're trying to pull, but I don't like to be kept in the dark. You have some explaining to do.

COLONEL: You'll have to ask Curtis why he broke into your office. I simply have no idea what would motivate him to do such a thing.

QUINN: Then you can pay me what you owe me, and I'll get out of here.

COLONEL: Now Quinn I'd like you to reconsider. There aren't a lot of women in your line of work and my daughter is suspicious of my motives. So rather than hire – the usual people – I use for such things I figured hiring a woman would make her more willing to accept the results of an investigation.

QUINN: That still doesn't give me any reason to stay on the case.

COLONEL: Well, considering your recent encounter with a former employee of mine I'd be willing to pay you twice your day rate plus a five-thousand-dollar bonus. I'll give you half now and half when the job is done. Raymond.

RAYMOND crosses over to the desk and gets an envelope out of the drawer.

QUINN: That money won't do me a lot of good if I'm dead.

RAYMOND hands the COLONEL the envelope.

COLONEL: I think you've proven to me and others that you are quite capable of looking after yourself.

THE COLONEL extends the envelope to QUINN, but SHE doesn't take it.

COLONEL: If you won't do it for me, or for the money, then do it for my daughter. As her father, it's my duty to protect her. She's the only family I have, and I wouldn't want to see her get hurt. I really have nowhere else to turn.

QUINN takes the envelope.

QUINN: Alright, I'll stay on the case, but if I find out you're not being straight with me – we're parting company – and I'm keeping this half of the bonus.

COLONEL: Of course.

QUINN: I'll need to talk to your daughter.

COLONEL: Raymond will you ask Mary to join us.

RAYMOND: Yes, Colonel.

RAYMOND exits.

COLONEL: Another letter arrived by the morning post.

The COLONEL pulls a letter out from his pocket and hands it to QUINN.

QUINN: Has your daughter seen it?

COLONEL: No.

QUINN: I'll make sure she gets it. It's important we have your daughter's co-operation if we're going to get to the bottom of this.

COLONEL: I just want to remind you that I'd like this matter handled with the utmost discretion.

QUINN: I'll be discrete. You give me a couple of days and I'll find out if this woman's story checks out.

RAYMOND enters.

COLONEL: Yes, Raymond.

RAYMOND: I'm sorry Colonel but Miss Mary left.

COLONEL: Did she say where she was going?

RAYMOND: No, Colonel.

COLONEL: Blast. Thank you, Raymond. You'll have to meet with Mary this evening – I suppose – if that works.

QUINN: Until this evening then.

QUINN exists

End Scene

SCENE IV: QUINNS OFFICE – EARLY AFTERNOON

BLAKE is sitting at the desk typing and smoking. He stops. He leans in and reads the last bit he typed and then takes a drag on his cigarette.

SFX: KNOCK at DOOR

BLAKE: It's open.

MARY MCCONNELL, wearing an attractive and expensive outfit, enters.

BLAKE: Well, hello.

MARY: Hello.

BLAKE: Blake Bannister.

BLAKE gets up and extends his hand.

MARY: Mary McConnell.

BLAKE: Yes, I know.

MARY: You do.

BLAKE: You'd have to be hiding under a rock not to know who the McConnell's are in this town. Not too many weeks go by without a photo of you or your father in the society pages. I work for the Journal.

MARY: A reporter. Well, I better be careful what I say.

BLAKE: We can keep things off the record.

MARY: I'm here to see Jessica Quinn.

BLAKE: Ah, well she's not here at the moment, but I'd be happy to take a message, or you're welcome to stay if you'd like.

MARY: Thanks. I'll stay.

BLAKE: Can I get you anything?

MARY: Do you have anything cold?

BLAKE: Sorry. I could offer you some warm water or cold coffee but that's about it.

MARY: No thank you.

BLAKE: Smoke?

MARY: Yes, please.

BLAKE gives MARY a cigarette and lights it with his lighter.

MARY: Don't you have an office at the Journal?

BLAKE: I have a desk.

MARY: But, you prefer to work here?

BLAKE: I'm working for myself today.

MARY: Oh. On anything interesting?

BLAKE: That depends on what you like to read.

MARY: I'm not much of a reader I'm afraid. Is that bad of me to say?

BLAKE: Not at all.

MARY: I'd rather go out. Paint the town red. Have some fun. What about you Mr. Bannister - do you like to go out on the town?

BLAKE: I like to cut a rug once in a while.

MARY: Well maybe you'd like to join me one evening.

BLAKE: What did you have in mind?

MARY: We could start with drinks at the Plaza and go from there.

BLAKE: You mean tonight?

MARY: Why not tonight?

BLAKE: A guy like me doesn't usually get asked out five minutes after meeting an attractive woman.

MARY: I find that hard to believe. I'll bet you've had plenty of invitations from attractive women. Shall we say seven?

BLAKE: Seven sounds great.

MARY crosses over to BLAKE

MARY: Wear something nice.

BLAKE: I've got two suits Miss McConnell, and you're looking at the good one.

MARY: Well then, I'll simply have to get you out of those clothes, won't I Mr. Bannister.

BLAKE: Will you?

MARY: Yes. And into a new suit.

BLAKE: Sorry but the clothing budget is a little short this month. You'll have to take me as I am.

MARY: My treat. After all, if I'm going to be seen around town with you then you should be dressed appropriately.

BLAKE: You don't have to do that.

MARY: But I want to.

BLAKE: I like to buy my own clothes.

MARY: Oh, don't be a bore Blake. You've done the socially acceptable thing and declined my offer, but now that I've insisted the only polite thing to do is to say thank you. Or does the idea of a rich woman spending money on you insult your manhood.

BLAKE: Not at all.

MARY: I'm glad to hear that. Men can be so juvenile when it comes to money. I've got plenty. I was born into a rich family and that wealth affords me certain luxuries – like being able to buy my friends nice things. We are going to be friends aren't we Mr. Bannister?

BLAKE: I sure hope so.

QUINN enters and takes in the situation.

QUINN: Ah, Miss McConnell. I guess we haven't been formally introduced.

MARY: No, we haven't. I must apologize for my outburst this morning, but I was upset.

QUINN: I understand.

MARY: I figured you'd want to speak to me, so I thought I'd come see you. And I didn't want my father around so he could twist and distort everything I need to tell you.

QUINN: Go on.

MARY: Do you have the letters?

QUINN: I have the two your father gave me and a new one. It arrived in the morning post.

QUINN hands the letters to MARY. MARY anxiously takes the letter and starts to read it.

QUINN: How many letters have you received?

MARY: Just these three.

QUINN: And you wrote back?

MARY: Yes, of course, why wouldn't I?

QUINN: Did you tell anyone?

MARY: I told Curtis.

QUINN: The chauffeur.

MARY: Yes, he's always had a little crush on me, and I'm afraid his visit to your office last night to recover my letters was him trying to prove his love for me, I suppose.

QUINN: And what happens to Curtis now that your father fired him?

MARY: I've no idea. I don't see why that's any concern of mine. I'm not the least bit interested in him. He knew that. Can I keep these?

QUINN: They're yours. I don't see why not.

MARY: My father had no right to take them.

QUINN: You do understand this could all be a scam.

MARY: I know what it could be, but I also know what my father is capable of, and I also know what's important to him. He didn't approve of the girl's father and so he doesn't approve of her. He married my mother because she had the right family connections not because he loved her. They had me a year later. It wasn't a very happy marriage from what little I remember. He was quite a bit older than her and she drank. She died when I was quite young. She drowned. It was an accident. So, I've been told.

QUINN: You don't think so?

MARY: She was drunk. She drowned. I guess it could have been an accident.

BLAKE: That must have been tough growing up without your mother.

MARY: I had a string of nannies and when I got older I had a governess. I would see my father once a day at the breakfast table where he'd tell me to say my prayers, pay attention to my tutors, and learn to be a lady since I was a McConnell. My father simply didn't know what to do with me, so he hired others to look after me. Is it any wonder I started running away from home?

BLAKE: Not at all.

MARY: When I was sixteen, I met Hannah's father, Sam. He was just a boy, but when he held me, I felt loved. We were going to go away and get married and live our lives together, but it was 1931 and jobs were hard to come by for a young couple like us. It wasn't long before my father hired some thugs to track us down. They took me back home and they beat up Sam.

MARY seems to become quite emotional.

BLAKE: Are you okay?

MARY: Do you mind if I have some water. The heat is unbearable.

BLAKE gets MARY a cup of water from the water cooler. She drinks the water and regains her composure.

MARY: When my father found us, I was pregnant. At first my father wanted me to have an abortion. Can you believe that? And us Catholic. I said no. I told him I was having this baby and that killing it would be a sin. He told me I'd already sinned so what difference did it make. But I stood up to him. I wasn't going to let anyone hurt my baby.

So, he sent me to St. Bernadette's. It's a place where rich Catholic girls can go to have their babies. The families just tell everyone their daughter is off exploring Europe with a distant relative.

When my daughter was born, I named her Hannah because it was my mother's name. And I thought if I couldn't be there to protect her maybe giving her my mother's name would do some good. I prayed they wouldn't find anyone to take her, but one day she was gone. I didn't even get a chance to say goodbye. Sister Margaret simply came in and told me I could go home.

QUINN: What happened to Hannah's father?

MARY: Sam? Oh, he was killed in the war. The destroyer he was on hit a mine and sank off Okinawa. A month after the war ended. Can you believe that? After the war ended.

QUINN: You two kept in touch?

MARY: No, not really. Raymond told me.

QUINN: Your butler?

MARY: Yes, he sort of kept tabs on Sam over the years. And now almost twenty years later I get a letter from Hannah. If this girl is my daughter, I want her in my life. I don't care what my father says or does. And I don't care what anyone thinks. I've recently made arrangements to free myself from my father's control and if he won't accept his granddaughter then I'll simply leave, and he can spend his remaining days – all alone – in that big empty house. That would cause quite a scandal, wouldn't it?

QUINN: It would.

MARY: So, is that the story my father told you?

QUINN: He told me a woman calling herself Hannah Stark had contacted you claiming to be your daughter. He asked me to check out her story. Which I'm going to do. But in order to do that we need to set up a meeting with her.

MARY: I've already arranged a meeting.

QUINN: You have?

MARY: Yes. We're meeting this Friday in Lincoln Park near the café by the fountain.

QUINN: Is she bringing any proof of her identity?

MARY: I didn't ask for any proof. I just want to look into her eyes and see if I can tell whether or not she's my daughter.

QUINN: What time are you two meeting?

MARY: Two thirty.

QUINN: Alright, I'll be there if you don't mind. I've got a few questions I need to ask her, and we'll see how things go. I assure you Mary that my only goal is to find out the truth. I hope you understand that. If this woman is your daughter, we'll find out.

MARY: Thank you. (To Blake) Mr. Bannister.

BLAKE: Miss McConnell.

MARY: See you tonight at the Plaza.

BLAKE: Looking forward to it.

MARY exits.

QUINN: Now you know you're not supposed to date the clients.

BLAKE: She's your client not mine.

QUINN: So, what did you make of her story? It all seemed a little theatrical to me. And what was all that business with the water and the unbearable heat?

BLAKE: You think she's playing you?

QUINN: I don't know, maybe.

BLAKE: She seemed sincere to me. Her father sounds like a cold mean bastard though – that's for sure.

QUINN: He's got money.

BLAKE: Does he ever. He just donating over a million bucks to Saint Mary's University. They're building the McConnell School of Business.

QUINN: Sounds like the Colonel's busy building his legacy. I just don't understand why he'd be so dead set against his granddaughter and her father.

BLAKE: Maybe they didn't have the right social connections.

QUINN: I guess we'll find out Friday.

End Scene

SCENE V: AUBURN SALOON – EVENING

QUINN is sitting alone at the bar. The BARTENDER pours her a shot of bourbon.

BARTENDER: Tough day Quinn?

QUINN: They're all tough.

BARTENDER: You want me to leave the bottle?

QUINN: Now that's the best idea I've heard all week.

The BARTENDER leaves the bottle. QUINN drinks a shot of bourbon and then refills her glass. CORNELIUS NERO, a handsome black man dressed in sharp and colorful clothes, walks up to the bar.

NERO: I hate to see anyone drinking alone. Mind if I join you?

QUINN: That depends.

NERO: Depends on what?

QUINN: Who's buying the drinks.

NERO: Allow me.

The BARTENDER comes over.

BARTENDER: What'll you have mister?

NERO: I'll have what she's having.

BARTENDER gets a glass and fills it with bourbon.

NERO: Here this should cover it.

NERO hands a bill to the BARTENDER.

BARTENDER: Gee, thanks mister.

NERO: To happy days.

QUINN and NERO drink.

QUINN: So, what's your story?

NERO: I see you're a woman who likes to come straight to the point Miss Quinn. Well then down to business. We have a mutual acquaintance.

QUINN: You don't say.

NERO: Yes, allow me to introduce myself.

NERO hands his card to QUINN

NERO: Cornelius Nero at your service.

QUINN: Well Mr. Nero, what can I do for you?

NERO: I'm here at the request of Alexander King.

QUINN: Is that right? You dress pretty fancy for an errand boy, don't ya?

NERO: I assure you, I'm no errand boy.

QUINN: Listen Nero, you tell King if he wants to talk to me then he can come down to the Auburn, and I'll buy him a drink.

NERO: Mr. King was hoping that the two of you could come to some sort of arrangement.

QUINN: What kind of arrangement?

NERO: Over the last few months you've managed to cost Mr. King a considerable amount of money and inconvenience.

QUINN: Have I?

NERO: Yes. Including that unfortunate incident earlier this week where you put two of his employees in the hospital.

QUINN: Well maybe his employees should learn how to drive.

NERO: Mr. King would like to avoid any further confrontations and has authorized me to make you an offer. How does ten thousand dollars sound?

QUINN: Sounds to me like I'm getting to him if he's willing to spend ten grand to keep me from causing trouble.

NERO: I am authorized to go higher. How does thirty sound?

QUINN: Wow. Thirty. I must really be a thorn in his side.

NERO: Do we have a deal?

QUINN: We are talking cash.

NERO: Of course.

QUINN: And what happens if I say no?

NERO: Well if you say no – and I walk out of this bar – you know perfectly well there are other ways of making sure problems go away.

QUINN grabs NERO by the collar.

QUINN: Listen here Nero, you tell King that I don't want his dirty money, and I'm not going to rest until he's rotting in a jail cell or found floating in the harbor. You hear me?

NERO: Please Quinn, these are expensive threads.

QUINN: You give him that message.

STEELE comes up in the bar.

STEELE: You okay Quinn?

QUINN: Yeah, I'm okay.

QUINN lets go of NERO. NERO is unshaken.

STEELE: This guy bothering you?

QUINN: He was just leaving. Weren't ya chum?

STEELE holds up his badge.

STEELE: You see this?

NERO: Very impressive. Did it come in a Cracker Jack Box?

STEELE: Listen smart mouth, I see you hanging around here again and I'll throw you in the drunk tank. Understand?

NERO: That won't be necessary. Quinn. Officer Cracker Jack.

NERO exits.

STEELE: Jesus Jessica, what the hell are you doing picking a fight with that guy? Do you know who he is?

QUINN: Said his name was Nero.

STEELE: He's called, "the fixer."

QUINN: The fixer?

STEELE: Yeah, he fixes things. If you know what I mean. What the hell did he want with you?

QUINN: He's working for King.

STEELE: You should back off Jess.

QUINN: I'd be happy to back off if you coppers would do your job.

STEELE: That's unfair Quinn. There are things in the works to put King behind bars. Just let us cops do our job and you stay out of it.

QUINN: If it's all the same to you I'd rather stir up a little trouble of my own.

STEELE: You know what your problem is Quinn? You always go barreling into a situation without thinking it through. You're like a bull in a china shop. You end up destroying things and getting people hurt.

QUINN: At least I hurt King where it counts. In the pocketbook.

STEELE: Just – lay off – and give us some time, would ya?

QUINN: Why should I? King gets out of any trap you boys in blue set up for him. There are too many cops and too many judges and too many politicians in his back pocket.

STEELE: I'll admit there are some bad cops on the force, but there are a lot of honest ones as well. (Beat.) Your dad was one.

QUINN: I know.

QUINN pours herself another shot of bourbon. STEELE considers what to say next. QUINN takes her shot and STEELE resumes the conversation.

STEELE: Do you think your father would want you messing around with King and his goons?

QUINN: My father died trying to put King away.

STEELE: Your father got shot at an armed robbery that went bad.

QUINN: Like hell! It was a set up. And King set it up. My father was going to testify the following week. He was off duty. Under police protection. And King still got to him. He got to him and two other witnesses and then suddenly nobody was willing to talk, and King went free.

STEELE: Believe what you want Quinn, but your father's death was just him being in the wrong place at the wrong time. I'm not saying King doesn't deserve to go to jail but that's not your job.

QUINN: What would you do if it had been your father?

STEELE: Probably the same thing you're doing. But if I was putting myself in danger then I'd hope to God I'd have somebody to slap some sense into me. Come on Quinn, you got to drop this. I don't want to see you get hurt. Why don't we go grab a bite and you can forget all about King and your dad and what a shitty world this is.

QUINN: You want to eat?

STEELE: Why not? I know a little joint over on 8th makes the best pizza this side of Chicago.

QUINN: I don't want any pizza.

STEELE: Well, what do you want?

QUINN: You want to come back to my place?

STEELE: Your place?

QUINN: Yeah, I'll cook you up a little something.

STEELE: Are you sure about this?

QUINN: Don't go getting cold feet on me now Steele. (They share a long kiss) Come on let's get out of here before I change my mind.

QUINN and STEELE exit.

End Scene

SCENE VI: QUINN'S OFFICE – LATE MORNING

At rise BLAKE is in the office. He wears a new shirt and tie. He is working at the typewriter, smoking a cigarette, and drinking coffee. QUINN enters.

BLAKE: Well, well, well...look who finally decided to show up.

QUINN: Don't you have a place of your own?

BLAKE: I do, but I like it here.

QUINN: Is that a new shirt?

BLAKE: You like it?

QUINN: And that tie. That's new too, isn't it?

BLAKE: It is.

QUINN: You come into some money I don't know about?

BLAKE: I told that McConnell woman I didn't need anything. But she insisted.

QUINN: Oh, did she?

BLAKE: Don't give me that look.

BLAKE finishes typing the page and rips it from the typewriter and puts in the pile of stacked papers on the desk beside the typewriter.

BLAKE: She took me to this place called Hanakers. You ought to see this joint. You go into a private room. You know – like a tailor's shop with all the mirrors and everything. And there's a dozen people running around with fabrics and bringing out samples and getting you drinks and asking you if you want caviar. Caviar! I can't stand the stuff myself, but I guess people get a taste for it. Anyway, she wanted to buy me a new suit.

QUINN: You need a new suit.

BLAKE: It's a nice-looking suit Quinn. Sharp. Navy blue with a pin stripe. They said they'd call when it was ready. Oh yeah, and she got me a new pair of shoes.

BLAKE shows his shoes to QUINN.

QUINN: You'd better watch out Blake. First, she starts buying you some nice clothes, and the next thing you know you're taking trips with her to Spain or South American, and then she's

setting you up in a nice little apartment not too far from her place. I've seen so many men make the same mistake.

BLAKE: Ha ha.

QUINN: Are you going to see her again?

BLAKE: Why, you jealous?

QUINN: No, but she does have good taste in clothes, I'll say that.

BLAKE: I think she just needed somebody to talk to. And buying me a new suit gave her something to do. She seems pretty nervous about meeting her daughter.

QUINN: If it is her daughter. Listen Blake, are you working for the paper today or do you think you could lend me a hand? I got a tip about one of King's Gambling joints. A place called The Silver Nugget. Thought I'd check it out.

BLAKE: Are you sure that's a good idea? One of these days King's going to set his goons on ya.

QUINN: He already has. He sent one of his errand boys – a guy named Cornelius Nero – to have a little talk with me last night. Steele says this Nero fellow is known in the trade as, "the fixer."

BLAKE: Steele?

QUINN: Yeah, Steele.

BLAKE: You were with Steele last night?

QUINN: Why, you jealous?

BLAKE: No, why would I be jealous? I just don't trust the guy. He's always seemed a little too smooth for my taste.

QUINN: We ran into each other at the Auburn.

BLAKE: Oh, is that all. So, what did this Nero want?

QUINN: He offered me thirty Gs to back off. But I said no.

BLAKE: You better watch your back Jess. If you don't take his money, he'll use it to hire some goons to take care of you permanently.

QUINN: That's why I need your help. I could use a little backup. Come on Blake why don't you tag along, and if it turns out to be a good story you can write it up for the early edition.

BLAKE: What have you got planned?

QUINN: Just thought I'd stir up a little trouble – that's all.

End Scene

SCENE VII: MCCONNELL HOME – LATE MORNING

RAYMOND enters the room. He looks around to make sure no one is watching. HE crosses to the mantel above the fireplace and pushes on a panel. The panel opens revealing a wall safe.

RAYMOND opens the safe and takes out a bundle of money. He takes one bill from the bundle and then returns the rest of the money to the safe. He closes the safe and puts the panel back in place. RAYMOND exits.

A moment later MARY and the COLONEL enter.

MARY: I'm going to take Hannah on a trip.

COLONEL: Are you?

MARY: Yes, just the two of us so we can get to know each other.

COLONEL: Mary, you don't even know if this woman is your daughter. Be reasonable. Let Quinn do her job.

MARY: Why? So, you can destroy any evidence she digs up?

COLONEL: Maybe it would be best if you took a little vacation.

MARY: I am not going back to Fairview.

COLONEL: You were doing so well until these letters showed up.

MARY: You said I'd never have to go back there.

COLONEL: You could have a nice room. One that overlooks the gardens. You like the gardens.

MARY: I don't like the pills. I don't like the treatments.

COLONEL: You could spend the summer resting and getting yourself back together.

MARY: I am not going to Fairview.

COLONEL: You've grown up with nothing but privilege. You've gone to the right schools and mixed with the right people and now you want to throw all that away. Well I'm not going to let you. If I must I'll call Judge Hardy, and have you committed.

MARY: Please father, don't do that.

COLONEL: Or what? You'll swallow another bottle of pills.

MARY: I told you that was an accident. Please don't make me go back to Fairview.

COLONEL: I'm only doing this because I love you, and I don't want to see you get hurt. Now I want you to let Quinn do her job, and I want you to stop all this ridiculous talk about taking a trip with that woman until we know the truth.

MARY: Yes, father.

KING: Now go to your room, and I'll send Raymond up with a little something to help you sleep.

MARY exits.

End Scene

SCENE VIII: KING's OFFICE at the SILVER NUGGET - EVENING

QUINN and BLAKE are sitting tied up in two chairs facing a large and impressive desk. NERO leans against the wall behind them smoking a cigarette. BLAKE struggles for a few moments in the chair and then looks over at QUINN.

BLAKE: So, was this part of your plan?

QUINN: No. But if you wait about ten minutes you'll find out exactly what my plan is. *(To Nero)* Hey Nero how about a drink?

NERO: It would be a little difficult for you to drink with your hands tied to a chair.

BLAKE: You could always untie us.

NERO: Now why would I go and do that?

QUINN: This is no way to treat a guest.

NERO: This is Mr. King's office. If he wants to offer you a drink that's up to him.

QUINN: So, where is your boss anyway?

NERO: Mr. King likes to ensure that his guests are having a good time. He believes in a personal touch when it comes to doing business.

KING enters wearing an expensive double-breasted suit. He strikes an imposing and dominating presence in any room but is generally good natured and humorous in his personality. KING moves to his desk and takes a cigar out of the cigar box and cuts off the end and then lights the cigar and takes a long drag on the cigar and blows the smoke into the air.

KING: Well, well, well, if it isn't Jessica Quinn and her faithful companion Blake Bannister our intrepid newshound. Buenas noches. What brings the two of you to the Silver Nugget?

QUINN: I've heard so much about this gin joint that I just had to check it out.

KING: And what do you think?

QUINN: Classy as far as most gambling joints go.

KING: I had a designer flown in from Paris to do the interior. I imported the roulette wheels from Monte Carlo, and the poker tables are all made of mahogany. The poker table in the high stakes room is the very table where Wallis Simpson first met Prince Edward the Duke of Windsor. Of course, that was before he became Edward the VII – King of England – and then

abdicated his throne for her. Love and gambling. Two sides of the same coin. Don't you agree Ms. Quinn?

QUINN: I wouldn't know. I don't play games of chance.

KING: You're welcome to try your luck at one of our tables anytime.

QUINN: I would, but I don't think you're going to be in business much longer.

KING: Is that a bluff?

QUINN: Your call.

KING: Ah, so poker is your game. So, what are the stakes?

QUINN: If I win, you'll end up behind bars.

KING: My word Jessica you are tenacious. And brash. Mr. Nero untie our guests.

NERO unties QUINN and BLAKE.

KING: You know what you should do? You should come and work for me. A woman with your smarts and your abilities could make a fortune.

QUINN: I'm not interested.

KING: If you won't take the job why not take the cash I offered you?

QUINN: The cash you earned through gambling, extortion, and prostitution – no thanks. I could never in good conscience spend a penny of it.

KING laughs.

QUINN: You find that funny?

KING: I do.

KING takes a long drag on his cigar.

KING: There's nothing like a good cigar now is there Mr. Nero?

NERO: Nothing quite like it.

KING gets two cigars. He hands one to BLAKE and the other to QUINN.

KING: These are extraordinary. They're imported from India and hand rolled by the Tagoré family which has been in the cigar business for eight generations. These particular cigars are their most coveted. They produce less than 500 a year. A large number of which, I have it on good authority, find their way behind the Iron Curtain. I guess not every comrade is treated equally, are they?

KING roars with laughter.

KING: I have a few connections and manage to snag myself a couple of boxes every year. I wouldn't normally be so generous, but I like you two. I ask only that when you do smoke these – you choose a time and place when you are free from distraction.

QUINN: Does that mean you're planning to let us go?

KING: Believe me Quinn nothing would satisfy me more.

SFX: PHONE RING

KING: Excuse me. (*KING picks up the phone on his desk*) Hello. (Mr. Nelson has exceeded his credit limit) How much has he lost? (Over seven thousand. He was playing in the high stakes room.) Well who let him sit at the high stakes table? (We're not sure how he got in.) There's nothing we can do about it now. Cover his loses so the other players get their money and take Mr. Nelson – to the warehouse – you understand? (Right boss.) (*KING hangs up*) Sorry about that. But that's the price of running a business. Constant interruptions and the need to always make tough decisions. Which brings me back to you two.

QUINN: You could have Mr. Nero give us a ride home.

KING prepares three drinks.

KING: I just might do that. But it will depend on the outcome of our little conversation here. I think you're really going to enjoy this Quinn. I know you have a taste for bourbon and this particular bourbon is among the finest you can buy. It's the sort of luxury I can afford and so I indulge my desire for good cigars and good drink. I'm not a thug Quinn. I'm a man of business. And a good corporate citizen. I give back to my community. I've given money to hundreds of charities and to plenty of people who have been down on their luck with no place else to turn. Tell me what do I do that's so bad?

KING hands QUINN and BLAKE a drink.

QUINN: You kill people.

KING: Even if I have – those people have always been other gentlemen in my line of work.

QUINN: What about my father?

KING: I swear, on the life of my own mother, that I had nothing to do with your father's death.

QUINN: Why should I believe that?

KING: Do you think I'd be able to operate for one minute in this town if I was a cop killer?

QUINN: You know what – I don't think I'll have that drink after all.

QUINN sets the drink down.

KING: You don't know what you're missing.

KING takes a drink and sizes up QUINN

KING: You have a tough shell Jess. But just how tough I'm not sure. You've put me in a very difficult position.

QUINN: It wouldn't be good for business to murder a woman.

KING: No, it wouldn't. But that's not the only reason. Is there anything we can do to come to some sort of arrangement? If you don't want my money then maybe I could donate the money to a charity of some sort. I could make a sizeable donation in your father's memory. Maybe set up a scholarship for poor kids that need help to go to college. Your father made sure you went to college, didn't he?

QUINN: Yeah, he did.

KING: Well why not help other kids? Keep your father's name alive. The John Quinn Memorial Scholarship fund. How does that sound?

QUINN is seriously thinking about this latest offer from KING.

QUINN: My dad would love that.

KING: Then why not do it?

QUINN: The John Quinn Scholarship fund.

KING: Maybe one of these kids will grow up to be President one day, and they'd owe it all to your old man.

QUINN: That would be too much to ask for.

KING: Do we have a deal?

QUINN: Do we have a deal?

SFX: FIRE ALARM GOES OFF

KING: Christ, go find out what the hell is going on.

NERO opens the door. There is smoke billowing outside the office door.

SFX: SHOUTS OF FIRE! FIRE! PEOPLE RUNNING AND SHOUTING.

KING: This is you're doing isn't it Quinn.

QUINN: What me?

NERO: We have to get you out of here.

KING: These two are coming with us.

NERO takes his gun and gestures to QUINN and BANNISTER to move.

KING pulls on a lever beside his desk and a secret panel hiding an escape tunnel opens.

SFX: FIRE TRUCK SIRENS.

STEELE runs into the office gun in hand.

QUINN: Steele thank God you're here.

STEELE: What's going on?

QUINN: King was about to make his escape.

STEELE: Was he? Alright Nero drop the gun.

NERO looks at KING.

KING: Better do what he says.

NERO drops the gun.

STEELE: Hands behind your head.

STEELE moves forward. One of KING'S THUGS comes up behind STEELE holding another gun.

THUG: Not so fast buddy. Give me the gun.

STEELE puts his hands up and the THUG takes his gun. NERO grabs his gun off the floor just as STEELE whips around on the thug and knocks the gun out of the thug's hand. NERO takes a shot towards STEELE but misses. QUINN dives behind the desk as NERO takes a shot at her. KING pulls the door to the escape tunnel open the rest of the way but BLAKE grabs him. KING who is more nimble and athletic than he might initially appear turns around and punches BLAKE in the stomach. BLAKE doubles over and KING gives him a couple more punches to the kidneys. NERO rushes towards QUINN behind the desk. He grabs her by the arm and pulls her forward and points the gun to her head and has his other arm around her throat. STEELE gives his assailant a couple of punches to the face and then goes to help QUINN.

QUINN: Don't worry about me. Get King.

STEELE hesitates then goes around the desk and grabs KING. STEELE gives KING a punch across the jaw and KING goes down. Meanwhile QUINN grinds her heel into NERO's foot and then flips him over her shoulder and grabs NERO's gun and points it at him.

QUINN: Don't you even try to get up.

STEELE grabs KING and puts his arms behind his back and cuffs him.

QUINN: Well, Blake it looks like you got your story for the early edition.

BLAKE: There's got to be an easier way to get a good story.

End Scene

SCENE IX: INTERROGATION ROOM – EARLY MORNING

QUINN is sitting at the table and is extremely annoyed. STEELE enters carrying a newspaper.

QUINN: Christ Steele, where the hell have you been?

STEELE: Cleaning up the mess you made. Your partner in crime Bannister got the front page this morning. “A fire alarm alerted police to an illegal gambling joint known as the Silver Nugget operating behind Stubbs Pharmacy on Hastings Street.”

QUINN: Hey the public has a right to know.

STEELE: What am I going to do with you Jess?

QUINN: Well we could head back to my place and celebrate.

STEELE: I don’t think so. You’re free to go, but you’ve got a court appearance in a week.

QUINN: I’ve got a court appearance. What kind of a Mickey Mouse operation are you running here Steele?

STEELE: That’s not a very nice way to talk to someone that posted your bail.

QUINN: Nobody asked you to do that.

STEELE: It’s already done.

QUINN: You couldn’t have gotten me out last night?

STEELE: Do you know how much paperwork your little stunt created?

QUINN: Come on Steele you’re a public servant. You should be an old hand at paperwork by now. Besides, isn’t it worth it to put King behind bars.

STEELE: Hardly. He walked out of here. With his lawyer. Half an hour after I brought him in.

QUINN: I’m being charged with public mischief and causing a disturbance and he goes free.

STEELE: You’re the one who put those smoke bombs in the ladies’ powder room.

QUINN: Prove it.

STEELE: You’ve really done it this time.

QUINN: I can’t believe you let King walk.

STEELE: Well the plan was to raid the Silver Nugget this weekend.

QUINN: You're making that up.

STEELE: The Feds and the local anti-corruption unit, of which I am a part of, have had that place staked out for over a year.

QUINN: You didn't tell me that?

STEELE: Because it was undercover. Just because we slept together doesn't mean I can tell you everything I'm working on.

QUINN: I'm sorry. I didn't know.

STEELE: Well now you do. So instead of raiding his place with a proper search warrant at a time when we knew we'd get evidence that would put him away for twenty years we've got nothing. Nothing Quinn. The Silver Nugget isn't even in his name. There are no records anywhere showing how King is connected to his empire.

QUINN: There has to be some record.

STEELE: Oh, there's a record alright but he keeps it safely hidden away except once a year he drags it out so his bookkeeper and lawyer can make sure the money he makes is going into the right numbered accounts and offshore investments. Can you guess what weekend that was going to be this year Jess? Can you?

QUINN: This weekend.

STEELE: That's right Jessica. This weekend. I know you want to put this guy away, and I know you think he killed your dad, but let the police handle things, would ya?

QUINN: But the police don't handle things. He gets out of every trap that's ever been set for him. If you've been investigating that place for a year, I can guarantee you King knew about it. The only way to deal with him is to do something quick and unexpected before he has a chance to figure a way out of it.

STEELE: Will you at least let me in on your plans. I don't want to see you getting hurt.

QUINN: Will you let me in on yours?

STEELE: You know I can't do that. Come on Jess, we've started something you and I, and I think it could be something good. I really care about you.

QUINN: I care about you too Steele.

STEELE: Then you'll keep me in the loop.

QUINN: Only as long as you keep me in yours.

STEELE: You're impossible.

QUINN exits.

End Scene

SCENE X: LINCOLN PARK CAFÉ – AFTERNOON

MARY takes out a cigarette and lights it. Nearby are a few tables for a small outdoor café. MARY scans the crowd and paces nervously.

BLAKE enters and crosses over to MARY.

BLAKE: Are you sure you said two-thirty?

MARY: Positive. I said two-thirty in Lincoln Park by the fountain near the café. Maybe she's changed her mind. Maybe she doesn't want to meet me.

BLAKE: I'm sure there's a simple explanation.

MARY: What if she hates me?

BLAKE: She's not going to hate you.

QUINN enters.

QUINN: Sorry I'm late, but I had a little trouble with the police.

BLAKE: One policeman in particular.

QUINN: We were damn lucky Steele showed up when he did.

BLAKE: You didn't find that odd?

QUINN: No. Apparently, they've had the place staked out for over a year. He was across the street keeping an eye on the joint and he knew we were in there.

BLAKE: Can you excuse us for a minute.

MARY: Sure.

BLAKE and QUINN move away from MARY

QUINN: What is it?

BLAKE: This obsession you have with putting King behind bars is getting out of hand. You have a client here that needs your help.

QUINN: You didn't seem to mind getting your story on the front page of the Chronicle this morning?

BLAKE: That's got nothing to do with it. If you hadn't asked me to be here this afternoon Mary would have been waiting on her own for the last hour. She's fragile Quinn. I know she doesn't seem like it, but she's not as strong as she pretends. You have a responsibility to her father and especially to her.

QUINN: I really thought we had him.

BLAKE: Who.

QUINN: King. But he's a slippery devil I'll give him that.

BLAKE: Can you forget about King for a minute and concentrate on why we're here.

QUINN: You're right. You're right. I won't mention King for the rest of the day. Now I want you to tail this girl after she leaves. You think you can handle that?

BLAKE: No problem.

QUINN: Good.

BLAKE and QUINN cross back to MARY.

QUINN: Blake's going to watch from the other side of the plaza. I'll be with you. We'll meet with Hannah and then figure out what to do next.

BLAKE: Everything will be fine don't worry.

BLAKE gives MARY a hug and then exits.

MARY: Thanks.

Pause. They wait.

MARY: You know when you give up your baby for adoption they do all they can to make sure you don't bond with your child. All the babies sleep in a common nursery, and the mothers are only brought in to feed them and change them when necessary. Most of our time was spent doing laundry, praying, and asking God for forgiveness. Most of the sisters shared my father's view that we had sinned and therefore only hard work and prayer would give us any hope of redemption. But Sister Margaret was different. She didn't see us as sinful. She saw us as the young scared girls we were. She was very kind. I'm not sure I would have made it through all those months at Saint Bernadette's without her.

*HANNAH STARK an attractive black woman around twenty years of age enters.
MARY sees her.*

MARY: Hannah?

HANNAH: Yes.

MARY: Oh my God, Hannah. Is it really you?

HANNAH: It's me.

MARY and HANNAH walk uncomfortably forward. QUINN stays back.

MARY: I'm so sorry Hannah. I'm so sorry. I don't know what to say or do.

HANNAH: Neither do I.

The two share a nervous laugh. MARY gives her daughter a hug. HANNAH hesitates and then hugs MARY back.

HANNAH: What am I supposed to call you?

MARY: I don't know. Why don't you call me Mary to start with?

HANNAH: Mary.

MARY: And I'll call you Hannah.

HANNAH: Okay, that's a start.

MARY: Just look at you. You're exactly how I imagined.

HANNAH: Are you okay?

MARY: I'm just a little overwhelmed that's all. I want you to know I never wanted to give you up. If I'd been stronger, I would have kept you and raised you as my own daughter. But I was just a kid myself and when you're that young sometimes you make mistakes. But I learned that my mistake was ever letting you go.

HANNAH: You don't have to explain.

MARY: But I want to explain.

HANNAH: I understand. You were young. You got pregnant.

MARY: I was in love with your father. He was a good man.

HANNAH: Was?

MARY: He died some years ago.

HANNAH: Oh.

MARY: You would have liked him.

QUINN walks over.

QUINN: Sorry to interrupt but I think introductions are in order.

HANNAH: Who's this?

MARY: This is Jessica Quinn.

HANNAH: Hannah Stark.

MARY: My father – your grandfather – hired Quinn to confirm your story.

HANNAH: What? I haven't asked for anything.

QUINN: No, you haven't, but the McConnells are a wealthy family and, on more than one occasion, people have tried to take advantage of them. I'm not saying you're not who you say you are, but we need more proof than just your word.

HANNAH: I told you I don't want anything.

MARY: Why don't we sit down and have a lemonade? It's such a hot day.

HANNAH, MARY and QUINN go to the CAFÉ. MARY addresses the waiter.

MARY: Three lemonades please.

WAITER: You got it!

HANNAH, MARY and QUINN sit at a table.

HANNAH: I'm sorry I'm late, but in my nervousness I got on the wrong bus and ended up on the East side before I realized my mistake. It took me half an hour to get turned around.

MARY: You don't have to apologize.

QUINN: Miss Stark, why get in touch with Miss McConnell now?

HANNAH: My adoptive father passed away last year and when I was going through his things I came across the adoption papers and this locket. I didn't know I'd been adopted. As far as I knew Isabel and Abraham Stark were my real parents.

MARY: You have the locket?

HANNAH: Yes, my mother said I had the locket when they adopted me.

HANNAH removes the locket from around her neck and hands it to MARY.

MARY: This is my mother's locket. When you were born, I knew that once you'd been adopted, I'd never see you again. So, I asked Sister Margaret to make sure the locket went with you. She promised she would, but I never knew if she had done what she promised. But here it is.

The WAITER returns with the lemonades and puts them on the table.

WAITER: Here you go ladies. Will there be anything else?

MARY: No thanks.

QUINN: You said your father died a year ago?

HANNAH: Yes.

QUINN: Well why didn't you try and contact Ms. McConnell then?

HANNAH: I didn't know why I'd been given up for adoption and so I wasn't sure I wanted to know. My own parents have been very good to me.

QUINN: And exactly how did you track down your birth mother?

HANNAH: I went to St. Bernadette's. Of course, they wouldn't give me any information. At least not officially. While I was meeting with one of the sisters about my case she was called away and I took the opportunity to search for my file. It was right on her desk. She returned a few minutes later and asked if I had everything I needed. She was very understanding.

MARY: And your mother – your adoptive mother – she's okay with you meeting me?

HANNAH: She doesn't know I'm here.

MARY: Oh.

HANNAH: She's not well.

MARY: Oh dear, is it serious.

HANNAH: My mother almost died of tuberculosis about ten years ago.

QUINN: Your mother had TB?

HANNAH: The whole family. My mother – my father – and my older sister Simone all got sick when we lived in Burlington. I was the only one that that didn't get sick.

QUINN: You have a sister?

HANNAH: I had a sister.

QUINN: Simone was your parent's biological daughter?

HANNAH: Yes. She died and the illness left my father very weak. My mother made a full recovery, but it came back again this year. She's in the hospital. They have treatments now that seem to work. Only it's rather expensive.

MARY: Well you don't need to worry about that. If your mother needs taken care of consider it done.

QUINN: Now Ms. McConnell you may want to hold off on that.

MARY: Why should I? I don't care if Hannah is my daughter or not – I want to help this woman.

HANNAH: I didn't come here looking for a handout. I'll pay back anything you give me.

MARY: Nonsense. Here. Take this for now and I'll make arrangements to get you enough to pay for your mother to get well.

MARY hands HANNAH some cash.

HANNAH: You'd do that?

MARY: It's the least I can do Hannah. The very least. I let you slip out of my life once before and I'm not going to let that happen again.

QUINN: Would it be possible to have a look at those adoption papers?

MARY: The locket is more than enough proof for me.

QUINN: All the same your father might want something a little more legal.

MARY: I don't care what my father wants.

HANNAH: It's okay. I don't mind.

MARY: You don't have to do any such thing. You're my daughter and I don't care what anyone else says. I know it.

MARY gives HANNAH back the locket.

MARY: Now if you'll excuse us Quinn, I want to have some lunch and hear all about Hannah's plans for the future.

QUINN: Here's my card Hannah just give me a call and we'll make all the arrangements.

QUINN hands HANNAH her card.

QUINN: Miss McConnell. Miss Stark.

QUINN gets up and crosses downstage.

BLAKE enters.

BLAKE: Well now we know why that racist old bastard of a Colonel objected to his daughter getting married to Sam. Now what?

QUINN: I still want you to tail them, but be discrete, and don't let Mary see you.

BLAKE: And what are you going to do?

QUINN: Do you remember at the Silver Nugget last night King mentioned taking some guy to, "the warehouse?"

BLAKE: I thought you said you weren't going to mention King for the rest of the day.

QUINN: I lied.

BLAKE: So, you figure this warehouse is some sort of code for something.

QUINN: No, I figure it's a warehouse. I'm going down to the docks to check things out.

BLAKE: Alone?

QUINN: I'll be careful don't worry.

QUINN exits.

End Scene

SCENE XI: MCCONNELL HOME – LATE AFTERNOON

NERO is enjoying a whiskey and a cigarette.

NERO: You know Raymond from what I've observed of Colonel McConnell I've come to the conclusion that he's none too fond of us black folk. He might put on a good front when he has to, but I do believe his Lordshit likes his darkies to polish his boots and plow his fields. Am I right Raymond?

RAYMOND: Why you trying to get a rise out of me Mr. Nero?

NERO: I'm just making conversation. Aren't you kind-a-old to still be working?

RAYMOND: The Colonel has always said I would have a job as long as I wanted one.

NERO: Lincoln freed the slaves 90 years ago Raymond.

RAYMOND: I'm well aware of that Mr. Nero.

NERO: Really? Sounded to me like you didn't get the news.

RAYMOND: I came to the McConnell's when I was 14 and I was grateful to have them take me in and give me a roof over my head and food to eat.

NERO: Why hell Raymond, that makes you no different than a stray dog.

RAYMOND: Have you ever gone hungry Mr. Nero?

NERO: No, can't say as I have.

RAYMOND: I know what it means to be hungry. And to be without a home. The McConnell's took me in, and I'm grateful to them for that. When I first got here, I worked in the stables looking after the horses.

NERO: Shoveling shit you mean.

RAYMOND: I didn't see it that way. I loved looking after the horses and working in the barns. The Colonel's father promised me that if I stayed – one day I'd have place of my own. Nothing too big – mind you. Just big enough to graze a couple of mares and spend my retirement years. I miss the days of the horse and buggy. That was a more civilized time in some ways. I'm not too taken with the death and destruction the automobile has unleashed on our nation. This land is obsessed with speed and the roads are covered in the blood of our young men and women.

NERO: Well look at that. Under that dull gray exterior of yours I find a man with a philosophical mind. Maybe a poet even. Now take me. I like the automobile. I like the speed and the feeling of power it gives me. I sure as hell wouldn't have wanted to live in this town when

the streets were full of horse shit. All you horse and buggy people don't mention the stink and the shit and the piss in the streets. Is that your idea of a more civilized time?

RAYMOND: Why are you riding me so hard Mr. Nero? I don't got no beef with you.

NERO: Ah, hell Raymond, I'm just passing the time. And just to show you there's no hard feelings here's a couple Benjamins you can put towards that little farm of yours. I like the idea of you spending your twilight years shoveling the shit out of your own barn instead of the Colonels.

RAYMOND: I don't want your money.

NERO: Would you feel better if I let you lick my boots before you took it.

RAYMOND: No sir, I would not.

NERO: You lick the colonels, don't you?

RAYMOND: No sir, I do not.

NERO: Why the hell do they call your master the Colonel anyway?

RAYMOND: He was a Colonel in the First World War.

NERO: Spent the war in the dance halls of Paris, did he?

RAYMOND: If you want to know about Colonel McConnell's service then ask him yourself.

COLONEL MCCONNELL and KING enter.

COLONEL: Ask me what?

NERO: Raymond here says you saw action in the first Great War.

COLONEL: That's right. 3rd Infantry Division.

KING: The Colonel was awarded for bravery.

NERO: You don't say.

COLONEL: My whole platoon had gone over the top and within ten minutes most of us had been cut down by machine gun fire. There were a lot of wounded and dying men left out on the battlefield.

KING: The Colonel crawled right back out into no man's land through the muck and the blood and dragged three wounded soldiers back into the trenches and got them the medical attention they needed.

COLONEL: I only did what any good soldier would do. I would have gone out again only on my third time out I took a bullet to the shoulder. Small price to pay considering how many brave men died that day.

NERO: War is hell hey Colonel.

COLONEL: It certainly is. So, King I can't imagine you've dropped by to share old war stories.

KING: Unfortunately, no. Did you read about that little raid on the Silver Nugget last night?

COLONEL: I did. I'm sorry to see it shut down.

KING: Well, I was hoping I could impose on your hospitality for a few days if it's not too much trouble.

COLONEL: Of course not. I'll have Raymond prepare two rooms.

KING: I also need a safe place to put this portfolio. I wouldn't want it to fall into the wrong hands.

KING places a ledger inside the portfolio he's carrying.

COLONEL: Yes, of course. We can put those in the safe. If that's agreeable.

The COLONEL crosses to the wall safe behind the portrait and opens it.

NERO: Our luggage is out in the car Colonel. Perhaps Raymond here could be a good lad and retrieve it.

COLONEL: Certainly. Raymond, why don't you help Mr. Nero with the luggage.

RAYMOND: Yes Colonel.

RAYMOND AND NERO exit. KING places the portfolio into the safe and the COLONEL shuts the safe.

KING: You seem to put a lot of trust in Raymond.

COLONEL: Of course, I trust Raymond. He's been with my family for almost 50 years. That's loyalty.

KING: I do hope you reward that loyalty Colonel.

COLONEL: He has a home, a job, and my appreciation. What more could he want? So, what are your plans now?

KING: I need to get back into business. But I've also got to watch my back. It's a dog eat dog world Colonel. You know that.

COLONEL: Yes, I do know that. Dog eat dog.

End Scene

SCENE XII: THE WAREHOUSE - EVENING

There are stacks of wooden crates. One of KING's thugs walks through the warehouse making sure everything is secure. HE exits. A moment later QUINN climbs in through a window. SHE crosses over to one of the crates and pries open the lid with a crowbar and pulls out a bottle of whiskey. QUINN grabs a paper cup from the water cooler, cracks open the bottle, and pours herself a shot. SHE drinks it.

QUINN: Not bad.

NERO: Aren't you going to offer me one?

NERO steps out of the shadows.

QUINN: Nero. What an unpleasant surprise. What are you doing here?

NERO: Don't you remember. I don't like to see anyone drinking alone.

NERO grabs a paper cup and QUINN fills up her cup and NEROS.

QUINN: So, where's your boss?

NERO: Oh, he'll be along later.

QUINN: That's too bad. I was about to leave.

NERO pulls out his gun.

NERO: I do wish you'd reconsider.

QUINN: Well since you put it that way. Why don't we have that drink.

QUINN and NERO both down the shot of whiskey.

QUINN: Another?

QUINN pours two more shots.

NERO: Why not. Even though we may be enemies I see no reason for us to be uncivilized.

QUINN: So, what's your story Nero? You raised in the ghetto?

NERO: No, far from it. My father was a doctor and my mother taught music.

QUINN: Then how the hell did you end up in this line of work?

NERO: I'm not much for music or medicine. I do, however, have a talent for dealing with problems. That's why people hire me. I do their dirty work. Even a man like Mr. King, who can be ruthless, operates from a certain moral principle. It's the reason you're still alive.

QUINN: I'm still alive because I know how to look after myself.

NERO: If you say so.

QUINN: I do.

QUINN and NERO down the second shot.

NERO: So, what's your plan? Get me drunk and make your escape.

QUINN: It's not my fault if you can't hold your liquor.

NERO: Pour us another.

As QUINN pours another – one of KING's THUGS sneaks up behind her.

NERO: Are you on your own tonight, or did you bring along one of your boyfriends?

QUINN: I let Steele know what I was planning. If I'm not back in five minutes the cops are going to be all over this place.

NERO: Are they really? Well maybe we should get out of here. Are you a good swimmer?

QUINN: Why?

NERO: I thought you might like to take a dip in the lake. Of course, it might be a little difficult to swim with your hands tied behind your back.

QUINN and NERO down the third shot.

QUINN: Another one?

NERO: Why not.

QUINN goes to pour the drink but the thug grabs her. She smashes the bottle against the thugs face. He loosens his grip. NERO moves forward and punches QUINN hard across the jaw. She goes down and he kicks her in the gut. He pulls her gun out from her holster and stands over her.

NERO: Let's see you get yourself out of this one Quinn.

NERO clubs QUINN with the butt of her gun.

BLACK OUT

ACT TWO: HEART OF STONE

SCENE I: MCCONNELL HOME – MORNING

HANNAH is nervously pacing back and forth. SHE holds a manila envelope. SHE thinks for another moment and then starts to head for the door as RAYMOND hurries into the room.

RAYMOND: Where are you going? The Colonel will be here in a minute.

HANNAH: I changed my mind. I don't want to do this.

RAYMOND: Hannah, calm down. You just need a little something to help settle your nerves.

RAYMOND crosses over to the bar and pours HANNAH a drink.

HANNAH: What if someone finds out?

RAYMOND: No one is going to find out.

HANNAH: I don't want to go to jail.

RAYMOND: You won't go to jail. More than anything the Colonel wants to avoid a scandal.

HANNAH: I hardly slept a wink last night.

RAYMOND: Here take this.

RAYMOND hands her the drink and a pill.

HANNAH: What is it?

RAYMOND: Just a little something that will make you feel better.

HANNAH takes the pill and downs it with the whiskey.

RAYMOND: Just remember the Colonel has more than enough money to easily pay for your silence. Trust me. He won't even miss it. Just let him do most of the talking and you stick to your story.

BEAT

HANNAH: Mary wants to take me on some kind of trip. She was talking about going to New York and Paris and London and God knows where else. What am I supposed to say to her?

RAYMOND: You don't have to say anything to her. After today you'll probably never see her again.

HANNAH: She doesn't seem like such a bad person.

RAYMOND: In spite of her getting involved with Sam and having a black child her feelings towards blacks and whites are not so different than her father's.

HANNAH: I don't believe that.

RAYMOND: You don't know Miss McConnell as well as I do. I saw her grow up and I know her true nature. She sees herself as part of the privileged class and she uses her money and position to get whatever she wants.

NERO enters.

NERO: Ah, there you are Raymond.

RAYMOND: Mr. Nero.

NERO: Oh, come on Raymond you can call me Cornelius when your master isn't around. It will be our little secret. And who have we here?

RAYMOND: Mr. Nero this is Miss Hannah Stark.

NERO: Miss Stark how lovely.

HANNAH: Mr. Nero.

NERO: Now I can't have you calling me Mr. Nero, can I? You must do the same as Raymond and call me Cornelius.

HANNAH: Cornelius.

NERO: Do you mind if I call you Hannah?

NERO takes out a cigarette case.

HANNAH: No.

NERO offers a cigarette to HANNAH

HANNAH: No thank you.

NERO lights a cigarette.

NERO: So, what brings you to the McConnell manor?

HANNAH: A personal matter.

NERO: A personal matter. How interesting. Oh, by the way Raymond, it looks like King and I will be needing the car. Do you mind being a good lad and fetching it from the garage for me while I get better acquainted with Hannah.

RAYMOND: I think it would be best if I stayed.

NERO: Alright, stay if you want, but that won't stop me from asking Hannah if she'd like to have dinner with me and see a show.

HANNAH: Oh my, I don't know about that.

NERO: If you need a chaperone, we can bring along old Raymond here. How does that sound Raymond? Would you like to join us for dinner and a show? Or we could all go dancing if you want. You do know how to Rhumba don't ya Raymond?

HANNAH laughs.

HANNAH: I'm sorry.

NERO: Don't be. I was trying to be funny.

HANNAH: The idea of the three of us going out seemed a bit ridiculous.

NERO: How about just the two of us?

HANNAH: Just dinner.

NERO: That's up to you.

RAYMOND: I would advise against it Hannah.

NERO: You two are on a first name basis, are you?

RAYMOND: Miss Stark is unaware of who you are and what you do. Since her father isn't here to look out for her, I feel it's my duty to make sure she comes to no harm.

NERO: Why don't we let the lady decide what she wants to do Raymond?

HANNAH: Thank you Mr. Nero...

NERO: Cornelius

HANNAH: Cornelius. But I think I should probably say no.

NERO: Well I think you should probably say yes. Have you ever been to the Beacon?

HANNAH: I could never afford a place like that.

NERO: I can, and it would be a great honor for me if you'd agree to have dinner with me tonight. And maybe a little dancing. They have a terrific Jazz band that I think you'll find hard to resist.

HANNAH: I don't know.

COLONEL MCCONNELL enters

COLONEL: Ah Nero, are you enjoying your stay?

NERO: Very much, Colonel. Especially now that I've met Miss Stark.

COLONEL: Is that right. Well I hope you don't mind but I have some personal business I need to take care of.

NERO: Not at all. I was just about to leave. I was just waiting for Raymond here to get my car from the garage.

RAYMOND: I thought you said you wanted to get the car yourself Mr. Nero.

NERO: No, I don't think so.

COLONEL: Raymond will you get Mr. Nero his car please.

RAYMOND doesn't move.

COLONEL: Well come on Raymond. Hurry up. What's the matter with you?

RAYMOND: Yes, sir.

RAYMOND exits

COLONEL: Now if you'll excuse us Mr. Nero.

NERO: Of course.

NERO hands HANNAH his card.

NERO: My card Miss Stark. I do hope you'll say yes.

NERO exits.

The COLONEL looks over at HANNAH. He doesn't say anything for a long moment.

COLONEL: So, you're the young woman claiming to be my granddaughter.

HANNAH: I am your granddaughter.

COLONEL: Do you have any proof?

HANNAH: I have the locket.

HANNAH holds the locket around her neck.

COLONEL: Yes, the locket seems to make it an open and shut case as far as Mary is concerned.

HANNAH: I have the adoption papers.

COLONEL: May I see them?

HANNAH hesitates.

COLONEL: If you didn't want me to see them then why did you bring them?

HANNAH hands the envelope to the COLONEL. HE opens the envelope and looks at the papers.

COLONEL: Mary is quite convinced that you are who you say you are. I'm not so sure.

HANNAH: I didn't come looking for money.

COLONEL: Oh, no? What's this I hear about a sick mother?

HANNAH: That's not why I'm here. I just wanted to know who my real mother and father were, that's all.

COLONEL: So, the McConnell fortune is of no interest to you?

HANNAH: I wouldn't say it's of no interest, but that's definitely not why I contacted Mary.

COLONEL: No? Suppose five years from now you find yourself in desperate need of money. Do you think you'd still be uninterested in the family wealth?

HANNAH: Well, I don't know about the future.

COLONEL: I do. The promise of wealth is a difficult thing to ignore Miss Stark. When you go to buy a dress that is a dollar more than you can afford, you'll think – if only I had the McConnell's wealth. Every time you run into something you can't buy – a new pair of shoes, tickets to the theatre, some pearl earrings – you'll think – if only I had the McConnell's wealth. Well I want to spare you that. I'm prepared to make you a very generous offer.

HANNAH: Then you believe I'm your granddaughter.

COLONEL: It doesn't matter one way or the other. You are no more welcome in my home now than you were twenty years ago.

HANNAH: I'm sorry?

COLONEL: You're black. You should be with your own people. I'm sure you can see that.

HANNAH: Mary doesn't seem to feel that way.

COLONEL: Frankly Mary is more interested in bringing you into this home – not because she wants to get to know you – but because she wants to defy me. She defied me when she ran off with Sam; the boy you claim to be your father.

HANNAH: She told me they were in love.

COLONEL: That's what she says, does she? She deliberately chose a black boy in order to humiliate me. She's always blamed me for her mother's death, and it has been her lifelong crusade to make me pay for it.

HANNAH: That doesn't seem like the Mary I met.

COLONEL: Oh, my daughter is far more devious than she appears. Her actions are often calculated to cause me the greatest amount of pain and suffering possible. I'm only being blunt so that you can understand the situation and why I'm willing to offer you a substantial amount of money in order to keep things as they should be.

HANNAH: As they should be? You mean to get rid of me.

COLONEL: I am willing to give you – one hundred thousand dollars – in exchange for all the documents you own regarding your birth as well as your silence in regard to your relationship with this family. I will have my lawyers draw up an agreement and once you sign it the money is yours. I want you to have enough money so you can go live your life somewhere else and never be tempted to interfere in my life or my daughter's life again.

HANNAH: Can I have those back please.

The COLONEL hesitates and then hands the documents back to HANNAH.

COLONEL: I'm sorry if I seem harsh but I think it's better for us to lay our cards on the table. Why don't you do a little window shopping and have a look at all the things you could buy and all the places you could go with the money I'm offering you. In the meantime, I'll have the papers drawn up and arrange for the money to be deposited into an account in your name.

HANNAH: Are you really so sure I'm going to say yes?

COLONEL: I'll be extremely surprised if you said no. Good day Miss Stark.

HANNAH: Goodbye.

HANNAH exits.

End Scene

SCENE II: INTERIOR CABIN OF A YACHT – MORNING

QUINN is lying on a cot. KING is sitting nearby in a chair smoking a cigar and reading a book. One of KING's THUGS stands guard.

QUINN: Ahhh – where the hell am I?

KING: Welcome back to the world of the living Quinn.

QUINN: King?

KING: It must be nice to hear a familiar voice.

KING sets his book down and laughs.

QUINN: How long have I been out?

KING rises and gets a glass of bourbon for QUINN.

KING: Several hours. Mr. Nero was a little rough on you I'm afraid. Here. I think you'll enjoy this.

QUINN takes the glass and takes a sip.

QUINN: You haven't answered my question. Where am I?

KING: You're aboard my yacht the El Viento.

QUINN: Are we still in dock?

KING: We are. You're perfectly safe. For the moment.

QUINN: Well then why don't you tell your errand boy here to back off.

KING: All in good time.

QUINN takes a longer drink.

KING: Your little stunt at the Silver Nugget has made more than a few folks from around the country figure they can move in on my territory.

QUINN: How is that my fault?

KING: You're a woman.

QUINN: Really. What gave me away?

KING (To the Thug): Wait outside.

KING waits until the THUG leaves and then turns to QUINN.

KING: Old enemies have resurfaced. In particular, Anthony Cassini. He's heard about my troubles and my unwillingness to take care of a little problem I've been having.

QUINN: And I'm the little problem.

KING: That's right, and it makes me look weak.

QUINN: I thought killing a woman was bad for business.

KING: Under normal circumstances it would be bad for business. But these aren't normal circumstances. You'd have been dead a long time ago Jessica if it wasn't for a promise I made to your father.

QUINN: What are you talking about? My father was going to testify against you, and you had him murdered.

KING: Your father would have sooner gone to jail himself than testify against me.

QUINN: Like hell he would.

KING: Did your father ever tell you about the time he spent in Spain during the Spanish Civil War?

QUINN: He didn't talk about it much.

KING: I was in Spain at the same time. Your father and I were both from the same hometown so naturally we got to talking and we became friends.

QUINN: You fought in the Spanish Civil War?

KING: I was a much younger man at the time. Certainly thinner. Your father was a commander in one of the International brigades and I was in the supply business.

QUINN: The black market you mean.

KING: Whatever they needed I supplied.

QUINN: For a price.

KING: Well certainly for a price. But I would have made a lot more money selling to the other side. I think if we'd stopped the fascists in Spain – history would have unfolded very differently.

QUINN: What does this have to do with you and my father?

KING: One afternoon your father and I, along with a half dozen other members of the Brigade, were taking supplies to an outpost when we were ambushed. The driver and two others were killed when the truck went off the road. Snipers had us pinned down for most of the day, but when night came we made a break for it. We crawled on our hands and knees through the rock and underbrush back towards camp. Unfortunately, we ran into an enemy patrol. Your father rushed one of the soldiers – who had his gun on me – and was about to fire. Your father knocked the soldier to the ground – saving my life – but not before he got himself shot in the leg. It was a nasty bloody little fight. In the end, only your father and I survived. The rest of our party, as well as the three soldiers we'd encountered, were all dead. Your father lost a lot of blood and was unable to walk so I put a tourniquet on his leg and carried him, on my back, the three miles to camp. Even then, he almost didn't make it.

QUINN: And you have some proof of this?

KING: I do.

KING hands Jessica a small photograph.

KING: Recognize your father?

QUINN: Yes.

KING: Recognize the man standing beside him?

QUINN looks at the photo then up at KING

QUINN: Just because you have a photograph of my father and you in Spain doesn't mean your story is true.

KING: No, but you have to admit that my story is certainly more credible now, isn't it?

QUINN: My father never mentioned he knew you in Spain.

KING: Your father became a cop. Old soldiers sometimes crave the adrenaline of battle and in civilian life being a policeman or a fireman is probably the closest they ever come to having that same sense of danger and being alive. My path was somewhat different. Our chosen professions made it impossible for us to remain friends – at least in public.

QUINN: So, what does this have to do with me?

KING: On the way back to camp when your father was near death, I promised him that if anything ever happened to him that I'd look out for you and your mother.

QUINN: You had my father killed.

KING: I keep telling you I had nothing to do with your father's death and if I ever found out who did I'd kill him myself.

QUINN: I don't believe you.

KING: Do you remember when your father died you came into some money that he'd put into a trust fund for you?

QUINN: What about it?

KING: You used that money to go to college. To take journalism. Didn't you want to be a reporter Quinn? Wasn't that your original ambition?

QUINN: I wanted to be a reporter so I could tell people about the crime and corruption that goes on in this city. But the entire year I worked for the Journal all they ever had me do was fluff. I was told that only men were meant to cover crime and corruption and that I should stick to my recipes, and celebrity gossip. So, I quit. I quit and started my own detective agency because I figured I could work for myself while helping to rid the city of people like you.

KING: You don't know what you've unleashed Quinn. You may not like how I make my money but trust me – Anthony Cassini is a more brutal and violent man than I.

QUINN: Are we done?

KING: I wish you had stuck to your recipe and gossip columns Quinn because now we've come to a crossroads. You can leave town and disappear and live your life someplace else, or you can stay here and face the consequences. I hope for your sake you choose to leave. And just to show you that I'm not completely without mercy here's six thousand dollars to help you set up a new life.

KING takes an envelope from his jacket and puts it on the table.

QUINN: What happened to the thirty thousand you were offering me?

KING: Cash is a little harder to come by now that the Silver Nugget is boarded up.

QUINN: How long do I have to get out of town?

KING: I wouldn't delay if I were you.

KING rises and opens the door. The THUG enters.

KING: I'm not such a bad guy Quinn. Do you really think your father could have saved all that money for your college education on a policeman's salary? That was my money. I had my lawyers set up that account in your name after your father was killed. The story's true Quinn otherwise why would I go to all this trouble to meet with you when I could just as easily have had you killed.

QUINN takes the money and the THUG escorts HER out the door.

End Scene

SCENE III: MCCONNELL HOME – LATE MORNING

NERO sits on the arm of a chair while he watches RAYMOND tidy up the bar.

NERO: So, Raymond aren't you even going to ask me about my date with Hannah?

RAYMOND doesn't answer.

NERO: She's a sweet little thing I'll give her that. What's your interest in her anyway?

RAYMOND: I don't like to see a young girl get taken advantage of.

NERO: You wouldn't be sweet on her yourself now – would you Raymond?

RAYMOND: I don't think about such things with a young lady like Miss Hannah.

NERO: Well Jesus Raymond you might as well be dead if you don't even think about such things. What else is there to think about?

RAYMOND doesn't answer.

NERO: She's a beautiful young and desirable woman and if she wants to go out and have a good time what does it matter to you? Or is it me you object too? That's it isn't it. You object to me. You just don't like me. You don't like my attitude. You don't like my fancy threads and the fact that I'm a black man with money and power and you're not. That's it isn't it.

RAYMOND: I find you and your fancy suit and your smart-ass attitude repellant.

NERO: Repellant. Whoo-hoo – that's a pretty fancy word for a bootblack wouldn't you say? You got any other fancy words there Raymond?

RAYMOND: No sir. I do not.

NERO: No sir. Lord if every black was as spineless as you, we'd all still be slaves. But I guess ever since you came in from the barn and curled up on that nice feather bed at your master's feet you stopped being a man.

RAYMOND grabs NERO by the shirt.

RAYMOND: Listen here, I may be an old man but I sure as hell will take you out into that yard and beat the living hell out of you if you don't lay off me.

NERO laughs

NERO: Watch the threads Raymond.

RAYMOND: Did you hear me?

NERO: I heard you loud and clear. I knew there had to be more spirit in you than you let on.

KING and the COLONEL enter.

RAYMOND: Now I want you to stay away from Miss Hannah. Is that understood?

COLONEL: What's this about Hannah?

NERO: Raymond here seems to object to my seeing her, don't you Raymond.

KING: Mr. Nero has an eye for the señoritas. It's his one weakness. Me I'm content with my cigars and bourbon.

NERO: Raymond is rather protective of Miss Stark. Why is that?

COLONEL: Loyalty. Raymond's always had this family's best interests at heart and this Hannah woman...*(He hesitates)*...well let's just say she's trying to cause trouble – if you know what I mean.

KING: I could have some of my associates handle the situation for you if you'd like Colonel.

COLONEL: Oh, that won't be necessary this time. I've hired a private detective to check into her background, but obviously until then Raymond must be feeling protective. Well there's no need Raymond. I'm sure once Quinn finishes her investigation we'll discover the truth.

KING: Quinn?

COLONEL: Yes. Quinn. Do you know her?

KING roars with laughter.

KING: Know her! Why she's the devil that's put me behind the eight ball.

COLONEL: Jessica Quinn.

KING: She's been on a mission to put me behind bars ever since her father was killed. She blames me for her father's death, and she's become obsessed with putting me out of business. So, she's checking out this Hannah Stark for you, is she?

COLONEL: Yes.

KING: Well I'm sure she'll leave no stone unturned. Now, Colonel I must thank you for your hospitality, but I'm afraid we must cut our visit short. I'd love to stay longer but my presence in

your home puts you and your family at risk. Nero would you get the car and bring it around front, please.

NERO: Certainly.

NERO exits. RAYMOND remains.

COLONEL: That's really not necessary King you're welcome to stay as long as you want.

KING: I appreciate the offer, but the new district attorney has issued a warrant for my arrest on some trumped up charges this morning and my being here means you are harboring a fugitive.

COLONEL: That's complete nonsense.

KING: It's all part of the game. He's thinking of running for governor and he figures the best way to make a name for himself is to put me behind bars. Even if it's only for a day or two. I think its best I find other accommodations while I still have options. Do you mind if we get that portfolio now?

COLONEL: Are you sure it wouldn't be safer here?

KING: I'd rather keep it close at hand.

COLONEL: I think it's outrageous the way you're being treated. And I want you to know that once things blow over, we'll make certain you have free reign to operate under the same arrangements as before.

KING: I'm glad to hear that Colonel. And once I'm back in business you can rest assured the Mayor should easily win reelection.

COLONEL crosses to the wall safe and opens it.

COLONEL: I'll put a call into the Mayor and Judge Hardy this afternoon and we'll see what we can do to help you out. It might take a little cash to grease the wheels, but I know you're good for it.

KING: I appreciate the help Colonel.

COLONEL hands the portfolio to KING. KING glances in the portfolio and then closes it.

COLONEL: This city wouldn't be the same if a bunch of dagos or – God forbid – some hymies from back east started running things. I don't want to see any of those shysters get a foot hold in this city. A lot of people don't remember what this town was like before you were in charge.

KING: People have short memories Colonel. You know that. You and I are from a different era.

COLONEL: Well rest assured I'll do all I can to help. It's important that people like us stick together. There's a certain order to things and there are plenty of people out there who are trying to change that – and not for the better – I can assure you.

KING: Thank you for your hospitality Colonel. Adios.

KING exits

End Scene

SCENE IV: QUINN'S OFFICE – EARLY EVENING

At rise QUINN is standing at the window looking out at the city. SHE holds the photograph KING gave her in one hand a drink in the other. There is an open bottle of bourbon on the desk. After a moment a shadow appears against the glass window of the hall door. QUINN takes a drink of her bourbon. The hallway door glides open and STEELE stands in the doorway. QUINN downs the rest of her drink and turns back to the desk. SHE sees STEELE.

QUINN: Steele.

STEELE: Jessica.

QUINN: Come on in and join me for a drink.

STEELE doesn't move.

STEELE: So, King just let you go?

QUINN: He did. But not without a warning.

STEELE: Where have you been?

QUINN: I was at the cemetery. I needed to spend some time with my dad and try to figure this all out.

STEELE: You should have told me what you were up to.

QUINN: That goes two ways buddy.

STEELE: You alone?

QUINN: You're here aren't you?

STEELE laughs.

STEELE: Yeah, I guess so.

STEELE steps in and closes the door behind him.

QUINN: Did you know my father knew King?

STEELE: Did he?

QUINN: Yeah. During the Spanish Civil War.

QUINN hands the photo to STEELE.

QUINN: King even gave me a photograph.

STEELE: Uh.

QUINN: I don't know what to think anymore. I don't want to believe it, but if it's true does that mean my father was a dirty cop?

QUINN closes her eyes. STEELE puts the photo on the desk and crosses behind the desk and stands behind QUINN.

STEELE: Of course not. Why would you think that?

QUINN: Everything's been turned upside down. I'm so tired I just want to go home and sleep.
(*She turns to him*) You okay?

STEELE: Yeah, sure why?

QUINN: Well you could at least give me a hug. I've had a tough couple-a-days.

STEELE give her a hug but says nothing. QUINN relaxes into his arms.

MARY and BLAKE enter the office. STEELE and QUINN break their embrace.

BLAKE: Quinn! Oh, thank God. I've been worried sick.

BLAKE rushes over and gives QUINN a big and intense hug.

QUINN: Well at least someone's happy to see me.

BLAKE: Of course, I'm happy to see you. What the hell happened? Where were you?

QUINN: King had me on his yacht, but he let me go.

BLAKE: He let you go?

QUINN: Only thing is, if I want to live, I have to leave town.

BLAKE: You need police protection.

QUINN: I can look after myself.

BLAKE: Oh, really? What do you think Steele? Can she look after herself?

STEELE: She's one tough lady.

BLAKE: Can you arrange for some police protection?

QUINN: I don't need any police protection.

BLAKE: Steele.

STEELE: If I can't arrange anything official, I'll certainly stay close to Jessica.

BLAKE: You can count on me as well.

QUINN: I'm sorry Miss McConnell but none of this is your problem. Where are we at with Hannah?

MARY: Hannah and I are leaving tomorrow afternoon for New York.

QUINN: Oh. What about her mother?

MARY: Her mother's already much improved.

QUINN: That was fast.

MARY: Well if you can get the proper antibiotics and care TB is very treatable now days. Hannah tells me her mother will be staying with relatives and that I shouldn't worry myself. My only concern is that my father may try and interfere. That's why I've decided to protect myself.

MARY shows QUINN a small revolver she has in her purse.

QUINN: Are you sure you know how to handle that thing?

MARY: Oh. Well, it's not even loaded. It's just for show. I wouldn't put it past my father to hire some thug to stop us at the train station. Well, if he does, I'll just show that thug what's in my purse and if it gets out of hand I'll scream for the police.

QUINN: Have you told your father what you're planning?

MARY: He knows I'm planning a trip, but he doesn't know when I'm leaving. Blake has offered to drive Hannah and me to the train station.

QUINN: You do understand I'm still working for your father. He's the one paying me. I'm still going to look into Hannah's background and find out the truth.

MARY: Look all you want. I don't need any more proof than what I already have.

QUINN: For your sake I hope her story checks out, but I just want you to prepare yourself in case it doesn't.

MARY: She's my daughter and I know it. And this time my father won't be able to hide her from the world. And after we get back from our trip, I'm going to throw Hannah a big coming out party and invite all our friends. I'm sure that will cause quite a stir, don't you think?

QUINN: Maybe you should check with Hannah before you do that. Listen Steele, would you do me a big favor and drive Mary home – that is – (To Mary) if it's alright with you?

MARY: Oh? Well I thought Blake would drive me home.

QUINN: I need to talk with Blake about a few things and there's no point you staying here and being bored so I just thought if it was okay with Steele...

STEELE: I thought you wanted some police protection.

QUINN: No, Blake wanted the police protection. I'm fine without it.

STEELE: I'm not sure I should leave you on your own.

QUINN: I'm not on my own. Blake is here.

Pause.

STEELE: Okay. But be careful. Miss McConnell.

MARY: Thank you. See you tomorrow Blake.

MARY gives BLAKE a small kiss and hug.

MARY and STEELE exit.

QUINN: Do you mind if I crash at your place tonight?

BLAKE: Oh, finally making a move, are you?

QUINN: I'm just taking precautions. There's a price on my head.

BLAKE: What do you mean?

QUINN: I had a nice long talk with King, but I'll fill you in on the details later. Right now, I want to know what happened when you followed Hannah.

SFX: PHONE RINGS

QUINN answers the phone

QUINN: Sorry. Quinn. (*Miss Quinn this is Raymond Holloway Colonel McConnell's butler.*) Oh, hello Raymond how can I help? (*Well I understand you've been looking for information that could help put Alexander King behind bars.*) Yes, I have. (*Well as it happens I might for a price be able to provide you with the information you're looking for.*) For a price you say. Yes. Well how much did you want? (*Would ten thousand be possible?*) Ten thousand dollars is a lot more money than I can get my hands on. I don't have the same resources your boss does, but if pressed I could scrounge up five or six thousand. (*Is that the best you can do?*) Six taps me out but I'd only be willing to pay that much if you really had something that could put King behind bars, you understand? (*I understand – I'll be in touch. Goodbye.*) Goodbye.

BLAKE: Who was that?

QUINN: Raymond. The Colonel's butler. Says he has information that could put King behind bars.

BLAKE: How on earth would he get anything on King?

QUINN: Damned if I know, but I'll meet with him and find out.

BLAKE: You want me to tag along?

QUINN: I want to know what happened when you followed Hannah.

BLAKE: Mary and Hannah finished their lemonade and had some lunch and then walked around the park for a couple of hours just talking and laughing. Mary gave Hannah cab fare and a big hug and the two parted.

QUINN: Where'd Hannah go?

BLAKE: She went to a little greasy spoon near the bus depot and met a guy there.

QUINN: Any idea who he is?

BLAKE: None. Never seen him before. They talked for about an hour and then he left. I couldn't follow them both, so I followed Hannah back to her hotel.

QUINN: Her hotel?

BLAKE: Yeah, the Mayflower. It's just a couple of blocks from here over on 7th.

QUINN: She didn't go to the hospital?

BLAKE: No. And her with a sick mother.

QUINN: Something doesn't seem right. Did you tell Mary any of this?

BLAKE: I wanted to wait until I told you. What do you think it means?

QUINN: I'm not sure, but that's what we're going to find out. You up for a little road trip?

BLAKE: Where are we going?

QUINN: I want to head over to Burlington and pick up a death certificate.

BLAKE: A death certificate?

QUINN: Yeah. We need to get that information before Mary takes off with Hannah tomorrow.

BLAKE: Are you sure we should be doing this?

QUINN: What do you mean?

BLAKE: Does it really matter if Hannah is or isn't her daughter?

QUINN: Of course, it matters. If Hannah's lying, then Mary has a right to know the truth.

BLAKE: Even if she'd rather not know.

QUINN: It's better to know the truth than to live a lie. I don't want to see Mary get taken advantage of if Hannah isn't her daughter and I can't believe you would either. Now are you going to help me or not?

BLAKE: Of course, I'm going to help you but try and show a little compassion, would ya?

QUINN: That's how these crooks work. They take advantage of people's compassion. The whole time you're feeling sorry for them they're looking you in the eye and smiling while they rob you blind.

BLAKE: You've got a tough view of the world Quinn.

QUINN: Yeah, well I just call it like I see it. Now, if we leave early, we can be in Burlington when public records opens in the morning and be back here before one. I've already called and made all the arrangements. We just have to be there to pick it up.

BLAKE: Alright you can crash at my place for a few hours and then we'll head out. But you owe me Quinn.

BLAKE: Drinks at the Auburn?

QUINN: Deal.

QUINN and BLAKE exit

End Scene

SCENE V: MCCONNELL HOME – AFTERNOON

HANNAH is reading over the document that the COLONEL's lawyers have prepared. RAYMOND is also in the room.

HANNAH: I don't know. This all seems very complicated.

COLONEL: It's quite simple Hannah. You sign that document. I give you the money and you're free to go away and start a new life.

HANNAH: I would never be allowed to see or talk with Mary again.

COLONEL: What is Mary to you? Until a few days ago you'd never even met her.

RAYMOND: Maybe something from the bar would help calm your nerves Miss Stark.

HANNAH: I don't want anything. What happens if I don't sign?

COLONEL: Well there are other means of persuasion. I can make your life quite difficult if you want to pursue a relationship with Mary. Why not make it easy on yourself and take the money.

RAYMOND: You should do what the colonel says.

HANNAH: All I have to do is sign here and that's it.

COLONEL: That's it. You sign that paper and your life will change. You'll be able to buy yourself plenty of nice clothes or go on a trip if you want. It's completely up to you.

RAYMOND: Remember Miss Stark – money gives you options.

HANNAH: I've always wanted to go to college.

RAYMOND: You could go to college or start a dress shop or open a restaurant.

COLONEL: This is your chance Hannah for a different life. One free from poverty and worry. All you need to do is sign.

HANNAH takes the pen and is about to sign.

MARY enters.

MARY: What are you up to father?

HANNAH stops.

COLONEL: I'm not up to anything. What are you doing back so soon?

MARY: Oh, did I forget to mention Hannah and I are leaving for New York.

COLONEL: Like hell you are.

MARY: How much is he offering you Hannah?

HANNAH: A lot.

MARY: Well you don't need it. I have my own money.

COLONEL: Is that right?

SFX: THE DOORBELL RINGS

COLONEL: Will you go see who that is Raymond.

RAYMOND: Umm...yes, Colonel.

RAYMOND exits but not before giving HANNAH a look.

MARY: I've been putting some money aside for some time now.

COLONEL: You've never been able to hide anything from me Mary. I know all about the money you've been transferring from your trust. I think you'll find that you are no longer able to access those funds.

MARY: That money's mine.

COLONEL: You've never earned a dollar in your life. Everything you've ever had I've given you.

MARY: You had no right to do that.

COLONEL: It's my money. You're my daughter. I have every right.

RAYMOND opens the door and lets in JESSICA QUINN and BLAKE BANNISTER. BLAKE is looking intently at RAYMOND as they enter.

COLONEL: Ah Quinn, I'm glad you're here.

QUINN: Colonel. Mary. Hannah.

COLONEL: You said you'd been down to Burlington.

QUINN: Yes.

COLONEL: Well, did you find out anything?

QUINN: Yes, as a matter of fact we did.

HANNAH: What were you doing in Burlington?

QUINN: I was checking out your story.

HANNAH: (To Raymond) Did you know about this?

RAYMOND: I'm sure there's nothing to worry about.

HANNAH: I don't want to go to jail.

RAYMOND: Nobody said anything about going to jail. Isn't that right Colonel.

COLONEL: I guess that will depend on what Quinn has dug up now – won't it.

BLAKE: I'd like to ask a question if I could.

COLONEL: Who's this?

BLAKE: Blake Bannister.

QUINN: He's one of my associates.

COLONEL: Well what is it?

BLAKE: The other day when Mary first met Hannah – Quinn asked me to follow Hannah after she and Mary parted ways.

COLONEL: Yes, and?

BLAKE: Well I followed Hannah to this coffee shop where she met a man.

COLONEL: What man?

BLAKE: Your butler. Raymond.

COLONEL: Raymond? That's ridiculous.

RAYMOND: Of course, it's ridiculous. This man is obviously lying or mistaken.

BLAKE: I'm not mistaken.

COLONEL: What's going on?

QUINN: I think this death certificate explains everything. Doesn't it, Miss Stark?

QUINN shows the death certificate to HANNAH.

HANNAH: I can't do this Raymond. I'm the one taking all the risks, not you.

RAYMOND: Now Miss Stark – Hannah – just keep your head and think of the money. I'm sure the Colonel is more interested in avoiding a scandal than anything else.

HANNAH: This is wrong, and you know it.

QUINN (To Hannah): Do you want to tell Mary or should I?

MARY: There's nothing to tell. (To Hannah) You had the locket and the adoption papers. My daughters adopted name was Hannah. Hannah Stark. That's your name.

QUINN: Her last name is Stark. Isn't that right?

HANNAH: Yes.

QUINN (To Mary): But her first name isn't Hannah. (To Hannah) Is it?

HANNAH doesn't speak.

HANNAH: Mary, I'm so sorry.

MARY: Don't say another word. This is one of my father's tricks. Isn't it father.

COLONEL: Not at all. It would appear that Quinn, here – has found out the truth behind this woman's story. Why don't you hear what she has to say?

QUINN: (To Hannah) Tell Mary the truth. She has a right to know. Your real name isn't Hannah, is it?

HANNAH: No.

MARY: Of course, it is.

HANNAH: No, it isn't.

MARY: That's simply not true. My father is forcing you to say these things isn't he. He's paid you off or threatened you.

QUINN: I'm sorry Mary but she's telling the truth. This is Simone.

MARY: Simone?

HANNAH: My mother and father adopted Hannah when I was about three. She was my baby sister.

MARY: Then where is she?

HANNAH: What I told you about my family was true. My mother and father and Hannah all got terribly sick. And...

QUINN: ...and it was Hannah who died not Simone.

MARY: Hannah, my baby girl.

QUINN: This is Hannah's death certificate.

MARY: No.

BANISTER: Mary.

MARY: No, it's not true.

HANNAH: I'm so sorry.

MARY: Well now you've got something to celebrate don't you father. You never have to worry about your black granddaughter disgracing this family or you ever again. She's dead. She's been dead for ten years. You're rather talented at killing off the women in this family aren't you. First my mother and now your granddaughter.

COLONEL: Now Mary this woman was trying to take advantage of us. You can see that, can't you?

HANNAH: I'm so sorry Mary. It was wrong of me to lie to you about your daughter.

HANNAH gives MARY the locket.

HANNAH: You should have this. I want you to know my parents and I were broken hearted when Hannah died. I loved my sister and I should have never let myself get talked into doing this horrible thing. I'm sorry.

MARY: She would have lived if she'd had our money to get the proper care and attention she needed, wouldn't she father?

COLONEL: Now, Mary you don't know that. You're just feeling upset at the moment and you're taking it out on me. This woman is the one who's deceived you. She's to blame for all of this. It's just the sort of lying dirty trick I'd expect from someone like her.

MARY: Oh, leave her alone. Do you have to destroy every one's life?

COLONEL: I'm only speaking the truth and you know it. In fact, now that we know the truth, I think I should give the police a call and have this woman arrested.

MARY: You do that father and I'll make sure the whole story ends up in the newspaper. Right from the start if you'd like. We could begin with mother's death and then move on to my running away from home and getting pregnant. Would you like that? Would you like everyone to know all the family secrets?

COLONEL: And just how are you going to do that?

MARY: Blake happens to be a reporter with the Chronicle.

COLONEL: Is he?

MARY: Yes, I'll even give an interview. It should make for interesting reading over the morning breakfast table, don't you think?

BLAKE: We could make it a three-part series.

COLONEL: You're bluffing.

MARY: You want to take that chance?

COLONEL: Alright, I won't call the police, but I want to know how Raymond is involved in all this.

RAYMOND: I'm not. I had nothing to do with this.

COLONEL: Tell me the truth. You owe me that.

RAYMOND: I owe you the truth?

COLONEL: Of course, you do.

RAYMOND: I don't owe you a damn thing.

COLONEL: Well I guess I don't owe you a damn thing either. You can pack your bags and get off my property. You obviously had something to do with this. Who knows what else you've been lying about all these years.

RAYMOND: Your father promised me I'd have enough money to get a little place of my own and retire. He even told me he'd put it in his will.

COLONEL: Did he really?

RAYMOND: Yes sir he did.

COLONEL: Well, you have no proof of that Raymond. I can't imagine he'd ever make such a foolish promise.

RAYMOND: Aren't my years of service worth something?

COLONEL: My father took you in when you were homeless and living on the streets. You've had a bed and a roof over your head and three-square meals a day. There are plenty of people with a lot less than that in the world.

RAYMOND: And now you're telling me I don't even have that.

COLONEL: I was good enough to keep you on after my father died even though you do half the work you used to. Good God Raymond, I'm not running a charity here. I don't believe in a free ride for anyone.

RAYMOND: So, you're telling me all I got left is your father's empty promise. Well is it any wonder I wanted something more? Is it any wonder I tracked down Simone and found out the real story behind your granddaughter – and decided if I could twist the truth a little – and have Simone here pretend to be Hannah –you'd only be too happy to pay to keep her quiet – because I know what a bigoted old bastard you are.

COLONEL: Get out of this house you ungrateful nigger!

RAYMOND: Now Colonel that's a word you might want to refrain from using in polite company. Somebody might take offense and do something about it.

COLONEL: Get out!

MARY: Oh, father you can't just kick Raymond out.

COLONEL: Don't you go taking his side.

MARY: Why shouldn't I take his side? It's because of you all of this happened in the first place. Give Simone and Raymond the money. What do you care you have plenty?

COLONEL: Mary this isn't up to you.

MARY: Are you going to kick me out too?

COLONEL: Don't be ridiculous.

MARY: I'm clearly a disappointment to you. You probably would have been happy if I'd never been born.

COLONEL: Don't say such things.

MARY: Why not? They're true.

COLONEL: You're going to spend the summer at Fairview and get yourself sorted out. Is that understood?

MARY: I told you I don't want to go back to Fairview.

COLONEL: It's already been arranged. I'll drive you there myself this afternoon.

MARY crosses to SIMONE.

MARY: Goodbye Simone. I'm sorry things didn't work out. I would have liked you to have been my daughter.

HANNAH: I should never have done this. I'm so sorry.

MARY: It's alright. I understand. The world is a very hard place when one is short of money. You run out of options.

MARY gives SIMONE a hug.

COLONEL: Alright Mary that's enough. Don't encourage these people or we'll never get rid of them.

MARY: My bags are already packed father. We can leave anytime you want. I'm going to go lie down until it's time to go.

BLAKE: Mary why don't you leave with us? You're welcome to stay at my place or I'm sure Quinn would put you up.

COLONEL: You stay out of this Banister.

MARY: It's alright Blake. *(She gives him a hug)* I know what I'm doing.

BLAKE: Are you sure?

MARY: I'm sure. Now, don't forget to pick up your new suit. They called this morning and said it was ready.

BLAKE: Are you going to be alright?

MARY: I'll be fine.

MARY exits.

COLONEL: Alright Raymond you can show Miss Stark to the front door and then I suggest you pack your own bag. I want you off my property.

RAYMOND and SIMONE exit.

COLONEL: Well Quinn I want to thank you for a job well done.

QUINN: How can you just dismiss Raymond like that?

COLONEL: He betrayed me. What else am I supposed to do with him? I thought he was different but instead he turns out to be like all the rest of his kind.

QUINN: His kind?

COLONEL: It's not his fault really. It's just in their nature. Some races are more honest than others and some are less than honest.

QUINN: It's been my experience that honesty has very little to do with race.

COLONEL: It's just the way God made them. Give a black man enough time and his true nature eventually shows itself. Raymond is proof of that. Now here's the rest of that bonus I promised you.

COLONEL hands the envelope to QUINN.

QUINN: It doesn't matter what race a person is. What matters is what kind of person they are.

COLONEL: I suppose you're one of those "free thinkers" who sees everyone as equal.

QUINN: I prefer to judge someone by their actions and not by the color of their skin. You're white – and so am I – but that certainly doesn't mean I would ever want anyone to assume I see the world – the way you do.

COLONEL: It's a matter of survival. I'm surprised you don't see that. It's the duty of every white man and woman to join the fight and to defend the proper order of things.

QUINN: Well Colonel, there's a new order on the horizon and I don't think it's the one you have in mind. Come on Blake let's get out of here.

QUINN and BLAKE turn to leave.

SFX: GUNSHOT OFF STAGE.

QUINN, BLAKE, and the COLONEL all run off stage in the direction of the gunshot.

End Scene

SCENE VI: LINCOLN PARK CAFÉ – A WEEK LATER

BLAKE and QUINN are sitting at a table. BLAKE is smoking a cigarette. A WAITER enters with drinks and sets them on the table.

QUINN: Thanks

WAITER: Will there be anything else?

BLAKE: No, we're fine.

QUINN and BLAKE drink and are quiet for a long moment.

QUINN: So how long are you going to sit there brooding over things?

BLAKE: You could have handled things differently that's all.

QUINN: Do you really think Mary killed herself because Simone wasn't her daughter?

BLAKE: Yes, I do?

QUINN: I wish I did, but I don't.

BLAKE: What does that mean?

QUINN: Listen Blake I know you had feelings for Mary, but I honestly believe that if she was such a devoted mother she would have tried to find Hannah a long time ago.

BLAKE: Maybe she did? Maybe her father stopped her?

QUINN: She had twenty years. I think with that much time and her money she could have found a way around her father.

BLAKE: Then why do you think she did it?

QUINN: I think she wanted to create a scandal. And I think she decided to do the one thing that all her father's money and position couldn't cover up.

BLAKE: We should have insisted that she come with us. If we had she'd still be alive.

QUINN: You don't know that. She wanted to hurt her father. And from what I've heard she has. The Colonel hasn't left his home since the day of the funeral, and he's dismissed most of his staff. He's all alone in that big old house of his. Just like Mary wanted.

BLAKE takes a drink.

BLAKE: I heard a rumor that King took off for Cuba.

QUINN: Yesterday he was supposed to have crossed the border into Canada and the day before that there were rumors he'd been bumped off and dumped in the lake. I like that rumor.

BLAKE: You still upset about your dad?

QUINN: So, my dad wasn't exactly who he said he was. Who is? He knew King when they were both young men and in danger. I'd rather know the truth about my father and what type of man he was than believe a lie.

BLAKE: At any cost?

QUINN: At any cost.

SIMONE enters. QUINN and BLAKE rise.

QUINN: Ah, Miss Stark thanks for coming.

SIMONE is wearing a somber dress.

SIMONE: You don't have to call me Miss Stark. Just call me Simone.

QUINN: Simone then.

BLAKE: Hello.

SIMONE: Hello.

QUINN: I'm glad you're here.

SIMONE: I was surprised to get your call.

QUINN: I'm just wrapping up some loose ends.

SIMONE: I had wanted to go to the funeral, but I didn't think the Colonel would have wanted me there.

QUINN: No, it was probably best you stayed away.

SIMONE: I went to the gravesite this afternoon and left some flowers. I feel horrible about everything.

QUINN: I'm sure Mary doesn't blame you.

SIMONE: I'm not having such an easy time forgiving myself.

QUINN: Have you heard anything from Raymond since last week?

SIMONE: He sure was mad at me after we left the McConnell's, but I guess all is forgiven. He bought me lunch and said he'd had a bit of good fortune and that things had finally worked out for him. He gave me two hundred dollars. I told him he didn't have to, but he insisted. I didn't mean to get him fired it's just I couldn't go on lying to Mary and having her believe I was her daughter.

QUINN: You did the right thing. So now what are your plans?

SIMONE: I'm looking for work. I didn't lie about my mother. Her health isn't very good and she can't work so it's up to me to look after her and get a job.

QUINN: Have you considered college?

SIMONE: Two hundred dollars certainly won't pay for a college education.

QUINN: Well, Mary gave me an envelope and asked that I make sure you got it in case anything happened to her.

QUINN takes an envelope from inside her jacket and hands it to SIMONE.

SIMONE: She did?

QUINN: There's five thousand dollars in there. I know it's a far cry from the hundred grand the Colonel was dangling in front of you but it along with the two hundred you got from Raymond should be more than enough for a college education.

SIMONE: I don't know what to say.

QUINN: Say thank you and make sure you graduate at the top of your class. I expect an invitation.

SIMONE: She just gave this to you? To give to me?

QUINN: She did. I guess she cared about you even if you weren't her daughter.

SIMONE: Maybe Raymond was wrong about Mary. Maybe she was a good person.

QUINN: Everyone has some good in them. Now, I think it would be best if Blake escorted you back to your hotel. You can put that money into the hotel safe and then we'll help you transfer it to a bank in the morning.

BLAKE offers his arm to SIMONE.

BLAKE: Simone.

SIMONE: Thank you.

BLAKE: I won't be long.

QUINN: Take your time. Will I see you back at the office?

BLAKE: Yeah, I think it's time we mended the fence, don't you?

QUINN: I'd like that. I'm not completely heartless you know.

BLAKE: I never said you were.

BLAKE and SIMONE exit.

End Scene

SCENE VII: QUINN'S OFFICE – LATER

KING and NERO are searching the office. KING is at the desk going through the drawers.

NERO: It's not here.

KING: It has to be here.

NERO: It could be anywhere.

KING: We have to keep looking. Go check the other room.

NERO exits into the storage room.

KING continues to search QUINN's desk.

QUINN enters from the hallway gun drawn.

QUINN: Why King, I thought you were in Cuba.

KING roars with laughter and talks louder to alert NERO in the next room.

KING: Did you indeed Quinn? Well you can't imagine how delighted I am to hear that. I started that rumor myself. It's always good to keep your enemy guessing.

QUINN: To what do I owe this visit?

KING: I believe you have something that belongs to me.

QUINN: Do I?

KING: Yes. Something rather important.

QUINN crosses to the desk runs her hand under the top lip of the front of the desk. There is a click and one of the front panels of the desk opens revealing a hidden compartment containing an accounting ledger.

QUINN: Careless of you to leave this lying around.

KING: One should never be in too much of a hurry I guess is the lesson learned. Raymond switched out that ledger with a blank one. I'm surprised you haven't turned it over to the district attorney.

QUINN: I figured if I turned it over to the district attorney, you'd hear about it, and skip town, right?

KING: Quite right.

QUINN: I'm surprised you didn't send your errand boy to get it.

QUINN retrieves the ledger. SHE closes the panel.

KING: Ah, Mr. Nero had some other business to take care of. He was getting together with the Colonel's butler to discuss matters. Mr. Nero has a particular dislike for Raymond for some reason.

QUINN: What are you going to do to him?

KING: Oh, it's already done. Now if you'll hand that over please.

QUINN: I don't think so. Now that I've got you and this ledger how about I call the police?

QUINN picks up the phone, but the phone is dead.

KING: Oh, dear it appears as if your phone is out of order.

QUINN: Then I guess you and I are going to take a little hike down to the precinct.

KING: I doubt it will come to that.

QUINN: Come on King put your hands behind your head.

STEELE enters. Gun drawn.

QUINN: Who says you can never find a policeman when you need one.

STEELE: What's going on Jesse?

QUINN: Oh, I set a little trap and look at what I caught.

KING: You don't really think I'd be here without back up do you?

NERO steps forward from the storage room and aims his gun at STEELE.

NERO: You better drop your gun Quinn or Steele gets it.

QUINN puts her gun on the desk. STEELE holds his hands up and KING crosses over to STEELE takes his gun and then gives STEELE a sock across the jaw.

KING: I think I owe you that.

KING crosses over to JESSICA and takes the ledger and looks in it.

KING: Look at that Mr. Nero. Exactly what we've been looking for. How much did you pay Raymond for this?

QUINN: I gave him the six grand you gave me.

KING laughs.

KING: Too bad he never got a chance to spend it.

QUINN: You couldn't have let him go?

KING: Not with Anthony Cassini breathing down my neck. I'm afraid Raymond will wash up on the morning tide and be a warning to others that try and cross Alexander King. You've really made a mess of things Quinn. You've put me in the middle of a bloody mob war, and you've turned this city's underworld upside down. A lot of people are going to die because of you. You should have left things alone. Now, I'm sorry to leave in such a hurry but I believe Mr. Nero can handle things.

QUINN: You're not going to kill a policeman, are you? Wouldn't that be bad for business.

KING: Oh, I have no intention of killing the good detective.

KING walks over to STEELE and hands STEELE his gun back.

QUINN: Steele?

STEELE: I'm sorry Jesse.

NERO: You had no idea your Officer Cracker Jack was on the take, did you? Well maybe you're not such a good detective after all.

NERO comes forward and motions to QUINN with his gun to move away from the desk.

NERO: Come on. Move away from the desk.

KING: Well, I'm sorry to leave you under such dire circumstances Jessica, but I have to get down to the docks.

STEELE: Not so fast King.

STEELE aims his gun at KING.

KING: What do you mean not so fast?

STELLE (To King and Nero): Don't either one of you move or you'll both be spending the night in the morgue.

NERO: You dirty rotten double-crossing son of a bitch.

KING: Are you sure about this Steele?

STEELE: Come on hands up. Nice and easy.

STEELE takes NERO's gun and puts his own gun in his holster.

QUINN: Had a change of heart – have ya Steele?

STEELE: Hardly. I've been working undercover, Jess.

QUINN: You could have told me.

STEELE: It was undercover. I couldn't tell you.

NERO: You dirty rotten stool pigeon. I'll get you for this.

STEELE: Shut up and put your hands behind your head and move over there.

NERO moves down in front of the desk. KING watches. QUINN moves away from NERO. STEELE crosses over to the desk.

NERO: You're a dead man Steele. You hear me. A dead man.

STEELE: Am I?

STEELE shoots NERO in the gut. NERO is completely surprised. NERO sways. STEELE shoots another bullet into him and NERO falls to his knees and then flops forward dead.

QUINN goes to grab her gun on the desk, but STEELE turns on her.

STEELE: Not so fast Jessica.

QUINN: You won't get away with this Steele.

STEELE: I told you to back off King, but you wouldn't listen, and you wouldn't take his money, and you wouldn't clear out of town when he gave you the chance. You've left me no choice.

QUINN: How about cutting me some slack and I'll leave town now.

STEELE: It's too late for that. I'm working for the Cassini family now.

KING: The Cassini family. You see that Jessica you can't trust anyone now days, can you? It would appear that we've both been double crossed. You like to play all the angles don't ya Steele.

STEELE: I like to stay one step ahead of the competition. (To Quinn) That's something your father could have learned.

QUINN: What do you mean by that?

STEELE: You see King's one weakness is loyalty. He believed your father would never turn him in. Me, I wasn't so sure your dad would keep his trap shut, and I couldn't risk him spilling the beans and ruining everything I'd set up. So, I took care of the problem myself.

QUINN: You bastard.

STEELE: I thought you two should know the truth. Not that it's going to make any difference now.

QUINN: Okay listen to me. I'll admit I'd like to see you behind bars for killing my father, but I don't want to die. Don't you care about me at all Steele? Is your heart really that stone cold? Because I don't think it is. Just let me go and I won't say a thing.

KING: I'm afraid that's not going to work Jessica. Steele is planning to set the scene so that it looks like you and I had a little shoot out. You kill Nero and me but not before we kill you. Am I right?

STEELE: It should make for a good story. Why I'll bet your boyfriend Bannister will write it up for the newspaper and you'll become another tragic victim of organized crime. Goodbye Jess.

BLAKE enters from the hallway. STEELE turns to see who it is. BLAKE see's STEELE with the gun looks down at NERO and then at QUINN and KING.

BLAKE: Whoa. Whoa. Whoa. Whoa. What's going on here?

STEELE: Hands up Bannister.

QUINN: Turns out Steele is a dirty cop. I guess you were right all along.

KING takes a step towards STEELE and moves towards him as he talks. JESSICA edges towards the desk and her gun while KING talks to STEELE.

KING: The body count is getting a little high, don't you think Steele?

STEELE: What's one more body?

KING: Three people killing each other might be plausible but four that's getting into the realm of fantasy. Especially if you're the one who reports it.

STEELE: Oh, I'm not going to call this in. I'm sure somebody will stumble across the bodies at some point.

KING: Alright then, why don't we cut a deal. After all you turned on me so there's no reason you wouldn't turn on Cassini for a price. There's over half a million dollars stashed away on my yacht in a hidden compartment. All you have to do to earn it is let me go.

STEELE: That's not going to happen, besides if you really had that much cash stashed away you wouldn't still be here. You'd be heading to Argentina or Hong Kong. You're finished King. You can't talk your way out of this one.

KING: Maybe you're right. Maybe the time for talk is over.

KING suddenly lunges at STEELE and strikes him across the face with an upper cut. STEELE reels back as QUINN grabs her gun and BLAKE ducks behind the desk. QUINN takes a shot at STEELE and STEELE fires two shots towards QUINN and BLAKE. KING lunges towards STEELE a second time but STEELE turns the gun on KING and fires twice. KING collapses, falls to one knee, and then falls to the floor dead.

KING: You bastard...

QUINN holds her gun on STEELE.

QUINN: That's it Steele you're out of bullets.

STEELE holds the empty gun - his hands up. BLAKE stands up from behind the desk.

STEELE: So, now what are you going to do Jessica shoot me down in cold blood?

QUINN: No, that's more your style.

STEELE: Listen Jesse maybe we can cut a deal? I've got money.

QUINN: I'm not interested in making a deal with you. You killed my father. What kind of a person do you think I am?

BLAKE: I always knew there was something I didn't like about you Steele. You're lucky Jessica's the one holding a gun on ya. I don't think I'd be so forgiving.

STEELE: Come on Blake, Quinn's got it all mixed up. I'm working undercover. This is just a big misunderstanding.

QUINN: Is it? Then why don't we call the police and let the legal system sort it out. I hear prison is a real friendly place for dirty cops. Isn't that right Blake?

BLAKE: That's what I've heard.

BLAKE wobbles a bit and then he looks at his hand. He holds his hand up to eye level. It's covered in blood.

BLAKE: Jesus Jessica. I'm shot.

QUINN turns towards BLAKE for a moment. STEELE drops the empty gun and quickly reaches for his other gun and starts to pull it out of his holster and aim it towards QUINN but she reacts and fires off two shots. STEELE is hit he looks at QUINN.

STEELE: Jessica?

STEELE falls to the floor dead.

QUINN hurries over to BLAKE. BLAKE is shot in the arm and is hurt but not in any danger of dying.

QUINN: Well it looks like you've got yourself another front-page story Blake.

BLAKE: I've got to get into a different line of work. This job is killing me.

QUINN: You doing okay?

BLAKE: I've had better days. But I'll live. How are you doing?

QUINN: I'm not doing so good. I just shot a guy...

BLAKE: The guy who killed your dad.

QUINN: Yeah, and a guy I trusted. A guy I cared about. What the hell does that tell you about the world?

BLAKE: I don't know. All I know is I'm glad you're alright Jesse.

QUINN: Well, maybe we can head over to the Auburn later and grab a drink. I sure as hell could use one.

BLAKE: That sounds good but how about we call an ambulance first.

QUINN: Can't phones are out.

BLAKE: How you gonna call the cops?

QUINN: These guys aren't going anywhere. I'll call them from the hospital.

BLAKE: Damn. I guess we're taking a cab.

QUINN: Come on tough guy. You aren't hurt so bad. We have to get you patched up so you can meet your deadline. You got a big story to tell.

QUINN helps BLAKE and they exit.

BLACK OUT