

DOLLS & DEMONS

Written By

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INT. BAR- NIGHT

Title Card:

MAY 8, 1945

The bar is full. Men, women, soldiers, common folk. Everyone is drinking. Everyone is laughing. Today is a day for celebration.

DRUNK

And here's to the United States of
America, the greatest country on
the face of the Earth.

He throws his hand into the air. His cup runneth over.

The crowd raises their glasses with him. Champagne glasses.
Beer glasses. Nobody cares. Everyone's friends tonight.

DRUNK CROWD

God bless America!

The drunk tosses his head back and dumps the contents of his
drink into his mouth. It runs over his lips and down his chin.
He wipes his mouth with his whole arm.

He stumbles back, right into TRACY MEYERS (20's).

DRUNK

Sorry, ma'am.
(Hiccup)
Apologies.

TRACY

It's all right.

She starts to put on her coat. He looks her over, woefully
taking into account her addition of layers.

DRUNK

You leaving us already? The
party's just begun.

He wobbles.

TRACY

'Fraid so. Got work in the
morning, and Lord knows the boss
won't take no latecomers, not even
on VE Day.

The drunk makes a stink-face.

DRUNK

Friggin' Hitler. Well, have a good night.

He reaches up to tip his hat to her, but he is not wearing one. So, he just waves.

TRACY

(politely)

You too.

She buttons up her coat and steps out of the diner.

INT. STREET- CONTINUOUS

She walks down the sidewalk, which is also peppered with PARTYGOERS.

PARTYGOERS

USA! USA!

Reflexively, Tracy raises her hand into the air as they pass her by. She doesn't cheer, but the PARTYGOERS are appeased by her gesture and keep walking.

She walks a ways more. A breeze catches her by surprise. She holds her coat closer to her.

The music from the bars grows quieter. Slurred songs from passersby echo through off the residential buildings.

The clipping of Tracy's high heels gets louder and louder.

The rising silence pricks Tracy's ears. She begins to look around.

HOMELESS MAN

Penny for the cause?

She jumps. A man in a threadbare coat lies at the edge of an alley. He flashes her a toothless grin and extends his hat out to her.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)

Us beggars deserve to celebrate, too.

She reaches into her purse, takes out a nickle, and drops it into his hat.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)

You're the kindest.

A BEAT. He leans in.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)

Say, you all right? You're lookin'
white as a sheet.

TRACY

Fine. Thank you.

She nods and walks on.

She hears something. Faint. Like a growl. She looks around. No one.

She walks faster.

Tracy reaches her apartment. She gets out her door key.

INT. TENEMENT HOUSE- CONTINUOUS

She proceeds into the lobby, then over to the elevator. On the front of it hangs a sign:

TEMPORARILY OUT OF ORDER

She frowns and marches over to the staircase. She sets her hand upon the railway and looks up. A wicked wind passes through the telescoping stairwell.

She moves upward. The stairwell creaks underfoot.

A cold sweat drips down her forehead. The GROWL returns. A little louder this time.

She sprints up the staircase. A series of thuds sounds at the base of the staircase.

She shrieks.

One of her heels snaps. She tumbles to her knees. The world spins around her head for a moment. The growl turns to a roar.

She tosses her heels aside and sprints up to the sixth floor.

TRACY

Help me, somebody!

The other tenant stick their heads out of their apartments, like groundhogs fearful of their own shadows.

One TENANT, a wearied widow, holding back her two soot-covered children, watches Tracy pass. She peers down as far as she can in the opposite direction.

TENANT

Who's chasing you, dearie? Ghosts?

Tracy gazes back, briefly. A long, sad look. Tracy and the tenant meet eyes. Tracy looks back toward the stairway. They look together, but nothing appears.

The tenant tips her head toward Tracy's bare feet. Tracy slinks back. The tenant shepherds her two children back into the apartment.

TENANT

Come along now, children. Nothing to see here.

CHILD

Is she really being chased after, mommy?

TENANT

No, hon. Nothing but wind and whiskey. Too much excitement in the air for one day.

As the tenant disappears, Tracy slumps off to her apartment. No. 66.

INT. APARTMENT- CONTINUOUS

The rusty doorknob turns slowly. Tracy peeks her head inside. A spring-bed. A transistor radio. Clothes drying on the radiator. Everything checks out.

She enters, hangs her coat up on the nearby coat rack, and locks the door behind her.

To calm her nerves, she flips on the radio and puts on a kettle of water for tea. BIG BAND music plays as she dances into the bedroom.

She flops into bed, takes a deep breath, and laughs at her fear.

The growl sounds again, this time behind her. She turns as white as a sheet. She twists her neck toward the window.

Slowly, her mouth opens. A scream.

The kettle whistles.

INT. DINER- MORNING

SOLOMON HARRIS (40's) scuttles into FRAN'S DINER. A few, tired old Joe's sit at the counter.

FRAN (50's) serves coffee, eggs, and toast to them all.

SOLOMON
Morning, Fran.

FRAN
Morning, Saul. Usual?

SOLOMON
Naturally.

He takes a seat beside LARRY O'MALLY (40's), a decorated police officer.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
Hello, Sunshine. Miss me?

LARRY
Funny. I was kind of hoping you'd take the day off. We won the war you know?

SOLOMON
Crime doesn't stop for politics. You of all people should know what.

Solomon takes out a copy of the Times from his jacket pocket.

LARRY
Let me save you some time for once: everything you need to know is on the first page.

Larry taps on the image of a celebrating sailor, accompanied by the words "Victory over Europe! (Send our Boys Home.)"

SOLOMON
Not for me.

He keeps flipping.

LARRY
Ain't nothing to see in there but a few drunk in public, and recipe for a killer meringue pie.

Solomon flips with even more determination until finally finding something of interest.

He slams the paper on the table.

SOLOMON

Nothing, huh?

Larry scans the article in question:

WOMAN MAULED IN HOME

LARRY

Oh, that? The press went cuckoo-bananas with that one. We've got it covered.

SOLOMON

Covered? Is it everyday that we let the zoo loose in the tenement houses?

Larry shakes his head.

LARRY

It's all hype. Probably just some jealous lover that went a little crazy with the switchblade.

SOLOMON

You're full of all kinds of explanations today, aren't you? Wanna shop for a second opinion?

LARRY

The boss would murder me if I did. Remember last time?

SOLOMON

Hey, I solved the crime, didn't I?

LARRY

And made a mess of the scene of the crime in the process. Almost didn't have enough evidence to convict. Had to go on parking detail for the next month to make up for it, thank you very much.

SOLOMON

There are no small crimes.

LARRY

Only small criminals?

SOLOMON

Exactly. Little people... With switchblades.

(MORE)

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

(A beat)

Listen, are you gonna gimme a tour, or am I going to have to show myself around?

They stare each other down. Larry rolls his eyes.

LARRY

I can see the parking citations now.

Solomon pats him on the back.

SOLOMON

But think, it's for such a great cause.

LARRY

I hardly think bending the law to your whim will win me any philanthropy awards.

SOLOMON

There you go, raining on your own parade. Glass half empty. All the time. Speaking of which-

He tears a PICTURE OF TRACY from the paper, shoves it in his pocket, and turns to Fran.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

I'll be back. Save me a cup of coffee, will ya?

He tosses some change on the counter. She eyes it and nods.

FRAN

And your One-Eyed Egyptians?

She holds out the toast and eggs. He scoops them up and shovels them into his mouth.

SOLOMON

Sunny side up. Can't miss that. Gotta make up for Sunshine's charming personality.

LARRY

Yeah? Hurry up before it starts to rain.

Solomon winks at Fran. Solomon and Larry leave.

EXT. TENEMENT HOUSE- DAY

Larry walks up to the front entrance and buzzes the landlord.

LANDLORD

Who izzit?

LARRY

Police. Here to check out the Meyers place again. Don't worry. Worry, we're not here to cause trouble.

LANDLORD

That's what they all say.

Larry turns to Solomon and counts down from three. At one, the front door buzzes. Larry opens the door and walks in.

LARRY

Like clockwork.

INT. APARTMENT- CONTINUOUS

Larry steps into the lobby. Solomon saunters alongside.

LARRY

I tell you, with people being they are, it's a wonder they still surprise me. Sometimes though-

SOLOMON

They do.

They reach the staircase. Solomon points upward.

LARRY

Yep. You sure you wanna go up there?

SOLOMON

I'm a detective. It's the best and the worst for me. The rest is all yours.

LARRY

Okay. Don't say I didn't warn you.

They start up. The stairs, no longer chilled by the night air, creak and moan slightly less than before. Emphasis on slightly.

SOLOMON

Bit of a fixer-upper. Reminds me of home.

They hike up the six floors. The landlord (the lady from earlier) meets them at the top of the stairs.

LARRY
(to Solomon)
Let me do all the talking.

Solomon bows.

SOLOMON
By all means. Wow me with your narrative prowess.

Larry gives him a look.

LARRY
Hello again, Ms. Crabtree.

MS. CRABTREE
'ello, officer. Not 'ad enough of that awful scene?

LARRY
Afraid so.

She points to Solomon.

MS. CRABTREE
Who's your friend?

LARRY
This is Detective Solomon Harris. I've brought him in to help solve the case.

MS. CRABTREE
'u know all the details.

SOLOMON
Just what I've read in the papers.

MS. CRABTREE
Don't do it no justice. One look. That's all you need. Awful shame. Awful shame. She was screaming like a banshee, she was. I didn't think nothing of it, not until it was too late.

SOLOMON
(dryly)
I wouldn't feel too bad about it. It's a common human trait.

She gazes at her feet.

MS. CRABTREE (CONT'D)
'Course, keeping that in there in
mind, I don't know what I could
have done different.

LARRY
Nothing, probably. We can do
something about now, though. Open
the door, and we'll take care it
from there.

She nods.

MS. CRABTREE
I don't see 'ow you do it. I got
one look at that awful scene and,
well, let's just I'll be staying
at the door. If it's all the same
to you.

LARRY
That will be just fine. Thank you.

MS. CRABTREE
K. Come along then.

She leads the way with her keys jangling beside her. They pass
by the landlord's apartment. One of the children pokes her
head out of the crack in the door. Solomon glances down at
her. She pokes her head back into apartment.

MS. CRABTREE (CONT'D)
We see at lot of monkey business
here. Nothing ever like this. You
think it could happen again?

LARRY
No. I believe this is an isolated
incident.

MS. CRABTREE
Good.

Ms. Crabtree reaches the door.

MS. CRABTREE (CONT'D)
Well, gentlemen, this is where I
take my leave. Just go fetch me
when you're done.

Ms. Crabtree slips the key into the lock and turns the lock
open. She leaves the door closed.

LARRY

Will do. Good day, ma'am.

The landlord scuttles away. Solomon gestures up to the room number.

SOLOMON

Sixth floor. Sixty-sixth door.
Cute.

Larry pushes open the door.

LARRY

Welcome to the madhouse.

INT. APARTMENT- CONTINUOUS

The apartment is askew. The radiator is torn out of place and smoking. The radio is smashed. Broken dishes and shredded furniture litter the ground.

A trail of blood leads to the bedroom. Slowly, Larry follows it.

INT. BEDROOM- CONTINUOUS

The center of the room is a mess of twisted box springs, shredded blankets, and blood. Lots of blood. On the floor. On the walls. On the ceiling. The afternoon Sun pours through the sanguine window like light through stained glass.

Larry walks toward the center of the room. Solomon stops at the door frame.

LARRY

Well, this is it.

SOLOMON

I've seen worse.

Larry shakes his head.

LARRY

This is pretty much how we found it. A little more flesh and blood here and there, but otherwise the same.

Solomon enters and ambles about, gazing at this and that but nothing particular.

SOLOMON

What do we know about her?

LARRY

Nice enough girl. No criminal record. Liked to party with the best of 'em, but a responsible enough.

SOLOMON

Enemies?

LARRY

None really. Ex-boyfriends. Ex-lovers. Nobody that could do this sort of damage, though. You'd need a pack of starved fighting dogs to do something like this. Nobody saw anything like that, though.

Larry walks over to a portion of the bed frame. A tuft of hair is caught on the splinters.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Smell that? Sulfur. We were thinking maybe someone that works at a steel mill. A man with muscles. A little rough around the edges. Maybe our victim had an affection for the seedier sort?

Solomon joins Larry next to the hair and takes a deep whiff.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Wouldn't be uncommon for that kind to be involved in dog fighting, either.

Solomon bows his head and reaches out to touch the hair.

SOLOMON

Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai..

LARRY

What're you doing?

He stops and looks up.

SOLOMON

Paying my respects to the dead. Could I have a moment?

LARRY

Yeah Go ahead.

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)
Probably the only respectable
thing that will be happening
around here for a long time.

Solomon bows his head and grabs the hair.

SOLOMON
Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu
Adonai Ehad.

He sees:

-Tracy screaming.

-The beast.

-The blood.

LARRY
Saul? You okay.

Solomon shakes his head. The visions fade.

SOLOMON
Peachy.

Larry tilts his head toward Solomon's hand. Solomon has squeezed the splintered wood frame so hard that it has pierced his hand. Solomon shakily releases his grip, leaving his blood fingerprints on the fur.

LARRY
You really know how to tamper with
evidence, don't you? Well, go
ahead and take it now, else I have
to register you a suspect.
Consider it a souvenir.

Solomon stuffs the bloody fur into his jacket pocket.

LARRY (CONT'D)
You're onto something, aren't you?

SOLOMON
Maybe.

LARRY
You're not gonna tell me what it
is?

SOLOMON
Not a chance.

LARRY
Teamwork, I tell you.

He tips his fedora to Larry.

SOLOMON
Thanks for the tour, Larry. The things they saw about you... All true.

LARRY
Come along, wise guy. I've got parking meters to attend to.

Solomon and Larry head for the door.

LARRY (CONT'D)
I'm gonna relieve the old woman of her duties. I trust you can show yourself out.

SOLOMON
I think I can manage.

He starts to leave. Larry grabs his arm.

LARRY
Hey, you be careful. I've got a bad feeling about this one.

He lets go.

SOLOMON
(playfully)
Aw, you do care.

EXT. STREET- CONTINUOUS

Solomon descends down the stairs and exits onto the sidewalk. He waves down a passing CAB. It stops. He gets in.

SOLOMON
The Beez Knees, and take your time...

The CABBIE turns his meter on.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
I'm not looking forward to this.

INT. CAB- CONTINUOUS

The cab slugs its way through New York. After lots of honking and creative driving, the cabbie pulls up beside Solomon's destination.

The SPEAKEASY before him is gaudy, almost gothic, a relic carried over from the roaring 20's. As the buildings around it succumb to modernism, "Beez Knees" refuses to be Frank Lloyd Wright-ed... and holds its own all the while.

Solomon tips his driver (just enough to be fair, but nothing altruistic). He gets out.

I/E. SPEAKEASY- CONTINUOUS

Solomon walks past the BODYGUARDS standing at the door.

SOLOMON

Good to see you, boys. Your boss in?

BODYGUARD #1

Buzz off.

Solomon sets his fedora on his head.

SOLOMON

Ouch. Your words have cut me to the core. Right...

He punches the man in the gut.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

Here.

The other bodyguard stands to attention as his friend keels over. Solomon shrugs.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

What? You can't say he didn't have it coming. No respect.

The bodyguard grabs his collar and raises his fist.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

That's right. Let it out. I can see it now: "Goon Punches Elderly Detective in Broad Daylight." Great headline right there. I'm sure your boss would just love it. Great for business.

The two men stare each other down for a bit, then the bodyguard lets him go.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

A wise choice. I'd say you have a good head on your shoulders, but then again, you're here.

The bodyguard glares at him at Solomon as he straightens himself out and walks inside.

INT. SPEAKEASY- CONTINUOUS

The speakeasy looks as seedy as you'd expect. Overhead fans barely make a dent in the cloud of cigar smoke hanging overhead. Light barely filters through the dusty blinds. Cheekily dressed CIGAR GIRLS bring smokes and booze to the men playing pool (some in suits, others in a wife-beater and suspenders).

Solomon flips up his collar and speeds through the establishment, keeping his eyes on the opposite side of the room.

Plenty of eyes fall on him as he walks by. Some spit at/on him. He doesn't flinch.

A man with a pool stick stands up right in front of him.

MAN WITH POOL STICK

You're not welcome here.

Solomon reaches into his jacket and flashes his badge.

SOLOMON

This shiny object says I'm welcome wherever I please. Now, stand aside.

The man steps aside.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

Don't you know it's not polite to stare.

He makes it over to the back door, flashes his badge at another round of guards, and pushes the door open.

INT. OFFICE- CONTINUOUS

Solomon throws his arms wide open.

SOLOMON
Beezy, how's it hanging?

A man with slicked back hair sits in a large plush chair.

He's entertaining a lady friend, whispering little nothings into her ear. He giggles at his every playful word.

When Solomon enters, she composes herself and stands up. BEELZENEFF (30's) crosses his arms.

BEEZ
You know, it's customary to knock.

SOLOMON
It's also customary not to tear ladies to shred, but you seem to be real bad at doing that. No I guess we're even.

Beez's female companion looks at him in shock.

BEEZ
(to the lady)
He's blowing hot air.
(to Solomon)
Ain't he?

Solomon blows.

SOLOMON
Like a balloon.

The woman, confused, looks at the two men for her next cue.

BEEZ
Give us some space, doll. Me and the detective have some words to share.

The woman exits.

BEEZ (CONT'D)
I don't appreciate anyone ruining my fun.

SOLOMON
Yeah, well, when it's at someone else's expense, exceptions must be made.

BEEZ
So what do you want to pin on me today?

SOLOMON

Aren't you gonna offer me the chance to sit down?

BEEZ

(irritably)

Won't you sit down?

SOLOMON

I prefer to stand, but thank you anyway.

BEEZ

You're trying my patience.

SOLOMON

Good, then let's get the point. You heard of the Meyers murder that went down last night? The real ugly one?

BEEZ

I may have. What's your point?

SOLOMON

It's got your name written all over it.

Solomon fishes into his jacket, grabs the bloody hair, and sets it on Beez's mahogany desk.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

This was found at the scene of the crime. It's got your name written all over it.

Beez feigns shock.

BEEZ

I'm a little insulted, Detective. You think my people would be that careless. I'm rather enjoying this truce we've wrought. It's good for business, anyway. I'm not about to ruin it for the sake of a little bloodlust.

SOLOMON

And your cronies? Do they have the same self restraint?

BEEZ

They do if they value their lives. It may not look like it, but I run a pretty tight ship around here.

SOLOMON

Yeah, well that patch of hair says different. So, either you feed me some clues, a direction where to go, or I'm going to make one, and it may be the cops right here.

Beez grabs the hair and smells it.

BEEZ

This isn't mine. This is half-breed material.

SOLOMON

You sure about that? You wouldn't be leading me astray, would you?

BEEZ

I make no promises. But it's more worth my time to play my hand now and get you out of my hair.

SOLOMON

So, where should I start looking? For the half-breeds?

BEEZ

Check the Caged Bird. Downtown. They tend to gravitate toward the new grooves. Fresh blood. Me? I'm all for the classics.

SOLOMON

The Bird? Ok. That's Beezy, but if it pulls up a dead end, I'll be back.

BEEZ

I'll expect you either way.

SOLOMON

You're too kind. A men among men.

BEEZ

Don't insult me.

SOLOMON

Sheesh. You try to be nice, and what does it get you? I guess I'll show myself out.

INT. BEEZ KNEES- CONTINUOUS

The woman is standing by the door.

SOLOMON
He's all yours.

He slinks back in. Solomon shakes his head.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
Dames.

He walks again by the jeering crowd and out the front door.

EXT. STREET- CONTINUOUS

He charges passed the bodyguards, now upright again.

SOLOMON
'Til next time boys, try the veal.
It's delicious.

He proceeds down the street, and into the subway. He picks up a ticket and rides the "A" train into Harlem.

FLASHBACK:

I/E. TRAIN STATION- DAY

A GERMAN OFFICER paces in front row after row of Jews, Gypsies, and invalids. At his back is a steam engine, towing an endless line of rusted railway cars. At his side are soldiers with dogs.

Solomon, four years younger, stand beside a skittish YOUNG MAN and a fervently praying RABBI.

RABBI
Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu
Adonai Ehad.

The officer walks up to the young man and yells at him in German. The man shakily nods. The officer yanks him out of the lineup. He barks a few more commands at him. The young man stands erect before the disheartened congregation.

The officer speaks. The young man translates (into Polish), taking pauses as where the officer does:

YOUNG MAN

(translating)

We are going to go for a ride...
It will be a smooth ride... Any
disturbances will be severely
punished... You will rise when I

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

tell you... Sleep when I say...
Eat... and be grateful...

The officer curbs his path toward the rabbi.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

(translating)

For here on out, we will be your
masters... You will be our dogs...
Because you are dogs... And if you
disobey...

The officer towers over the rabbi. An IRON CROSS dangles from
his neck.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

(translating)

Abandon all hope... Your God has
left you... We are the new
instruments of your salvation...
and demise.

The officer shoots the rabbi in the leg. The man falls at
Solomon's feet. Laughing, the officer grabs the young man and
throws him back into line. He barks a few more orders. The
stormtroopers begin to herd the Jews forward.

One by one, they march through the mud, passed the injured
rabbi, and into the train cars.

INT. TRAIN (MODERN DAY)- EARLY EVENING

The train screeches to a stop. Solomon clutches something far
away in his jacket. The riders start to filter out. Solomon
follows suit.

EXT. STREET- CONTINUOUS

Solomon walks, with hands in his pocket and coat collar high,
through Sugar Hill.

He gets the occasional look. Nothing threatening, but often
dirty.

Jazz music sounds in the distance. He follows the music to The
Songbird, a decent sized jazz club. He walks in.

INT. JAZZ CLUB- CONTINUOUS

It is too early for the joint to really start jumping. Businessmen, friends, and lovers make small talk at various tables while nibbling on greasy, homespun cooking.

A cheery HOSTESS approaches him.

HOSTESS
Table for one?

SOLOMON
Two preferably. I'd like to speak
the owner of this operation.

He furtively flashes his badge. He sticks out like a sore thumb at the place, but still he'd prefer to remain as low-key as possible.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
Official business.

HOSTESS
Sure. Right this way.

She leads him towards the kitchen... and the stage.

At the swinging door to the kitchen, the HOSTESS pauses.

HOSTESS (CONT'D)
Wait here.

The hostess disappears into the kitchen. As Solomon waits, his gaze drifts to the picayune stage. It is currently empty. A old, balding black man- the OWNER- comes out. He steps out of the kitchen, alongside the hostess.

OWNER
Yes?

The hostess returns to the front.

SOLOMON
Such warm service. Better than the
last joint I was at, though.

OWNER
People don't usually respond well
to inquisitions.

SOLOMON
I think the word is investigations

OWNER
Same thing. What do you want?

SOLOMON

There was an incident uptown. A young girl got murdered.

OWNER

And somebody pointed the finger at us? Every time. Every single time.

SOLOMON

Hold your horses. Nobody's pointing the finger at anybody. I'm just wondering if you've seen her.

Solomon takes out Tracy's picture, which is now slightly bloodstained, and shows the man. He fleetingly looks it over.

OWNER

Not around here.

SOLOMON

You think the rest of your staff would say the same?

OWNER

We'd hope.

SOLOMON

Mind if I ask?

OWNER

Go right ahead. We got nothing to hide.

SOLOMON

Your cooperation is much appreciated... Last question. Any suspicious behavior gone down here lately?

The owner pauses.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

The sooner you give me the answers I want, the sooner I go away.

The man looks around.

OWNER

(quietly)

Billy. Her dumb-ass husband has been making a scene lately. Ever since they got signed, he thinks he's somebody. But he ain't. Just another broke-ass musician.

SOLOMON
And this gentleman's name?

OWNER
Curtis. Curtis Jones.

SOLOMON
And where might I find this gentleman?

OWNER
Dunno. He hasn't shown lately. Not since he and I had words.

SOLOMON
How long ago was that?

OWNER
About a week or so. Billy should be here tonight, though, with the band. She might help you out. Or she might shove a drumstick down your throat. If you wanna roll the die and find out which, I won't stop you.

SOLOMON
I'll take my chances. Mind if I hang out for a tick?

OWNER
As long as you buy something, and stay out of the best seats.

Solomon tips his hat to him.

SOLOMON
Chicken and waffles. And a coffee. Black. Two sugars.

He looks around.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
You got a phone?

OWNER
By the restroom Help yourself.

SOLOMON
No one else will.

Solomon walks over the phone and drops a coin into the slot.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

Hey there, Lare... Yeah, Saul here... Love you too... I'd like you to run a name for me... Curtis Jones... Might be a lead... Yeah, I know. I'm good.

He hangs up.

INT. JAZZ CLUB- LATER

A JAZZ TRIO- double bass player, drummer, electric guitarist, plus a vocalist- plays for the evening crowd.

BILLY WILLIAMS (30's) woos the mic, singing soft and sultry.

BILLY

(singing)

Baby, please remember/ Baby, don't forget/ All the good times we had together/ How fast the time, it went/ Sure, life has thrown us a rainstorm/ But I've got a rainbow in my chest/ So, baby, please remember/ Baby, don't forget.

The song resolves. A smattering of applause answers it back.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Solomon, sitting in the corner, takes note of the song. The whimsical note cuts through his fog of consciousness, spiked by several cups of coffee.

BILLY

We're going to take a quick break.

Solomon makes his way over to the stage.

SOLOMON

Can I have a moment?

BILLY

Who's asking?

Solomon flashes his badge. No hiding this time.

SOLOMON

Somebody looking for answers.

The band rises to their feet.

BILLY
(to the band)
Cool it!
(to Solomon)
What's your game?

SOLOMON
People been saying that your
sweetheart's been less than sweet
lately.

BILLY
People should mind their own
business.

SOLOMON
(unintimidated)
I'd like to have a word with him.

BILLY
Nothing doing.

SOLOMON
Would you prefer I bring my
buddies in from the station and
arrange for us all to have a
little chat at their place.

BILLY
Suit yourself. My answer won't
change.

SOLOMON
Pity. You got a pretty face. It'd
be a shame if it got caught up in
this ugly business.

BILLY
Curt didn't do nothing.

SOLOMON
My sources say he cut up a girl
uptown.

BILLY
Your sources are full of crap.

SOLOMON
Maybe so. If you wanna play along,
we might just be able to disprove
it.

BILLY
Sorry, all played out.
(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)
 Now, if you'll excuse me, we've
 got a set to finish.

SOLOMON
 'Course. The show must go on.

Solomon drops a few dollars and his BUSINESS CARD into the TIP
 JAR.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
 If you wanna start singing a
 different tune, give me a ring.

She turns from him. The band retakes the stage. Music plays.
 Solomon walks off. The hostess from earlier approaches him.

HOSTESS
 Phone for you, sir.

SOLOMON
 Thank you, doll.

He picks up the phone.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
 Harris.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. POLICE STATION- CONTINUOUS

LARRY
 Ran that Curtis guy through the
 system. Dig this: his father runs
 the steel mill. Could be our guy.

SOLOMON
 Could be. Any clue where I can
 find him? Got nothing but a closed
 zipper here.

LARRY
 We received in a call in for
 reckless driving about an hour
 ago. Plates match Jones'. Heading
 like a bat out of hell out of
 town.

SOLOMON
 Anything out there work noting?

LARRY

The old man has an estate upstate.

SOLOMON

Larry, you truly are a beautiful man.

LARRY

Better act quick. Don't know how long I can keep the Force back before we gotta start going after him.

SOLOMON

Thanks for the tip. Color me gone.

He hangs up.

EXT. HIGHWAY- NIGHT

A CAB drives down a lonely road. It snakes up a hill and stops in the middle of nowhere.

SOLOMON

This'll do. Right here. Wait up for me, will ya?

He hands the cabbie a hefty down payment and gets out the car.

He walks up the forested area to a gnarled gate. It looks exactly like someone through a car through it.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

Interesting.

He steps over the twisted metal and up the long driveway.

EXT. ESTATE- CONTINUOUS

Several of the meticulously shaped hedges have been mowed down. The asphalt has skid marks on it. The Jones car is smashed up against the front entrance.

Solomon shines a light into the car. Claw marks. Torn upholstery.

He doses his light and climbs over the car into the estate.

INT. ESTATE- CONTINUOUS

The Jones home is massive and empty. Jackson Pollock paintings. Very expensive, arguably functional furniture. Right angles.

Solomon manages the best he can with the moonlight filtering in through the broad windows.

He looks up the staircase. He contemplates going up. He hears a noise coming from the back of the house. He goes that way instead.

At the back of the house, there is a pool. At the edge of the pool, a BODY.

Solomon grabs his gun, checks his back, and ventures outside..

EXT. POOL- CONTINUOUS

It is deathly quiet. The muted lapping of water provides the only soundtrack Solomon has available to him.

He cautiously approaches the body. It is JONES SR., or at least the filleted remains of which. He checks the pulse. Jones is dead.

A brief snarl serves as Solomon's only cue of the impending doom.

Solomon whips around, but too late. Curtis barrels into him, knocking him back. Solomon's gun goes off before they both flop into the swimming pool.

EXT. UNDERWATER- CONTINUOUS

Curtis bites, claws, and kicks at Solomon as they wrestle under the water.

Solomon fights as best as he can, lands a few good punches, but Curtis is just too strong.

Solomon starts to loose air, fast. He keeps fighting though, flailing wildly, struggling against the cold goodnight.

Bubbles cascade from his mouth.

FADE TO BLACK.

FLASHBACK:

INT. TRAIN- DAY

Solomon and the YOUNG MAN from earlier fight each other in the limited space provided by the train car. They roll across the jagged ground, bumping into people and over people.

The rabbi tears them apart.

RABBI
(in Polish)
What are you doing?

Solomon thrusts an accusatory finger at his opponent.

SOLOMON
(in Polish)
He's a rat. A puppet. He just stood there as the German played Gpetto with his balls.

RABBI
Listen to me.

Solomon looks away.

RABBI(CONT'D)
It doesn't matter.

SOLOMON
Doesn't matter? He just stood there as the German brute has his way with you, rabbi.

RABBI
But this man didn't pull the trigger. It was the Germans, who are puppets themselves, manipulated by fear and the powers that be.

SOLOMON
But somebody must pay. Just because we are prisoners doesn't mean we must forego justice.

RABBI
We will see justice. I promise you. God will see to it Himself. Has He not done so previously?

SOLOMON
God?! When you, a man of God, does not go unscathed, where is God in that?

The rabbi grabs Solomon's paper-thin shirt.

RABBI

You want to throw God to the wind?
Go right ahead, but I swear to you
that to give up on the Lawgiver is
also to give up on the Law. Then,

RABBI (CONT'D)

where is you justice?

Solomon obstinately grits his teeth. The rabbi lets go.

RABBI (CONT'D)

Too much pain has been caused by a
self-defining sense of justice.
Just look around.

Solomon does just that. He is surrounded by teary eyes,
emaciated faces, untended injuries and deep wounds. Despite
all that, everyone huddles together, gathering what warmth
they can from one another.

He sighs. Sensing a reprieve, the young man scurries off into
the fray

RABBI (CONT'D)

Stand up for justice, son. Stand
up...

FADE IN:

INT. POOL- NIGHT

Solomon's eyes open. He looks up. He sees a SHINING FIGURE
hovering about the water.

SHINING FIGURE

Stand up!

The water around him begin to boil. Curtis falls back.

Solomon shouts with a large shout. Suddenly, the water, like a
geyser, bursts into the air. The water, with Curtis in it,
goes everywhere. A beat.

Solomon finds himself at the bottom of an empty pool. The
shining figure is gone. He cracks his neck and looks around.
No sign of Curtis.

He jumps up and grabs the pool ladder and pulls himself up.

He flops onto the ground. Coughs. Look around again. Curtis
has made himself scarce.

Solomon gets up, fishes his gun from amongst the wreckage, and
starts toward the exit.

INT. ESTATE- CONTINUOUS

The house is still a mess. The Jones' car is still smashed against the front entrance.

EXT. ROAD- CONTINUOUS

He walks the length of the road back to where his cab had been. The cab is gone. The cabbie is still there, in pieces.

Solomon shakes his head and walks on.

In the distance, he hears sirens, then lights. The cops show up. He sticks out his thumb, intending to hitchhike.

A car pulls up. It's Larry's.

LARRY
Need a lift?

SOLOMON
Always.

Larry unlocks the door. Solomon gets in.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
You missed all the fun.

LARRY
Yeah, well, I'm sure there'll be all kinds of fun in store for you in the form of paperwork.

SOLOMON
Joy and rapture. Couldn't you fill it out for me? You know me so well, it's like we share one mind.

LARRY
Yeah, well, I'd like to pick our brain back at the station. I feel like you and I have some things to talk about.

SOLOMON
Where to ?

LARRY
Exactly.

SOLOMON
Why they can't put any good toys in a Cracker Jack box?

Larry motions to comment, then simply nods and drives away.

INT. POLICE STATION- EARLY MORNING

Solomon has his feet up on the table in the INTERROGATION ROOM. Larry paces around him.

LARRY

So Jones is definitely connected?

SOLOMON

Somehow. How he and the Meyers girl are connected is still anybody's guess. The targets seem too targeted to be random.

LARRY

Think the jazz artist could bring some light to the situation?

SOLOMON

If she talks.

LARRY

She'll talk. I didn't get this far for nothing.

SOLOMON

And all this time I thought it was for helping little old ladies across the street. Boy, was I wrong.

LARRY

I'll place the call and arrange an appointment.

SOLOMON

Splendid. It's a date.

Solomon takes a sip of his coffee with his eyes set on the empty, metal chair across from him.

AS HE SETS THE CUP DOWN, CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Billy sits in the chair. She does not look pleased. Larry is still pacing.

LARRY

Look we know Curtis was involved.

BILLY

So you tell me. Have any proof?

LARRY

We know he's been wracking up the

LARRY (CONT'D)

domestic disturbances lately, and his car was found with markings similar to those found at the Meyers residence.

BILLY

And those would be?

LARRY

They're distinctive. Like those of an animal. Do you own an animal?

BILLY

None. Our apartment won't allow it. The jerk.

Solomon drums his finger against the table. Billy starts to sweat.

LARRY

But your husband has been acting different lately?

BILLY

He's not been his usual self, sure, but everyone has their days.

LARRY

Ma'am, do you want to know where we found his car? It was abandoned at his father's estate. Curtis Jones Sr. was found dead, brutally murdered.

Billy cups her hands over her mouth.

BILLY

Lord have mercy.

LARRY

Ma'am. I know you probably love your husband greatly, but he's a danger to himself and to the community. We need to know what happened to bring this on, and how to stop him.

She starts to tear up. She doesn't speak for some time.

BILLY

Curt's a sweet guy. The nicest guy you could ever meet. But he changed recently, dramatically. Ever

BILLY (CONT'D)

since...

LARRY

Since what?

BILLY

We were poor. Real poor. The landlord was at our throats. The gigs were coming in, but not enough to pay the bills. All we needed was a good push and then we'd be on our way. Getting that push... Well, it's hard.

Solomon hands her a tissue. She wipes her eyes.

SOLOMON

Your boss mentioned that you did come into a good amount of money recently. Was it from, daddy?

BILLY

No. He loved his son. But me? Well, let's just say old prejudices die hard. We couldn't squeeze a cent from the old man. We really started hurting. Curtis started making more and more trips uptown, to make connections, you know. Just when I thought we'd gone under, he came by, saying he found a benefactor.

LARRY

Does this benefactor have a name?

She shakes her head.

BILLY

I was so ecstatic that I didn't ask questions. The money started rolling in. We were able to pay for better instruments, nicer clothes, and start getting into more than the dive bars we were used to.

LARRY

Then what happened?

BILLY

He started becoming more
controlling, about our career,
about our music. Even when I
wasn't

BILLY (CONT'D)

feeling up to the gig, he'd insist
we go. When I resisted, he got
violent.

She pulls her blouse slightly to the side, revealing a broken
collar bone, nearly mended now.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Eventually got too much. Rufus,
the owner of the Bird, caught wise
and kicked him to the curb. The
next day, Curtis apologized. He
was in tears. Said he couldn't
help himself. I insisted we take
some time off, but he wouldn't
have any of it. By the next
morning, he'd split. Haven't seen
him sense.

Larry sets an assuring hand on her shoulder.

LARRY

We'll find him. If he's half the
man you assure us he is, there's
still hope.

BILLY

Bring him back safe.

LARRY

We'll do the best we can.

BILLY

I know I'm in no position to pull
favors; but, for my sake, do
better.

Solomon nods.

SOLOMON

The best.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM- LATER

Billy is gone. Solomon stares at the empty seat again.

SOLOMON

You did good today, chief. I gotta say, I'm impressed.

LARRY

A compliment. Wow. Has hell froze over?

SOLOMON

Maybe.

A beat.

LARRY

What do you think? Does her story hold water?

SOLOMON

I think it's the best lead we got so far. Now it's time to track down that mysterious investor.

LARRY

And catch the perp.

SOLOMON

That would be good too.

He reaches into his pocket and takes out a coin.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

Wanna flip to see who goes after who first?

Larry's eyes roll.

LARRY

Geez, don't you take anything seriously?

SOLOMON

Too seriously. That's why I do things like this.

LARRY

Heads for the perp.

Solomon flips the coin. He lifts his hand off the result. It's Heads.

SOLOMON

All yours. Happy hunting, my friend.

LARRY

Priority on: keep the streets clean.

SOLOMON

Works for me. I'm more of a back alley man myself.

LARRY

I know. Scary as it is to admit, we make quite convenient team.

SOLOMON

Yeah. In the broad scheme of things, we're not too bad.

LARRY

Call me if something interesting happens.

SOLOMON

Don't worry. I won't.

Solomon picks up his things and leaves.

EXT. SPEAKEASY- AFTERNOON

Solomon looks up at the speakeasy and ventures inside.

INT. OFFICE- CONTINUOUS

He knocks on Beez's door this time. Beez opens it.

SOLOMON

Miss me?

BEEZ

Not in the slightest.

SOLOMON

Good.

Solomon sits down. Beez follows suit.

BEEZ

How may I help you, Mr. Harris?

Solomon twiddles his thumbs.

SOLOMON

We found our perp. Curtis Jones.

BEEZ

The steel mill tycoon?

SOLOMON

Close. Junior. But he did make quick work of his old man.

BEEZ

That's unfortunate.

SOLOMON

I'm surprised. It's not like you to express remorse.

Beez shrugs.

BEEZ

He was a good customer. Have you caught the man yet?

SOLOMON

Not yet. The cops are on it. I'm sure it's only a matter of time.

BEEZ

I don't think you believe that in the least.

SOLOMON

Not particularly, but not because of any fault of theirs. I ran into him the other night. Actually, he ran into me. Fought like a wildcat. Not human. Had your name written all over it.

BEEZ

And here it goes, coming full circle again. Well, are you going to charge me of something, or are we going to keep playing "Ring Around the Rosie?"

Solomon leans in.

SOLOMON

His wife tells us that, before he experienced his transformation, he came into a lot of money. Wasn't from his old man. I wanna know who it was.

BEEZ

And why would I know that?

SOLOMON

Because I think it was you. You're off the hook for the murder charge. No human court could convict you of that; but if you're caught making death deals with your clientele, I know a different authority that

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

won't be very happy about that.

Beez rubs his hands together

BEEZ

My hands are clean. You wanna try to prove differently? That's on you.

EXT. STREET- CONTINUOUS

Solomon slumps out of the speakeasy and walks the long mile back to his own TENEMENT HOUSE.

INT. TENEMENT HOUSE- CONTINUOUS

This building is slightly better than Tracy's. The elevator here works. He rides it to the third story.

He gets out and ventures over to his apartment.

INT. APARTMENT- CONTINUOUS

He enters into his house, hangs his hat and coat on the rack, and takes a seat at the dining room table.

He retrieves from his jacket an IRON CROSS.

SOLOMON

Help me out here.

FLASHBACK:

INT. TRAIN- EVENING

The train chugs along at a decent clip. Sleep is beginning to set into the people in the car.

They start to doze off.

EXT. PASTURELAND- CONTINUOUS

A cows graze on the dew-ridden meadows.

INT. TRAIN- CONTINUOUS

Solomon, deep in thought, looks around him. At the old man. At the young man.

He gazes out the slats in the railroad car. At the open expanse. And freedom.

EXT. PASTURELAND- CONTINUOUS

A cow wanders onto the railroad track.

INT. TRAIN- CONTINUOUS

Solomon sighs.

SOLOMON

(in Polish)

Lord, if you are a good and
righteous God, then prove it.
Prove it, and I will become an
instrument of your will.

EXT. PASTURELAND- CONTINUOUS

The lights of the train fall upon the cow, only too late. There is a sudden screech of brakes. Still, the train his the cow dead-on and promptly derails.

INT. TRAIN- CONTINUOUS

As the train takes a tumble, so too does everyone inside. Men, women, and children are all thrown about.

Screaming. Darkness. It is human Yahtzee inside.

Eventually, everything comes to a halt.

The train is on its side. The car door is open. Solomon lies dazed on the ground.

Somebody shakes him awake. It is the young man, who wordlessly eggs him on, then begins crawling towards the exit.

Solomon looks beside him. The old man is dead. He takes a minute to process this, then follows after the young man.

EXT. PASTURELAND- CONTINUOUS

The two men tumble out of the car and into the night. He can hear soldiers shouting not far away. They are a bit out of sorts, but they are regrouping. Quickly. That encourages the Jews to move in haste away from the wreck.

They make it a hundred yards out before they run smack dab into the German officer, who is a little worse for wear, but still intimidating with the Luger he points at their chests.

The young man rises to his feet and salutes. The officer guns him down. He redirects his aim at Solomon.

A soldier call for him from the train. The officer answers. Gunfire sounds. The soldiers have opened fire on the Jews left in the train.

The officer smiles at Solomon and fires.

Solomon flinches, but the bullet never hits.

A glow wraps around it. It drags through the air like a comet in flight, slowing all the while.

It pierces the SKIN on the bridge of his nose, then stops entirely.

Both the officer and Solomon stand flabbergasted at the whole scenario.

The SHINING FIGURE appears, holding the bullet in place. She turns her head toward the officer, who still has his gun pointed at Solomon. She lowers his gun. He passes out.

She leans down, takes the IRON CROSS from around his neck, and hands it to Solomon, who looks is fearful wonder upon her.

She wraps his hands around the cross. Her touch is so warm.

SOLOMON
 (in Polish)
 Who are you?

FIGURE
 I am she who has heard you and
 called you my own. Come, let us
 go.

SOLOMON
 Where?

FIGURE
 To freedom.

The figure levitates away further into the pasture-land, and gradually fades into a simple, guiding light. Solomon follows her away from the wreckage of the train, away from the carnage, and into the unknown.

MODERN DAY:

INT. APARTMENT- DAY

Solomon strokes the cross. The phone rings. He shoves the cross in his pocket and answers.

SOLOMON
 Harris.

BILLY (O.S.)
 Detective. This is Billy. I need

BILLY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 you at the Bird, quick.

SOLOMON
 Curtis?

BILLY
 I think so. He got Rufus.

SOLOMON
 I'll be right there.

INT. JAZZ CLUB- LATER

Solomon walks into the club. As is his customary style, Curtis has made a mess. Tables are overturned. The stage is thrashed. Rufus lies dead thereupon.

Billy spots him as he comes in and greets him at the door.

BILLY

Thanks for coming so quick.

SOLOMON

It's part of the job. When did it happen?

BILLY

Earlier today. I wasn't here at the time. The band and I just showed up in time to see the aftermath.

Solomon saunters into the room, taking a careful look around.

SOLOMON

Your husband really knows how to throw a party.

BILLY

(coldly)

Any man- anything- who could do something like this is no husband of mine.

Solomon approaches Rufus' body. Beside it, etched in blood are the words:

I MISS YA, WILLAMINA. SOMETHING AWFUL.

SOLOMON

Willamina?

BILLY

That's my name. Willamina Williams.

SOLOMON

Sometimes I wonder. About parents. A lot of things actually.

BILLY (CONT'D)

You're not the only one.

She stares down at the RED LETTERS.

BILLY

This can't go on. I want to help you. What do you need?

SOLOMON

Just keep pointing. Eventually, we'll get him.

BILLY

Eventually? And how many people more people have to die? Because of him? Because of me?

SOLOMON

I don't see no talons on those painted nails of yours.

BILLY

But if I hadn't wanted to be a singer so badly, if I hadn't chased after this stupid dream, we could have been like every other couple. Normal. Happy.

Solomon softly takes her chin.

SOLOMON

Hey. Hate to break it to you, but nobody's happy.

BILLY

You're just sayin' that.

SOLOMON

No, I mean. If I ever meant anything at all, it's that.

She collapses into his arms.

BILLY

Thank you. That's the nicest thing

BILLY (CONT'D)

anyone's ever said to me.

SOLOMON

Pessimism has its advantages.

He gives her a brief hug.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

Now come on, there'll be no chasing demons in the dark. You should go home. Get some rest. Tonight, we can take on the world in earnest. Do you have far to go?

BILLY

No. Just a block or so. But Detective?

SOLOMON

Yes?

BILLY

Can I ask a personal favor?

SOLOMON

Shoot.

BILLY

Would you keep me company. Watch over me. It's not safe out there anymore.

SOLOMON

Sorry, ma'am, but I don't do house calls.

Her head drops despondently.

BILLY

All right.

She walks away. He watches her go.

SOLOMON

But...

She turns.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

Maybe I'll walk you home.

She waits for him join her. Together, they step out into the night.

INT. STREET- CONTINUOUS

They walk together.

SOLOMON

So, what made you get into music.

BILLY

My mother used to sing, all the time. She'd sing when she'd wash dishes, when she'd fold clothes, when switch out diapers, when she'd stub her toes.

SOLOMON

Sounds like quite the musical lady.

BILLY

She was. I guess I didn't have much of choice but to love music. It was in my genes.

SOLOMON

The only thing in my jeans are my freakishly hairy legs.

She chuckles.

BILLY

How about you? What got you into being a detective?

SOLOMON

Fate.

BILLY

Mystical.

SOLOMON

I know right? But seriously I never had any plan to do this. My father was a tinker. He'd go around the neighborhood with his little cart, peddling his services to whoever needed them.

(nostalgically)

Whenever anybody would ask him how business was, good or bad, the answer was always the same:

(in Yiddish)

I tink so... The screwball.

BILLY

Are your parents still alive?

SOLOMON

(darkly)

No. He passed suddenly. Nothing worse than leaving without saying goodbye.

BILLY

My father passed when I was young. My mother was never quite the same. But she took care of us kids as best as she could. I swear she would have been one of the great singers of her day if it weren't for needing to make ends meet at the home. We never felt like she held it against us, though. It was just what she had to do.

SOLOMON

So you became a singer to do what she was never able to?

BILLY

In a sense, yes. But mostly I do it because I love it.

She leans in toward him.

BILLY (CONT'D)

What do you love, Detective?

SOLOMON

Me? A warm cup of coffee, and the satisfaction of a job well done.

BILLY

Well, I can definitely help you out with the first one now. The other one...

SOLOMON

The other one we'll worry about tomorrow. A cup of coffee would be wonderful, though.

They smile at each other. Her smiles slowly fades into a sad, sweet whimsical stare.

BILLY

Detective, there's something I haven't quite told you about yet. Told anybody about, actually.

SOLOMON

Oh?

BILLY

When Curtis started going uptown for those connections, before he even started talking about that investor... He started getting distant. Detached. The fire in him, it was still blazing, but elsewhere.

SOLOMON

You think he and Ms. Meyers-

Billy nods.

BILLY

A woman can always tell. I hoped against it.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

I mean, who wants to believe something like that? But when you came by with that picture, it all clicked.

SOLOMON

I'm sorry. I didn't mean...

She shakes her head.

BILLY

Love's an awful thing, Detective. It's the strongest force in the Universe. It'll tear you a new one and make you whole again, all in the same instance.

SOLOMON

(dryly)

You're right. It does sound awful.

She stops, takes a breath, and keeps walking.

BILLY

You know what's worse, I still miss that man. Feel incomplete without him.

SOLOMON

Like a phantom limb.

BILLY

Pretty much. How about you? You have someone special, Detective.

SOLOMON

Too dangerous. With my line of work-

BILLY

(interjecting)

Doesn't pale in comparison. When you're in love, that's most dangerous thing there is.

Solomon is left without words.

BILLY (CONT'D)

That Meyers woman sure did look pretty.

SOLOMON

If you're into that kind of thing...

Billy looks at him.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

Blonds.

INT. APARTMENT- LATER

Billy and Solomon walk into their apartment. A vinyl player. A small library. A whiff of perfume. Chanel. No. 5.

BILLY

Here we go. Home sweet home.

SOLOMON

Quaint.

BILLY

The percolator's on the burner.
Coffee's in the can to the left.
Help yourself to it.

SOLOMON

Much obliged.

She heads for the record player.

BILLY

It's the least I could do. Do like
Coltraine?

SOLOMON

Born in Hamlet, North Carolina.

BILLY

That's right. Plays sax like a
dream.

Billy turns the player on. The music plays.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

Hamlet... Horatio : a fellow of
infinite jest, of most excellent
fancy: he hath borne me on his
back a thousand times; and now how
abhorred in my imagination [he]
is.

BILLY

Sounds kind of like you, when you
think of it.

SOLOMON

Think so. Comes with the
territory.

BILLY

And what else comes with the territory?

SOLOMON

A bellyful of grit. That's okay, though. I hear it helps the digestion. Makes the hard things easier to swallow.

BILLY

Such a woeful life. I pray you find some solace in it.

SOLOMON

I'll drink to that.

She wanders toward the jail

BILLY

I'm going to go freshen up. Be back in a jif.

Solomon wanders into the kitchen, fills the percolator, and turns the gas on. The pot begins to boil.

SOLOMON

You want some coffee?

BILLY (O.S.)

I like a little coffee in my cream, if that's okay.

SOLOMON

Not coffee, but you got it.

Billy enters the bedroom.

Solomon steps over to the fridge. It is fairly bare. A sprig of parsley. A slice of meat. He grabs the milk, smells it. He shrugs and closes the fridge.

He serves the coffee and milk.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

Coffee's ready.

BILLY comes out wearing a ENVELOPE CHEMISE and an open robe. Despite himself, catches himself staring. He looks away.

BILLY

Something the matter, Detective? I thought you weren't into... blonds.

He pauses.

SOLOMON
Moment of weakness. It won't
happen again.

Solomon adds sugar to his coffee and mixes it in. She ties up
her robe.

SOLOMON
(aside)
Here hung those lips that I have
kissed I know not how oft...

Billy comes up beside him.

BILLY
Now get you to my lady's
chamber... Make her laugh at that.

SOLOMON
Prithee, Horatio, tell me one
thing.

Billy scoops up her coffee and takes a sip.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Good coffee.

SOLOMON
Thanks. Folder's Best.

She saunters into the bedroom.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
You'd regret it, you know.

BILLY
I regret a lot of things.

She disappears behind the door. He follows her in.

INT. BEDROOM- CONTINUOUS

She lays there in her chemise. The robe discarded.

BILLY
There's a lot of pain in those
lonely eyes. I can see it all the
way from here.

SOLOMON
There are worse things.

BILLY

What sort of secrets are you
keeping locked up in that thick
skull?

SOLOMON

Nothing to tell over a dinner
conversation, that's for sure.

BILLY

Dinner's over, Darling.

He walks over and rests his weight upon the edge of the bed.

SOLOMON

If I tell you something, you
promise not to tell?

BILLY

(intrigued)
Promise.

SOLOMON

I don't think we're going to make
it out of this alive.

A beat.

BILLY

Funny. I don't either.

She leans in to kiss him. He sets a finger on her lips.

SOLOMON

That song you were singing at the
club... Did you write it?

BILLY

No. That was my husband. He's
really got quite a way with
words... when he's not a raving
maniac.

She starts to tear up.

SOLOMON

Could you sing it for me again?

She nods and starts to sing.

As she sings, they slip into the billowing sheets.

He tips his hat over his eyes. She rests her head upon his
chest. They slowly descend into sleep.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. OCEAN- DAY

Solomon stands at the bridge of a ship, looking out at New York City Harbor.

A YOUNG GIRL (10) comes up beside him and points into the Harbor.

YOUNG GIRL

Look, ma, the Statue of Lizard-
ty.

Her parents come up beside her.

MOM

That's right, hon, and she
welcomes all newcomers to America.
Good, bad. She waves them in.

DAD

Then once they get here, then the
people at Ellis Island get to have
the chance to kick the bad ones
back out again.

MOM

Frank!

DAD

What? The kid's gotta learn.
There's right and there's wrong.
And us? We're one of the good
guys.

GIRL

Is that true, Mom?

MOM

It's true. We're one of the good
ones. There are very brave
soldiers fighting to keep the bad
guys away from our shores even
now.

GIRL

What about the bad guys that are
already here?

DAD

That's what the police are for.

GIRL

Oh, well, when I grow up, I wanna
be a policeman.

The MOM gives her a hug.

MOM

That's wonderful, dear. Just
wonderful.

Solomon looks eagerly to the approaching shore.

MONTAGE:

-Solomon going through customs, wading through the lines...

-Ambling wide-eyed through the street while asking directions
in broken English...

-Finally arriving at the police station and practically
skipping up the front step.

INT. POLICE STATION- DAY

He walks up the front counter, manned by a disinterested,
overweight officer.

SOLOMON

I... Want... Job.

The officer turns back to his fellows in the audience.

POLICE OFFICER

Who is is this guy?

SOLOMON

I... want... job.

POLICE OFFICER

Seriously, Benny. Did you put him
up to this?

BENNY

Not me. Guy must be the real
McCoy.

The officer frowns and turns back to Solomon.

POLICE OFFICER

Sorry, bub. Full up.

SOLOMON
 (plaintively)
 I... want...

The officer gestures toward the door.

POLICE OFFICER
 What are you deaf? Am- scray!

Solomon exits. Off in the distance, Larry notices his passing.

EXT. POLICE STATION- CONTINUOUS

Solomon despondently exits the station in the wake of mocking laughter.

As he descends the stairs, Larry catches up to him.

LARRY
 Hey, wait up!

Solomon stops and turns.

SOLOMON
 Job?

LARRY
 Listen, you can't just walk up to the NYPD expecting that they'll snatch you right up into the force...

He notes Solomon's downcast demeanor.

LARRY (CONT'D)
 But, down the street... About a block or so, there's a detective agency- super sleuths, good guys. I think they're looking for an assistant. On the job training. You understand?

He nods.

LARRY (CONT'D)
 K. Good. And if they give you any guff, tell 'em... Tell 'em Larry O'Mally sent ya.

Solomon pauses a moment to take it all in.

SOLOMON
 Thank you.

LARRY
You're welcome.

Larry heads back into the station. Solomon watches him go, then walks down the street, to the AGENCY.

EXT. STREET- CONTINUOUS

A block down the street, he spots a sign on a nearby stoop:

DETECTIVE AGENCY. NOW SEEKING
ASSITANTS.
NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY.

He walks into the adjacent building. A little while later, the HEAD DETECTIVE flips the sign over. The position has been filled. The rest is history.

MODERN DAY:

INT. APARTMENT- NIGHT

A faint scratching wakes the detective. His ears perk up. He opens his eyes. The scratching persists.

He taps the sleeping beauty.

SOLOMON
Billy, wake up.

Billy opens a lethargic eye.

BILLY
Huh?

SOLOMON
We've got company.

Solomon points upward. She speedily slips into her evening dress as all eyes go to the ceiling. He puts on his pants and coat. They follow the noise out of the bedroom.

Overhead: the scuttling of feet, the cracking of support beams, the circular movements akin to a vulture's.

Solomon points his gun at the ceiling. Billy sets her hand on the gun.

BILLY
No.

Solomon slips her an inquisitive glance.

BILLY (CONT'D)

There could be people up there. No
more unnecessary deaths.

He lowers his gun and hands it to her.

SOLOMON

Here. You made need it.

She takes it and looks up again. The noise has stopped.

BILLY

(softly)

Where is he?

Curtis comes crashing through the wall. Billy screams.

Solomon dives for the kitchen, grabs a knife from the drawers.
He now has claws too.

He throws it at the creature. It stabs him in the back,
distracting him from Billy.

The creature formerly known as Billy's husband lumbers toward
Solomon. He grabs another knife and throws it. Curtis bats it
away. He picks up a third. Same result. Curtis grows tired of
the distraction and charges forward.

Solomon braces himself for another battle. As he swings back
to land his first blow, a sharp pain bites into his side.

He looks down. He is bleeding. Another intense pain assails
him. He has been shot again.

He glances up. Billy has a smoking gun in her hand.

BILLY

Sorry. It's the only way.

She flings her arms wide toward Curtis. Solomon trips over
himself and collapses onto the ground.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I'm right here, Baby. All for you.

Curtis turns his attention back to Billy. She drops the gun.
Curtis abandons Solomon and sweeps Billy up in his grotesque
talons.

Curtis carries her out through a trail of wanton destruction
as the detective loses consciousness.

FADE OUT.

INT. HOSPITAL- LATER

Solomon, now bandaged and lying in a hospital bed, wakes from his pain-induced slumber.

Larry stands over him with a bouquet of roses.

SOLOMON

Hey there, Sunshine. For me?

LARRY

I never know what to get a guy, so yes. Roses for everyone.

SOLOMON

He's got her.

LARRY

Who?

SOLOMON

Curtis. He's got Billy.

LARRY

Dang.

SOLOMON

I know. Back to square zero.

Larry puts his hands on his hips.

LARRY

So, what's the plan?

SOLOMON

Don't got one. Look at me, Larry.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

I'm more bandaged than Karloff's Mummy. Game over.

Larry raises an eyebrow at his friend.

LARRY

The great Detective Solomon Harris giving up? That'll be the day.

SOLOMON

I've got no leads.

LARRY

Yes you do. You've always got leads.

A beat.

SOLOMON
Okay. I may have one last lead,
but it's a Hail Mary pass.

Larry makes the Sign of the Cross.

LARRY
Hail Mary, full of grace...
(to SOLOMON)
The Lord is with thee.

SOLOMON
Ugh. You know what this is? It's a
taste of my own medicine.

LARRY
How is it?

SOLOMON
Dreamy. Grab my coat and some
painkillers.

Solomon leans upward. The pain bites into him again.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
Lots of painkillers.

He starts to get out of bed. Larry cheers.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
Ain't enough coffee in the world
right now. Not by a long shot.

INT. SPEAKEASY OFFICE- THE NEXT DAY

Beelzenef plays with his CIGAR CUTTER as talks on the phone.

BEEZ
Listen. I want that shipment by
tomorrow or... Yeah, it won't be
pretty... Tell your boss I don't
care what sort of excuses he wants
to make up... I want my product...
Got it?!

The door to his office glows, then bursts into a million
obsidian shards.

Beez doesn't bat an eye.

BEEZ (CONT'D)

Listen, I've got to go... I've got company... Just make those deadlines and I'll worry about who I'm having over for dinner... Thanks... Bye.

He hangs up the phone.

BEEZ (CONT'D)

Hello, Detective. I see you just can't stay away from our noble establishment.

SOLOMON

Try as I might.

As the dust settles, Solomon stands in the door frame. Larry is beside him.

BEEZ (CONT'D)

And you brought an actual cop with you this time? How wonderful.

LARRY

Afternoon.

BEEZ

What new accusation would you like to mount against me this time?

SOLOMON

Actually, I need your help.

BEEZ

Oh?

SOLOMON

As you can see, I am a little incapacitated at the moment, and

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

our perp is still on the loose. You're the only one who's dealt with this kind of garbage before. Care to assist me in taking it out?

Beez leans forward.

BEEZ

Not particularly. Warfare is such vile business, after all.

(MORE)

BEEZ (CONT'D)

Even still, I'm open to a decent proposition if you have one to offer. What's in for me if I did what you ask?

SOLOMON

I know you gave Jones the money. It's got your fingerprints all over it. I don't have to make any substantial leap to say that it's Tracy Meyers that lead him to you. She had a record of party going and your speakeasy is the hippest joint in town-

BEEZ

Why thank you.

SOLOMON

For those that don't know any better.

BEEZ

No thanks for that.

SOLOMON

So, it's your careless actions that lead to the murders of Ms. Meyers, Curtis Jones Jr., and the owner of the Caged Bird. I'm willing to waive all that, though, if you help me track down the bastard... preferably if his wife is left unharmed in the process.

BEEZ

Do my ears deceive me, or is this Solomon Harris making a deal with the devil?

SOLOMON

I'd call it more of a momentary

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

truce, and don't get too excited. You take one misstep after this and I'm coming after you like gang-busters.

BEEZ

As could only be expected. After all, you've got to your reputation to uphold.

SOLOMON

Do we have an agreement?

BEEZ

Could we throw in a new door as well? Mine seems to have come into some disrepair.

LARRY

I'll have the PD gift wrap it and deliver it to you personally.

Beez claps his hands together.

BEEZ

Excellent. Well, gentlemen. This should be quite interesting indeed. An arrangement for the ages, I'd say.

They shake hands.

SOLOMON

You know where he's hiding, don't you?

BEEZ

I have my sources, yes. Just as you have yours. And I'm not afraid to do what I need to get the information that I want.

SOLOMON

A no-nonsense kind of guy.

BEEZ

Exactly. Give me time to assemble my men and I'll escort you there myself.

SOLOMON

Can't wait.

LARRY

Afternoon, sir.

They exit.

BEEZ

Don't forget about the door!

INT. STREET- CONTINUOUS

Larry and Solomon walk fervently down the street.

LARRY

That guy gives me the creeps.

SOLOMON

He should. Not the type of person
you want on your RSVP list.

LARRY

Takes after you in a way.

SOLOMON

Oh?

LARRY

All the answers, none of them
shared.

SOLOMON

A man must have his secrets.

A beat.

LARRY

So, he's behind all this? Creating
this madman?

SOLOMON

Pretty much.

LARRY

And we're not taking him in...
because?

SOLOMON

You wanna try explaining to your
superiors how some random guido
wrote up a contract with our perp
that turned him into a half-crazed
animal?

LARRY

Point taken. But can we trust him?

SOLOMON

Not in the slightest.

LARRY

So what's the plan?

SOLOMON

Run both ends versus the middle. A kingdom can't combat against itself. I'm hoping by having them spar it'll cause both to implode.

LARRY

And he's not wise to this?

SOLOMON

I'm sure he is. I'm sure he's got an angle too. My only hope is that I can figure it out before the whole thing snaps back in my face.

LARRY

That's not a very encouraging plan.

Solomon stops.

SOLOMON

Remember how I said this was a Hail Mary pass?

LARRY

I think I recall something to that affect. It's suspiciously blurry now.

Solomon softly jabs him in the ribs.

LARRY (CONT'D)

So when are we doing this?

SOLOMON

It will take a few days for Beez to gather his men. If you want, it wouldn't be a bad idea to gather our own in the process.

LARRY

Bring the Force into this?

SOLOMON

That's the idea. We're gonna need all the help we can get in bringing this guy down.

LARRY

We can make that happen. You know, it's scary, but I'm starting get your hair-brained schemes more and more.

SOLOMON
That is scary. Hey, Lare?

LARRY
Yeah?

SOLOMON
If I don't make it through this,
bury me somewhere nice.

LARRY
What sort of talk is that?

SOLOMON
The honest sort.

EXT. STREET- LATER

Larry and Solomon stand outside the police station. A
LIMOUSINE comes by and stops in front of them.

The window rolls down.

BEEZ
Going my way?

SOLOMON
Nice ride.

BEEZ
Spare no expense, make no regrets.

SOLOMON
Nifty motto. Hard to live by.

BEEZ
I try.

Two of Beez' cronies step out and open the door for them. They
get in

INT. LIMOUSINE- CONTINUOUS

BEEZ
Help yourself to anything inside
here. Liquor. Wine. Perrier. All
the finest imports. You are my
guests after all.

SOLOMON
Coffee?

BEEZ
Unfortunately, no.

SOLOMON
(sarcastically)
Aw, well, there goes the
experience.

Beez turns to Larry.

BEEZ
And you?

LARRY
I'm good.

BEEZ
Well, that makes one of us.

He pours himself a glass of wine.

BEEZ
Mine if partake? It is my car
after all.

Larry nods.

WIDE SHOT:

A cavalcade of police cars falls in before and after the
limousine.

CUT BACK TO: LIMOUSINE INTERIOR.

Beez takes a sip of his wine.

BEEZ
Ooh, I'm so glad I didn't miss the
parade.

LARRY
No offense, but I wasn't about to
go into this unarmed.

BEEZ
None taken. As you can see, I am
of the same mind.

The ARMED GUARDS at his side are a testament to that.

The sirens blare. Wherever they are going, they are going to
make great time getting there.

SOLOMON

So, Curtis, where is he?

BEEZ

Word on the street is they saw him skipping town again.

SOLOMON

Back to his old man's estate?

BEEZ

Like a dog to his vomit.

LARRY

That place is going to be his Alamo. He won't go down without a fight.

BEEZ

(teasingly)

I'm sure the good men at the New York City Police Department are more than capable of rooting him out.

LARRY

He's not common thug, but yeah, we'll get our man.

Solomon speaks to Larry, but never takes his eyes off their host.

SOLOMON

Don't let him get a rise out of you. He lives for that.

Larry turns to Beez, who shrugs.

BEEZ

Everyone has their guilty pleasures.

LARRY

As long as everyone stays cool, I

LARRY (CONT'D)

don't care how everyone gets their kicks.

BEEZ

I agree.

SOLOMON

Yeah. Me too. Gentlemen, this is gonna be fun.

Beez takes another healthy sip of his wine.

EXT. HIGHWAY- DAY

A limousine full of hoods is escorted back toward the JONES' RESIDENCE by a parade of cop cars.

They stop at the toppled gate. The police stream out of their cars, guns drawn.

Beez, unlike everyone else present, is not at full alert. Rather he seems calm. Grumpy, but calm.

BEEZ

(looking upward)

I don't see what people find so attractive about the Sun. It's so dreadfully bright.

SOLOMON

I think that's the idea, Beezy.

(to Larry)

What say you, you ready to start the fun?

LARRY

Bring it on. Everyone spread out!

The police fan out across the estate. A SELECT GROUP of them stays behind to guard Solomon, Larry, and their dishonorable guest. Once they have the place surrounded, they pause, waiting for orders.

Solomon peeps over the hood of the Jones vehicle into the bowels of the lofty estate.

SOLOMON

Give it up, Curtis. We know you're in there and we've got the place surrounded.

Nothing.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

Looks like our friend's gonna play hard to get.

BEEZ

Let's fish him out, shall we?

LARRY

(to the cops)

You heard the man. Move in!

As jaws of the trap close, the beast leaps out of it. No sign of Billy, yet.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Open fire!

The police let loose a volley of bullets into the creature. He takes them like pin pricks or bee stings, annoying, but far from deadly. If anything, the volleys just make him angrier.

Curtis goes on the attack, slashing and clawing at the police, at Beez's goons, whoever he can get his hands on.

Blood flows freely.

Beez surveys the battlefield for a good, long time before his patience thins and he throws a commanding hand into the air.

BEEZ

Hold your fire!

Larry looks to Solomon. Solomon shrugs.

SOLOMON

Give the baby his bottle.

Larry nods.

LARRY

You heard the man, fall back!
Circle formation.

The firing stops. A ring is formed around the beast. Curtis snarls and roars, waiting for someone to approach him.

Beez cracks his knuckles and does just that.

A DARK ENERGY forms around two combatants as they go at it. Their movements are swift and violent, like shadows caught in a windstorm.

Scratching. Clawing. Biting. Tearing. No mercy. No restraint.

Curtis puts up a darn good fight, but although he is possessed, he is only mortal.

Beez gradually gets the upper hand. He digs his claws into the Curtis' face. Every vein in Beez' body becomes visible as he physically wrenches the demon from out of Curtis' body.

Once the demon is exorcised, Curtis falls to the ground. He looks up, not to the sky, but the second story of the Jones residence. He reaches a hand shakily upwards, then collapses under the strain of his own existence.

CURTIS
Wilimina. I... Sorry.

As he dies, his power is absorbed into his opponent's body.

BEEZ
Game, set, match.

He turns to the onlookers, including Solomon and Larry.

BEEZ (CONT'D)
I believe the young woman you are
looking for is up there.

Solomon breaks into a dead sprint, passed Beez, passed the
cops and the cronies, through the front door and up the
stairs.

INT. ESTATE- CONTINUOUS

Sweat pours down his brow as he charges upwards.

SOLOMON
Billy!

He flings open the door to the MASTER BEDROOM.

INT. BEDROOM- CONTINUOUS

Most of the bedroom furniture is covered in sheets. A
congregation of discount ghosts. Billy sits upright in bed,
looking out the window, through the billowing curtains.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
Willamina!

He runs up to her. She is scratched up, but otherwise
unharmd. Tears run down her eyes.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
Are you all right?

BILLY
He's gone.

Solomon looks at her, confusedly, then nods her and wraps her
in his arms.

SOLOMON
But you're safe now, and we're
going to be okay.

BEEZ (O.S.)
Not all of us.

They turn. Beez, now radiating an obsidian glow, approaches them.

BEEZ (CONT'D)
There is one part of Mr. Jones' agreement that I forgot to mention, and I expect that part to be honored.

SOLOMON
And that is?

BEEZ
It was not just Mr. Jones' soul that he put on the line, but that of his lovely wife too.

SOLOMON
And now you're here to collect?

BEEZ
Exactly. I love a good deal.

SOLOMON
And you think we're just going to start around and let that happen?

BEEZ
Are you in any position to stop me?

Solomon slumps.

BEEZ (CONT'D)
Aw, I never took you for a sentimental man, Mr. Harris. I must say, it's not a good look on you, but it is rather convenient for me.

Beez circles around the couple.

BEEZ (CONT'D)
Look at those pleading, pathetic eyes. Absolutely delicious. The moment you stepped into my office, asking me of all people for help, I knew I had you.

He holds out his hand.

BEEZ (CONT'D)

Come along, my dear. Your destiny
lies with me now.

Solomon charges forward.

SOLOMON

No!

Beez effortlessly bats him away. Solomon slams against the wall
and drops to the floor.

LARRY (O.S.)

Freeze!

Larry and his men stand at the door, guns drawn.

BEEZ

You think you can take me on,
after all I've done for you?

Beez blasts Larry and his men away and slams the door. They
continue to knock, but he successfully ignores them.

BEEZ (CONT'D)

No more interruptions. I'm tired
of this. We had an agreement. Time
to pay the piper.

Solomon stands before him, clutching the iron cross.

SOLOMON

Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu
Adonai Ehad.

Solomon begins to glow, brightly at first, then ever dimmer
until the light fades out.

Despondently, he drops the cross.

Beez howls and goes in the kill.

BEEZ

Compromises. Seemingly
insignificant sacrifices of
virtue. They all add up, leaving
you with nothing, and me with
everything.

He grabbed Solomon's skull, just as he had grabbed Curtis, and
begins to slowly squeeze.

The light begins to drain from his eyes and from his body.

BEEZ (CONT'D)

Silly man. How does it feel to be just like everyone else?

SOLOMON

It feels... free.

Billy seizes the moment and retrieves Beez in the back with it. The creature gasps.

Blood begins to pour from Billy's pores as she fights hard to keep his hold on the artifact.

Beez explodes. Solomon and Billy are thrown not just out of the room, but stories into the air.

Gravity quickly begins to take hold. They fall.

Locking hands, they close their eyes and wait for impact, but the the impact never comes. Instead, they hover inches above the ground.

An invisible hand holds them steady, then drops them softly onto the ground.

Solomon and Billy look up. They sees the Shining Figure returning to the heavens. They take a moment to catch their breath

SOLOMON

Nice work.

BILLY

You too.

I/E. ESTATE- CONTINUOUS

Larry and his men emerge from the ruins of the Jones' estate. Solomon and Billy dust themselves off.

Larry approaches.

LARRY

Well, that was really something, wasn't it?

BILLY

Sure was.

LARRY

Would you do it again?

SOLOMON
In a heartbeat.

BILLY
Assuming there's coffee provided.

SOLOMON
Get out of my head.

She hugs him tightly and starts to tear up. Solomon hugs her back.

LARRY
Get a room.

SOLOMON
(to Larry)
I did. Blew the roof right off of it.
(to Billy)
What are you doing tomorrow?

BILLY
Me. Don't know. Rest. Recuperate. Why?

SOLOMON
I could use a partner, if you're not busy.

BILLY
I could squeeze you in.

Larry puts his arms around them.

LARRY
Looks like we're gonna be one big, dysfunctional family.

BILLY
Looks like it.

SOLOMON
Joy and rapture.

They walk off.

INT. DINER- LATER

Solomon walks into the diner.

SOLOMON
Hey, Fran. I've come back for the coffee. You still serving?

FRAN
For you. Always.

Larry walks in.

LARRY
Make that two.

Billy walks in.

BILLY
There.

Solomon looks them all over.

SOLOMON
Three. On the NYPD.

Fran looks to Larry, who nods.

LARRY
On me.

They sit down at the counter, each with a newspaper in hand.
Fran serves them their coffee. They read and drink in unison.

BILLY
Found one.

Solomon leans over to check the article in question.

SOLOMON
Hmm, I don't know. Could be
dangerous?

BILLY
After the adventure we've had,
bring it on!

LARRY
Here we go again...

FADE TO BLACK.