

# Voices & More Voices

(1 M and 12 Voices 5 F – 7 M)

**A NEW STAGE PLAY**

by

*Karl J. Niemiec*

A romantic dramedy for the longing heart  
in all of us.

Harry Starkers met the muse of his life during the finals of a Detroit seventh-grade spelling B state championship. And never stopped loving her. Even in print.

After his over-bearing father blamed his sudden death on paying for Harry's super-education, Harry Starkers closed his law practice to write wildly successful, cheesy suspense novels about the girl his father wouldn't let him ask to the seventh-grade dance because she wasn't of his faith.

Offstage actors can perform multiple voices, live or recorded. As written, *Voices and More Voices* is an innovative play that creates an opportunity for directors to use their full discretion on who will be seen on stage based on available actors and budget.

For production info:

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**CHARACTERS :****HARRY STARKERS**

Super-educated and on the brink of clinical depression. Yet a widely successful, and grossly misunderstood novelist  
30s

**VOICES & MORE VOICES: (Production Options)****ANGEL STYLE**

Harry's heroin. Beautiful sexy, blond, lighthearted - high society personality - 30s

**ANNIE MERCY-SINGER**

Harry's muse. sophisticated, charming, lawyer - 30s

**EDDIE MEATS**

Ruggedly handsome, rich and powerful export/importer - Both evil & good - 30s

**ALLEN WRENCH**

Quadruple amputee vet, neighbor - who begs Harry to put him in his books - 40's

**MARY STARKERS**

Harry's pissed-off wife - 30s

**MOTHER STARKERS**

Harry's concerned mother - 50's

**JASON STARKERS**

Harry's confused and obnoxious son - preteen.

**PETER MIDDLEFINGER**

Harry's long-time friend and frustrated Publisher - 40s

**DR. NOAH HART**

Harry's psychiatrist - 40s

**POLICEMAN**

One of Harry's fans - 50s

**AMBULANCE DRIVER**

There to take Harry away - 40s

**GALE WIND**

TV/Radio Reporter - late 20s

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

### ACT I

Scene 1: Day - Harry's Detroit slum hideaway

### ACT II

Scene 1: Night - Harry's padded cell in the Ypsilanti Regional Psychiatric Hospital

Scene 2: Days later - Harry's padded cell

**ACT I****Scene 1**

HARRY'S Detroit slum writing hideaway. The only light in the room comes from a single window D.S. in the middle of the room. The rest is a dimly lit single room of a fifth floor infested, sleazy, downtown Detroit apartment building. The single window has a ledge just big enough to stand on.

The walls are water stained and the furnishing consists of a mix matched left behind junk. C.S., a broken-down couch is the bed. Rumpled sheets and a blanket are on it. A refrigerator is D.S. and C.S. next to the beat up Hall Door with several locks on it.

S.L. of the door is a frayed chair and a cheap square wood table that holds an Underwood Typewriter. A 50-gallon garbage can is overflowing with crumpled bad ideas.

Also on it, is stacked HARRY'S latest and unfinished Manuscript.

Under the table are reams of paper.

A filthy hot plate with a coffee pot on it is plugged in and sittin on floor against the S.L. wall.

Empty beer cans, delivery pizza boxes and smelly deli bags are scattered about the room.

Overall, disgustingly dirty.

**AT RISE:**

HARRY STARKERS, unshaven and unkempt - perhaps hasn't showered in weeks, stands at the door trying to get rid of MARY. He's not having much luck.

As written, all we see through the entire play is HARRY. All other characters are voices off stage or on electronic devices.

HARRY

You call me crazy ... but shooting at my publisher is perfectly sane behavior?

MARY

It is when you consider the target sells that drivel you call writing.

HARRY

You're lucky that Peter and I have the same lawyer.

MARY

Just get rid of Angel, Harry, or I will.

(HARRY steps into the hall as MARY pulls out her gun. HARRY grabs it and they struggle.)

HARRY

Give me that.

(pulls the gun away)

You come close to Angel and I'll edit you out of my life.

(MARY kicks HARRY on the shins.)

HARRY re-enters the room, hopping on one foot while holding his other very painful leg. He has MARY'S small pistol.)

MARY

For Christ's sake, she's ruining our lives.

(HARRY slams the door in MARY'S face. And tries to lock it. But MARY pushes it back open, trying to get inside.)

MARY

And she's keeping you trapped in this hellhole - imprisoned like a stinking roof rat. Just give me the pages. I'll end this my way.

(HARRY blocks her way.)

HARRY

No. You loved her when she bought you a matching Cadillac and mink.

MARY

I don't need all those things.  
(like a kitten)

I just need you, Harry. Give me the book ... and come home ... think of our child.

(HARRY does. The brat.)

HARRY

Not yet.

MARY

Then kill the tramp.

HARRY

Never.

(HARRY is forced to kick her back in trying to get the door close.)

MARY

Ouch! How dare you kick me?!

HARRY

You kicked me first.

MARY

I'm a woman.

HARRY

There's more where that came from if you don't leave.

MARY

You're out of your frigging mind. You sit at that goddamn typewriter and call it safe sex.

(HARRY stops on her foot to finally get the door closed and locks it several times.)

HARRY

You're just jealous.

MARY

And you're sick. Please let me get you help.

HARRY

Help? You really want to help?

MARY

Yes, anything, you're my husband.

HARRY

Then help me find a way to save Angel. Eddie'll kill her.

MARY

Let him.

HARRY

I can't.

MARY

Then I'm leaving.

HARRY

Good.

MARY

And I'm calling Doctor Hart, and bringing back your Mother.

HARRY

(horrified)

Don't you dare!

(HARRY opens the door holding the gun.)

HARRY

Mary. MARY!

(But MARY is gone. HARRY turns from the door. A condemned man. His eye begins to twitch.)

(ALLEN WRENCH, the quadruple amputee, neighbor across the way, yells into the open window.)

ALLEN

Yo, Hemingway. Shut the hell up over there.

(HARRY goes to the window.)

HARRY

Oh, am I disturbing All Your Inbred Children, Allen?

ALLEN

Hey, listen, my man, I'm warnin' ya for the last umpteenth time. I hear any more bullshit yelling over there, I'm callin' the De-troit P.D.

HARRY

Then shut up. That'll solve half the problem.

ALLEN

Well, listen, this broad of yours is constipatin' the hell out of me. Why don't you just turn on the tube, roll a doob, and forget about her for a spell?

HARRY

I don't have a television.

ALLEN

Too bad, these people don't live in rooms that smell like garbage. You should try it once in awhile. Maybe even clean up after yourself?

(HARRY turns to look at his filthy room. How much longer can he take this?)

ALLEN

Hell, you're makin' my cockroaches feel so poor they're startin' to picket my nurse.

HARRY

Screw off, Allen.

ALLEN

You tease.

HARRY

I've got a book to finish.



ALLEN

So listen, my brother, that woman in your head ... she's got you so whooped, you be ...

(HARRY SLAMS shut the window. He covers his ears to block out ALLEN. It doesn't work.)

ALLEN

... grabbin' your nuts like a squirrel in a snow storm.

(ALLEN'S voice FADES.

HARRY uncovers his ears. A moment of silence as he stares at his typewriter. Then ....)

ANGEL

(very sexy)

Help me, Harry - everybody wants me ...

(echoing)

... DEEAAAAD.

(DESERT SOUNDS above the Grand Canyon fills HARRY'S room.

HARRY'S eyes widen as he looks towards ANGEL STYLE'S voice.

We HEAR ANGEL running frantically.

EDDIE MEATS' deranged evil villain LAUGHTER GROWS.

HARRY dashes to his typewriter, RIPS out the page in it, CRUMPLES it, throws it at the overly full garbage can ... and sits at the desk.

Dark suspenseful MUSIC and wild DESERT TONES swirl as HARRY'S imagination runs amuck. Wind picks up swirling HARRY'S pages about.

EDDIE MEATS, still LAUGHING. A loud ECHOING SCREAM from ANGEL again.)

HARRY

ANGEL?

ANGEL

(still running)

Harry, he's right behind me.

HARRY

I know! Let Angel go, Eddie.

EDDIE

(running past HARRY)

Give me one good reason I shouldn't kill her to get my life back. And she's all yours.

(An even louder SCREAM by ANGEL.)

HARRY wheels towards EDDIE. He holds up the crumpled page.)

HARRY

Because you can't kill her if I don't write it. That's how books work.

(HARRY listens: ANGEL is trying to still her heart. EDDIE is winded, as his footsteps, move slowly towards ANGEL'S BREATHING.)

EDDIE

(wicked LAUGH)

You don't have to write it, numb nuts. All you have to do is think it ... and she's gone. Slam-bang - five hundred feet below. By the time anyone happens across her mutilated body, the scorpions will have feasted on her pretty little table-hopping face.

(HARRY covers his ears. It doesn't do any good. EDDIE'S cruel, O.S. ECHOING LAUGHTER fills his head.)

He picks the manuscript off his desk. He takes a lighter and holds it to the pages.)

HARRY

Let my Angel go.

EDDIE

(taunting)

Come on, Harry. Let me bash her skull on the rocks.

HARRY

Back off, Eddie, or I'll burn you.

(EDDIE LAUGHS again.)

HARRY

I'll torch you like a Tiki Lamp.

EDDIE

Go ahead - see if I even flinch. You plan to have Angel kill me off anyway, in some stupid, hideous way, don't you?

HARRY

Well, yes. But it's nothing personal. It's just what our readers expect Angel to do. You're the bad guy.

EDDIE

Whose fault is that? I didn't want to be a bad guy. I could've stayed a good guy if you would've let me. We had a great thing goin'. But no, you had to get envious and write me into what I am today - a low-minded, backsliding pig. So don't blame me.

HARRY

But you're perfect. Good looking, filthy rich, unsuspecting. And I needed a villainous bad guy.

EDDIE

You threw my life away and made me just another dumb-cluck fall guy to motivate Angel in one more of your lousy murders. And now you plan to put my demise in a Hollywood Movie? Well, I got news for you, Pal. It'll happen over your dead body!

(SOUNDS of EDDIE lurching out for ANGEL, grabbing her.)

ANGEL SCREAMS again and pulls away, running with a limp. She stops.)

ANGEL

(pissed)

Think of something, Harry. Look, we've ruined my best boots. Norman and I shopped for months all over New York City to find just the right color.

EDDIE

And don't even get me started on that little fink.

ANGEL

Shut up. Normy is my best shopping buddy.

(HARRY gets up from the desk, pacing.)

HARRY

You're not just a fall guy, Eddie. You're a great criminal mind. Real people give up their freedom trying to be as felonious as you. And kill for the gregarious life you lead.

(We HEAR EDDIE stop at HARRY'S table, winded. HARRY pours him an imaginary glass of water from his pitcher. We hear EDDIE down it.)

EDDIE

Ahhhh ... thanks. Frickin' hot out here. Sure, it's a great life, Harry. Cars, homes, booze, Angel. I mean, look at her. We were fallin' in love, but you set me up. Christ, can you blame me? So close to paradise only to find you two were yanking my short hairs. I feel like a complete schmuck.

(EDDIE hands the glass back. HARRY takes it.)

HARRY

I'm sorry, but it's too late. I was planning to happily end the series with you two together. Honest. But my publisher sold the series to Hollywood and they wanted to keep the series alive with Angel's exciting single life intact.

(We HEAR ANGEL crouching, hiding. EDDIE'S FOOTSTEPS sneak up behind her.)

EDDIE

Hollywood sequels. Those pricks. Tell me you'll let me live and I'll back off. You got to promise to put it in writing, though. And make Hollywood suits buy into it.

HARRY

How about life in prison? I'll give you a lovable cell mate with a life supply of KY Jelly, and the top bunk.

(ANGEL SCREAMS at SOUNDS of EDDIE diving for her, only to end up hugging the thorny cactus.)

EDDIE

Aaahhh. I want to be a free thought. Aaahhh. Like a bird ...  
 aahhh ... as I had been, aahhh ... minding my own business,  
 aahhh ... not hurting anyone ... aahhh. Hugging a cactus?  
 With this face? That was low, Harry. Even for the tasteless  
 books you write.

HARRY

(pacing again)

I've peaked.

ANGEL

I don't like the look of this cliff, Harry.

HARRY

Just climb, Angel.

EDDIE

Don't worry, I'm right behind ya. Nice.

(We HEAR EDDIE start up after her.)

ANGEL

You creep! Stop it.

HARRY

I'm not thinking clearly.

ANGEL

Not you, Harry, him. Lie down, get some rest.

HARRY

Oh, honey, if I could sleep, believe me I would.

ANGEL

Go ahead, take a break. I'll be just fine up here. Meditate  
 for awhile. Picture positive thoughts. Like Eddie's dead body  
 for example.

(We HEAR EDDIE continue to climb. Reaching for  
 ANGEL. She KICKS HIM in the head.)

(EDDIE falls off and LANDS HARSHLY. He picks  
 himself up, dusting himself off.)

EDDIE

AHHHHHHH. What the ... hell? I can't believe this. My nose is actually bleeding. Hey, I could've broken somethin' useful.

(We HEAR EDDIE start to climb again. HARRY'S hangs his head in defeat.)

HARRY

There's no visible way out of this.

ANGEL

See ... you've hypnotized yourself into believing it. No thanks to that crumb.

(Another heinous LAUGH by EDDIE as he reaches the top.)

EDDIE

You mind, that hurts my throat to laugh so villainously all the time. I've got a masters degree. You're making me sound like some kind of deranged drugged out animal.

HARRY

Tough. If you don't like it, die.

(ANGEL SCREAMS.)

EDDIE

Hypnosis-symosis, come on, Harry, light my fire. I triple dare ya.

(HARRY grabs up the manuscript, waving it. He picks up the lighter. FLICKS it.)

HARRY

If I do, you'll have nothing. No homes, no cars, no women. Nothing, just a lousy two-bit player in my first two books. You didn't even have a last name, barely a description at all.

EDDIE

To have lived as but a shadow in the minds of millions is better than never having been thought of at all.

(HARRY tries light the manuscript, but can't.)

EDDIE

Ha, didn't think so.

(EDDIE flips HARRY the lighter and runs after ANGEL again.)

HARRY

I'll rewrite them all. I'll edit you out of the next printing.

EDDIE

(disappointed)

Sure, edit me, edit your wife, you can't edit everything. Parts of your sorry life are real.

HARRY

I'll call my publisher right now.

EDDIE

You're cold, man. Well, screw it. Make the call. Just remember, I never asked you to think of me in the first place.

(HARRY reaches for the phone, and dials.)

PETER MIDDLEFINGER answers. PETER comes over the phone's INTERCOM.)

PETER

This better not be you, Harry.

HARRY

Peter, don't hang up.

PETER

Your wife is driving me kooky, you dizzy bastard. My secretary just told me Mary broke out all the windows of my car.

HARRY

I'm sorry, Peter, but listen.

PETER

That's it. From now on I lease.

HARRY

Will you listen? I figured a way out of this story. It's brilliant. I --

PETER

-- You finished it? It's that good?

HARRY

That's the beauty of it, Peter. It won't have to be good.

PETER

What the hell are you talking about? I'll break every bone in your body if this isn't the best thing you've ever written.

HARRY

You see? I'll go back to my first two books and rewrite Eddie out of our lives ... before we republish them.

PETER

We won't republish for three years.

HARRY

Make them a special edition.

PETER

The next time I get you out on the golf course, I'll beat you with my special edition four iron. Finish the book, you egghead. You're two months late already.

HARRY

This isn't a menstrual cramp, Peter. It's a book. These kind of editing changes don't just biologically happen. Eddie won't back off. And I've painted Angel so far into a corner, I've got my own footprints on my back.

PETER

I told you not to use his character again. He's too damn cunning for you. Now you got him stuck in your head like some brain-fart.

(HARRY makes a contemptuous face.)

HARRY

Yeah, who would've figured that stinking bastard would be such an aneurysm?



PETER

Listen, you, I've got a six figure deal in LA waiting with open arms for this goddamn book. You finish it the way they want. Today. And don't call me until it's done. Unless it's an emergency.

(PETER hangs up.)

EDDIE'S low LAUGHING grows with mocking intensity as HARRY turns to face it.

HARRY grabs the lighter off the desk. Picking up the manuscript. Holding the lighter under it.)

HARRY

I'm sorry, sweetheart, things are getting out of control. Peter's right, using Eddie again is wrong. I'll just have to start over.

(ANGEL footsteps come to a stop, out of BREATH.)

ANGEL

Harry, I suspect you subconsciously want me out of your mind.

HARRY

I'd go crazy if you left.

ANGEL

Then why are you letting Eddie spoil our happy ending?

HARRY

Some stories just don't work out the way you outline them.

EDDIE

She's right, Harry. You think I'd get caught dead in a desolate place like this if I had a choice? I'm only here because of you.

(HARRY puts down the lighter and manuscript.)

HARRY

Don't be reading subtext into it ... this is meant to be light reading.

EDDIE

Yeah, the dumbing of American Lit by Harry Starkers. I can see it now, professor. No wonder your mother's ashamed to admit you're her only son.

HARRY

What do you mean by that?

EDDIE

I'm talking about your mother telling her relatives that her son is still a successful lawyer.

HARRY

So what, I am a successful lawyer. Top of my class. I did everything my father wanted me to accomplish.

EDDIE

You know she denies that you write this crap. Even after seven books. And millions of sales. She still pretends to her friends you didn't waste your education to write this trash.

HARRY

I paid my father back! This is my life.

EDDIE

And you made your own mother ashamed that you're part of hers. You're still a lousy unappreciative son, if you ask me.

(Harry picks up the lighter and manuscript, determined to end this story, tries to burn it, but can't.)

HARRY

Somebody, help me.

(HARRY throws down his manuscript, it scatters. Horrified by the pages scattering, he crawls around, picking them up.)

EDDIE fills the air with maddening, echoing LAUGHTER. ANGEL footsteps sneaks along.)

ANGEL

Oh, Harry, don't listen to him. I love you. Remember all the good thoughts we've shared?

(EDDIE LAUGHS and ANGEL SCREAMS as we HEAR EDDIE leap down onto ANGEL and they roll around in the dirt, biting, scratching, kicking, and CURSING.

HARRY rushes to his typewriter with the pages. Piles them on the desk. Inserts a blank page, and types wildly.

HARRY stops, rips out the page. And puts in another and starts to type then stops. Then starts again.)

EDDIE

Face it, it's the perfect murder. No one knows we're out here. No one. Just you, Angel and me. And three's a crowd, Harry. Think it.

ANGEL

Get off me, Eddie.

EDDIE

Think it! Let her die. Who will know? See it. Write it. It's hot. She gets lost, stumbles into the Grand Canyon of all places.

ANGEL

You'll end up on those rocks - somehow. With the scorpions eating your face, not mine.

EDDIE

Oh yeah, how's that?

ANGEL

Harry will think of something. Eventually. Won't you, Harry.

(HARRY stops typing.

We HEAR EDDIE struggle to pick ANGEL off the ground. We HEAR her struggling to get away. EDDIE has his hand over her mouth. They are right before HARRY'S desk.

HARRY covers his ears. It doesn't help. He's losing control.

EDDIE FOOTSTEPS march ANGEL towards the Grand Canyon.)

HARRY

Stop!

(ANGEL stops and EDDIE is forced to throw her over his shoulder. They stagger around like this. ANGEL kicks and claws at EDDIE.)

ANGEL

You need rest. Lie down.

(HARRY gets up and pulls a beer out of the frig.

SOUNDS of EDDIE falling down, momentarily losing ANGEL. She CRAWLS away. But he catches her and they GO AT IT again.

She PUNCHES him in the mouth. He pushes her FACE DOWN IN THE DIRT. Holds her there. ANGEL YELLS unintelligible curses into the dirt.)

EDDIE

Lunch time, Harry? A little drinky-poo. Sloshing ourselves silly again today, are we? Doctor Hart won't like all this daytime drinking.

HARRY

It's just one beer. I need to relax ... I need to get away ... I need to finish this goddamn story.

(HARRY goes over and lies on the couch. The phone RINGS.)

EDDIE

The problem here isn't me. It's you.

HARRY

(hits the intercom)

Eddie, this is just another book. Now shut up so I can deal with this. Hello?

HART

Hello, Harry. This is Dr. Noah Hart.

HARRY

This really isn't a good --

HART

-- I just had a very disturbing call.

HARRY

I'm sure you did. Listen --

EDDIE

-- Tell him how much you play with yourself. It makes 'em feel needed.

HARRY

I told you to shut up.

HART

Now, Harry.

HARRY

Not you, Doctor Hart. I'm not alone.

HART

Yes, that's why I called.

EDDIE

Tell him how you created this gorgeous broad out of your childhood fantasies.

HART

Harry?

EDDIE

And instead of making her a doctor, a lawyer, or a mother ...

HART

Your family's very concerned.

EDDIE

... you chose to make her nothin' more than a social wart on the face of humanity.

ANGEL

How dare you? Tell him to shut up, Doctor Hart.

HART

Harry, are you still with me?

HARRY

Doctor Hart, I really can't talk.

HART

Are they there? Are they speaking to me?

HARRY

Yes. But I'm a writer, they're just voices. I'm okay. Tell my family --

HART

-- Writing them is one thing, Harry. Seeing them and being with them concerns me. Your mother and your wife are --

HARRY

-- Tell them none of my relationship with Angel concerns anyone but me and my readers.

EDDIE

At least tell him why she's got no job, no goals ... just shoppin' and fun and crazy adventures. What kind of life is that?

HARRY

Don't listen to him, Angel. I've given you an ideal life because it works for your stories and nothing else.

ANGEL

And I love my life, Eddie. My credit is impeccable.

EDDIE

See, Doc. His view of women is so low he's made her incapable of realizing what he's done to her. And let's not get into his mother and wife relationships. Talk about backbiting. And that big mouth kid --

HARRY

-- Doctor Hart, can I call you later? I'm right in the middle of a very excruciating ending where I shut Eddie up forever. So maybe --

ANGEL

-- That's telling him. Besides, if I wanted to work, I would, Doc.

EDDIE

Yeah, at what?

ANGEL

Well ... I ... I haven't thought about it much ... but if I want to, Harry would think of something appropriate.

HART

I have a receipt here from a Quickie Liquor for quite a lot of beer. Thirteen cases.

EDDIE

That's because the only thing he's allowed her to be qualified for, Doc, is a high class party girl ... which she basically is anyway.

(We HEAR ANGEL push EDDIE off and RUN for it.  
EDDIE'S FOOTSTEPS go after her.)

HART

Harry? Harry, I think you need my help. May I come see you? Or perhaps you could come out to my office.

HARRY

Doctor, please don't listen to my family. I use most of the beer to bribe my neighbors into leaving me alone. All I really need is an hour or two of sleep. Just an hour or two to relax. No thinking - let my mind go - meditate ....

HART

Yes, perhaps some medication could --

HARRY

-- Aaahhhhh. You're not helping. It's just ... I haven't slept in three days, Doc. Look, I ... I've got to go.

HART

Harry? Don't go. Harry, don't hang up. Your mother is --

(HARRY clicks off the intercom. He's got another idea. HARRY goes back to the typewriter and excitedly puts in a fresh piece of paper. He stares at it a moment, then begins to TYPE. He stops. Starts then stops again. HARRY rocks back and forth in his chair.)

HARRY

This sucks. I can't think of anything clever. I need something raw. Something biting. Gripping and painful. What is it? It's out there staring me right in the teeth. I know it ... what, what, what? Come to me, come to me ....

(HARRY RIPS out the page. CRUMPLES it and tosses it into the pile of wadded up bad ideas near the trash can.)

EDDIE

This is your own fault, humdrum. You never should've stuck Angel's cute upturned nose into my import/export trade in the first place.

HARRY

Import/export - you're a diamond smuggler.

EDDIE

At least I worked for my wealth.

ANGEL

Smuggling isn't an occupation. It's a crime.

EDDIE

Hey, it's a good clean business. I make women happy. I get men laid. I make families grow. I'm not hurting anyone.

HARRY

Except the two Wall Street brokers who --

EDDIE

-- got in my way. Just like Angel here. They stuck their roaming noses up the wrong caboose.

HARRY

So you had them pushed in front of street cleaners?

EDDIE

Sorry, I'm a tidy guy.

HARRY

You're a no good murderer and you deserve to die.

EDDIE

At least I'm not a fairy writer.



HARRY

Now you're getting way out of line.

EDDIE

I'm also a desperate character. Come on, admit it. She's more you than I am.

HARRY

Yeah, well, I've known Angel longer.

EDDIE

And you can't kill her off any more than you can kill yourself. Because she is you. Isn't she, Harry?

ANGEL

Don't listen to this jerk. We know who I really am. And I'm sure she'd be flattered if she knew I was based on her.

HARRY

Don't worry, Angel. I'll get you out of this mess somehow. Even if I have to climb up that cliff and save you myself.

EDDIE

Oh, great, Chapter Thirty-five: the feeble writer gives up. Climbs into the story, and they live happily ever after. Husband and book. Only the novel's a bomb. Because the pages keep sticking together. I can't wait for the reviews.

(The phone RINGS. HARRY backs away from it in horror. This could only be one person ... his MOTHER.)

EDDIE

Answer the damn phone. Or let's move on.

(HARRY opens the window. The phone continues to RING. Reluctantly, he moves over and pushes the INTERCOM button.)

HARRY

Hello, you've reached Harry Starkers' empty hellhole.

MOTHER

Harry, it's your mother.

(HARRY makes a childish face.)

HARRY

I'm sorry, but Harry is busy in his head writing at the moment, and can't come out to answer the phone.

MOTHER

Why do you do this to me?

HARRY

Please leave a number and the son you're ashamed of will call you back when he's finally killed off Eddie Meats.

(reaches for the intercom button)

MOTHER

Don't you dare hang up on me, Harry. Are you still there, Harry? Harry?

HARRY

What do you want, Mother?

EDDIE

Get rid of her, Harry. I can't hold this twit upside-down forever.

ANGEL

You'll pay for this, Eddie.

MOTHER

Why are you still in this dump?

HARRY

(whining)

I'm still writing.

MOTHER

(mimics her son)

I'm still writing.

HARRY

I am.

MOTHER

Well, I'm still Mothering. And I want you to come down from there, and get home right now.

HARRY

No. Leave me alone. I'm not Daddy's little genius anymore. I'm just an average married guy with a son of my own.

MOTHER

Mary told me you threw her out of that rat infested hellhole.

HARRY

It's not that bad. It's got atmosphere.

ALLEN

Yeah, I can smell it all the way over here.

EDDIE

And cockroaches big enough to carry my luggage.

HARRY

Shut up.

MOTHER

Don't you talk to me like that, young man.

HARRY

I wasn't talking to you, Mother. I was talking to to to to to to ... Allen my shithead neighbor.

MOTHER

Shame on you, Harry. The poor man's an invalid.

HARRY

He keeps it up and he'll be a ...  
(out window)

VEGETABLE.

ALLEN

Look who's braggin'.

HARRY

Keep your big mouth shut.

(HARRY SLAMS the window shut.)

MOTHER

I'm worried about you, son.

HARRY

We go through this every book. Aren't you used to it yet?

MOTHER

But you've gotten noticeably worse this time. All your neighbors are complaining.

HARRY

Look, yesterday a crazy broad on the third-floor shot her drunk husband for beating her. Did I complain? No.

MOTHER

They blamed you for getting him so drunk. And I don't like you being down here by yourself. You've got money, they could kidnap you or worse.

HARRY

I'm not by myself.

EDDIE

And he's got a gun.

MOTHER

Come home.

HARRY

Don't nag.

MOTHER

Doctor Hart seemed very concerned. It's time.

HARRY

No.

MOTHER

Let Angel go, Harry. Mary told me you threatened to edit her out of your life.

HARRY

I didn't mean it.

MOTHER

Really, Harry, you can't threaten to end a marriage, and not expect it to have a derogatory effect on your relationship.

HARRY

So I'm sorry. But I'm not getting rid of Angel because I love writing about her. She's a great character to write about. She's exciting, beautiful, courageous, charming, sexy ....

ANGEL

Oh, Harry.

(HARRY starts to BEAT his head on the wall.)

HARRY

... and I'm just having fun.

MOTHER

Have all the fun you want. But at home as a brilliant lawyer. Not here like some self-imposed idiot locked in that hellhole writing such gibberish trash.

HARRY

(stops dead. Thinks)

Here. Here? Mother, did you say here?

MOTHER

Yes, I'm downstairs and I'm coming up to put an end to this nonsense once and for all. Now, which apartment?

HARRY

Stay away from me, Mother. I came here to be alone.

EDDIE

What are we? Compound subjects?

MOTHER

I'll be right up. Start packing.

(HARRY starts to answer but the INTERCOM cuts off. He runs to the window, throws it open. Sticks his head out.)

HARRY

I'm warning you. No matter what you say - I'm not killing Angel.

ALLEN

Then write me into the story, Harry. Anything you want. immortalize me. Please?

HARRY

I can't write you into the story, Allen.

ALLEN

Why not? I've got nothin' better to do. Let me save the bimbo.

(HARRY scowls and SLAMS the window shut.)

EDDIE

Way to go, schmuck. Now you'll never finish writing this piece of unadulterated crap.

(HARRY sits at the desk and SLIPS in one last piece of paper. He's got until his MOTHER gets there.)

EDDIE still holds ANGEL upside down over the canyon.)

ANGEL

Think hard, honey. You're a genius at saving me. I can't wait to hold you alone in my thoughts again.

HARRY

Sssshhh, ANGEL, I'm thinking.

(HARRY starts to TYPE wildly. EDDIE starts LAUGHING again and ANGEL SCREAMS.)

WOLVES begin HOWLING, moving closer and closer.)

EDDIE

What is this? You've got to be kiddin', numb nuts?

HARRY

It'll do the job.

EDDIE

A pack of wolves, though? Why don't you just throw down a banana peel?

HARRY

It's nature's way of telling me I've run out of sensible solutions.

EDDIE

Am I in a suspense novel or the remake of "Call of the Wild?"

HARRY

Put her down, or you'll go down in history as dying in the stupidest ending ever written in modern literature.

EDDIE

And the Hollywood yokels will yank Angel out of your mind so fast your head will implode. Besides you doofus, how will they stop me from droppin' her?

(EDDIE uses ANGEL as bate to save himself.)

ANGEL

Oh, Harry call off the wolves. He's using me as bait!

HARRY

Eddie!

(THE WOLVES near. Very mean and savage.)

EDDIE

Christ, Harry, call them off. They'll eat us both!

(HARRY pulls the page out of the typewriter and crumples it and tosses it with the other bad ideas. The wolves run off.)

HARRY POUNDS on the typewriter, and SNIVELS.)

HARRY

How could I create a monster like you?

EDDIE

(CHUCKLES wickedly)

Because I'm you. Deep down inside your subconscious, I'm you.

(HARRY slowly loses the battle with EDDIE. He gets worse as EDDIE'S VOICE GROWS with power.)

EDDIE

You don't get it, do you, Harry. I'm the dark-side that lurks deep inside the hidden crevices of your heart. The gray misty matter of your mind. The part of you who must kill Angel once and for all. Kill Angel so you can live. Kill Angel so your wife can have you back. Kill Angel because your kid needs you. Kill Angel because she possesses you like a toy. Kill Angel because ... Mother says so.

HARRY  
(openly WEEPS)  
STOP TALKING!

ANGEL  
(uncertain)  
Harry?

(HARRY stops crying, SNIFFS, wipes his face.)

HARRY  
Don't worry, honey. I'm just letting go of a little tension.

EDDIE  
You wimp. Ask your mommy if she ever had a son.

(HARRY wets a towel and wipes his face.)

HARRY  
You won't get to me, Eddie. You'll die like all the others. You can't have her and you can't kill her. And you're not part of my subconscious. You're just a voice. Do you hear me? Just a petty, unwanted voice in my head.

EDDIE  
Okay, fine, don't have an aneurysm. But hear this. She's no good, Harry. You don't know her like I do. She's driving you crazy. Just like she drives us all crazy. No one's good enough for her. No man but you ... because you never really loved your father.

HARRY  
That's not true. My father has nothing to do with my writing. He wouldn't even read it. So there.

EDDIE  
No? Did you ever admire your father?

HARRY  
That's confidential information.

EDDIE  
Were you sad when he died? Did you even appreciate him? I doubt it.



HARRY

I don't want to talk about him.

EDDIE

You don't admire anyone, do you? Not even your father. No man, no male image to pair your dream girl up with but yourself. And you can't have her either, can you. You see, I don't have to get to you. You've gotten to yourself. Your own sordid thoughts are like acid, corroding what's left of your rationality.

HARRY

I'm not crazy. I'm, I'm just tired. I'm so tired ... tired of this stupid story. Tired of you. Tired of everything.

ANGEL

Maybe everyone is right about me, Harry. Maybe I am no good for you. Maybe you should let me fall.

(ANGEL'S words fill HARRY with manic-energy.)

HARRY

Don't talk like that. Don't ever let me hear you say those words. You're mine and no one's taking you away from me. I'll think of something.

ANGEL

Just checking.

EDDIE

You hear that? She's such a cold, calculating woman.

HARRY

Will you drop dead?

EDDIE

O-kaaaayyy ....

(ANGEL SCREAMS as EDDIE prepares to jump.)

HARRY

No no no, wait wait wait. Don't drop anything.

(HARRY goes to the window, opens it, catching a BREEZE. It really feels good. He closes his eyes and lets the breeze soothe his tortured soul. We HEAR seagulls.)

EDDIE

Feels good, huh?

HARRY

If only I could fly away like a seagull.

(HARRY starts leaning further and further out the window. He spreads his arms, gliding.)

EDDIE

You can fly. Come on fly, Harry. Take us all for a ride. Drifting, drifting, drifting --

ANGEL

Snap out of it, Harry!

(HARRY opens his eyes and freaks when he sees how far he's out the window. He nearly falls out in his haste to get back inside.)

ANGEL

Think, my love, think. Get me down from here. I'm bored and I want to go on to something else.

(suggestive)

Something Caribbeanish, something sexy, something wet....

(HARRY hangs onto the windowsill. His body filling the open window.)

HARRY

I'm trying, I'm trying. I'm trying ....

ALLEN

How about tryin' to shut the hell up?

HARRY

Piss off, Allen.

(A KNOCK at the door and a JIGGLE at the knob. HARRY turns slowly from the window. Another KNOCK.)

MOTHER

(windded)

Open ... this door, son.

HARRY

Who is it?

MOTHER (O.S.)

Don't who is it me. Open this door, right now.

HARRY

Mother, please.

ALLEN

Shut your window, momma's boy. I'm watching General Hospital.

HARRY

One more word out of you, Allen, and I'll put you IN General Hospital.

ALLEN

Hell, if I could afford Obamacare I'd put myself in, pinhead.

(LOUDER KNOCKING.)

HARRY

Mother, if you don't leave, I'll climb out on the window ledge until you call me from home.

MOTHER

Don't be silly. Open this door.

(MOTHER JIGGLES the knob again.)

HARRY

You asked for it.

(HARRY climbs out on the window ledge.)

HARRY

I'm outside. Happy?

MOTHER

Don't be crazy. Harry? Harry.

HARRY

Gee, it's really nice out here, Mother. What a view. Look, the Ambassador Bridge.

MOTHER

Come back in the window. Right now.

HARRY

Go home. Wave from the tree in the yard and I'll go back inside.

ALLEN

What are you doin', Hemingway? You a writer or a pigeon?

HARRY

It's my mother. She won't leave me alone. Nag nag nag. Push push push.

ALLEN

Hum. Now, your Mother-in-law I could understand jumpin' for. But your own momma?

HARRY

You don't know my mother.

ALLEN

Is she fat?

HARRY

I never ... yeah, I guess she's a little plump.

ALLEN

How about an introduction. Fat broads dig me.

HARRY

You're disturbed.

ALLEN

Hey, I'm lonely.

HARRY

I just want to write in peace.

ALLEN

So write and give the rest of Motown the day off.

HARRY

I can't. I've got a block.

(HARRY squeezes his head as though to wring out an idea.)

ALLEN

Tough crap. Randy the candy stripper's only on TV for five minutes a day - so shut the hell up or jump.

HARRY

Sorry.

ALLEN

You're sorry. Randy will never want to meet me. Unless you writer me into your book.

HARRY

What really happened to you, anyway?

ALLEN

I told you, I fell into a canyon.

(Both ANGEL and HARRY SCREAM. He covers his ears.)

EDDIE

That's it, we're jumping.

HARRY/ANGEL

I don't want to die ...!

(A POLICE CAR stops below the window as SIRENS fill the air. Tires SCREECH, as a CROWD begins to form below.)

POLICEMAN

What the hell is happening up there?

ALLEN

He's drivin' me bonkers.

POLICEMAN

Who was that?

ALLEN

Allen Wrench in 502. And this fool's been trippin' me out of my frickin' mind for three months. Get him the hell off the ledge, so I can watch my bitter-sweet Randy Candy in peace.

POLICEMAN

All right, son. Who are you and why are you trying to ruin my lunch hour?

MOTHER

He's my son, officer.

MARY

And my husband.

JASON

And my dad.

HARRY

Jason, why are you out of school?

JASON

I had an orthodontist appointment. Mom said I could come and watch. So I don't hate her if she puts your butt away.

HARRY

Mary, did you have to drag our son into this?

MARY

Our son needs to see what a nut his father is so he'll think twice about quitting a perfectly good law practice and becoming a demented writer like you did.

MOTHER

You're not putting my son away.

MARY

He needs professional help.

MOTHER

He needs his mother.

HARRY

All I need is to save Angel.

JASON

Hey, Dad. If you jump, can I have your Harley?

MARY/HARRY

No.

JASON

Ah, butt nuts.

ALLEN

Your son's a real pick of the litter.

HARRY

His mother confuses him.

POLICEMAN

Will someone tell me what he's doing up there?

HARRY

I'm just trying to write.

POLICEMAN

Well be merciful, man. Get back in that window and set your bottom in front of your computer.

ALLEN

Typewriter. Clack clack clack. All day, all friggin' night. And let's not get into the nonsensical ranting and raving.

POLICEMAN

Whichever.

HARRY

I can't. I've got a block.

POLICEMAN

And I've gotta lunch date.

ALLEN

And Randy's on now, so shut 'em up.

HARRY

They're trying to kill Angel.

POLICEMAN

What? Who is?

HARRY

They are - they hate her.

MOTHER

Harry, I'm coming back up there.

HARRY

Stay where you are. You set one foot back into this building and I'm coming down on the sidewalk-express.

JASON

Please, Mom? Can I have Dad's Harley?

MARY

No, Jason. Now hush or I'll put you on a bus. And get your finger out of there.

JASON

Ah, son-of-a-soda pop!

ALLEN

You've got a nice family, Harry. I'd jump again, too.

HARRY

We're trying to break him of swearing.

POLICEMAN

Will someone tell me who Angel is and where she's at now.

HARRY

She's hanging upside-down over the Grand Canyon.

POLICEMAN

Well hell, that about explains everything, doesn't it.

MOTHER

She's in his head. He's a writer, and he's, well --

JASON

-- a pervert.

MARY

Jason.

JASON

What? You said he has sex with his typewriter.

(MARY SLAPS JASON.)

JASON

Dad, Mom hit me again.



ALLEN

Hit the little brat once for me.

HARRY

Shut up, Allen. Mary, he's only repeating your words.

POLICEMAN

Will you people cut it out? Now who's Angel?

MOTHER

Angel Style. She's the main character in his trashy books.

HARRY

And they're making me kill her off.

POLICEMAN

You mean, you're Harry Starkers?

HARRY

Well, yes.

POLICEMAN

I'll be an alligator's meal. I love your books.

MOTHER

Don't encourage him. They're trash. He's got a law degree and what does he do with it? He writes trash for a living.

HARRY

And it's your fault.

MOTHER

Did you hear him? Now it's my fault my super-kid's a garbage man.

JASON

Wow. Wait until I tell the kids at school my dad's a perverted super-garbage man.

MARY

Taxi. Jason, get that taxi. You're going home.

HARRY

Super-kid? You didn't want a baby, Mother. You and Dad wanted an IBM. My first words weren't momma or daddy. It was one in three languages.

MOTHER

All we wanted was to give you a head start. Look at the advantage it gave you.

HARRY

Advantage? All my peers hated me.

ALLEN

Poor little Harry never had friends.

HARRY

Shut up. How would you like to grow up without friends?

ALLEN

How would you like to grow up without limbs?

POLICEMAN

Mr. Wrench, please stay out of this. Now son, you can't kill off Angel - I love reading about her.

HARRY

You do? I love writing about her. She's my soul mate. The best friend I ever had. Thanks to my parents.

POLICEMAN

Hell, all the guys love her down at the twenty-three. We trade your books back and forth. I'm reading "Bitches With Guns In Detroit" right now. Boy, you come up with some --

ALLEN

-- Who the hell cares?

POLICEMAN

Mr. Wrench, if I have to come up there --

ALLEN

-- Come on up. Bring your nightstick. I haven't had a free beating in years.

JASON

Hey, Dad, when I come visit you in the loony bin, may I bring my friends, and play Houdini in your straight jacket?

MARY

No.

JASON

Ah, fudge-sickles.

POLICEMAN

Son, if you want to save Angel, start writing.

HARRY

I can't.

ALLEN

He's mentally constipated.

HARRY

I've got writer's block.

ALLEN

Same thing.

JASON

Dad's a shithead? Oops, it slipped.

MARY

Take him home, Mother.

MOTHER

You take your son home. My son needs me right here.

HARRY

I don't know what to do, officer. Eddie Meats will kill her if I even think it.

POLICEMAN

Eddie Meats, huh?

HARRY

Yeah, the import/export guy. I barely described him in my first two books.

POLICEMAN

Oh right, the good lookin' guy, with the whirlpool charm about him. Boy, he seemed like such a nice guy, too.

EDDIE

See Harry, readers liked me.

HARRY

Turns out he's been importing stolen diamonds from South Africa. He's a bloodless killer. Ice in his veins.

POLICE

Jesus, no kiddin'. Sounds bad for Angel. Well, you've got Detroit's finest behind you, son. Give him hell, Harry.

EDDIE

Won't your readers be disappointed.

(HARRY turns to look into the window.)

HARRY

Shut up, you bastard. Or I'll hang you from your nose hairs.

EDDIE

Come back in, Harry - I'm gettin' thoughts of my own.

ANGEL

Stop it, Eddie.

(HARRY comes back into the room. He scoops up a handful of pages. Buries his face in them.)

JASON

Hey Dad, can I sit in Angel's Porsche while you're cooped up and pretend?

MARY/HARRY

NO.

JASON

Ah, rodent hair-pie.

(HARRY rushes over to his typewriter, throwing the pages into the air. WIND swirls as the falling pages WHIP around.)

ANGEL

Quickly. I'm slipping, Harry.

(HARRY puts a piece of paper in the typewriter and stares at it. Nothing comes to him.)

(He takes out Mary's gun. Looks at it. Places it to his head.)

EDDIE

I win, Harry. Say goodbye.

(HARRY pulls the TRIGGER.

HARRY'S body SLAMS against the door and he slides off the chair to the floor. Manuscript pages still float from above. The typewriter falls to the floor in front of him.

ANGEL SCREAMS bloody murder. EDDIE LAUGHS wickedly.

Shock SOUNDS from a GATHERING CROWD.)

POLICEMAN

Hey, what's happening up there?

ALLEN

I think Hemingway just shot himself ... again.

MARY/MOTHER

Harry, I'm coming! Get out of my way?!

JASON

Mom, can I drive Angel's Porsche in the funeral?

POLICEMAN

(into police radio)

This is Adam Mokowski. Get me an ambulance and back up, pronto. I've got Harry Starkers. Yeah, the writer. I think he just killed himself. I know, I loved that one, too.

(HARRY'S eyes open. WIND still blowing. Pages still swirling.)

EDDIE

You coward. You missed.

ANGEL

Thank heavens.

EDDIE

And to think I thought you had big ones.

(Suddenly an idea hits HARRY. He pulls the typewriter to him and starts TYPING feverishly, still sitting in front of the door. He LAUGHS maniacally as the WIND picks up around him.)

EDDIE

Hey. What are you thinkin'? Hey! No, you bastard. Stop. Don't think that. Not that. AHHHH. She's ... bitin' me. AHHHHH. Let go you ....

(ANGEL is biting EDDIE on the balls. EDDIE is fighting to remain standing.)

HARRY continues to LAUGH as he TYPES with WIND and PAGES whirling around him. Revenge at last.)

EDDIE

Oh, sweat Jesus, Harry she's bitin' 'em. AAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH!

(EDDIE falls off the cliff, SCREAMING, and ANGEL hangs at the edge of the cliff.)

EDDIE'S VOICE FADES as ANGEL HUFFS and PUFFS, struggling to climb up the edge of the rock wall. HARRY continues to TYPE wildly.)

ANGEL

Let us know when you hit bottom, Eddie.

HARRY

You can do it, Angel.

(ANGEL continues to struggle.)

HARRY

That a girl. Reach once more. There, I knew you could do it.

(She pulls herself up and sits at the edge.)

EDDIE'S VOICE agonizingly stops as the distant brittle THUD of his body CRUSHING on the rocks.

ANGEL spits as she dusts off her hands.)

(HARRY types "The End" studies it. A great big satisfying smile covers his face.)

ANGEL

Oh, Harry, we did it! We got rid of him!

HARRY

You did it, beautiful. Let's go home.

ANGEL

Ummm ... Harry?

HARRY

What, sweet thing?

(She gets up and dust herself off.)

ANGEL

How do you feel about the Virgin Islands? No story, just you and me this time.

(ANGEL comes over and sits in HARRY'S lap. HARRY takes out a hanky. Tries to wipe her face, but ANGEL takes it from him and dabs at his head wound.)

HARRY

Ouch ... I don't know. Haven't been there ... yet.

ANGEL

You really need some rest, darling. A little pampering wouldn't hurt ... maybe a stitch or two.

HARRY

And some fun.

ANGEL

Lots of fun. And I know just the perfect places to pamper.

HARRY

I bet you do.

(ANGEL gets off HARRY and starts the long walk back.)

ANGEL

Gee, do I have to walk in these boots? I'm missing a heal.

HARRY

Just to the nearest road. The guy who picks you up has a nice truck, and buys you a beer.

ANGEL

Men. Oh well, then. Will I see you there, Harry Starkers?

(HARRY is still smiling as he scoops up his manuscript.)

HARRY

Nothing could stand in my way, Angel Style.

(SOUNDS of MOTHER, MARY, Jason and the POLICEMAN fill the hall outside HARRY'S apartment door. An AMBULANCE'S SIREN approaches outside.

Voices from other lowlife TENANTS fill doorways.

LOUD POUNDING on the door and more SIRENS from outside his window.

HARRY reaches to pick up the gun as violent POUNDING comes at the door. Blood runs down the side of his head.

Suddenly the door CRASHES in but Harry's head is in the way of it opening enough for anyone to get in. It hits him hard. The POLICEMAN is forced to stand O.S. behind the door.

HARRY and the POLICEMAN stare at each other through the crack in the opening. As Harry tries to clear his head.)

POLICEMAN

You hurt bad?

HARRY

I missed.

POLICEMAN

That's good. Now drop the gun.

(MARY stops behind the Policeman.)



MARY

Harry, look what you've done to us.

MOTHER

What do you mean us? It's my son with the hole in his head.

(AMBULANCE DRIVER shows up with a gurney.)

POLICEMAN

Help is here, Mr. Starker. Drop the gun.

MOTHER

This is all your fault.

MARY

Why is it all my fault?

MOTHER

You're his wife. You promised to love and cherish him.

MARY

I do. It's that woman in his head I can't stand. And if you really want your son back, you'll help me fix it so she never interferes with us again.

DRIVER

Who we got, Mokowski?

POLICEMAN

Hold on, guys. Harry Starkers.

DRIVER

No shit. Man, I read his crazy stuff all the time.

MOTHER

Don't encourage him. It's trash.

ALLEN

Hey, Harry, drop the gun before someone accidentally panics and shoots you ... or even better ... me.

(HARRY looks at the open window.)

HARRY

I just want to go home, Allen.

MARY

We're taking you to the hospital.

HARRY

But my book is done. I just need to go home now, Mary.

(The POLICEMAN and the AMBULANCE try to push the door open wider. Harry pushes it closed.)

POLICEMAN

Okay, Harry. We're taking you home. Just give me the gun.

JASON

I bet they put him in a rubber suit. Hey, Dad, can I use your golf clubs this summer?

(MARY grabs Jason by the ear and marches him down the hall.)

MARY

That's it, young man. I've had it with you today.

JASON

Owe owe owe! But, Mom, I want to see if he shoots anyone.

MARY

No. You're heading home on a bus.

JASON

Ah, boogers, you never let us have fun. No wonder Dad's a fruitcake.

ALLEN

Yo, Harry, I've barely known your family for what, ten minutes, and I already hate them more than mine. You sure you want to go home?

POLICEMAN

Give me the gun and it's all over, Harry.

MOTHER

Please, Harry? Give it to him.

(HARRY raises the gun toward the opening in the door, throwing more tension into the room. Until finally he hands it to the POLICEMAN.)

HARRY

I just need some peace and quiet.

(Immediately HARRY is yanked into the hall. And held down and strapped into a gurney O.S.)

HARRY (O.S.)

Please, really, this isn't necessary. I just want to go home.

(They wheel HARRY down the hall. HARRY'S neighbors APPLAUD. Calling him NASTY NAMES.)

ALLEN

Are you kidding, they're cutting into my show with that crazy bastard's bullshit?!

GALE WIND

(over ALLEN'S TV)

I'm Gale Wind and you are watching BS TV.

(HARRY SCREAMS.)

GALE WIND

I'm standing in front of the ambulance. From what I can gather, Detroit's most celebrated author of such best selling suspense novels as "Bitches With Guns In Detroit," "Poor Broads Don't Binge Shop," and my personal favorite, "Your Neighbor Has Three Nipples," has apparently just shot himself in the head. Now, I'm not clear on the details, but from what I've gathered, Harry Starkers just finished what might prove to be his last, yet greatest book: "Falling Men Must Die". And gossip has it, that Hollywood has finally struck a deal with Harry's publisher, Peter Middlefinger. Something Harry always vowed would happen over his dead body. How prophetic. Excuse me, ma'am, but aren't you Harry Starker's mother?

MOTHER

Oh, stuff it, you vulture.

ALLEN

Are you kidding me? Now they're cutting to a commercial! Harry, you crazy bastard. I want my Randy Candy!

**Fade To Black.**

**END OF ACT I**

**ACT II****Scene 1**

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - WINTER

A lit sign indicates the YPSILANTI REGIONAL PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL.

A viewing window and a locked door. An intercom is near the window. The room is dimly lit. Nothing else in the room, but HARRY in a straight jacket.

HARRY goes through many heavily sedated positions. Ending back in a fetal position in the corner.

EDDIE

Wake up, Harry.

(HARRY GROANS and rolls over, showing his face in the light. He looks bad, crazed and perhaps dangerous.)

EDDIE

Rise and shine, Starkers.

(HARRY'S eyes slowly open. He's groggy.)

HARRY

Leave ... me ... alone.

EDDIE

Harry, it's me. I'm back from the dead.

(HARRY'S eyes focus.)

HARRY

Eddie? Is that you?

EDDIE

What are you thinking about me for, huh? Isn't rippin' my cobblers off once good enough for you? Isn't droppin' me five hundred feet onto my noggin enough revenge? Or did you dig me up to drag my corpse through the streets. So the whole world could watch you feed upon your morbid necrophagous tendencies?

HARRY

Damn, Eddie. It is you?

EDDIE

No, it's the tooth fairy.

(HARRY sits up and looks around him, trying to clear his head. Sniffs the air.)

HARRY

You smell terrible. You're covered with worms and nasty bugs.

EDDIE

Me? Have you gotten a good whiff of your aura lately? What have you done to yourself?

HARRY

Huh? Nothing ... I've done nothing.

(HARRY'S eyes follow EDDIE as he walks around examining the room.)

EDDIE

So, this is Hollywood. I hate to say it, Harry, but this reminds me of a padded cell. Damn, feels like winter in here, too. And I can't see crud out this window. You need to talk to the supper.

(HARRY keeps blinking, trying to clear his head. EDDIE moves o.s. HARRY looks relieved thinking he's gone.)

EDDIE

Over here. Hey, it is winter ... and this is a padded cell.

(EDDIE'S VOICE reappears from the other side of the room. HARRY is disappointed.)

EDDIE

So, ah, are you aware of how long you've been hanging around this mental dump?

HARRY

I don't know ... three ... four months ... years ... I don't know.

EDDIE

Try too long. And you ain't gettin' any better. What are they givin' ya, anyway? Got any left?

HARRY

What? No .... Man, my head's in a bog. Eddie, it's good to hear from you.

EDDIE

Yeah, I bet.

HARRY

No no ... I mean it. They've got me all messed up. We've got to talk.

EDDIE

Talk? Us? We've got nothin' to talk about, pal. The quicker you forget about me, the better off I'll be.

HARRY

I need your help.

EDDIE

You had Angel bite me on the gonads. We're through.

HARRY

Eddie. Eddie? Eddie, I need you. Eddie? Look, I'm sorry. Okay?

EDDIE

No. Wait, you mean it?

HARRY

I need your help to get me out of here. Please?

EDDIE

Sure, now you need me. Okay, what the hell, it's either you or these scorpions eating my face. So what's bugging you?

HARRY

Hollywood. They tried to bring in new writers to rewrite our story.

EDDIE

You can't go around having your heroine biting dudes on the jewels, Harry. Who'd want to play the part? What the hell did you expect?

(HARRY struggles to get up. He can barely stand.)

HARRY

A little respect wouldn't've hurt.

EDDIE

It's a business, Harry.

HARRY

Well it started out as fun thoughts.

EDDIE

Pardon me while I tune my violin. So, where's what's her face?

HARRY

(lets out a big sigh)  
Angel ... left me.

EDDIE

(trying hard not to laugh)  
What? You're pullin' my short hairs again, right?

HARRY

No.

EDDIE

No bull ... that's great ... I'll be a mother .... Ah, ignore me while I grovel in your gloom ... but this is possibly the brightest moment of my life ... or un-life, whatever. So, why?

(HARRY just shakes his head in sorrow.)

EDDIE

Come on, please? I knew she would eventually. They all do.

HARRY

The trial. They raked her through the coals.

EDDIE

Yeah, so?

HARRY

I never should've pulled that trigger.

EDDIE

No, Harry, you never should've missed.

HARRY

Thanks.

(HARRY'S FLASHBACK: The LIGHT ADJUSTS to just a pinpoint on HARRY'S face, as the COURT ROOM - SANITY HEARING takes place. The cell becomes crushed with VOICES of HARRY'S family and fans. MOTHER, the POLICEMAN, ALLEN, DR. NOAH HART and PETER. POUNDING of an angry gavel to quiet them. MARY is on the stand. All we SEE is the emotions on HARRY'S face as he listens.)

MARY

Oh yes, he's quite mad, Your Honor. You see, it's this woman ... she's in his head. And he well ... talks with her. It's not normal. Did you know he takes vacations with her. I found this in his desk. An airline ticket. Just one ticket. Not with me, not with his kid ... with her. He says he's just researching his next book. But I know what she's doing. And after he got out of the hospital this last time. And those nice Hollywood people tried to fix his story. You should've seen him. He ranted and raved and locked himself in the ladies' room of the Fisher Building. It was so embarrassing. The Fire Department had to go in through the fourteenth floor window. He once took my gun and threatened to edit me out of his life ... the same day he tried to ... to ... kill himself with it. That Angel Style is driving the poor man crazy .... You've got to help us. You've got to put him someplace safe. Oh, please help us save him.

(END FLASHBACK as the LIGHTS COME BACK UP in the PADDED CELL.)



EDDIE

Holy deadlock. Sounds like you've got a stagnated marriage there, pal. Not to mention a bummed-out old lady.

HARRY

She doesn't understand. She thinks Angel is driving me crazy.

EDDIE

Shit, I told you that. Oh yeah, sorry. How's the chow around here?

HARRY

It stinks.

EDDIE

Figures. Hell, you sure know how to choose your women. A buster and a biter. No wonder you hate them.

HARRY

Just drop it, Eddie. I can see this isn't leading us anywhere.

EDDIE

Hey, what do you want from me? You had me rotting in a canyon for over eight months ... in both paperback and hardcover, in twenty-two languages. And there's no tellin' what stench those Hollywood hacks had planned for me.

HARRY

Well, go on back. You're negativity isn't helping.

EDDIE

Come on, I want to contribute. Look at me, I'm rotting off like cream cheese. A couple more months I'll be maggot dip. Can you imagine what this smells like in High-Def?

HARRY

No. I'm not sure. I'm not sure what I was thinking. You're the last character I need counseling from.

EDDIE

Okay, but listen, pal. If you've got a moment, I've got a few ideas anyway.

HARRY

I'm not interested.

EDDIE

Then screw you, man. If you don't want to write about me, then why the hell am I back in your head?

HARRY

You crept in while I was unconscious.

EDDIE

Deep down inside you need me, Harry.

HARRY

No I don't. I don't need anybody. Especially not you.

EDDIE

Everybody needs somebody, even if that somebody is nobody anybody wants.

HARRY

Go away, Eddie.

EDDIE

Then let me go, goddamn it.

(HARRY closes his eyes. He tries to forget EDDIE.)

EDDIE

I'm still here.

(HARRY moves to the intercom and pushes it with his nose.)

HARRY

Doctor Hart.

HART

Yes, Mr. Starkers?

HARRY

Could you bring in something to help me sleep?

EDDIE

You mean, make you sleep.

HARRY

Shut up.

Sorry?  
HART

Not you, Noah. Him.  
HARRY

Oh.  
HART

He's back.  
HARRY

I see. What are you feeling, Harry?  
HART

Anger. I'm just feeling angry.  
HARRY

That's fine. Take deep breaths and I'll be right with you.  
HART

Thank you ... thank you.  
HARRY

Drugs are not the answer, Harry.  
EDDIE

(HARRY'S eye begins to twitch again.)

HARRY'S FLASHBACK in the COURT ROOM - SANITY HEARING - THE LIGHT ADJUSTS to just a pinpoint on HARRY'S face, as the COURT ROOM - SANITY HEARING takes place.

The cell becomes crushed with VOICES of HARRY'S family and fans. MOTHER, the POLICEMAN, ALLEN, DR. NOAH HART and PETER. POUNDING of an angry gavel to quiet them.

HARRY'S MOTHER sits in the witness stand. All we SEE is the emotions on HARRY'S face as he listens.)

MOTHER

Harry first wrote short stories about Angel Style in seventh grade. Who knew? He got A's on all of them, too. But Harry always got A's. His father, please rest his soul, was always so proud of Harry. He read to him every night. Simple math, new math, algebra. And at night he played records of Beethoven and Mozart. On his fourth birthday he added audio recordings of the works of da Vinci and Aristotle, until Harry started developing this eye twitch, and the doctors - what do they all know - suggested less informative material. Naturally they didn't understand what a super-child we really had. He's a brilliant lawyer. With a photographic memory. He's not crazy. He's tired. He needs to come home and get some rest and forget about this writing nonsense. I tried once to read his drivel. Terrible-terrible. How he thinks of such distorted things with a mind like his .... Why, if his father were alive, he'd set Harry strait. Why ....

(LIGHT FADES TO BLACK.)

(HARRY has rolled over into the corner again as the LIGHTS COME UP.)

JASON

(older voice now.)

Dad? Can you hear me, Dad? Wake up.

HARRY

(an eye opens)

Huh?

JASON

It's me, your son.

HARRY

(looks with one eye)

Huh?

JASON

I need to talk to you.

HARRY

(closes the eye)

I just want to sleep.

JASON

It's Mom. She's been acting weird.

HARRY

Who are you?

JASON

It's me, Jason. Your son. Remember? I swore a lot to get your attention. But, you didn't give a shit?

HARRY

Jason? Is that you? You sound --

JASON

Yes. And yesterday was my birthday. Mom didn't even remember.

HARRY

I'm sorry, Jason, my head is real foggy. Mom, your birthday?

JASON

Mom hasn't been coming home at night.

HARRY

I missed your birthday?

JASON

Yes. But that's not the point. Mom is happy. Cheerful, even.

HARRY

I just need to go back to sleep.

JASON

Dad, wake up. I think Mom is getting ... you know ... laid.

HARRY

That's nice ... I'll talk to you later, Jason ... happy birthday.

(Jason POUNDS on the glass trying to get HARRY to wake up.)

JASON

Dad? Dad. DAAAAD ...!

HARRY

Please, Jason, go outside and play. I'm working.

EDDIE

Hey, Harry, wake up. Your kid's tryin' to talk to you.

(HARRY roles over and sits up.)

HARRY

What? Eddie? What do you want, Eddie?

EDDIE

What, am I speaking in metaphors? Listen to your son.

(HARRY lifts his head.)

HARRY

Okay, okay ....

JASON

Dad? You're talking to yourself.

HARRY

Yeah, okay ... what?

JASON

They're down the hall signing papers. I snuck in. It's about Mom and Doctor Hart.

(Just then Dr. Noah Hart enters.)

HART

Hello, Jason. Let's not disturb your father just yet.

JASON

I want to talk with him. Alone.

HARRY

Jason?

HART

How do you feel, Mr. Starkers?

HARRY

Doctor Hart?

HART

Yes. I'm here with your son.

(HARRY sits up.)

HARRY

Can we take off this jacket? I don't like my child to see me this way.

HART

I'll take it into consideration.

HARRY

Would you?

HART

Of course.

HARRY

Oh, and Noah ... if you decide to take off my jacket, could you manage to provide me with a note pad and pen?

HART

No sharp objects. Sorry.

HARRY

Crayons? Can I at least have Crayons?

HART

Well ....

HARRY

Just Crayons?

HART

I'll see what I can do.

HARRY

Thank you.

JASON

I gotta go, Dad. Bye.

HARRY

Jason? Jason? Jason? Doctor Hart, I was speaking with my son .... for the first time.

**Lights to Black.**

**End of Act II Scene 1**

**ACT II****Scene 2**

Days Later.

HARRY sits in the corner without his straight jacket. He has a drawing pad and Crayons.

MARY  
He's not writing, is he?

HART  
Drawing.

MARY  
Is he --

HART  
-- getting any better? I'm afraid not.

JASON  
Dad will get better, you'll see.

MARY  
Hush, or I'll make you play with the nurse again.

(HARRY continues to peacefully draw. His back is to the viewing window.)

(EDDIE enters from the shadows.)

EDDIE  
What gives?

HARRY  
What's it to you?

EDDIE  
It's nothin' to me. Thanks for the Brooks Brothers, though.

(EDDIE moves to see his reflection in the glass.)



EDDIE

Notice I don't look so cryptic anymore. What's up?

HARRY

Nothing. Why don't you go back to wherever you came from?

MARY

Oh no ... is he ...?

HART

Sssshhhhh.

(EDDIE turns on HARRY.)

EDDIE

Hey, you are where I came from.

HARRY

So?

EDDIE

Write something and get me out of here.

HARRY

So now you need me.

EDDIE

Why am I here, Harry?

HARRY

Far as you're concerned, I'm drawing.

EDDIE

Listen, don't be using me, inkblot ... I'm not dying again.

HARRY

Don't worry, you won't.

(EDDIE goes over to the window. He makes faces.)

EDDIE

It's not natural to have these people watching us.

HARRY

They're also listening, so keep your mouth shut.

MARY

He knows we're here and he still ...?

HART

It comes and goes. He seemed to be just fine ... until just after the New Year.

(EDDIE turns to the glass.)

EDDIE

Why? They can't hear me. Hey, you bunch of demented Peeping Toms, take a good look at this.  
(moons the glass.)

HARRY

Pull up you pants, Eddie. My son is in there.

EDDIE

Just doin' what you wish you could. So, hurry up, I'm goin' stir-crazy.

HARRY

Keep your furry butt to yourself.

MARY

Really, Harry.

JASON

I want Dad to come home, Mom.

MARY

So do I, dear. Who's he talking to?

HART

Eddie Meats.

MARY

From "Falling Men Must Die"? But he's dead.

HART

According to Harry, he's now the un-dead.

(MARY'S voice comes over the intercom)

MARY

Harry?

(HARRY looks up at the glass.)

HARRY

Come on in, Marry. I want to talk.

MARY

You're looking better today.

EDDIE

How about me? I'm almost human again.

(HARRY shoots EDDIE a look, while forcing a smile at MARY.)

HARRY

Mary, I want to come home.

MARY

The doctors would like to wait a little while longer.

HARRY

I'm fine, Mary, honest. I haven't heard Angel's voice ... jeez, I don't know in how long. At least since I've been here.

EDDIE

And it's been almost a year since he stopped masturbating. Happy?

JASON

She's trying to sell Angel's Porsche, Dad. She put it on E-Bay.

HARRY

(stops, alarmed)

Don't you dare sell the Porsche.

(MARY SMACKS Jason on the head.)

JASON

Ouch!

MARY

Of course I wouldn't, dear.

HARRY

Noah, I want out of here. Now would be soon enough.

HART

We'll get you home as soon as we can.

(HARRY tries to get up.)

JASON

She wants to take the money and redo the bathrooms. OUCH.  
Come home, Dad. Ouch. Mom keeps hitting me.

(HARRY makes it to his feet and calmly walks up  
to the glass.)

HARRY

Honey bunch?

MARY

Yes, pudding pie.

HARRY

Stop hitting our child. And if you sell the Porsche to  
remodel our bathrooms, I'll do much more than just edit you  
out of my life.

MARY

You're sick, Harry. Sick!

HART

It's okay, Mary. Perhaps we should discuss this.

EDDIE

Way to go, mouth. Now we'll never get out of here.

HARRY

I don't care. Mary. Do not, do you hear me? Do not touch  
Angel's Porsche, or my Harley.

JASON

Or me, you bitch. Ouch!

HARRY

Now, Noah. I want out of here. I'm as sane as you or the next  
guy.

EDDIE

Careful on that front. I'm the next guy.

MARY

Come here, Jason. Nurse.

JASON

Dad, Mom traded your Harley in for a new dishwasher and refrigerator. So they'd match the new kitchen stove.

HARRY

What? You traded my Harley? Why?

MARY

Jason kept trying to start it. And I caught three little ghetto brats from that evil neighborhood you wrote in ... pushing it down the street. They were stealing it.

JASON

Were not. We were just pretending. We didn't even have the key.

(EDDIE is disgusted with it all.)

EDDIE

Kids. We gotta get home, Harry.

HARRY

Let me out of here, Hart.

HART

Give us a minute, Harry.

HARRY

I've got to get home before she gives all my clothes away.

JASON

Too late. And Doctor Hart keeps eyeing Mom's ass. Ouch.

HARRY

Ahhhh. Are you cheating on me, Mary?

MARY

Don't be ridiculous, Harry. We're married. We're in this together.

HARRY

Then why can't you see I'm needed at home?

MARY

I do see. And you'll be home soon, darling. I promise.

HART

It's obvious that you're still feeling a bit troubled. We just feel that you need a little more time here to work things out.

HARRY

Mary, tell Peter I'm ready to redo the script. Tell him to come see me.

MARY

... Okay, Harry.

HARRY

Do you still love me? I mean, despite everything? You know, for better and all that?

MARY

Of course I do.

HARRY

Then please don't sell the Porsche. It's Angel's, a prototype, and the last of its kind.

MARY

I'll tell Peter. I'll see you in a few days. Be well, Harry.

HARRY

Mary ... Mary?

(HARRY stands there in front of the glass.  
Waiting.)

EDDIE

That's it, I'm outta here, pal.

(HARRY realizes they have left him hanging.)

HARRY

Noah ... Haaaarrttt ... Nooaaah Haaaaarrttttt ....

(HARRY starts to THRASH around the room ... pulling out his hair and BEATING himself with his drawing pad.)

HARRY

Noah. Haaarrrrrtttttttt ... Aahhhhh ...

(He falls to his knees, reaching up to the heavens. His face twisted and tormented.)

HARRY

I want out of HEEERRREEEE.

(LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK)

(LIGHTS UP - CONTINUING)

HARRY'S FLASHBACK. A SINGLE LIGHT PIN POINTS his face. Just before the trial. He speaks to DOCTOR Hart.

HARRY

Frankly, Doctor, I don't see the big deal. I admit I might have gone beyond the normal realm of noble behavior at times. But to point fingers at me and paste unnecessary labels on my back like suicidal is ... I'm not suicidal. I know, I know ... I attempted to shoot myself in the brain. But it wasn't me I was trying to kill. It was Eddie. And I admit it does sound similar, but hey, I was sane enough to miss.

HART

Point taken.

HARRY

And this hatred toward my father. You didn't know him. So how could you possibly see the whole picture? He wanted so much for me to be a savior. The answer to all Mankind's problems. If not for my mother, he would've named me Moses Mohammed or Jesus Einstein. I'm telling you, the guy had it in for me from day one. For example, when I was six, I begged my father to buy me a bicycle and let me stay home so I could keep up with the other kids. Do you know what he bought me? A used Encyclopedias set to read in an after school study class. Has anyone mentioned my trying to electrocute my father for that? I almost did, you know. Should've named me Franklin Tesla.

HART

Yes. Let's delve further into this anger. It's okay. I'm here for you.

HARRY

Well, in the seventh grade my father forbade me to ask the most beautiful girl in the neighborhood to a social dance because she wasn't of our faith. The next semester she moved and I never saw her again.

HART

Ah yes, I see. You experienced your first crush.

HARRY

It wasn't just a crush. It was destiny. We were both deadlocked in a state spelling B final for over four hours. Just the two of us from the same neighborhood. It was unheard of. But there we were. And the way she looked at me when they drew necrophagous.

HART

Ahh ....

HARRY

The feeding on of dead bodies, out of the tumbler. I'll never forget her eyes. No one thought I'd spell it right. Not my mother, not my father. Not even me. No one, but her. She knew I could win. I saw it on her lips, a slight smile for me. She was happy for me. And I was inspired. She was my living Angel and even then had such breathtaking style.

HART

So, things could've been different?

HARRY

If my father had let me ask her out? She might have said no. Me ... this dorky kid ... and her a picture of beauty. But as it stands, I've written about her ever since. And yes, I live in a fantasyland sometimes. It makes me happy. It's just my writing process. I don't know about you, Doctor, I don't consider that grounds for putting me away. I do support my family adequately. My books are translated in several languages. Millions of copies of each book. I'm rich, Doc. And it's not as if I don't love my wife. She's given me a great son. Okay, he's spoiled rotten right now, and I need to spend more time with him, but he'll grow out of it.



HART

Let's get back to your father.

HARRY

Halfway through law school, Father got hit by a street cleaner. He bent down to pick up a shiny nickel. On his death bed he said if my law schooling hadn't cost him every nickel he had, he wouldn't have been scrounging around in the gutter, when he could've lived like a king. When I sold my first book, I went and dug down to his coffin and left fifty grand in thousand dollar bills. If I ever need it, I'll dig it back up. But until then, the bastard and I are even. He's dead - and my life's a living hell.

(LIGHTS TO BLACK.)

(From off in the void, ANGEL CALLING.)

ANGEL

Har-ry, Har-ry, Harrrrr-rrrry, Haaaarrrrr---rrrrrrryyyyyy ....

(LIGHTS UP)

(To reveal Harry completely out of it. ANGEL is thrown in from the shadows.)

ANGEL

You creep, untie me!

(EDDIE appears. He struggles to untie ANGEL.)

EDDIE

Look who I found? It took me awhile but I finally found her suckin' up to some rich pimp down in the Virgin Islands.

ANGEL

We were dancing. Where are we?

EDDIE

In Harry's tomb if we can't find a way out of this dump. Look at this, no Wi-Fi or cable outlet.

(Eddie frees her. Angel slaps him. She sees Harry and crawls to him.)

ANGEL

Oh, Harry.

(ANGEL rolls HARRY over and SCREAMS.)

EDDIE

Cut the dramatics, Stella.

ANGEL

Why didn't you tell me?

EDDIE

Like you really care.

ANGEL

I do care.

EDDIE

I told you he needed to see you.

ANGEL

I didn't know he was like this. If I had, you wouldn't've had to kidnap me.

EDDIE

Why would I spoil all the fun?

ANGEL

Which, by the way, you'll see time for.

EDDIE

Uh-uh, unless he rewrites the story, I'm still literally dead. And if he does, I got my hunches you'll be feelin' a lot different about me soon.

ANGEL

Never. You're the scum of the oceans. The ring around the toilet bowl of life. The doo-doo on the front lawn of heaven.

EDDIE

You know, for a dumb blond you can be pretty stupid and insensitive at times.

ANGEL

I'm not insensitive.

EDDIE

No? Look what you've done to the poor chump.

ANGEL

What happened ... after I left, I mean?

EDDIE

Hollywood. The suits got to him. Pushed him over the edge. But he wouldn't give you up. He fought them to the bitter end. So whatever you do, don't mention anything about his ...

(whispers)

... father.

ANGEL

His father?!

HARRY

(bolts up - hysterical)

Rot in hell, cruel bastard. It's not my fault you're dead!

(ANGEL SLAPS HARRY'S face. HARRY snaps out of it. His eyes slowly focus on ANGEL'S. He starts to cry. ANGEL takes him in her arms and he openly WEEPS as they have a moment together and just rock back and forth.)

ANGEL

It's okay, Harry, it's okay ... everything will be okay. I'm back. I've been such a spoiled brat. But I'm back now ... everything is okay.

HARRY

Am I awake?

EDDIE

Disgustingly so.

HARRY

Angel ... you look ... so ... tan. Where have you been?

ANGEL

In the Virgin Islands sulking. Waiting for you.

HARRY

I couldn't get away ... they found my ticket ... and I thought ... you were mad at me.

(big burden lifted)

Oh, Angel, I've missed you so much.

ANGEL

I wasn't mad at you, Harry. Oh, honey, it must've been terrible. I was mad at them.

(checks his pupils)

What have they given you?

EDDIE

Forget it. He's got none left.

(ANGEL pulls away. HARRY plops down on the floor.)

ANGEL

What's he doing here? I didn't ...

(spits in disgust)

... bite him for nothing.

(EDDIE starts HUMMING the wedding march.)

HARRY

Don't start, Eddie.

ANGEL

Harry, I don't like the sound of this.

HARRY

Eddie, why do you have to be such a horse's tail?

EDDIE

Because, basically, unless we find someone else to pin this sordid tale on, I'm still a double murderer. I pushed two guys in front of street cleaners, remember. By the way, I love how you stole the idea from you father.

ANGEL

Pin it on? What and on whom?

HARRY

That's part of what we've got to talk about.

PETER

Harry? It's me, Peter.

(HARRY gets up on his knees and crawls over to the window. HARRY tries to stand but can't and plops down on his bottom.)

HARRY

Peter, where have you been?

PETER

Work. And interviewing law firms. I've stopped by several times to see you though. But the last time you were reciting passages from the 1966 Encyclopedia Britannica, volume fourteen, Libido to Mary - Duchess of Burgundy.

HARRY

I was?

PETER

Verbatim. I checked.

HARRY

Jesus. Sorry, it was a thing with my father. It's funny, I feel as though a heavy guilt has been lifted off my soul. My father was a shit. Shit, shit, shit, shit, shit. Damn, I feel good.

PETER

That's nice, Harry. Look, your son left me a message about you needing to see me. So I've been stopping by on and off for over a month.

(HARRY tries to remember his conversation with Jason.)

HARRY

I did? Yes, yes, I did. I've decided to rewrite "Falling Men Must Die."

(PETER doesn't say anything. HARRY is worried by the silence.)

HARRY

Well ... isn't that good news? You know, for the script's sake?

PETER

Yes, Harry, it is. Especially if you had told me a year ago.

HARRY

A year? What are you getting at?

PETER

(very sad)

The movie deal fell through.

HARRY

Through what? Find someone else.

PETER

It's not that easy. There's money and lawyers involved.

HARRY

I'm working on a happier ending, though. A big Hollywood ending.

PETER

I'm glad to hear that, Harry, I really am. But there's not much we can do now until it goes into turnaround.

(HARRY finally stands up, facing the window.)

HARRY

What the hell does that mean?

PETER

It doesn't matter because ... ah crap ... there's another thing .... Everything you own at the moment, all your writing, will be tied up in court for awhile.

HARRY

What for? What did I do? I haven't killed anyone. I'm not a drug dealer, bank robber, or a child molester ... I'm just --

PETER

-- getting divorced.

HARRY

What?

PETER

(this is really hard)

It's Mary. She's sold off all your personal things. And put the money into the house. Now she's divorcing you. Get this. Our lawyers are representing her, so they dropped us. Jason called me, so I went over and had a talk with Mary. She's asked me to tell you. That's why I'm here today. To tell you she moved Jason to Florida.

HARRY

Florida? The Porsche, my Harley, golf clubs, everything?

PETER

Everything. She's put it all into one pot. To split it right down the middle. Clean and simple. But if it makes you feel better, I bought back your metal woods. And you can have them back at half what I paid for them.

HARRY

(thinks it over)

You're a prince, Peter. So, Mary's divorcing me. That should make my mother happy. What about future book royalties, foreign and domestic?

PETER

She's asking for half. Unless we can agree on a flat figure. I'm sure that's what they want.

HARRY

What about my mother? Where does she stand in all this?

PETER

She's down stairs. Listen, she's on her way up. I've got to go make some calls. Is there anything I can do for you right now?

(HARRY thinks, but doesn't answer.)

PETER

Harry? Harry, is there any .... Your mother will be here in a minute. So I better --

HARRY

-- Peter wait. Peter ... there's been a mistake. Peter? Get me out of here. Please? Get us an honest lawyer.

PETER

Your mother's way ahead of us. We've taken on a new firm we can trust. Headed by a knockout from our old neighborhood. Your mother found her.

(This worries HARRY greatly. Not knowing what his MOTHER has done.)

HARRY

Peter, wait. Who is she? Do I know her?

PETER

I'm sorry, but Dr. Hart left word for you not to be disturbed for too long.

HARRY

Left word? Where the hell is he? I want to speak to him right now.

PETER

He's in Florida ... with Mary. He's helping her get settled. Apparently, he's removed himself from your case, as of yesterday.

HARRY

Yesterday? Oh great, isn't this just flawless? He's playing hide the angry thermometer with my wife and stealing half of everything I own.

PETER

Actually, Harry, I think they just fell in love.

HARRY

Fine, I'll get over it. Just get me the hell out of here before something permanent happens to me. Like rigor mortis.

PETER

One way or another I'll get Annie Mercy-Singer down here today.

HARRY

Annie Mercy?

PETER

Yeah, you might have known her. Look, I got to go call her.

HARRY

No, Peter, wait. Mother did this for me? Why?

PETER

Yes. She loves you. Hang in there, Harry.

HARRY

But --



PETER

-- Get some rest.

(PETER leaves.)

HARRY

I don't want Annie to see me like this. Peter. You don't understand. Please, don't let her see me like this. Peter? Talk to my mother. She'll explain, all right? Peter? Ask my mother. Peter? Peter?

(Harry turns with mixed emotions on his face.)

MOTHER

It's just me, son.

HARRY

Mother?

MOTHER

Yes.

HARRY

I'm very sorry.

(MOTHER tries her best not to let HARRY know she's crying.)

MOTHER

Sorry for what?

HARRY

Sorry for all the trouble I've caused you. Sorry, for not ever appreciating what you and Dad sacrificed for me.

MOTHER

I'm your mother. You don't have to appreciate me.

HARRY

Yes I do. I've been selfish and need to learn how to participate in life more. To let go and appreciate those around me. There's still a few things I need to work out. But I want you to know that ... Mother, I love you.

(MOTHER BLOWS her nose.)

MOTHER

You've never told me that before.

HARRY

I know .... I'll be home soon. Okay?

MOTHER

I love you too, son. And if writing can make you happy ... I promise to accept that. It's your life. Mary was not the right woman for you. She didn't get you. I didn't get you. You father didn't either. But I've been reading your fan mail. Readers love you ... they love Angel. They get you. I've read the early stories. There's real life passion there. I wasn't able to see it before. If a woman can make a man love like that, then she ought to know it. Because any woman would feel lucky to be loved in the way you love your Angel.

HARRY

Mother ... thanks ... thanks for everything you and Dad gave up for me to go to school. I'll make it up to you soon. I promise.

(MOTHER openly cries. HARRY wipes his tears away again.)

MOTHER

Peter's waiting. If I don't leave now, my eyes will fall out.

HARRY

It's okay, Mother. I'll see you soon.

MOTHER

I'll be waiting for you, son.

HARRY

Buy yourself some flowers. Whatever you like and send them from me.

MOTHER

But --

HARRY

-- Please. Buy some for Dad, too.

MOTHER

Okay then, I will. Thank you, son.

(HARRY smiles up to his MOTHER.)

HARRY

The expensive ones.

(HARRY waits until he's sure his MOTHER is gone and begins to calm himself by pacing the cell.

ANGEL and EDDIE enter. They've been making love ... all day. They're being overly kissy-face.)

ANGEL

Oh, Edward, you big trouser mouser.

EDDIE

I didn't know I had it in me. Holy cow, I can't take my hands off you. Hey, Harry, did your Mother leave yet?

HARRY

She's gone. I think she did cartwheels on the way out.

EDDIE

Why do women cry so much when they're happy?

HARRY

Probably for the same reason you both sounded like you were dying all day.

ANGEL

Why, Harry, you were listening.

HARRY

When you two finish sucking on each other's anatomies, would you mind taking a moment from your bliss to parley matters with me.

EDDIE

Parley away, old bean.

ANGEL

Hasn't your lawyer showed up yet?

HARRY

Soon. Look, I've decided on how to get you off the hook, Eddie.

EDDIE

You mean ... me and Angel can --

HARRY

-- forever and a day, if you want.

ANGEL

What about the diamond smuggling?

HARRY

All part of the same frame job.

ANGEL

By whom?

HARRY

Well, the perfect person would be someone who was secretly in love with you. Someone you've known for a long time who would object to you and Eddie being together.

ANGEL

I can't think of anyone who'd hate him more than my mother.

EDDIE

I can. That little creampuff of a friend of yours.

ANGEL

Not Norman. Oh, please don't make it Normy. Who will I shop with? And he's such a --

EDDIE

-- back stabbing little weasel. I can see him now. He uses his gay South African ties to plant the diamonds. In return, he supplies them with donations through his charity drives and gets me out of his way in the process.

ANGEL

But he doesn't even like girls that way.

HARRY

It didn't necessarily have to be for sexual reasons, Angel.

EDDIE

Just havin' a broad ... ah ... a lady like you on a guy's arm can open a lot of social doors.

ANGEL

You mean, I was just a dumb piece of jewelry to Norman?

EDDIE

Don't take it so hard, Angel. If I couldn't get a rise just lookin' at you, I'd still want you wrapped around my neck.

(ANGEL kisses EDDIE on the cheek.)

ANGEL

Edward, you say the sweetest things. Trash Norman, Harry.

HARRY

It's getting a little thick in here.

ANGEL

Oh, Harry, I've got a wonderful idea.

EDDIE

Oh-oh, hold on to your suitcase.

ANGEL

Make Allen the killer.

HARRY

Who?

ANGEL

Allen Wrench ... you know, that nasty man in 502.

EDDIE

The soap opera quadro? Gee, Angel, that's kind of rickety.

HARRY

I don't know. She may be on to something.

EDDIE

The guy can't even scratch himself. How's he supposed to kill anyone?

ANGEL

See? Who would suspect him?

HARRY

He did ask to be in our book.

EDDIE

Who am I to argue? Just get me off the hook.

HARRY

The more I think about it, the more I like it.

ANGEL

We can still trash Norman if you want. He could be the brains.

HARRY

Right. Maybe Norman sets up the diamond smuggling ... but the killer is really Allen ... a secret flame.

EDDIE

The flamer will really love you for this one, Harry.

ANGEL

I've got it. Why don't we dedicate part of the book proceeds to Allen's medical care. The press will eat it up.

HARRY

There is that fifty-grand buried on my father's coffin.

EDDIE

Hell, why not go whole-hog and get Randy the candy striper to present the check?

ANGEL

That's a fantastic idea.

HARRY

Okay, consider it done. Now why don't you two run along and have a good life. I've got to straighten out my own for awhile.

ANGEL

Don't you want our help?

HARRY

I've got to work on this one myself, Angel.

EDDIE

Well, so long. Keep a stiff upper groin.

HARRY

I will. Take care of her, Eddie. And thanks for everything.

EDDIE

I got the better deal.

ANGEL

Will you ever write about us again?

HARRY

Maybe someday. I love you, Angel ... I really do. You're the best thought this writer ever had. So long.

(ANGEL bolts to HARRY and gives him one last hug and a kiss.)

ANGEL

So long, Harry. I love you, too. You're the greatest. Everything will be okay.

(ANGEL runs off behind EDDIE.)

HARRY stands there a moment. He wipes away a tear.)

ANNIE

Mr. Starkers?

HARRY

Yes.

(ANNIE MERCY-SINGER SOUNDS like ANGEL, but with a much more stylish, professional tone.)

ANNIE

I'm Annie Mercy-Singer. Peter sent me. I'm a lawyer with Singer and Masterson.

HARRY

Annie? Annie Mercy? It's me, Harry.

ANNIE

(not getting it)

Yes, I know.

HARRY

Harry Starkers. From seventh grade.

ANNIE

Mr. Starkers, your mother --

HARRY

-- I know, I didn't expect you to remember me. And believe me, I never wanted you to see me like this if you did. Are you married? Of course you must be ... Mercy-Singer.

ANNIE

I was ... but look I --

HARRY

-- You're divorced?

ANNIE

Widowed. Look, I don't think --

HARRY

N E C R O P H A G O U S ... the feeding on of dead bodies.

ANNIE

Oh, my .... That was you? From the seventh grade spelling B championship?

HARRY

You remember me?

ANNIE

Who could forget? How could a seventh grader even know a word like that?

HARRY

Easy, just have a father like mine.

ANNIE

I can't believe it's you. I wanted you to ask me to the Halloween dance. Why didn't you?

HARRY

You really wanted to dance with me?

ANNIE

In the worse way. I tried looking for you later on, but my family moved around a lot. And I was too shy to call you more than once.



HARRY

You called?

ANNIE

I left a message with your father.

HARRY

I tried calling you a million times. I thought of you almost every day. But I kept hanging up.

ANNIE

That was you? Why didn't you say something? My mother kept changing our number.

HARRY

I know. But I just couldn't. I just wanted to hear your voice. And I got married right out of high school. You were such a little Angel. And what style.

ANNIE

Angel Style ... is me?

HARRY

Every last word.

ANNIE

I don't know what to say. The things you wrote.

HARRY

You moved me. My mother called you?

ANNIE

Yes. I knew Peter from the old .... Oh, Harry, I love your books. I wanted to be Angel. I've read them all ... twice. How?

HARRY

It doesn't matter. I want to see you, Annie. Please, get me out of here.

ANNIE

Don't worry. I'm with you now. Everything will be okay.

**Fade Slowly To Black**

(As the light fades.)

GALE WIND (V.O.)

This is Gale Wind from BS News. Out of the padded cell and into the courthouse. Just a few hours ago, Harry Starkers and his estranged wife, Mary Starkers - voted the wife suspense readers most love to hate - settled out of court. As Mary was quoted as saying: "I'll get my child and money, and he'll get her and his damn books." The court threw out Harry Starker's sanity case because as Harry so colorfully put it in writing: "Doctor Noah Hart was playing hide the angry thermometer with my wife, while keeping me drugged and unconscious, so he could steal the royalties to my books." Sounds like a killer book. Well, read on, America. I don't know about you, but I'm a biiiiig fan. And I can't wait for Angel's next crazy adventure. I'm Gale Wind. And that's the BS from Detroit.

**CURTAIN**