

THE LOVERS

Screenplay Adaptation

by

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Based on the Stage Play

THE CHEATERS

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FADE IN:

EXT. REGENT HOTEL, NYC - NIGHT

A light snow falls in New York City. GUESTS enter and exit the Regent Hotel located on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. SAM SHEPARD, 54, a good-looking man for his age, and GRACE NEER, 50, a woman in disguise, get out of a taxicab and enter the hotel. Grace is wearing a large brimmed hat, black scarf, red wig, and dark sunglasses.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Sam pays for a room at the front desk while trying to keep a low profile. Grace stands near the elevator with her back toward the guests. She kisses a cross and tucks it inside her scarf as a WOMAN walks by and stares at her. She gets on the elevator with her husband. Grace panics. She sees Sam approaching her as he passes by the main hotel ballroom.

INT. MAIN BALLROOM - NIGHT

A young BRIDE AND GROOM, mid-20s, are married by a PRIEST in front of a large CROWD. Amidst the crowd is MICHELLE NEER, 26, a tall beautiful blonde who happens to be one of the bridesmaids. She checks out her boyfriend, ALLEN SHEPARD, 28, a handsome man in a black tuxedo.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Sam and Grace step into the elevator trying not to appear as though they are together as some of the other hotel guests join them.

EXT. SECOND FLOOR HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sam and Grace squeeze their way out of the elevator and head down the hallway, first walking in opposite directions until the elevator lifts off again.

SAM
It's this way.

Grace lowers her head and follows Sam. They pass by Room No. 209 which has loud MUSIC blasting from behind the door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM 209 - NIGHT

HOWARD NEER, 56, in fabulous shape and proud of it, dances with MONICA SHEPARD, 47, a very attractive woman who used to be a knockout in her glory days but who has now aged. They are dancing to SAMBA music. Monica has gotten carried away with her dancing and HOWARD is preoccupied with his own thoughts.

MONICA

(dreamily)

You move me so effortlessly, as if we were one, flowing into each other.

(she blows into his ear)

Say something nice to me.

(no reply)

I feel so safe tucked within your arms.

(Howard scratches ear)

Howard, say something nice to me.

(again no reply/she barks)

Howard!

HOWARD

(automatically)

Your hair smells good. What did you do? Wash it?

MONICA

(sweetly)

You silver tongue devil.

(naughtily)

I know what you want.

(instructs him)

Touch my hair.

He lays his hand flat on her head.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Oh! You tempt me to submit to my innermost yearnings.

(fights it)

No. No, darling. I mustn't. You understand.

HOWARD

(not disappointed)

I understand.

He removes his hand.

MONICA
(talking like a drill
sergeant)
Put it back!

He obeys immediately.

MONICA (CONT'D)
Your touch is like a soft breeze
rustling my plumage.

Howard stands still and looks at her. She dances around him without a care in the world.

MONICA (CONT'D)
My heart, my heart... you're not
moving, dear... my thoughts drift
back to that starry night in St.
Moritz.

HOWARD
We've never been to St. Moritz.

MONICA
So take me.

Howard eyes her, knowingly, and continues dancing.

MONICA (CONT'D)
So dance.

HOWARD
This is not dancing. This is
desecrating the memory of Glenn
Miller.

He drops his arms and stops dancing.

MONICA
(hands on hips)
Look. You can ruin the evening and
leave me my fantasy, or take me out
of my fantasy and give me an
evening, but give me something will
you!

She leaps onto the bed, picks up a copy of Cosmopolitan Magazine, and eats a chocolate from the candy box.

MONICA (CONT'D)
You used to be so romantic.

HOWARD

Why? Those aren't my chocolates
you're eating?

(points at flowers)

Or my rose in the vase? Candy and
flowers. A perfect rose?

(takes out a rose)

That isn't romantic? One perfect
rose?

MONICA

In the beginning it was romantic,
now it's cheap.

HOWARD

Cheap?

He puts the rose back.

MONICA

(continues eating)

And unoriginal.

HOWARD

(sits at end of bed)

Unoriginal?

MONICA

You used to be so seductive. Now
you're just middle-aged.

HOWARD

Hey. Cheap and unoriginal maybe,
but never middle-aged! I'm forty-
eight years old and closer to
passing for thirty-eight.

MONICA

The only thing you're close to is
passing away.

HOWARD

(points at door)

I'll walk right out of here.

MONICA

(tosses magazine aside)

You can take me with you.

(stares up at ceiling)

We never go anywhere anymore. I
want to go to Lutece.

HOWARD

I hate that place.

MONICA
(kicks off her shoes)
Why? We used to have those
candlelight dinners there. Lutece
brought us together.

HOWARD
(picks up her shoes)
I still hate that place.

MONICA
Well, either take me to dinner or
take me to bed.

She holds out her arms to him as he puts her shoes in the closet.

HOWARD
All of a sudden I'm starved.

MONICA
(pats the bed)
Here, Howard.

HOWARD
Would it be okay if I didn't feel
like it just now? I have a little
back pain.

MONICA
(inches closer)
I'll rub it.

HOWARD
Don't touch me.

He picks up the chocolate wrappers off the floor.

MONICA
But this is Friday night.

INT. HOTEL ROOM NO. 219 - NIGHT

Sam and Grace enter their room as he closes the door behind them. He immediately searches the room to make sure they are alone. Grace checks all the drawers.

SAM
What are you doing?

GRACE

Looking for the Bible. I'm not going through with this with a Bible in the room. I'm sorry, Sam. When you prove to me that you're a wonderful man, I'll bring it back in.

She finds the Bible and puts it in the hallway. Sam watches nervously as Grace closes the door and takes off her disguise. She sits on the bed as Sam paces the floor.

SAM

I can't.

GRACE

(jumps up)

You're right! Of course we can't! What were we thinking?

She unlocks the door, grabs the bible, and brings it back inside the room. Grace puts it back in the drawer.

GRACE (CONT'D)

We are happily married people. Aren't we?

They exchange looks but neither one of them says a word. Grace opens the drawer, pulls the bible out, and tosses it outside in the hallway. With her mind made up, she closes the door. Sam takes his coat off and hangs it up in the closet.

SAM

So, everything's all right?

GRACE

(moves from bed,
petrified)

Uh, huh.

SAM

You're comfortable?

GRACE

Comfortable.

SAM

You're sure?

GRACE

Sure.

Sam yanks down the shades and closes the curtains.

SAM
Well... Here we go.

Sam starts to take off his tie as Grace SHRIEKS. Sam stops.

SAM (CONT'D)
What?

GRACE
(she giggles)
I'm a little nervous.

She sits on the bed and Sam snuggles up next to her.

SAM
Of course you're nervous. You've gone to bed with the same man all your life. It's only natural to feel butterflies in your stomach.

GRACE
(shyly)
It's okay?

SAM
Of course.

GRACE
You're a little nervous, too. Aren't you?

SAM
Me? Nah.

Sam struggles to loosen his tie. He nearly strangles himself trying to get it off but finally does.

SAM (CONT'D)
Yes, I'm nervous. But, that's good. That's all right. I'm glad to be here with you.

GRACE
So am I.
(relaxes more)
Otherwise I'd be home pining for Harold all night long. I don't usually spend the evening sitting alone in a movie theatre.

SAM
You weren't alone. I was there.

She takes off her shoes and nylon stockings.

GRACE

Yes you were. Me and you.

SAM

All alone. Two rows apart.

Sam unbuttons his shirt. Grace rises and takes her skirt off.

GRACE

I knew you were a little lonely because you were eating Juicy-fruits and separating the green ones. Any man who sits alone at the movies picking out the green Juicy-fruits, I figure is reaching out.

She hangs her skirt on the chair and unbuttons her blouse.

SAM

(takes shoes/pants off)
You really wait up for your husband?

She slips into bed and under the covers.

GRACE

Friday is his poker night. He doesn't get home until dawn. I can't fall asleep.

SAM

My wife plays Canasta on Fridays. I always go to the movies. If she only knew that tonight I'm the main attraction.

He hangs up his pants on the same chair and takes his shirt off.

GRACE

You miss your wife on Fridays?

SAM

Thursdays. Monday she plays Bridge. Tuesday she plays Mah Jongg. Wednesday I play Gin. Thursday is our one night together. I miss her on Thursdays.

GRACE

You love your wife?

GRACE pulls back the covers for Sam. He gets into bed with her.

SAM
As much as she'll let me. But I see
no reason to be lonely. I'm a nice
guy, and I need female
companionship.

Grace snuggles next to Sam.

GRACE
You're a wonderful man, Sam.

Grace takes her wedding ring off and places it on the table
next to them. She turns off the lights.

SAM
(in the dark)
Grace?

GRACE
(feels his chest)
Yes?

SAM
Are you here for revenge?

GRACE
(stops)
What?

SAM
Maybe you don't really think your
husband plays Poker on Fridays?

GRACE
Yes he does. Maybe you don't think
your wife plays Canasta?

SAM
Yes, she does. She plays Canasta.
It's the Mah Jongg I'm worried
about.

INT. HOTEL ROOM NO. 209 - NIGHT

Howard picks up the candy wrappers from the floor and tosses
them into the trash.

MONICA
You know how much I look forward to
Friday night, Howard.

HOWARD
I'll make it up to you next Friday.
I mean it. My back is acting up
from the war.

He arches his back, stretching.

MONICA
What war?

HOWARD
The war we had last Friday.

MONICA
(pats the bed pillows)
Then come sit down and talk to me.

HOWARD
(paces floor)
I don't feel like talking.

MONICA
Well, if you don't feel like
dancing and or going to bed, then
what do you feel like?

HOWARD
A nineteen-year-old.

He sits in a reclining chair and leans back.

MONICA
You'd be dead inside an hour.
(rises annoyed)
Howard, you're having a mid-life
crisis. So, you're getting a little
older. Join the club.
(approaches the mirror)
So what? I think the most
attractive men in the world are a
little older.
(brushes hair)
Besides, you're in terrific shape
and the years are only improving
you. You're aging gracefully, just
like a fine wine, dear.

HOWARD
I'm afraid you have it all wrong,
Monica. I'm not at all concerned
about my age.

MONICA
Good.

HOWARD
What concerns me is your age.

MONICA
(stops brushing)
What?

HOWARD
I am a majestic eagle soaring into
the next phase of my life while you
are a rabbit dropping Raisinettes
into the sands of time.

She lowers the brush as Howard rises and paces the room.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
I'm not trying to upset you. You
wanted to talk and I'm talking. So
don't get all bent out of shape.

MONICA
(waves brush at him)
My cage is not rattled.

HOWARD
Good.

MONICA
(throws brush at him)
Dogface!

The brush hits his head.

HOWARD
Oh! So now you're going to be
miserable? That's just what charms
me! Misery! You're a misery to me!
Who needs it?

He goes to the closet and starts putting his clothes back on.

MONICA
(softer)
Okay, maybe we should talk. While
we still can.

HOWARD
I don't know. I think we've got
ourselves a little trouble.

She approaches him.

MONICA

But that's okay. Trouble's okay.
You just sit here next to me.

She tries to lead him toward the bed. Howard resists.

HOWARD

I'm okay here.

INT. HOTEL ROOM 219 - NIGHT

Grace and Sam are still in the dark, cuddling.

GRACE

(cuddles closer)

Sam. Do you do this sort of thing
often?

The headlights from moving taxis outside the premises flash
into the room, creating a distraction for Sam.

SAM

What?

GRACE

Come to hotels?

SAM

It's my first time. I've never
cheated on my wife. Ever. Not that
I haven't had the inclination.

GRACE

You've had the inclination?

SAM

Only at night. Do you think we
should have asked for a higher
room?

Lights continue to flash in Sam's eyes. He is also bothered
by the sound of ambulances, then police sirens.

GRACE

What's held you back?

SAM

I'm petrified of getting caught.

GRACE

We won't get caught.

SAM

Oh, good.

The sirens stop and Sam relaxes.

GRACE

Don't think about it.

SAM

You're right.

They lean back and think about it. Beat.

GRACE

(SINGS softly)

Amazing Grace, how sweet the
sound...

SAM

You're thinking about it.

GRACE

I was remembering the first time I slept with a man. I was twenty and going to an all girls college. It was on a Friday night because that was the only time we were allowed out. Do you know he tried to take me to bed that same evening? But, I made it clear that sort of thing was going to have to wait. And it did. Until Saturday. He told me we were going to see a movie. I thought we'd be seeing the Marx Brothers, or Mae West, but it turned out his taste in movies was different than I'd expected. He took me to see *Citizen Kane*. I was delighted. I thought he was very intellectual.

She snuggles closer to Sam.

GRACE (CONT'D)

After the movie we went back to my dormitory because he promised he'd explain it to me, the movie I mean, but my roommate was there so he explained it to both of us. I could see how impressed she was with him. Before I knew what was happening, she excused herself and I was alone with him.

(MORE)

GRACE (CONT'D)

Sam, if it had been anybody else I'd have been scared to death, but, he was so confident, so sure, I just didn't feel it was my place to let him down.

SAM

Naturally.

GRACE

You know, all during it, he kept explaining the movie to me.

(giggles)

Like I wasn't aware of what was going on. I guess he figured if he kept talking I wouldn't have time to ask him what he was doing.

Sam nods in agreement.

GRACE (CONT'D)

The next thing I knew, he was walking out the door and my roommate and four other girls who were leaning against it, fell into the room. They spent the evening listening to me tell my tale of romance. They kept asking me, how does it feel, how does it feel? What could I tell them? I didn't feel a thing.

SAM

Nothing?

She shakes her head 'no'. Sam seems perplexed by this.

SAM (CONT'D)

Did you ever see him again?

GRACE

I married him. To this day, whenever I see Orson Welles, I get this nauseous sensation in the pit of my stomach.

SAM

And there hasn't been anyone else since then?

She shakes her head 'no'.

SAM (CONT'D)
 So I'm number two on your list of conquests?

GRACE
 Yes, Sam. I hope that means you'll try harder.

Sam turns the light on. He grabs the remote control and turns the TV on.

GRACE (CONT'D)
 What's the matter?

SAM
 Why don't we watch a little television and order some room service? I'm hungry.

They hear MOANS coming from a blue movie on the television. Grace looks up at the TV as the MOANS reach a towering crescendo. Sam turns the TV off. He rises and paces.

GRACE
 So that's how it's done.

SAM
 Well, those are professionals.

The telephone rings. They both freeze.

SAM (CONT'D)
 Did you leave this number?

GRACE
 I don't know this number.

SAM
 (picks up phone/disguises voice)
 Hello? What?
 (to Grace)
 It's the guy in the next room.
 (into phone)
 What noise? What party? No, you can't bring your wife over!
 (hangs phone up)
 Jesus!

Sam kicks the bed. It starts to vibrate as Grace is bounced around. She holds onto the bed post as Sam finds the plug and pulls it out. The bed stops.

SAM (CONT'D)

What kind of place is this?

Sam sits in the chair on the other side of the room.

GRACE

Why are you so upset?

SAM

Nothing. It's just that I did this once and got caught.

GRACE

You told me you never.

SAM

It wasn't my wife. Up until my senior year of high school, I had one girlfriend. Her name was Martha. She had red hair and freckles. A real down-to-earth girl, you know?

Grace feels her own freckles and eyes her red wig on the chair. Sam gets up and paces the floor.

SAM (CONT'D)

We were pretty young so when we spent time together it was just talking or listening to the radio. Well, we turned fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, and we still felt the same way about each other, until a very sweet February afternoon when it all changed.

GRACE

What happened?

SAM

We were sledding. It was bitter cold, but there was this hill in Donaldson Park and --

INT. REGENT HOTEL BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

The BAND PLAYS as Michelle and Allen sit at a table eating dinner along with some other wedding GUESTS. Michelle watches the bride and groom dance as she plays with her food, slightly upset.

ALLEN

What's the matter?

MICHELLE

Nothing.

They get up and dance together. The other bridesmaids watch Michelle with Allen. Some of the girls wink at Michelle as she smiles and relaxes, holding Allen tighter.

INT. HOTEL ROOM NO. 219 - NIGHT

Grace leans against Sam in bed.

SAM

We'd been sledding before on this one beat up old sled we had between us, where she'd lie on top of me as we rode down the hill.

GRACE

Oh.

SAM

So, it was nothing new to have her on top of me, but my hormones must have been on overdrive that day, because even though we had all those clothes on and it was freezing cold, I felt her there. When it got dark, we went to her house.

GRACE

No one was home?

SAM

Her parents were sleeping. We went up to her room and took off our sweaters and threw them at each other. We started to wrestle like we always did, only this time, something told me not to let her win. I pinned her to the bed and I looked down at her looking up at me. She seemed to have no fear. She was smiling, waiting for me to get to someplace she already was, trusting I'd know what to do.

GRACE

What did you do?

Sam sits up in bed.

SAM

I kissed her. It was an awkward kiss. I think I missed most of her mouth.

GRACE

I still get kissed like that.

SAM

Everything we did that day was awkward. But it was all so sweet.

GRACE

Because you were in love.

SAM

Martha and I began to have more and more romantic evenings together after that. And it wasn't awkward anymore. They were better and better and real good and we knew it, too. The problem was nobody else knew it. I mean, you know when you have something new or get something good, you have to show it to people? I thought if I could just show one other girl what Martha knew about me, so she could whisper about it to all of her friends, and all her friends could tell their friends. Soon I would become a legend and all the girls at school would smile at me in the schoolyard. But I'd still be with Martha and never want anybody else. Ever. So, I took some girl to bed and before I even got the chance to become known as a Don Juan, Martha walked in on me.

He leans back in the bed disgusted with himself.

GRACE

Oh, Sam.

SAM

There wasn't the slightest hint of anger on her face. No fear whatsoever. She had that same smile like she knew something I would never know. And not even a single ounce of disappointment.

(sighs, upset)

And you know what else?

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

The whole time I was with that other girl, I was pretending she was Martha.

GRACE

Sam. If I go to bed with you, are you going to pretend I'm Martha?

He gets up and paces the floor.

SAM

Are you kidding? When I go to bed with my wife I pretend she's Martha. I was supposed to marry Martha. Why don't we know what we're supposed to do before it's too late? What makes us think we are going to get these once-in-a-lifetime moments again and again?

GRACE

You never saw her after that?

SAM

I heard from her once, years later. I received a letter with no return address. Dear Sam, I have two children now, and I love my husband. Sometimes when the lights are out and I love him the most, I think of you. Love, Martha.

GRACE

Did that upset you?

SAM

I was thrilled.

He sits beside Grace.

GRACE

Why?

SAM

Because as hard as I try, I can't seem to satisfy my own wife. But, without even trying, without even being there at all, somebody thinks I'm terrific.

Grace kisses Sam on the cheek. She leans against him.

GRACE
I think you're terrific, Sam. I
really do.

SAM
Really?

She kisses him and growls. Sam leans over and turns off the
lights.

GRACE (O.S.)
Come to Martha.

SAM (O.S.)
I guess I still got it.

INT. HOTEL ROOM NO. 209 - NIGHT

Monica pats the bed next to her as Howard sulks. He looks out
the window and sees a limousine drive off with the words JUST
MARRIED on it. He scoffs.

MONICA
(pats bed)
Come on, soldier. Right here.

HOWARD
Soldier only works when I'm in the
mood.

MONICA
(breathy)
Whoopee, soldier boy.

She lies back on the bed and strikes a sexy pose. She raises
one leg into the air.

HOWARD
I said no.

MONICA
(SINGS with one leg
dangling off the edge of
the bed)
Falling in love again, what am I to
do?

HOWARD
Don't do that.

MONICA
Never wanted to...

HOWARD
Don't.

MONICA
Can't help it...

She gets up and pulls him to the bed. He is unable to resist as she straddles him and continues to HUM. She lays on top of him and kisses him in all his erogenous zones. Howard stares up at the ceiling defeated. Beat.

HOWARD
Nothing.

MONICA
(sits up)
Get out!

HOWARD
(sits up)
What?

She gets off him and stands.

MONICA
(points at door)
Out. I've had enough!

HOWARD
(sits up)
You want me to leave?

MONICA
I'm through with you!

HOWARD
(puts on coat)
No, no. I'm through with you!

He picks up his shoes, puts them on, and heads for the door. The door is locked.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Fine! You want me to leave?
(struggles with door)
Good.
(jiggles handle)
Because I can't wait to leave!

He twists the door handle with both hands and then kicks it. The door opens. She slips back into bed, sulking.

MONICA
Where are you going?

HOWARD

Home!

MONICA

You never get home this early. What are you going to tell your wife?

HOWARD

Don't let it concern you.

MONICA

I won't. It obviously doesn't concern you.

HOWARD

That's because I know how to handle my marriage. And I don't have to perform for her either.

MONICA

What does that mean?

HOWARD

That's all you want, Monica. Performance. Well, I am sick and tired of being a sex machine.

She laughs as a GUEST walks by. He closes the door slightly.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

I don't have this kind of pressure at home. My wife never expects it.

MONICA

Don't bring up your wife to me.
(she fluffs pillows)
What do I care about your wife?

HOWARD

Don't you ever talk about my wife!
(waves briefcase at her)
My wife is a saint. Her name has no business coming out of your mouth.

Monica gets up and opens a bag. She takes out a new negligee and models it.

MONICA

You told me you were leaving her for me.

HOWARD

I was under pressure. You know, I can't have a casual fling with a young girl. I wanted someone with a mature attractiveness, like you. Because I thought you were mature enough to realize we both had our own lives.

Monica holds up her new negligee, admiring it.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Will you stop doing that? I have my life to worry about and you have yours. Now you want me to be concerned about your life too, and that's why this whole thing is falling apart!

MONICA

Because I want you to care about me? Because I'm looking for a little romance?

HOWARD

Don't you get it? I don't want to care, Monica. I have too many worries as it is. Wife worries, mortgage worries. Enough romance. We've been romancing it up for two years!

Some people walk by in the hallway as Howard closes the door. She rises and approaches Howard. Monica kisses him.

MONICA

We can be anything we want for each other. Why do you want to go home to your mortgage?

HOWARD

Because you can be whatever you want with whoever you want, and it holds no permanent attraction for you, but my mortgage is mine and it needs me.

MONICA

(lets go of him)

Fine! Since you don't need me, and don't care anymore, then there's nothing left to talk about. Is there?

She heads back for the bed, annoyed.

HOWARD

Exactly! That's exactly what I'm
trying to tell you.

He exits the hotel room. Monica sits up in bed and looks at the door. She tosses the negligee on the floor and sighs.

INT. HOTEL BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

The bride and groom appear in the doorway now dressed in their honeymoon clothes. The bride turns to throw her bouquet as all the BRIDESMAIDS gather around her. Michelle looks at Allen.

MICHELLE

Wish me luck.

ALLEN

You got it, babe!

She rushes off and joins the other bridesmaids as the bride throws the bouquet over her head and into the crowd.

IN SLOW MOTION

The bouquet comes flying beyond the reach of all the bridesmaids and heads straight for Allen. He looks up and sees the flowers coming toward him. The swarm of girls turn toward Allen and back away, looking up at the flowers. They keep backing up toward him and further away from the flowers. Allen who is standing next to the wall panics when he sees them continuing to come directly at him.

Allen reaches up and grabs the bouquet as -- Michelle and the other girls -- watch in horror. He realizes what he's done as the bride, bridesmaids, Michelle, and other WEDDING GUESTS all stare at him.

Humiliated, Allen tosses the bouquet back into the air and it happens to land in the trash can next to him. The girls all SIGH in disbelief as the bride and bridesmaids all turn toward Michelle. Michelle bursts into tears completely mortified and runs out of the banquet room.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Howard gets off the elevator. He pauses and reflects for a moment. A part of him is ready to go back into the elevator but he wills himself not to do it.

He spots the lounge and bar area and heads for it just as Michelle dashes out of the banquet room, crying. She nearly knocks Howard down.

HOWARD

Hey!

Michelle runs past Howard and heads for the hotel exit. Howard composes himself and enters the hotel lounge as Allen leaves the banquet room.

ALLEN

Michelle? Michelle?

Allen scans the lobby and makes a beeline for the hotel exit.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST/APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Grace, wearing the same clothes as before, minus the wig, hat, scarf, and sunglasses, steps out of a cab. She glances at her watch and hurries into the apartment building as a DOORMAN, 30s, holds the door open for her.

INT. GRACE AND HOWARD'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Grace and Howard have a tastefully decorated, large but cozy apartment. Grace unlocks the door and enters the apartment in a hurry. She tosses her coat inside a closet and grabs a robe. She slams the closet door shut and puts the robe on over her dress. Grace jumps onto the sofa and grabs a gigantic afghan she has been knitting for years. She covers herself with the afghan and starts to knit as the apartment door opens. Howard makes an entrance.

HOWARD

I'm home.

GRACE

(knitting)

How was your evening, dear?

HOWARD

I lost.

GRACE

I'm sorry.

HOWARD

As a matter of fact, I was thinking of taking a few weeks off from the game.