

OFF THE RECORD

by

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MONTAGE: 1930S NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

Headline: "HEIRESS TO FLY SOLO CROSS COUNTRY"

Headline: "NAYLOR DAUGHTER CLIMBS MATTERHORN"

Headline: "FRANKIE NAYLOR CONQUERS ARCTIC"

Headline: "NAYLOR SETS SIGHTS ON AMAZON"

Then:

Headline: "NAYLOR SISTERS NAILED AT SPEAKEASY"

INT. SAM'S STUDY - DAY

We pull out from that last headline to see that it tops a newspaper held by Sam Naylor -- 50s, portly, ruddy-complexioned, yet distinguished.

He frowns and throws the paper down on his desk.

SAM  
(yelling)  
FRANKIE!

Frankie Naylor bounds in. She's in her early twenties, fresh-faced, confident, and full of energy.

FRANKIE  
Morning, Daddy!

Sam holds up the paper.

Her face falls.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)  
(disgusted)  
Oh, that.

SAM  
Anything you'd like to say for yourself?

FRANKIE  
Yes, it was a terrible party.

Sam is not amused.

SAM  
Frances--

She grimaces.

FRANKIE

(re: her name)

Oh Daddy, don't do that. I *am* sorry. I should never have let it get into the papers.

SAM

Frankie, we need to nip this in the bud.

FRANKIE

Nip what in the bud?

SAM

This bad press.

FRANKIE

It's one story!

SAM

It's not just one story, it's the *first* story. Next comes--

FRANKIE

The second story and then the third, yes Daddy, I do know how to count, but there isn't going to be a second story because I won't let it happen again.

SAM

(firmly)

No you won't.

His tone makes Frankie suddenly suspicious.

FRANKIE

What do you mean?

SAM

We're going to write our own story.

FRANKIE

Don't be vulgar.

SAM

I don't mean *us*. We'll hire someone.

FRANKIE

Like a journalist?

SAM

Like a biographer.

FRANKIE

That sounds an awful bore.

She picks up the newspaper and begins paging through it.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

(re: the paper)

Not even a good photo of us.

SAM

I'm hiring one today.

Frankie throws down the paper.

FRANKIE

I leave for the Amazon in a week!  
He can't possibly invent a  
biography in that time.

SAM

He's going with you.

FRANKIE

(growing alarmed)

You can't be serious!

SAM

I'm perfectly serious.

FRANKIE

He'd have to be mad to do that!

SAM

Not mad, desperate.

FRANKIE

Who could be that desperate?

Sam picks up his phone. Barks into it:

SAM

(into phone)

Get me Kane.

(after a moment:)

Kane, it's Naylor. Who's the  
brokest writer in town?

(pause)

Thanks.

He hangs up. Frankie looks expectantly at him.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Gilbert George.

CUT TO:

INT. GIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gil George lounges at his desk. He's a threadbare man in his late twenties. Upon the desk gleams a well-oiled Royal typewriter, by far the nicest thing in the room.

Behind him a tall blonde man rummages through the kitchen cabinets. This is Charlie Hunter (20s), a poet, and Gil's roommate.

CHARLIE  
We haven't any food.

GIL  
We haven't any money.

CHARLIE  
Well, we need some.

GIL  
Which?

CHARLIE  
Either.

GIL  
If you had to choose.

CHARLIE  
Oh, in that case, love.

GIL  
Which is why we haven't any money.

The phone rings.

Gil answers it.

GIL (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
Yes? This is he. Uh-huh. Uh-huh...uh-huh...uh-huh. Who? Uh-huh. Thanks.

He hangs up.

CHARLIE  
What was that about?

GIL  
Money.

CHARLIE  
What sort of money?

GIL  
The easy sort. They want me to write Frankie Naylor's biography for two hundred dollars a week.

CHARLIE  
(horrified)  
A biography! You can't possibly accept.

Gil sighs and shakes his head ruefully at his friend.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - DAY

India Naylor, Frankie's little sister, enters the drawing room. She's 18 and an incorrigible flirt.

INDIA  
(calling)  
Frankie! Frankie, where are you?

She passes through the drawing room.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

She wanders through the foyer and up the grand marble staircase to the second storey.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

INDIA  
Frankie?

FRANKIE (O.S.)  
In here!

INT. FRANKIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

India enters the room to find Frankie furiously packing. She's dressed for travelling.

INDIA  
Where are you going?

FRANKIE  
I'm running away.

INDIA  
At your age?

FRANKIE  
It's complicated.

INDIA  
(with sudden  
understanding)  
Oh! What's his name?

FRANKIE  
Gilbert George.

INDIA  
I've never heard of him. He must  
be terribly handsome.

FRANKIE  
I don't know, I haven't met him  
yet.

She picks up her travelling bag and walks out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Frankie strides resolutely toward the front of the house,  
India bobbing along behind her.

INDIA  
You haven't met him? How can you  
not have met your fiancé?

FRANKIE  
He's not my fiancé, he's my  
biographer.

INDIA  
(disappointed)  
Oh, what a bore.

She loses interest and wanders into her room.

Frankie continues toward the front of the house.

FRANKIE  
(to herself)  
That's what I said.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

She descends the marble staircase to the foyer and finds Gil, hat in hand, waiting.

FRANKIE  
Hello, who are you?

GIL  
I'm Gilbert George, who are you?

FRANKIE  
Too late.

Without missing a beat she turns on her heel and walks back toward her room.

SAM (O.S.)  
(bellowing from his study)  
FRANKIE!

INT. SAM'S STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

Gil and Frankie stand awkwardly. Sam lounges behind his desk and chews a cigar, quite at his ease.

SAM  
Frankie, this is Gilbert George.

FRANKIE  
We've met.

GIL  
No we haven't.

FRANKIE  
I've met you.

GIL  
I don't think it works like that.

Frankie concedes the point. She holds out her hand.

FRANKIE  
Frankie Naylor. I'd say it's a pleasure but it's not.

GIL  
(shaking her hand)  
Likewise.

Sam decides it's time to get down to brass tacks.

SAM

I want to make a couple things clear, Mr. George. To you, too, Frankie.

She looks apprehensive.

SAM (CONT'D)

Now you may not like each other, but frankly I don't care. I want to set the record straight. I think a biography's the way to do it, and I think Mr. George here is the one to write it.

GIL

Thank you, sir.

SAM

Shut up, I'm not finished. I think you're the one to write it but I don't think you're the only one who can write it. If I don't like the job you're doing, I'll fire you.

Frankie eyes Gil.

FRANKIE

What if *I* don't like the job he's doing? Can I fire him?

SAM

No. You two are gonna stick together like--

GIL

Two peas in a pod?

SAM

Sure, if that's your metaphor.

GIL

Simile.

SAM

Don't test me, son. You two are gonna stick together like anything you please and if you don't, you're fired. Got it?

GIL

Got it.

FRANKIE  
But you can't fire *me*. What happens to me?

SAM  
Death. Slow and painful.

FRANKIE  
I see.

Frankie looks thoughtful.

SAM  
(to Gil)  
If you let her out of your sight you're fired. If she shows up in the press again without my say so, you're fired. If I don't like what you write--

GIL  
Let me guess, I'm fired?

SAM  
Don't be cute. Now get out of here, both of you, I'm busy.

They leave.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Gil closes the door behind him. Frankie is already halfway down the hallway toward her room.

GIL  
You're going to get me fired, aren't you?

Frankie doesn't break stride.

FRANKIE  
(over her shoulder)  
Absolutely.

She goes into her room and slams the door. Instantly Gil turns around and sprints toward the front of the house.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Gil slides down the marble bannister of the grand staircase, dashes across the foyer, slides to a halt in front of the door, wrenches it open, and runs down the steps.

EXT. NAYLOR MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Gil makes it around the side of the house just in time to catch Frankie climbing down the trellis from her window.

She notices him.

FRANKIE  
(looking down at him)  
Damn.

She begins to climb back up. He watches her until she disappears through the window.

INT. FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Gil walks back into the foyer as Frankie descends the staircase. She goes into the drawing room. He follows.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frankie's mother, Delilah, sits by a window and reads the paper. She's a handsome woman in middle age.

FRANKIE  
Hello, mother.

DELILAH  
Hello, dear.

FRANKIE  
I'd like to introduce my biographer  
Mr. George. He was just telling me  
about his time in prison.

Delilah gets up and offers Gil her hand.

DELILAH  
Was it Sing Sing or Rikers Island?

GIL  
(shaking her hand)  
Sing Sing at first, ma'am, but they  
chucked me out. It's a pleasure.

Frankie's annoyed.

FRANKIE  
Gil's taking me to a speakeasy.

DELILAH  
At noon, dear?

GIL

I thought we'd start with the  
Follies before heading over to the  
Blind Tiger.

DELILAH

Oh you mustn't do that!

Frankie's gratified. But Delilah continues:

DELILAH (CONT'D)

The wages they pay those poor women  
are appalling. They conduct these  
things so much better in Paris.

Frankie leaves.

GIL

Au revoir, ma'am.

Gil hurries after Frankie.

EXT. SPEAKEASY - DAY

Frankie strides up to a nondescript door, Gil at her heels.  
She tries to open it. It's locked. She bangs on it. A  
grate opens in the door and a pair of eyes appears.

PAIR OF EYES

(through the grate)

We're closed! Come back at a  
reasonable hour!

The grate slams shut.

Frankie is annoyed, Gil is amused.

Frankie continues furiously down the street. Gil, hands in  
his pockets, strolls behind her.

EXT. NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY - MOMENTS LATER

Frankie trots up the steps. Gil follows. At the top of the  
steps Frankie stops.

FRANKIE

Sorry, it's members only.

She enters the building. He shrugs and follows anyway.

INT. NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY FOYER - DAY

The doorman nods to Frankie. He steps in front of Gil.

DOORMAN  
Name and business, sir?

GIL  
Gilbert George. I'm writing a  
biography of Miss Naylor.

DOORMAN  
Not the Gilbert George who wrote  
*Molly's Remorse*?

GIL  
The same.

The doorman delightedly shakes his hand.

DOORMAN  
It's an honor, sir. Go right in.

Frankie looks on, disgusted. Gil follows her in.

INT. NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY TEA ROOM - LATER

They sit across the table from one another, drinking tea.

FRANKIE  
Well I suppose you win.

GIL  
Giving up that easily?

FRANKIE  
What's a girl to do in the face of  
such tenacity?

Gil realizes he's being made fun of.

GIL  
(a statement)  
You're not actually giving up, are  
you?

FRANKIE  
(shrugging)  
Oh, who knows? I could be.

GIL  
I don't think I like you very much.

FRANKIE

That's a pity, I'd thought you could take me to Catherine Vanderheisen's party tonight. I have an extra ticket.

GIL

(coldly)

I have a ticket of my own.

FRANKIE

(impressed)

You do?

GIL

Everyone does.

FRANKIE

Everyone who's anyone.

GIL

I'm someone.

FRANKIE

I didn't realize. I suppose I'll see you there, then.

She gets up and begins to leave.

GIL

Not so fast.

He leaps up and follows her out.

GIL (CONT'D)

It's only gentlemanly to walk you home.

FRANKIE

I know the way.

GIL

I know you know it, I just don't trust you to go there.

FRANKIE

You are a bore.

They leave.

## INT. FRANKIE'S ROOM - EVENING

Frankie's half-dressed for the party. Her travelling bag is on the floor beside her. India, in a ball gown, enters and flops down on the bed.

INDIA

I hate Catherine Vanderheisen.

FRANKIE

That's good, because I think Catherine Vanderheisen hates you.

INDIA

Yes, but only because I'm prettier than her. I hate her on principle.

FRANKIE

I'm glad we've got that settled.

India notices the travelling bag.

INDIA

Where are you going?

FRANKIE

To the party of course. But after that, who knows?

INDIA

(petulantly)

Daddy, probably. He *always* knows. He sent men to drag me out of Nathan's bash last week when I *told* him I'd be at the Algonquin.

## INT. GIL'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Gil and Charlie are getting dressed.

GIL

She's a demon.

CHARLIE

This is the face of an unsympathetic friend.

GIL

(drily)

Thanks.

CHARLIE

I told you not to take the job.

GIL  
That job bought us dinner.

Charlie looks sadly at himself in the mirror.

CHARLIE  
I'd rather it bought me a new  
tuxedo. Look at me.

GIL  
Make up your mind, clothes or love?

CHARLIE  
A fellow can't find love in a  
shabby tux.

GIL  
Well a fellow can't find either  
without a job. Come on, we're  
late.

Charlie casts one last mournful glance at his reflection and follows Gil out.

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL - NIGHT

As Frankie and India walk up the steps they notice Charlie and Gil. The men look respectable if a little shabby.

FRANKIE  
(mocking)  
Is that Mr. George? I didn't  
recognize you! Maybe you're  
someone after all.

GIL  
The always charming Miss Naylor.

FRANKIE  
India, this is my illustrious  
biographer Mr.--

But India isn't interested in Gil. Her attention is on Charlie.

INDIA  
Who are you?

CHARLIE  
I'm, uh, I'm Charlie. Charlie  
Hunter.

GIL

In his better moments Charlie's a poet.

INDIA

(delighted)

A poet! Daddy will hate that!

India takes Charlie's arm and drags him into the hotel.

Gil whips out a notebook and pencil.

FRANKIE

That's off the record, Mr. George.

Gil shrugs and pockets his notebook.

Frankie and Gil enter the hotel.

INT. PLAZA BALLROOM - MOMENTS LATER

It's a high society party. Gowns and champagne and money. Frankie looks bored. Gil seems surprisingly at ease.

FRANKIE

I don't know how you can stand it.

GIL

Stand what?

FRANKIE

Parties.

GIL

I stand *you*. This is a cinch.

A gaudily dressed young woman makes her way over to them. This is Catherine Vanderheisen.

CATHERINE

Frankie, *darling!* How good of you to come! I didn't think you'd *make* it, what with your...*exploits*.

FRANKIE

(hates her)

Hello, Catherine.

Catherine notices Gil.

CATHERINE  
 Gil, *darling!*  
 (re: him and Frankie)  
 Caught at last?

GIL  
 Not this time, Catherine. I'm  
 writing Miss Naylor's biography.

CATHERINE  
 Pity. What a lark that would have  
 been. Is that Mr. Edwards?

She flounces off.

FRANKIE  
 Dreadful woman.

GIL  
 I think she's a peach.

A short stocky man approaches. This is Saul Solomon.

SAUL  
 Frankie Naylor!

FRANKIE  
 (with a sigh)  
 Hello, Saul.

Saul sizes up Gil, who towers over him.

SAUL  
 Who's your fellow?

FRANKIE  
 For God's sake.

Gil extends his hand.

GIL  
 Gilbert George, Miss Naylor's  
 fortunate biographer.

Saul beams and shakes Gil's hand enthusiastically.

SAUL  
 Gilbert George! It's a pleasure!  
 Saul Solomon, lately of Hollywood.  
*Molly's Revenge* kept me up nights,  
 it's my life's ambition to make a  
 film of it!

Gil raises an eyebrow.

GIL

Is it?

SAUL

(mournfully)

Yes, shame they'd never let me.  
Everyone loves you books but no one  
seems to *read* them.

Gil opens his mouth to retort, but before he can reply Sam bursts into the scene, Delilah in tow.

SAM

(to Gil and Frankie)

There you are! Quite a couple you  
look, too! Been wantin' to talk to  
you. Just remembered a story.

Saul excuses himself.

SAM (CONT'D)

Better write this down, George.

Gil obligingly pulls a notebook and a pencil out of his pocket.

SAM (CONT'D)

Frankie would've been seven or  
eight, wouldn't she?

DELILAH

(tolerant)

I don't know the story you're  
telling, darling.

SAM

'Course you do, it's the one about  
how she fell out of the tree.

DELILAH

That was India.

SAM

No it wasn't, it was Frankie!  
Wasn't it, Frankie?

But Frankie isn't there.

SAM (CONT'D)

Eh? Where'd she go?

Gil scans the room for Frankie. She's making a beeline for the door.

SAM (CONT'D)

Well never mind, got another story  
for you. Certain this one was  
Frankie. She'd have been--

Gil is still staring after Frankie. Realizes she's trying to  
give him the slip.

GIL

Sorry, sir, I don't mean to be  
rude, but--

He runs off, leaving Sam blinking behind him.

Gil threads his way through the guests, hurrying after  
Frankie. Watches her go out the door, dashes out after her.

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

He sees her get into a cab. He runs down the steps, past a  
gaggle of lounging reporters, and hails one of his own.  
Dives into it.

The reporters look up.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

GIL

(to the driver)  
Follow that taxi!

The cab speeds off.

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

REPORTER #1

Wasn't that Frankie Naylor?

REPORTER #2

Yeah, but who's that guy?

REPORTER #3 (FEMALE)

C'mon, boys!

She hails a cab. The other reporters all follow suit.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - CONTINUOUS

The taxis chase each other through Manhattan.

INT. FRANKIE'S CAB - LATER

Frankie's driver slows and stops. She pays him and get out. They're in a wooded area of Long Island, next to an airstrip and a--

EXT. PRIVATE AIRPLANE HANGER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Frankie lets herself in through a side door.

INT. PRIVATE AIRPLANE HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

Inside is a trim little biplane. Frankie's travelling bag is on the ground next to it.

Frankie presses a button near the door and the front of the hanger opens. She notices the headlights of Gil's taxi approaching and sighs.

She hurriedly puts on a flying jacket over her ball gown. Throws a scarf around her neck, puts on goggles, tosses her bag into the plane, and climbs in after it. She fires up the engine.

Gil's cab screeches to a halt outside the hangar. He tumbles out of it and runs into the hangar. He plants himself in front of the plane.

GIL  
(yelling over the engine)  
What on earth are you doing?

FRANKIE  
(from the cockpit)  
What does it look like?

GIL  
There are reporters right behind me.

FRANKIE  
(can't hear)  
What?

GIL  
Reporters!

FRANKIE  
Reporters?!

GIL  
TURN THAT OFF!

FRANKIE

No!

GIL

You can't afford any more bad  
press!

FRANKIE

Get out of my way!

GIL

Come on, Miss Naylor!

The headlights of the reporters' cabs are right outside.

Frankie makes a quick decision.

FRANKIE

You can come with me if you want,  
but I'm not getting out of this  
plane.

She throttles towards him. Gil realizes she's not going to  
stop and throws himself out of the way.

GIL

Fine!

He clambers into the cockpit behind her. He finds a flying  
cap and pair of goggles at his feet, and angrily jams them  
onto his head.

Frankie guns the engine and the plane roars out of the  
hangar.

EXT. PRIVATE AIRPLANE HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

The reporters are spilling out of their taxis just as Frankie  
and Gil taxi past.

Frankie doesn't even look at them. She urges the little  
plane faster and it leaps into the air.

They take off in a storm of flashbulbs.

INT. BIPLANE COCKPIT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

As the plane soars up into the night sky Gil screams.

FRANKIE

What's wrong?

Gil looks like he's going to throw up.

GIL  
I don't like heights.

FRANKIE  
Then why did you get in the plane?!

GIL  
Why did you leave the party?

FRANKIE  
To get away from you, of course!

She does a barrel roll. Gil screams the whole way round.

GIL  
Don't do that!

FRANKIE  
What, this?

She does it again. He screams again.

GIL  
Please!

She takes pity on him.

FRANKIE  
Fine.

GIL  
What were you thinking?!

FRANKIE  
It's perfectly safe!

GIL  
I mean by running away!

FRANKIE  
I wasn't! And it feels wonderful!

GIL  
Where are we going, anyway?

FRANKIE  
I have no idea! I'm going to fly west until we run out of fuel.

GIL  
Until *what?*!

Frankie glances at the fuel gauge. It's low.

FRANKIE

(calmly)

Which is actually going to happen sooner than I'd anticipated.

GIL

What?!

FRANKIE

(philosophically)

Well you really can't blame me for that. You were in such a hurry I didn't have time to fill up.

GIL

Turn this plane around!

FRANKIE

Certainly not.

GIL

Frankie!

FRANKIE

Oh, are we using first names now? Good, I'm glad. It was getting awfully stodgy.

GIL

Turn around, Frankie!

FRANKIE

Absolutely not, Gil. "Gil." That's a nice name. I like it. I like your name much better than I like you.

GIL

We're going to crash!

FRANKIE

Don't worry, I've crashed before.

GIL

Well I haven't!

FRANKIE

All the more reason then. Everyone should crash at least once. It's an experience.

Gil moans and slumps down in his seat, resigned to his fate.

EXT. BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS - AIRBORNE - DAWN

As the sun rises over the Blue Ridge Mountains, the engine sputters and dies.

INT. BIPLANE COCKPIT - DAWN

The plane is suddenly very quiet. The only sound is the wind whistling past.

Every muscle in Gil's body is quivering.

GIL  
What's happening?

FRANKIE  
Do you hear that?

GIL  
I don't hear anything.

FRANKIE  
Exactly! Isn't it wonderful? I think that's my favorite sound in the world.

GIL  
We're going to die.

FRANKIE  
We're not going to die.

GIL  
How can you be sure?

FRANKIE  
Well if it comes to that I suppose I can't. You're quite right, we *could* die.

This doesn't help Gil's nerves. He clings to the edges of the cockpit.

The plane continues to glide gently earthward.

Frankie, with perfect composure, guides it toward a cornfield.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)  
Hang on.

GIL  
I am!

In a confusion of cornstalks the plane crashes into the field.

EXT. CORNFIELD - MORNING

Silence. Then a groan. It's Gil.

The plane's a wreck, but its passengers appear to be unharmed.

Frankie clambers out of the cockpit and reaches down to help Gil.

FRANKIE

There now, wasn't that fun?

GIL

No.

He takes her hand and she pulls him onto the wing. He stumbles off it and collapses onto the earth.

Frankie goes back for her travelling bag.

She comes back and stands next to Gil. She pats the plane

FRANKIE

(re: the plane)

The poor dear.

GIL

Can you fix it?

FRANKIE

Oh heavens no. I'm no mechanic, and even if I was....

She shrugs.

GIL

What now?

FRANKIE

Now I'm going to get out of this gown and into some proper clothes.

She begins doing just that. Gil, scandalized, heaves himself up and hurries behind the plane.

GIL

(calling)

Tell me when you're done!

FRANKIE (O.S.)  
I didn't know you were a prude!

GIL  
I'm not a prude.

FRANKIE (O.S.)  
Oh, I see. You do a good  
impression.  
(musing)  
Daddy's a bit of a prude, though,  
so perhaps this should stay off the  
record, too.

She comes round the side of the plane. She's in trousers and her leather flying jacket. She looks rugged and adventurous. Gil notices, and gapes at her for a moment.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)  
Well come on. I saw a road from  
the air.

She begins walking off through the corn. Gil, limping outrageously, follows.

EXT. ROAD - MORNING

They reach a dirt road.

GIL  
Thank God.

FRANKIE  
North or south?

GIL  
How should I know?

FRANKIE  
It's not about knowing, it's about  
*feeling*.

GIL  
I think my leg's broken.

FRANKIE  
Your leg isn't broken.

GIL  
I feel as though it is.

She shoots him a look.

There's a distant roar that grows nearer. Frankie cocks her head.

FRANKIE

Someone's coming! North it is.

She steps to the side of the road and sticks out her thumb as a battered jalopy hurtles around the bend.

Gil, who seems a little dazed, doesn't move far enough out of the way and is almost flattened as the jalopy flies past.

He leaps backwards, slips, and falls into a mud puddle.

The jalopy slams on its breaks and a grimy sixteen year old boy hops out. This is Ned Pickering.

NED

What the devil do you think you're doing! Coulda got yourself kilt!

Gil picks himself out of the puddle.

GIL

Why don't you watch where you're going!

Frankie is laughing at him. Ned notices her for the first time. His demeanor abruptly changes. He becomes bumbling and courtly.

NED

Oh, I'm awful sorry, ma'am. I didn't realize you was a woman. Otherwise I'd never of said those things. I'm Ned Pickering.

FRANKIE

Hello, Ned Pickering. I'm Frankie, and this is Gil.

NED

Real pleased to meetcha. I don't mean to be rude, ma'am, but I'm in a bit of a hurry. Can I offer y'all a ride?

FRANKIE

Thank you, Ned.

He gets back into the car, and they climb in the passenger side.

INT. JALOPY - MORNING

As soon as they're inside Ned floors it.

Frankie and Gil are thrown back as the jalopy leaps forward. Gil tumbles into the backseat. The back of the car is filled with cases of moonshine.

GIL  
Are you a *bootlegger*?

NED  
(proudly)  
Me 'n' my brothers is the best in the state!

FRANKIE  
That's terribly exciting, Ned. If you don't mind my asking, which state is this?

NED  
Why, this here's the great state of Kentucky, ma'am. Best state in the Union.

Just then, sirens become audible behind them.

GIL  
Are those sirens?

NED  
Now doncha worry, Gil. There's no faster driver alive than Ned Pickering. In all my years a' doin' this I ain't never been caught once. I's on my way right up to New York, and there ain't a cop in the county that can stop me.

FRANKIE  
New York! We just came from there!

NED  
How'd y'all end up way out here?

FRANKIE  
Well our plane crashed, but--

Gil, who has been looking anxiously out the window, cuts in.

GIL  
They're gaining on us!

EXT. JALOPY - CONTINUOUS

Sure enough, two police cars are speeding behind the jalopy.

INT. JALOPY - CONTINUOUS

NED  
Don't y'all worry, now.

A bullet smashes the passenger side mirror.

GIL  
Are they *shooting* at us?!

NED  
Donch'all worry!

Frankie, who's rather thrilled by all this, notices for the first time a tommy gun bouncing on the dashboard.

FRANKIE  
(indicating the gun)  
May I?

NED  
Please do.

She picks it up and cocks it.

GIL  
What are you--?!

Before he can protest further she leans out the window. She begins shooting back at the cops.

GIL (CONT'D)  
Cut it out!

FRANKIE  
Quiet, Gil, I'm concentrating.

Gil takes cover among the moonshine jars as bullets smash through the rear windshield.

GIL  
Do something!

FRANKIE  
I'm trying!

She shoots out the cops' tires.

EXT. JALOPY - CONTINUOUS

The police cars veer off the road. The jalopy pulls safely ahead and disappears around a bend.

EXT. BARN - DAY - A LITTLE LATER

The jalopy pulls off the road and disappears into a barn. The door is closed behind it.

INT. JALOPY - CONTINUOUS

GIL  
What's going on?

NED  
Gotta change cars.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Ned leaps out of the jalopy. Frankie and Gil follow suit.

Two men, Ned's brothers, have already begun unloading the crates and transferring them into another, faster looking jalopy.

NED  
These here are my brothers, Jimmy--

JIMMY  
Hiya.

NED  
--and Larry.

LARRY  
How do.

NED  
Boys, these folks is from New York.

The brothers continue their work uninterrupted.

FRANKIE  
Hello, I'm Frankie and this is Gil!  
It's wonderful to meet you both!

JIMMY

(to Ned)

Any trouble on the road?

NED

Nah. Ran into some cops, but  
Missus Frankie here's handy with a  
gun.

(to Frankie and Gil:)

Y'all is OK, right?

FRANKIE

Oh, fine, fine!

Gil wanders over to the new jalopy and looks inside. He gets  
in Larry's way. Larry brushes against him and glances down.

LARRY

(to Gil)

Got some blood on you.

Gil glances down and notices that his left sleeve is soaked  
in blood.

GIL

Good God!

FRANKIE

I'd better have a look.

She rolls up his sleeve. There's a bullet hole above his  
elbow.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Just a flesh wound.

GIL

I've been shot?!

FRANKIE

(wistfully)

Wounded in battle.

GIL

I've been shot!

He begins wailing.

FRANKIE

Oh shut up, you didn't even notice  
it before.

GIL  
Well I notice it now! And it  
hurts!

He wails louder. A little concerned, everyone peers at him.

JIMMY  
I guess y'all had better head on  
over to Doc Ignatius. He'll patch  
you right up.

NED  
I'd take ya, but I'm late already.

JIMMY  
It's only a couple a' miles.

GIL  
A couple of *miles*? I've been shot!

JIMMY  
(pointing)  
Yep, right over that-a-way.

FRANKIE  
(trying for some local  
flavor:)  
Well it was lovely meeting y'all.  
Take care now, and say hello to New  
York for us.

JIMMY  
Bye, now.

NED  
Bye, Missus Frankie!

FRANKIE  
Come on, Gil.

Frankie leads him out of the barn.

EXT. ROAD - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

They begin walking in the direction Jimmy indicated. Frankie is practically skipping. Gil cradles his arm and limps pathetically.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Back in New York, Sam Naylor is meeting with a private investigator named Ernst Rosen. He's 30, handsome, and

German, with a thick accent.

SAM  
 ...She goes by Frankie. You need a picture?

ERNST  
 Her photo is in all the papers.

SAM  
 'Course it is, just wanted to be thorough. What else do you need?

ERNST  
 I do not wish to be crass, but--

SAM  
 Ah yes, the money.

He pulls out a check book.

SAM (CONT'D)  
 Half now, half when you find her.

ERNST  
 That is fair.

Sam scribbles the check, tears it out.

He hands it to Ernst.

SAM  
 And listen -- this better not end up in the papers, you understand?

ERNST  
 Perfectly, perfectly. I can show myself out.

He does.

INT. FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Ernst is crossing the foyer when the door opens and India and Charlie come in. They're still in their evening dress -- it's clear they're only just coming back from the party.

As soon as India sees Ernst she shrieks.

INDIA  
 Ernst darling!

She runs to him and throws herself into his arms. Ernst receives her awkwardly, but he's not displeased.

Charlie looks on, nonplussed.

INDIA (CONT'D)

I never thought I'd see you again!

Charlie decides to take action. He walks forward to introduce himself.

CHARLIE

Hello, I'm Charlie Hunter.

Ernst extricates his right hand from India and offers it to Charlie.

ERNST

Ernst Rosen.

INDIA

Charlie darling, it's the most wonderful thing! I met Ernst at a party weeks ago and fell in love with him on the spot, but then the police arrived and I never thought I'd see him again! And now here he is, right here in my house!

CHARLIE

(coldly)

How extraordinary.

INDIA

Ernst, Charlie's a poet and I'm perfectly mad about him.

Charlie warms a little at that.

ERNST

(coldly)

Delightful.

INDIA

Come on, we must celebrate! You boys can take me to breakfast!

She turns around and drags them out of the house.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

India sits on one side of a booth, Charlie and Ernst sit awkwardly shoulder-to-shoulder on the other. Neither of them look happy. India beams at them.

After a tense moment, Ernst, who is on the inside seat, says:

ERNST  
Excuse me for a moment.

Emphasizing the inconvenience, Charlie gets up and lets Ernst out.

Ernst heads toward a phonebooth.

INT. PHONEBOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Ernst goes into the phonebooth and picks up the phone.

ERNST  
(into phone:)  
Get me Percy Pierson at the Times.

He waits. Then:

ERNST (CONT'D)  
(into phone:)  
Ja, Percy? It's Ernst. I've got  
the scoop of the century.

INT. RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Food is on the table and Charlie is looking dreamily at India when Ernst appears beside them.

ERNST  
(to Charlie:)  
Excuse me.

Charlie sighs and gets up. Ernst slides into the booth and Charlie sits back down. Hold on the plates of food.

INT. DOCTOR IGNATIUS'S KITCHEN - DAY

We match cut to Kentucky, where Frankie and Gil are finishing breakfast with Doc Ignatius.

The doctor is a spindly man in his 60s with kind eyes and a shock of white hair.

Gil's left arm is in a sling.

FRANKIE

Thank you so much for breakfast.  
Nothing like a good cup of coffee  
after a morning of adventure.

DOC IGNATIUS

My pleasure, Miss Naylor. I'm  
awfully sorry about your plane.

FRANKIE

Oh, it's no trouble. These things  
happen.

GIL

Do they?

FRANKIE

They happen to me, Gil.

DOC IGNATIUS

What will you do now?

Frankie sighs.

FRANKIE

Oh, I don't know. I suppose I've  
been dreadful to poor Daddy -- he  
must be beside himself. We'd  
better start heading back to New  
York.

GIL

We just left New York!

FRANKIE

Yes, and I'm glad we did, and now  
we'd better go back.

DOC IGNATIUS

Why not stay in the country for a  
few days? I have a spare room.

FRANKIE

Thank you, doctor, but I really  
couldn't. There's a fund-raising  
gala the day after tomorrow for my  
Amazon expedition that I really  
must attend.

GIL

Fund-raising gala? But you're rich  
as Croesus.

FRANKIE

No I'm not, Daddy is. But even he isn't rich enough to single-handedly finance a trip of that scale.

GIL

So after all that hullabaloo getting out of New York we're just going right back?

FRANKIE

Would you prefer to stay here?

GIL

Certainly not!

He glances up at Doc Ignatius.

GIL (CONT'D)

(to the doctor:)

No offense.

DOC IGNATIUS

None taken. Can I help in any way?

FRANKIE

Oh no, you've done so much already. You wouldn't happen to know where I could buy a plane, do you?

Doc Ignatius laughs.

DOC IGNATIUS

Nowhere around these parts. But there's a town nearby where you can catch a bus.

FRANKIE

(disappointed)

Oh. Well, that will have to do. Thank you, doctor.

She rises.

DOC IGNATIUS

I'd drive you, but I can't leave my practice. It's not far -- seven miles or so.

Gil is aghast.

GIL  
Seven miles! I can't walk seven  
miles, I'm wounded!

Doc Ignatius smiles at him.

DOC IGNATIUS  
You'll be fine, son. Y'all take  
care, now.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Frankie and Gil are walking to town. Gil is limping.

GIL  
We must be close.

FRANKIE  
Are you always like this?

GIL  
Like what? No, don't answer that,  
I don't want to know.

FRANKIE  
Aren't you having just a little bit  
of fun?

GIL  
How far have we gone?

FRANKIE  
Oh, at least a mile.

Gil stops dead.

GIL  
That's impossible.

FRANKIE  
I know, it feels like we've been  
walking for no time at all!

GIL  
I'll never make it.

FRANKIE  
You don't do well out of the city,  
do you? Would you like me to carry  
you?

GIL  
Certainly not.

FRANKIE

I could, you know. I once carried  
a wounded porter across the  
Serengeti.

Gil pulls out his notebook. He tries to write that down, but  
it's difficult with only one hand.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Don't write that down, it's off the  
record.

GIL

You keep saying that, but what do  
you mean, off the record? You do  
realize that I'm not a journalist --  
there is no record.

FRANKIE

Of course there is.

A beat while Gil fumbles with his pencil.

GIL

Well this one actually is off the  
record, I can't manage it.

He gives up and puts his notebook back in his pocket.

GIL (CONT'D)

I can't wait to be back in New  
York.

FRANKIE

Can't you enjoy anything?

GIL

No.

Just then a woman steps into the road in front of them.  
She's at least six feet tall and carries a pistol. This is  
Penny Bruiser (30s).

She points her gun at them.

PENNY

Reach for the sky!

Frankie does.

FRANKIE

(thrilled)  
A hold up!

Gil tries, but his sling gets tangled round his neck.

PENNY  
Come on, stick 'em up!

GIL  
I'm trying!

PENNY  
Hands up or I shoot!

FRANKIE  
Oh no, you mustn't do that -- he's  
already been shot once today and  
that wouldn't be fair.

PENNY  
Oh, I see. Well, no funny  
business.

FRANKIE  
I suppose you want our money?

PENNY  
That's right.

Gil has finally had enough of this day.

GIL  
You can't just take it!

PENNY  
Can't I?

GIL  
What do you want with our money?

FRANKIE  
She wants to buy things, silly.

PENNY  
No I don't, I want to enter a  
boxing tournament.

GIL  
(skeptically)  
You're a boxer.

PENNY  
That's right.

GIL  
You're not a boxer, you're a girl.

PENNY  
I am too a boxer!

GIL  
That's ridiculous.

PENNY  
It's not, and I'll prove it.

She slugs Gil in the face and we

CUT TO BLACK:

UP ON:

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY - LATER

Gil's lying flat on his back, out cold. Frankie crouches over him. Penny's nowhere to be seen.

Close on Gil's face. His nose is badly broken. His eyelids flutter.

Gil's POV: We see Frankie through his eyes. She's radiant, a vision. The sun makes a halo behind her head. But then:

FRANKIE  
It was awfully rude of you to question her credentials.

GIL  
She punched me!

FRANKIE  
As far as I'm concerned you got what you deserved.

She helps him to his feet.

GIL  
What about our money?

FRANKIE  
Oh, I gave it to her, of course.

GIL  
All of it?

FRANKIE  
("duh")  
It was a hold up!  
(MORE)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Besides, it seems to me that she needed it more than we did. I of all people should understand the need for patrons. How do you feel?

GIL

Bad.

She peers at his face. It's covered with blood.

GIL (CONT'D)

How do I look?

FRANKIE

Bad. I'd better set your nose.

She reaches toward him.

GIL

What are you--?

She grabs his nose and in one swift motion sets it. There's an audible crack and he howls in pain.

FRANKIE

There, that's better. Come on, hurry up and we'll get there before dark.

She strides off down the road. Gil follows.

They haven't gone ten paces before a car appears behind them. Frankie steps to the side of the road. Gil, recalling his near miss with Ned, dives headlong into the bushes.

The car stops and backs up. A middle aged women rolls down the window. This is Mrs. Digby.

MRS. DIGBY

(to Frankie)

Is he alright?

FRANKIE

Oh, he's fine, just a little gun shy. He almost got hit earlier, you see, and then he got shot, and then he almost got shot again, and then he got punched.

MRS. DIGBY

The poor dear.

Gil sheepishly emerges from the bushes. He really looks awful. He's covered in mud and blood, his clothes are torn, his hair is wild, his arm is in a sling.

MRS. DIGBY (CONT'D)  
Can I offer you a ride?

FRANKIE  
Oh no, thank you, it's not much farther!

GIL  
Are you crazy?

MRS. DIGBY  
Please dear, I insist.

GIL  
Frankie.

FRANKIE  
Very well.

She opens the door and gets in. Gil clammers in behind her, bumping his head as he does so.

GIL  
Ow!

INT. MRS. DIGBY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Gil closes the door behind him and they begin to drive.

MRS. DIGBY  
I'm Mrs. Digby.

FRANKIE  
I'm Frankie and this is Gil.

MRS. DIGBY  
And where are you two coming from?

FRANKIE  
New York.

MRS. DIGBY  
New York! Honeymoon?

FRANKIE AND GIL  
No.

MRS. DIGBY  
 (significantly)  
 Ah.

Silence for a moment. She eyes them in the rear view mirror.

MRS. DIGBY (CONT'D)  
 Well I know just what you need.

GIL  
 A shower and a scotch?

MRS. DIGBY  
 The helping hand of Jesus.

Gil opens his mouth but Frankie cuts him off.

FRANKIE  
 (straight faced)  
 We do, Mrs. Digby. We do.

MRS. DIGBY  
 Well you're in luck. My husband happens to be the best preacher this side of the Mississippi. He's in the business of saving souls.

GIL  
 (sarcastic)  
 Amen.

In the distance the lights of the town glimmer. But before they reach it, Mrs. Digby slows down and pulls off the road.

EXT. CHURCH TENT - CONTINUOUS

In a clearing by the side of the road is a revival tent. Mrs. Digby pulls turns off the car. They all get out, and Mrs. Digby bustles them into

INT. CHURCH TENT - CONTINUOUS

a revival meeting. It's in full swing. Mrs. Digby throws up her hands and is swept right up in the whole thing.

Gil and Frankie don't and aren't. They share an alarmed look.

Mrs. Digby's husband, Obadiah (40s), stands at the front, preaching for all he's worth.

OBADIAH

And the lord looked upon the  
sinners and he cried VICE!  
INIQUITY! THE SINS OF THE FATHER  
SHALL BE VISITED UPON THE SON AND I  
SHALL RAIN DOWN BRIMSTONE UPON THEM  
AND THEY SHALL BE CAST DOWN INTO  
THE FIERY PITS OF HELL!

CUT TO:

INT. SPEAKEASY - EVENING

We're back in New York, in a speakeasy. It's a high class joint, full of high class young people drinking and dancing and reveling in their life of sin. A jazz band plays.

India, Ernst, and Charlie are drinking at a table.

INDIA

You boys are been so gallant  
escorting me around all day!

ERNST

It was nothing, darling.

Charlie looks daggers at him.

After a moment a gangly reporter walks in. This is Percy Pierson (30s), Ernst's contact at the Times.

Ernst sees him and waves him over.

ERNST (CONT'D)

This is my friend, Percy Pierson.

PERCY

Hello.

He shakes hands with them.

CHARLIE

Charlie Hunter.

INDIA

Oh Mr. Pierson, Ernst's told me *all*  
about you! I feel as though we're  
old friends. Won't you sit down?

He does.

PERCY

Thank you.

INDIA

Isn't this just the loveliest place? It's where Frankie and I got caught last week, and of course that's what started all this mess, but I can't hold that against it -- it's too, too darling.

Percy looks uncomfortable.

INDIA (CONT'D)

Oh don't worry, Mr. Pierson, you are too! It was you who wrote that story, wasn't it?

PERCY

Well, yes, but--

INDIA

No, no, don't apologize! We all have to earn a living, after all. Well, I don't, of course -- but you were just doing your job, and even Daddy couldn't hold that against you.

PERCY

That's good of you to say, Miss Naylor.

INDIA

Oh, you're cute.

Charlie and Ernst both bristle. Before either of them can say anything, though, there's a commotion at the door.

Ned Pickering, the bootlegger, bursts in. He's flushed and rushed and in a hurry. He finds the bartender.

NED

I'm real sorry I'm late! You'll never believe it, but I was just startin' out when a woman dropped outta the sky in a plane. And she was real purdy, if you follow me, so a' course I had to help her. Her and that man she was with.

India, Charlie, Ernst, and Percy all prick up their ears. Ernst leaps to his feet.

ERNST

Did you say a couple in a plane?

NED

Why, yes, that's what they told me. Crashed right in Pete Hassen's corn field. Said they was from New York, but they ended up in Chippewa, Kentucky -- and here I am in New York! Ain't life funny?

The whole table's on its feet now.

CHARLIE

The man, was he thin, sort of useless, looked a little lost?

NED

That's him alright. Couldn't figure out what a woman like her woulda been doin' with someone like that.

INDIA

She -- she'd have been wearing a flying jacket, I suppose, with a patch on the arm?

NED

Yes indeedie! Y'all know 'em?

PERCY

Please, can you tell us where they are? We need to speak to them immediately.

NED

Well I don't rightly know, last I saw 'em they were headed to see Doc Ignatius. Suppose they probably went into town after that, but there's no tellin'.

Charlie sees an opportunity.

CHARLIE

Why Ernst, that sounds like a lead!

ERNST

Ja, ja, it does.

CHARLIE

I guess you'd better go down there and see if you can't bring Miss Naylor back safely, hadn't you?

Ernst sees the danger.

ERNST  
 (panicked)  
 Ah, no, that--

But it's too late.

INDIA  
 Oh Ernst, *would* you? That would be  
 too, too good of you!

ERNST  
 Well, I--

NED  
 If any a' y'all need a ride I'm  
 startin' back that way in ten  
 minnits or so.

INDIA  
 That settles it! Oh Ernst, thank  
 you!

ERNST  
 (defeated)  
 It is my pleasure.

NED  
 Anyone else?

PERCY  
 You bet I'm going -- can't pass up  
 a scoop like that! Charlie?

CHARLIE  
 Well gosh, I wish I could -- but I  
 promised this Miss Naylor I'd take  
 her to Marquette's tomorrow night.

Ernst glares at Charlie.

EXT. CHURCH TENT - AFTERNOON

Frankie and Gil meanwhile sneak out of the revival meeting.  
 As they exit the tent we hear Obadiah thundering on behind  
 them.

They both look shell shocked.

GIL  
 That was....

FRANKIE  
 A lot. That was a lot.

GIL

Do you think they'll just let us  
leave?

FRANKIE

Of course! They're not going to  
*follow* us.

But she can't help glancing behind her. They both walk a  
little faster.

Frankie and Gil get back on the road toward town.

EXT. ROAD - AFTERNOON

He takes out his notebook and pencil.

GIL

Would you call yourself a religious  
woman, Miss Naylor?

FRANKIE

This is off the record.

Gil sighs and puts his notebook back in his pocket.

EXT. TOWN - AFTERNOON - LATER

They finally reach the town. It's a dingy little coal mining  
community.

They both stop and look at it.

GIL

I can't help but feel a little let  
down.

Even Frankie has to admit that

FRANKIE

It *is* a rather shabby place, isn't  
it?

A drunk man is thrown out the double doors of a saloon and  
lies insensible on the street.

Gil raises his eyebrows.

Just then, Penny Bruiser appears.

PENNY

Hello!

Gil recognizes her. For half a moment he considers challenging her.

GIL

You--!

She takes a step towards him. He runs behind Frankie.

FRANKIE

Hello, Penny!

PENNY

(to Gil)

I'm real sorry for punching you, mister. I just hate it when people talk to me like that.

GIL

You stole our money!

PENNY

I feel real bad about it, too. I'd give it back to you, but I don't have it anymore.

FRANKIE

You were able to enter the tournament, then?

PENNY

Yes! Look!

Penny's carrying a sheaf of paper. She hands Frankie one of the sheets. It's a promotional poster advertising a title bout between "PENNY BRUISER AND TONY THE TITAN!"

FRANKIE

That looks wonderful!

PENNY

(shyly)

I don't suppose -- I don't suppose you'd like to come watch? You paid my entry fee, after all.

GIL

(coldly)

I'm sorry, that won't be possible. We need to find the bus.

FRANKIE

Nonsense, Gil. Besides, we haven't any money for bus tickets.

Gil looks darkly at Penny.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)  
We'd love to come, Penny.

Penny is thrilled.

PENNY  
Oh, thank you! It'll be nice to  
know *someone* there's rooting for  
me.

EXT. BARN - EVENING

Penny leads them to a barn on the edge of town. From within we hear cheering. They go inside.

INT. BARN - EVENING

A makeshift ring has been set up in the middle of the barn. A huge crowd mills around it. Inside the ring a fight is just finishing up.

Two burly men pummel one another until one of them falls, bleeding and unconscious, out of the ring. The crowd goes wild. Gil winces.

He glances over at Frankie. She's watching raptly. So is Penny.

PENNY  
(reverently)  
Isn't it wonderful?

INT. BARN - LATER

Frankie and Gil now watch without Penny. An even bigger man than the ones in the last bout is waiting in a corner of the ring.

GIL  
*That's* Tony the Titan? He'll kill  
her!

FRANKIE  
I thought you hated her.

GIL  
I do. But-- Death seems  
excessive.

Penny walks through the crowd toward the ring. As she passes through, the crowd boos loudly.

CROWD  
(chanting)  
To-ny! To-ny! To-ny!

Gil frowns, annoyed at the injustice.

Penny climbs over the ropes and waits in the other corner.

A bell is stuck and the match begins.

Tony comes out swinging. Penny absorbs blow after blow. Gil winces as each punch lands.

Frankie watches stoically.

GIL  
Why doesn't she hit back?

Penny keeps taking punishment.

CROWD  
(chanting)  
To-ny! To-ny! To-ny!

Gil is visibly disgusted.

Penny continues getting pummelled. One of Tony's blows connects with her jaw, and she goes down.

The crowd roars.

CROWD (CONT'D)  
(chanting)  
To-ny! To-ny! To-ny!

Gil glares around at them.

The referee begins the count.

REFEREE  
One! Two! Three!

CROWD  
(chanting)  
To-ny! To-ny! To-ny!

REFEREE  
Four! Five!

Finally Gil can't take it.

GIL  
 (yelling over the crowd)  
 COME ON, PENNY, GET UP!

Penny hears him. She looks up.

Gil has become a fan. Frankie joins in.

FRANKIE AND GIL  
 COME ON, PENNY!

Penny gets up.

GIL  
 NOW HIT HIM!

Tony comes running at Penny. This time, she hits him. Hard. It's the same punch she used to fell Gil.

Tony the Titan goes down with a thud that shakes the whole barn. The crowd is silenced.

Then:

GIL (CONT'D)  
 (chanting)  
 PEN-NY!

Frankie picks it up.

FRANKIE AND GIL  
 PEN-NY! PEN-NY!

The crowd doesn't know what to do.

Finally a miner says:

MINER  
 She knocked out Tony the Titan!  
 PEN-NY! PEN-NY!

The crowd joins him.

CROWD  
 PEN-NY! PEN-NY! PEN-NY!

Penny puts her arms up proudly and beams at everyone.

INT. BARN - LATER

Penny is flushed with happiness. She wears an enormous championship belt and holds a wad of cash.

Frankie and Gil make their way through the adoring crowd. She sweeps them into a crushing bear hug.

Then she peels off several bills and thrusts them into Gil's hand.

GIL  
(yelling over the noise of  
the crowd)  
I couldn't.

PENNY  
Please!

She's engulfed by a wave of fans.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT - LATER

Frankie and Gil wait outside the barn. The crowd is still audible inside.

GIL  
I guess we probably missed the last  
bus tonight.

FRANKIE  
You don't seem sorry.

GIL  
(glancing at the barn)  
I'm not.

FRANKIE  
Does Gilbert George have a taste  
for adventure?

He scowls at her good naturedly, then yawns.

Penny comes outside.

GIL  
Penny, is there an inn in this  
place?

Penny frowns.

PENNY  
Well, not an *inn* precisely.

GIL  
I don't care if it's a jail cell,  
as long as it's got clean sheets  
and a decent shower.

PENNY

Come on, I'll show you.

She leads the way back into town.

EXT. TOWN - CONTINUOUS

They walk through town. It's even seedier by night. Penny brings them straight up to:

EXT. MADAM MISLETHWAITE'S BROTHEL - CONTINUOUS

A brothel. It's gaudy and loud and utterly disreputable. Gil blanches.

Frankie, though, is delighted.

FRANKIE

A brothel! I love brothels!

GIL

Is that--?

FRANKIE

Off the record.

PENNY

(apologetic)

I wish there were something better.

FRANKIE

No, it's delightful!

Gil sighs. He's too tired to argue. He shrugs.

PENNY

Well I'd best be off. Tony says I owe him a drink, and--

(she blushes)

Well, I'd best be off. It was so lovely meeting you.

FRANKIE

Likewise!

GIL

(gravely)

The pleasure was ours.

The shake hands all round. Penny leaves.

FRANKIE

Shall we?

GIL

God help us.

They go inside.

INT. MADAM MISLETHWAITE'S BROTHEL - CONTINUOUS

Frankie goes right up to the birdlike madam, Madam Mislethwaite (40s).

FRANKIE

Hello, I'm Frankie and this is my biographer Gil. We'd like to rent rooms for the night.

She slaps down some bills.

MADAM MISLETHWAITE

Of course, dear. Would you like to rent anything else?

FRANKIE

Not this time, I'm afraid.

MADAM MISLETHWAITE

Right this way, dear.

She leads them up the stairs.

FADE OUT.

EXT. JALOPY - NIGHT

Up on Ned's jalopy as he speeds back from New York. Ernst and Percy are visible through the windshield, squeezed in next to him. They look uncomfortable. We pull back and hear:

NED (V.O.)

And then Mama says to me, Now Ned, don' chu do that again, but I look over at Larry and I just knows he's gonna and then can you guess what happened next?

ERNST (V.O.)

(in mourning for his life)  
I cannot guess.

EXT. MADAM MISLETHWAITE'S BROTHEL - MORNING

In a courtyard behind the brothel, a maid holds Gil's bloodstained shirt at arm's length and wrinkles her nose. She plunges it into a bucket of soapy water and begins scrubbing it on a washboard.

INT. MADAM MISLETHWAITE'S BROTHEL - MORNING - LATER

The maid, looking exhausted, hangs Gil's shirt on the door to his room. She knocks on the door. It opens promptly and Gil's hand emerges. He takes the shirt off the doorhandle and brings it inside. The door shuts again.

INT. MADAM MISLETHWAITE'S BROTHEL - MOMENTS LATER

Frankie sits at a table sipping a cup of coffee. Gil comes down the stairs, looking almost clean, and sits next to her.

FRANKIE  
(impressed)  
Look at you!

GIL  
You're not so bad yourself.

FRANKIE  
Sleep well?

GIL  
Like a baby. Let's find a bus and get out of this place.

EXT. BUS STATION - MORNING

Frankie and Gil walk up to the bus station. It's not much to look at -- just an awning and a ticket booth. A ramshackle bus idles outside.

They go to the booth. Behind the counter is a wizened ticket agent.

GIL  
Two tickets to New York, please.

TICKET AGENT  
That'll be a dollar twenty.

Gil realizes Frankie has their money. He looks at her.

She hands over two dollars to the ticket agent. He hands the change and the tickets to Gil. Gil hands the change to Frankie. He glances at the tickets and frowns.

He hands them back.

GIL  
I'm sorry, I said two tickets to  
New York.  
(loudly and slowly)  
NEW. YORK. These say Chicago.

The ticket agent takes back the tickets and hands Gil two more.

Gil looks at them. He hands them back.

GIL (CONT'D)  
Still Chicago.

TICKET AGENT  
Only one bus and it only goes to  
Chicago.

GIL  
But we need to get to New York.

TICKET AGENT  
Plenty a' busses in Chicago that  
can take you to New York.

GIL  
That's ridiculous, Chicago's the  
wrong direction. There must be  
another bus.

TICKET AGENT  
(implacable)  
Only one bus and it only goes to  
Chicago.

Gil glances at Frankie. She shrugs.

Gil takes the tickets.

They walk over to the bus. The driver is standing outside.

DRIVER  
Where you headed?

GIL  
New York.

The driver takes their Chicago tickets and carefully looks them over.

DRIVER  
Come on in.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

There aren't many people on board. The few passengers blink sleepily at Frankie and Gil.

They take two seats near the front and sit down.

EXT. BUS STATION - CONTINUOUS

The bus driver makes a great show of checking his watch. He looks around at the empty bus station.

DRIVER  
Anyone else for Chicago?

There's no one there.

DRIVER (CONT'D)  
Alrighty then.

He gets onto the bus.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

The driver starts the bus and it lumbers out of town.

GIL  
So long--  
(realizing)  
Do you know, I never did catch the  
name of this place.

EXT. THE BUS - CONTINUOUS

As the bus leaves town it passes Ned's inbound jalopy.

Ernst and Percy are sound asleep beside Ned, their heads on each other's shoulders.

INT. BUS - LATER

Gil leans back in his seat, quite comfortable. Frankie, though, is looking uncharacteristically nervous.

GIL  
What's wrong?

FRANKIE  
Nothing. It's-- Well. Nothing.

GIL  
Come on. Off the record.

She cracks a smile.

FRANKIE  
Well it's silly, because we're on an adventure, and I should have counted on things turning out differently than I'd planned. But I really have to be back in New York by tomorrow night.

GIL  
For the gala?

FRANKIE  
That's right.

GIL  
Why are you so keen on going to that thing, anyway?

FRANKIE  
I have to go! It's a fund-raiser for my Amazon expedition.

GIL  
Heck, I know that, I just mean that it seems a shame. Oughtn't adventuring to be about more than just money?

FRANKIE  
Of course it ought, and it is. But money's awfully important.

GIL  
Nonsense, money is a petty thing for petty people! People like you and me, we oughta be bigger than money.

In his animation he's quite a different person from the worrying complainer we've seen up till now. Frankie can't help but smile at him.

FRANKIE

Well, yes, but--

GIL

(warming to his subject)  
But nothing! Exploration is about  
new horizons, unseen sights, not  
dredging up funds!

FRANKIE

I believe I've underestimated you,  
Gil.

GIL

That's right, you have. And I've  
been a jerk, and I'm sorry for it.  
Money changes a guy, makes him do  
stupid things. I was so intent on  
earning my two hundred bucks a week  
that I didn't pay attention to the  
important things.

FRANKIE

You weren't so bad.

GIL

I was though, and I'm man enough to  
admit it. Do you know, I have less  
money now than I did in New York,  
which between you and me is saying  
something, and I'm happier than  
I've ever been.

FRANKIE

You are?

GIL

Absolutely! Country air, good  
company, a place to put my feet up -  
- I've got everything a guy needs.  
Maybe Charlie's right and we oughta  
choose love over food.

Frankie smiles.

FRANKIE

To love over food.

GIL

And art over biographies! And  
adventuring for pleasure over  
adventuring for money!

FRANKIE  
And good company.

GIL  
And good company.

He's now looking at her intently, in a way that surprises them both.

They share a moment, but--

Suddenly there's a horrible grinding of gears and a whistle of steam. The passengers lurch forward as the bus breaks down.

The moment is shattered.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Ernst and Percy pile out of Ned's jalopy.

NED  
It's been real nice talking with  
y'all. Good luck to ya.

PERCY  
Same to you, kid.

They quickly walk away from him.

PERCY (CONT'D)  
(to Ernst)  
Alright, where do we start?

ERNST  
We should split up. Ask around. I  
go this way, you go that way. We  
meet back here.

They do.

INT. MADAM MISLETHWAITE'S BROTHEL - MOMENTS LATER

We see Percy ask Madam Mislethwaite a question. She crosses her arms and shakes her head. Percy leaves.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Ernst is at the ticket booth.

ERNST

A man and a woman, ja.

TICKET AGENT

I see a lot of men and a lot of women round here. We got a lot of 'em both.

ERNST

She is very lovely, he is skinny, useless.

TICKET AGENT

Oh yeah! Yeah, yeah, I think I know who you're talkin' about. Just put 'em on a bus to Chicago.

ERNST

(surprised)  
Chicago?

TICKET AGENT

That's right.

ERNST

Are you certain that's where they went?

TICKET AGENT

Oh yeah, I'm real sure. Sure as can be about that.

ERNST

Thank you.

He walks off just in time to meet Percy, coming from the brothel.

PERCY

The madam's a close lipped bird.

ERNST

They got on a bus to Chicago.

PERCY

Chicago? Why'd they want to go there?

ERNST

I do not know. Is a mystery.

PERCY

Well I guess we're going to Chicago, then.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Sam and Percy talk to Ned, next to his jalopy.

NED

Heck, I'd love to take y'all, and I'm headed up there next week if ya can wait till then, but I can't just up and go to Chicago at a moment's notice. I got work to do!

ERNST

Then we will buy your car.

NED

She's not for sale.

ERNST

For five thousand dollars.

It's hard to say who's more shocked, Ned or Percy.

NED

(in wonderment)

Five thousand dollars for my jalopy?

ERNST

Ja.

NED

Well...alright, Mister Rosen, but I feel like I'm robbin' you.

Ernst takes out a check book and makes out a check for five grand. He gives it to Ned.

Ned takes it reverently and holds out the keys to the jalopy.

Ernst takes them and he and Percy get inside. He starts it up.

ERNST

(out the window to Ned:)

Goodbye, Edward.

They drive off, leaving Ned standing agape behind them.

INT. JALOPY - DAY

They drive out of town.

PERCY  
Five grand for this rust bucket?  
That's highway robbery!

Ernst shrugs.

ERNST  
We do not have time for games.

PERCY  
How do you even have that kind of  
dough?

Ernst smirks.

ERNST  
I don't, but Herr Naylor does.  
Expense account.

EXT. BUS - DAY

The passengers are waiting on the side of the road next to the broken down bus. The driver sits in the shade. Frankie and Gil stand cross-armed and frustrated, talking to him.

FRANKIE  
What do you mean you can't fix it?

DRIVER  
Not allowed. Unions.

FRANKIE  
Well then what do we do?

DRIVER  
Wait.

FRANKIE  
I haven't got time to wait.

DRIVER  
The next bus will be along shortly.

GIL  
The ticket agent told me there was  
only one bus.

DRIVER  
There's another one goes the other  
way. It'll pick us up.

FRANKIE

But wouldn't that take us back to town?

DRIVER

That's right.

FRANKIE

I don't want to go to back to town, I want to go to Chicago.

GIL

New York.

FRANKIE

That's right, New York.

The driver shrugs.

DRIVER

Nothin' I can do.

He pulls his cap over his face, ending the conversation.

Frustrated, Frankie stalks away. Gil follows.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

They walks away from the bus.

GIL

Where are you going?

FRANKIE

I'm going to hitch hike.

GIL

You sure about that?

FRANKIE

Quite sure.

Gil chuckles.

GIL

Frankie Naylor, hitch hiking. No one'll believe it. I don't suppose this is on the record?

FRANKIE

Certainly not.

Pause.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Can you imagine the look on Daddy's  
face?

They both laugh this time.

A car comes down the road. Frankie sticks her thumb out.  
The car slows to a stop.

Inside is a sturdy workingman in his 40s. This is Ethan  
Jones.

ETHAN

Where you folks headed?

GIL

Chicago.

FRANKIE

New York.

GIL

That's right, New York.

ETHAN

Well, which is it?

FRANKIE AND GIL

New York.

GIL

There's only one bus, you see.

FRANKIE

And it only goes to Chicago.

GIL

And now it doesn't go anywhere.

ETHAN

Well there's a train station just  
down the road. Hop on in and I'll  
take you there.

Frankie and Gil look at each other in blank dismay: it didn't  
occur to them to take a train.

FRANKIE

A train.

GIL

We don't deserve to live.

As they're about to climb into the car, Ned's jalopy appears behind them. It pulls over behind the bus. The bus driver points toward Gil and Frankie.

Ernst leans out of the jalopy and yells down the road:

ERNST  
Frankie Naylor!

Frankie glances back and suddenly looks alarmed

FRANKIE  
(to Gil)  
Get in!

Gil gets in.

ERNST  
Miss Naylor!

The jalopy speeds toward them.

Frankie throws herself into the car and slams the door.

INT. ETHAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

FRANKIE  
(to Ethan)  
Step on it!

He does.

GIL  
Who was that?

Frankie looks nervously back. The jalopy is following them.

FRANKIE  
(darkly)  
G-Men.

GIL  
(shocked)  
G-Men? You mean -- government agents?

FRANKIE  
They've given me trouble before. Uncle Sam can't imagine why a woman would want to travel all over the world. This is off the record of course.

GIL  
Of course.

FRANKIE  
Government thinks I'm a German spy.

ETHAN  
Are you a German spy?

FRANKIE  
(solemnly)  
I am not, nor have I ever been, a  
German spy.

Gil glances behind them.

GIL  
G-Men drive jalopies?

FRANKIE  
Plainclothes. Trying to blend in,  
but you can spot 'em a mile off.

Ethan turns out to be an expert driver.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)  
(to Ethan)  
I'm Frankie, by the way. This is  
my biographer Gil.

ETHAN  
Ethan Jones.

FRANKIE  
Sorry for the inconvenience.

ETHAN  
No trouble. Happy to help.

EXT. ETHAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The cars speed along.

They approach a railway crossing. A freight train is  
barrelling down the track and threatens to cut them off.

INT. ETHAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Gil sees the train.

GIL  
Train's coming.

No one says anything. They get closer and closer.

GIL (CONT'D)  
 (growing alarmed)  
 Train.

They ignore him.

GIL (CONT'D)  
 Train!

ETHAN  
 We'll make it.

GIL  
 We're not gonna make it.

FRANKIE  
 We're gonna make it.

It doesn't look like they're gonna make it. Gil screams as they fly across the tracks--

Just in front of the locomotive.

The jalopy is stuck on the other side of the train.

Gil looks like he's going to die. Even Frankie is a little out of breath. Ethan is unruffled.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)  
 (to Ethan)  
 Better let us out here -- we can jump the train, it's headed east.

ETHAN  
 Sure thing.

He slows to a stop.

GIL  
 We can't jump onto a moving train!

FRANKIE  
 Of course we can! Tramps do!

GIL  
 But they're...tramps!

FRANKIE  
 Gil, on the other side of that train are government agents intent upon my arrest. You've been aiding and abetting me for days.

GIL  
That's true.

FRANKIE  
We can jump the train.

GIL  
Fine.

FRANKIE  
Thanks again, Ethan Jones.

ETHAN  
Anytime.

They get out of the car.

EXT. TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Ethan speeds off.

Frankie and Gil approach the train. When viewed from up close, it's daunting.

GIL  
How do we do this?

FRANKIE  
I'm not sure.

GIL  
Do we just jump?

FRANKIE  
I suppose.

They stand watching it, their heads whipping back and forth like tennis spectators as they follow the cars.

Then a voice from an approaching boxcar yells:

WOMAN'S VOICE  
You've got to keep pace!

Frankie begins running alongside the train. Gil follows.

A young woman's face appears at the opening. It's grimy and good natured. This is Dot. She's a tramp.

DOT  
That's it! Now jump in!

Frankie lightly vaults into the boxcar.

Gil has more trouble, though. He's still limping from the crash, and can't quite keep pace. He falls further and further back.

FRANKIE  
Come on, Gil!

With a burst of speed he pulls even with the car. He stretches up his good arm. Dot grabs it. Frankie grabs his injured arm. He yelps. She ignores him.

The women unceremoniously begin to drag him into the car. He bounces a little bit on the ties.

INT. BOXCAR - CONTINUOUS

They finally manage to drag him into the boxcar. They all end up in a heap on the floor.

GIL  
Ow.

Frankie looks up. The other side of the boxcar is open, too, and through it she glares triumphantly at the perplexed "government men."

INT. JALOPY - CONTINUOUS

Ernst and Percy stare back, genuinely baffled.

PERCY  
Why did she run away from us?

Ernst shrugs.

ERNST  
Women.

The train continues to rumble by. It's a really long train. They continue to watch it. Finally it's past.

PERCY  
What now?

INT. BOXCAR - CONTINUOUS

Gil still lies on the floor, groaning from time to time.

Frankie and Dot have picked themselves up.

FRANKIE  
Thanks for your help.

DOT  
No problem! You did an excellent  
job.

FRANKIE  
Thanks! I've always wanted to jump  
a train, but somehow never got the  
chance. I'm Frankie, by the way.

DOT  
Dot.

They shake.

FRANKIE  
That's Gil. He's my biographer.

DOT  
(to Gil)  
You alright?

FRANKIE  
He's fine.

Gil groans.

DOT  
He doesn't look fine.

FRANKIE  
He's had a rough couple days.

DOT  
I know the feeling.

FRANKIE  
Where are you headed?

DOT  
Oh, here and there. Bread?

She breaks off a piece of a loaf and offers to it Frankie.

FRANKIE  
Thanks.

Dot sits down with her legs dangling over the side of the  
train. Frankie joins her.

They eat together, watching the country roll past.

DOT  
Isn't it beautiful? It's so big.

FRANKIE  
It is.

A beat. Frankie watches.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)  
It's funny, I'm an explorer, but I've never really explored my own country. It didn't feel exciting enough, or dangerous, or....

Gil crawls over and joins them.

GIL  
It's dangerous, alright.

DOT  
Oh, you're alive! I started to think you might not be, which would have been sad. You'd miss the sunset.

They watch the country roll by.

DOT (CONT'D)  
Mighty pretty.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Sam, Delilah, India, and Charlie sit in the Naylor drawing room. Sam is on the phone with Ernst, and he's not happy.

SAM  
(into phone)  
A train?! Well why didn't you jump on after her? ...I don't care what your excuse is and I don't care how you do it, but FIND MY DAUGHTER.

He slams down the phone.

SAM (CONT'D)  
They've jumped a train like couple of tramps!

CHARLIE  
(surprised and a little impressed)  
Gil jumped a train? Didn't think he had it in him.

DELILAH

At least they're having fun.

INDIA

Trains are terribly romantic,  
aren't they? Wouldn't it be the  
most delightful thing if they fell  
in love?

CHARLIE

It'd do him a stitch of good.

DELILAH

Her, too.

Sam's apoplectic.

SAM

It won't do anyone a bit of good!  
The gala's tomorrow night and if  
she's not back I'm going to wring  
some necks!

DELILAH

(tolerantly)  
Yes of course, dear.

INT. BOXCAR - EVENING

The train keeps trundling east. Frankie, Gil, and Dot sit  
dangling their legs out of the car, craning their necks to  
see the sunset.

DOT

(abruptly)  
Well, this is my stop.

Gil looks around. There's no visible stop.

GIL

Where is here?

DOT

Here is here.

She jumps off the train and rolls on the grass.

FRANKIE

(calling after her)  
Wait! Where's this train going?

DOT (O.S.)

New York!

GIL  
 (marvelling)  
 Well whaddya know. New York.

Frankie smiles. They're both charmed by the serendipity.

With the absence of Dot, the whole thing suddenly seems very romantic -- sitting alone in a boxcar, bodies almost touching, watching the sunset.

She puts her head on his shoulder. He's surprised but not at all sorry. They stay like that as we

FADE OUT.

IN BLACKNESS, WE HEAR THE CHUGGING OF A TRAIN.

FADE IN:

INT. BOXCAR - MORNING

We come back up on Frankie and Gil the following morning. They're asleep, huddled together for warmth. Gil's jacket serves as a wholly inadequate blanket for them both.

Gil wakes up. He rolls over and tucks his jacket more tightly around Frankie.

She stirs and burrows into his chest. He holds her close.

She wakes up. She smiles at him. He smiles back.

They sit up. Stretch.

FRANKIE  
 (almost shy)  
 Good morning.

GIL  
 Good morning.

FRANKIE  
 Did you sleep alright?

GIL  
 Dreadfully, you?

FRANKIE  
 (laughs)  
 Terribly.

Gil notices something in her hair.

GIL  
You've got something--

He reaches out and pulls a piece of straw out of her hair.

GIL (CONT'D)  
There.

Beat.

GIL (CONT'D)  
The gala's tonight. Do you know  
where we are?

Frankie shrugs.

FRANKIE  
(quoting Dot)  
Here.

Gil smiles.

GIL  
You don't seem worried.

FRANKIE  
I'm not. I've been thinking about  
it, and I've decided you're right.  
I mean, look at Dot. She's an  
explorer, of sorts, and she hasn't  
any money at all. Real explorers  
don't need capital!

GIL  
That's putting it a little strong.  
I'd give every cent we've got for a  
cup of coffee.

FRANKIE  
I'd give Daddy's fortune for a cup  
of coffee.

Beat.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)  
Gil?

GIL  
Frankie?

FRANKIE  
Of all my adventures, this one's  
been my favorite.

Gil beams at her.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)  
Off the record, of course.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - EVENING

We're back in New York, in the Naylor drawing room. Sam, Delilah, India, and Charlie are all dressed to the nines.

Sam keeps checking his watch.

India is fiddling with something on her finger. She holds Charlie's arm happily.

Charlie is bright red and happy as a clam.

CHARLIE  
(mumbling)  
'Course as soon as I sell my next collection I'll buy you a proper one.

Sam harrumphs.

India glares at him.

INDIA  
(crossly to Sam)  
It's a lovely ring, and I don't care if he hasn't any money, Charlie is a prince! Besides, you have more than enough to go around.

Sam's taken unawares -- he was harrumphing about Frankie, not the ring.

SAM  
Hm? Oh, sure, sure.

He looks at his watch again.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Where the devil is she?

DELILAH  
She'll be here.

SAM  
She'd better be, or--

At that moment, Frankie and Gil waltz in. They're bedraggled and dirty and happy as can be.

As soon as she sees them India springs up.

INDIA

There you are, Frankie! I thought  
I'd die if I had to wait another  
minute to tell you! Look!

She shows off her ring and we get our first good look at it.  
It's...rather plain.

GIL

Is that from a Crackerjack box?

CHARLIE

(groaning)

Don't have to make a big thing of  
it.

GIL

You gave it to her?

FRANKIE

(to India:)

Are you--?

INDIA

Engaged!

Frankie hugs her sister. Gil heartily shakes Charlie's hand.

Sam gruffly breaks in on the celebration.

SAM

(to Frankie and Gil)

Now listen, you two, as soon as  
this damned party's over I'm going  
to give you a piece of my mind!  
But if you don't get ready right  
now we're going to be late! You  
look like a couple of tramps.

INDIA

Come on, I'll help you change!

She drags Frankie out of the room.

GIL

(to Sam)

Don't suppose you have an old suit  
I can borrow?

Delilah pats Sam's paunch affectionately.

DELILAH  
 A very old one.  
 (to Gil:)  
 Come with me, we'll find you  
 something suitable.

Gil follows Delilah out of the room. They passes the butler  
 on the way.

BUTLER  
 (to Sam)  
 Phone call for you, sir. It's  
 Ernst Rosen.

Sam snatches up the phone.

SAM  
 (shouting into the  
 receiver)  
 She's here, you're fired!

He slams it down.

INT. PHONEBOOTH - EVENING

Ernst holds the phone, looking surprised.

Percy is outside the booth. He pounds on the glass.

PERCY  
 Well?

ERNST  
 They are in New York.

PERCY  
 New York?!

ERNST  
 Ja. I am fired.

PERCY  
 (furious)  
 They're in NEW YORK? You promised  
 me the scoop of the century!

ERNST  
 Ja.

PERCY  
 They're in New York, and we're in--  
 Where are we, anyway?

ERNST  
Lost. We are lost.

EXT. FRANK DONATI'S MANSION - NIGHT

A beautiful, if gaudy, mansion.

The Naylor family, Charlie, and Gil arrive. They're all beautifully dressed (even Gil).

They enter the house.

INT. FRANK DONATI'S FOYER - CONTINUOUS

At the top of a grand staircase a man is pacing. He's short, swarthy, and powerfully built. This is Frank Donati (50s).

The group crosses the foyer toward the stairs.

GIL  
(to Frankie)  
Who's that?

FRANKIE  
That's Frank Donati, of course --  
this is his house!

GIL  
(shocked)  
Frank Donati the mob boss?

FRANKIE  
Oh yes, he's an avid patron of  
exploration -- particularly mine.

Donati is visibly relieved when he sees them.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)  
Hello, Frankie!

Donati grins at her.

DONATI  
Hello, Frankie!

They kiss cheeks.

DONATI (CONT'D)  
You're late, the guests are  
waiting. Come in, come in.

He ushers them into

INT. FRANK DONATI'S BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

A grand ballroom. It's packed to the brim with swankily dressed guests.

Donati hurries Frankie onto the stage.

DONATI

Ladies and gentlemen, if I could have your attention for a moment. It's my privilege to introduce our guest of honor, a woman who needs no introduction, a true pioneer, my friend Frankie Naylor!

The guests clap enthusiastically. Charlie whistles loudly. India smiles at him.

Donati cedes the stage to Frankie. She looks radiant.

FRANKIE

Thank you! Thank you. Thank you all so much for coming tonight.

The applause dies down in anticipation of her speech.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

I almost didn't make it tonight, because I was on a freight train.

No one's quite sure if this is supposed to be funny, so they laugh.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

And I was talking to a tramp I suddenly realized that she was as much an explorer as I am! And that what's necessary for true exploration isn't money, but greatness of spirit!

The speech isn't going over well. Gil sees this and grimaces.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Everyone who is here tonight, wealthy, privileged, boring -- I say to you, go home! Do something better with your lives! As my friend Gilbert George says, we oughta be bigger than money!

Sam has turned purple. Gil puts his face in his hands.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

To all the explorers who beg for money -- I say to you, stop! Do without! And if you cannot I say to you, you are no explorer but a hack!

The reporters in the back of the room are scribbling furiously.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry if I'm rambling -- in two days the only food I've had is a bit of bread given to me by a tramp. Why? Because we oughta be bigger than money! I used to sleep in featherbeds, but last night I slept in a boxcar! And the night before that in a brothel!

The crowd gasps.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Three days ago I was just like all of you. Vain, silly, and a little stupid. I don't mean to be insulting! It's a good thing, because I believe I'm different now, better -- and if I can change, then you can, too! Thank you.

She descends the stage in thundering silence. She doesn't seem to notice.

She hurries to Gil, beaming.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

(to Gil, proudly)

*That was on the record.*

We hold on Gil's horrified face.

MONTAGE: NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

Headline: "NAYLOR THE NAYSAYER"

Headline: "DISASTER AT DONATI'S"

Headline: "NAYLOR FUNDRAISING FLOP"

Headline: "NAYLOR EXPELLED FROM GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY"

Headline: "NAYLOR AMAZON EXPEDITION CANCELLED!"

INT. FRANKIE'S STUDY - DAY

The last headline is on a paper that Frankie is reading. She throws it down disgustedly.

She looks awful -- depressed and unwashed.

The butler enters the room.

BUTLER  
There's a visitor for you, miss.

FRANKIE  
Is it Mr. George?

BUTLER  
Is is.

FRANKIE  
Then you ought to know that I don't  
want to see him.

BUTLER  
Very good, miss.

He starts to leave the room, but can't help himself.

BUTLER (CONT'D)  
He has called every day since your  
return, miss.

FRANKIE  
And he can keep calling everyday  
until doomsday, for all I care.  
He's an idiot and scoundrel and I  
never want to see him again.

She pauses, then adds:

FRANKIE (CONT'D)  
And you can tell him so.

BUTLER  
Very good, miss.

Frankie opens a copy of *Molly's Remorse* as the butler bows himself out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

We follow the butler down the hall to the

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

He descends the stairs toward Gil, who is waiting on a bench.

Gil looks up at him hopefully.

The Butler shakes his head.

Gil sighs, nods, and leaves the house.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - CONTINUOUS

We follow Gil as he trudges sadly home.

INT. GIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gil enters his apartment and throws himself down in a chair.

He sighs dejectedly and stares into space.

His gaze falls on his notebook. He grabs it and opens it. Flips through a few pages. Smiles sadly to himself.

He closes the notebook and thinks for a moment.

He gets up and goes to his desk. Puts a sheet of paper into his typewriter and begins hammering away.

When he finishes the page he pulls it out of the typewriter, slaps it face down on the desk next to him, puts another sheet in, and keeps writing.

He writes for a long time. Days. The stack of finished pages grows and grows. Finally it's finished. A book.

He flips it over and looks at it. Puts one more sheet into the typewriter, types, adds it face up to the pile.

We see: "Off the Record: A Glimpse of Frankie Naylor. By Gilbert George."

He stands up, exhausted but finished. He looks a little dazed.

The door opens and Charlie and India come into the apartment. They're giggling. When she sees Frankie India shushes Charlie, but it only makes them laugh harder.

CHARLIE

(to Gil)

I'm sorry, I'm so sorry. We will be sad. Just give us a moment--

They dissolve into laughter again.

GIL  
It's alright, I'm leaving.

CHARLIE  
Leaving? Does that mean--

INDIA  
Is it finished?

GIL  
It's finished.

CHARLIE  
Well done! Even if it is just a  
biography.

INDIA  
It's not just a biography, silly!  
It's a love letter!  
(to Gil)  
Is it very good?

Gil shrugs. Then he thinks and says:

GIL  
Yes.

He puts on his coat and picks up the manuscript and leaves  
the apartment.

EXT. NAYLOR MANSION - DAY

Gil, unshaven and bleary eyed, trots up the steps of the  
Naylor mansion. He clutches the manuscript to his chest.

INT. SAM'S STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

Gil sits across the desk from Sam. Sam eyes him with  
hostility.

GIL  
As far as I can tell, Mr. Naylor,  
expedition or no expedition I'm  
still under contract.

SAM  
(growling)  
Are you here about money?

GIL  
Hardly. I figure the only reason I haven't been fired yet is because you've simply forgotten to do it, and that's just fine.

SAM  
Quite right. You're fired.

GIL  
(unperturbed)  
But the fact is, I *wasn't* fired.

SAM  
(impatient)  
What of it?

GIL  
Here.

He sets the manuscript down on the desk and slides it toward Sam.

SAM  
What's that?

GIL  
The book I was hired to write.

SAM  
I doubt that.

Gil smiles.

GIL  
Well maybe not quite. But I'd be obliged to you if you'd glance at it, all the same.

Sam scowls but picks up the manuscript. He begins to read.

Gil watches him intently.

As Sam turns the pages, his frosty demeanor noticeably warms. He reads with increasing interest, and even laughs a few times.

The hours tick by. Gil sits motionless in his chair, lost in thought, as Sam reads.

Sam reaches the last page, reads it twice, laughs again, wipes away a tear, and throws it down on his desk.

He looks up at Gil.

SAM  
By God, George, you've done it.

GIL  
Thank you, sir.

SAM  
That's her! That's really her.  
That's my Frankie.

GIL  
She's an extraordinary woman, Mr.  
Naylor.

Sam picks up his phone.

SAM  
(into phone)  
Get me Kane.  
(after a moment)  
Kane, it's Naylor. You own a  
publishing house, don't you? Good.  
Clear the presses -- I've got a hot  
one for you.

He hangs up.

SAM (CONT'D)  
(to Gil)  
I wish she'd see you, but....

He spreads his hands.

GIL  
I know.

Gil stands to go, but then has a thought.

GIL (CONT'D)  
Mr. Naylor, would you mind if I  
added something to the manuscript?

SAM  
Anything.

GIL  
Thank you. I forgot to include a  
dedication.

He scribbles something on a sheet of paper and hands it to Sam. Sam reads it and looks sharply up at Gil, surprised.

Then he holds out his hand. Gil shakes it.

INT. FOYER - EVENING - MOMENTS LATER

Frankie is walking toward the staircase when she sees Gil coming down it. She hastily turns around and ducks into--

INT. DRAWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

India and Delilah are drinking tea. They look up as Frankie enters.

DELILAH

Hello, dear, come to join the living?

FRANKIE

No, I'm avoiding Gil.

INDIA

Frankie, can't you please stop this? I'm never going to be able to enjoy my honeymoon if I know you're blue.

FRANKIE

I'm sure that's not true.

INDIA

Well maybe not *entirely* true. But I do think this would be easier for everyone if you simply admitted to yourself that you're love with the man.

FRANKIE

(flatly)  
I hate him.

INDIA

(to Delilah)  
See? I told you it was hopeless. Can't you say something? Tell her it's not his fault that she made a fool of herself?

DELILAH

I don't think that would be helpful, dear.

Sam enters, carrying the manuscript.

SAM

It's amazing! The boy's done it! Frankie, you've got to read this!

FRANKIE  
I'd rather die.

She sweeps out.

INDIA  
Well *I* want to read it!

INT. FRANKIE'S STUDY - DAY

Frankie's reading a newspaper, and we see the headline: "NAYLOR DAUGHTER MARRIES POET." Underneath it is a photo of a radiant India and Charles at their wedding.

Frankie smiles, but as she turns the paper over at the crease it abruptly turns to a frown. There's a review of Gil's book: "GEORGE WRITES INSTANT CLASSIC."

Frankie lowers the paper, disgusted.

The butler enters.

BUTLER  
A parcel for you, miss.

He hands her a brown paper package all tied up with string.

FRANKIE  
Thank you, Giles.

Frankie takes it. The butler bows and leaves. Frankie opens the package. Inside is a bound copy of *Off the Record*.

Frankie throws it across the room. But as it arcs toward the wall a piece of paper falls out and flutters to the floor.

Intrigued, she goes and picks it up. It's a check made out to her for a hundred thousand dollars. The signatory is "Kane Publishing."

She blinks at it, baffled.

She retrieves the book and opens it. The dedication reads: "This book and all its proceeds are dedicated to the most daring and large-hearted adventure who ever lived. Here is here. --GG."

Hold on Frankie's shocked face.

INT. GIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tight on a giant headline: "NAYLOR EXPEDITION BACK ON!"

Gil puts down the paper, a wry smile on his face.

The phone rings. He picks it up.

GIL  
(into phone)  
Yeah? This is he. Uh-huh, uh-huh,  
uh-heh. Uh-huh. Thanks.

He hangs up, bemused.

He grabs his hat and leaves the apartment.

INT. FRANKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Frankie is sitting behind the desk.

Gil enters.

Frankie stares at him coldly, professionally.

FRANKIE  
I've come into some money.

GIL  
Is that so?

FRANKIE  
Yes. And I understand that you're  
still the brokest man in New York.

GIL  
That's true.

FRANKIE  
As you may know, I'm about to leave  
for an extended expedition to the  
Amazon.

GIL  
I read about that.

FRANKIE  
Well, I'd like to bring a  
biographer. Would you be  
interested?

GIL  
Does it pay well?

FRANKIE  
It does.

GIL

Then I guess I'm interested.

FRANKIE

Good. You understand, of course, that you're not the only applicant for the job.

GIL

Of course.

FRANKIE

So there will have to be a brief interview. Would you mind if I asked you a few questions?

GIL

Not at all.

FRANKIE

Thank you. Much of the travelling will be conducted aerially. Have you ever flown in a small plane?

GIL

I have. I've even been in a crash.

FRANKIE

Excellent. There may be some little danger. Have you ever been in a gun battle?

GIL

(straight faced)  
I've been shot.

FRANKIE

I see. In the event of the unexpected, have you ever ridden the rails?

GIL

With a tramp.

She makes a note.

FRANKIE

One last question, if you have the time.

GIL

Certainly.

FRANKIE  
 (in the same professional  
 tone)  
 Do you love me very much?

GIL  
 (matching her tone)  
 Excessively.

FRANKIE  
 I see. That will be taken under  
 consideration. A brief follow-up.  
 Would you like to kiss me?

GIL  
 I would.

He does.

FRANKIE  
 (a little breathlessly)  
 Very good. And do you have any  
 questions for me?

GIL  
 Just one.

FRANKIE  
 Go ahead and ask it.

GIL  
 Will you marry me?

FRANKIE  
 Of course.

She kisses him.

EXT. PRIVATE HANGAR - AFTERNOON

Outside the hangar is a sea of reporters.

The front door of the hangar opens.

A new biplane, identical to the one they crashed, taxis out.

Frankie's at the controls. Gil sits behind her.

She guns the throttle and the little plane speeds down the  
 runway. They take off into the sunset.

As the plane rises, a flashbulb goes off and we freeze-frame  
 on the plane silhouetted in front of the setting sun.

The freeze-frame fades into a newspaper photo. We hold on it  
as we

FADE TO BLACK.