

a pack of cigarettes and matches. She lights a cigarette, places the matches on the edge of the table, then sits on the sofa, smoking. As she does all this, we can hear the sounds of Greenwich Village early on a Saturday night: automobiles passing, brakes, tires splashing in puddles, a car door shutting, Gloria getting into a taxi perhaps, a radio or a record playing popular songs like the intro to "Suspense!" or Hoagy Carmichael singing "Hong Kong Blues," footsteps on wet pavement, dishes clanking together in a nearby restaurant kitchen. Susan suddenly becomes alert. She puts out her cigarette. The hall door handle has begun to turn quietly. Someone is trying to open it. Then there is a quiet knock. Susan does not move.)*

MIKE. *(From offstage.)* Susan. *(Susan does not move. From offstage.)*
Susan, open the door. *(Susan does not move. We hear something being fitted in between the door and the lock. Susan now stands, tense. The door opens. Mike enters. He returns a small tool to his pocket and closes the door. He comes down the steps, angry.)*

Start SUSAN. I thought you were going to call. *(Pause.)* Did you manage to get into the studio? *(Mike's answer is to throw the keys on the floor.)*
No doll?

MIKE. No doll, no desk. How long have you known?

SUSAN. About you? Not as long as I should have.

MIKE. *Do you know where the doll is?*

SUSAN. For a price.

MIKE. How much?

SUSAN. Not money, answers. Sam and Mrs. Roat, true or false?

MIKE. I'm not playing / any more games —

SUSAN. My husband Sam Hendrix was having an affair with Mrs. Roat, true or false!

MIKE. I can't make a deal with you if you don't know where the doll is.

SUSAN. It's in the apartment.

MIKE. Where in the apartment?

SUSAN. Sam and Mrs. / Roat, true or false.

MIKE. If I tell you, *if* I tell you ... you'll give me the doll?

SUSAN. Yes.

MIKE. They didn't know each other, they only met when she sat next to him on the train yesterday.

SUSAN. Sergeant Carlino is a policeman, true or false.

MIKE. False. He *was* a cop, once, a long time ago, but ... no.

SUSAN. You and Sam are old war buddies, he saved your life, you

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on Copyright Page.

owe him. (*Pause. Mike is starting to look sick.*) False. The murdered woman was real, though. Did she have anything to do with this? Or you...?

MIKE. ... She and Carlino and I ... used to work together. Carlino called me last night, said he needed me to help him pull a con, lot of money involved. Told me about your husband, Italy, things I'd need to know.

SUSAN. Did Carlino kill the woman?

MIKE. No.

SUSAN. Did you?

MIKE. No!

SUSAN. Roat? (*Beat.*)

MIKE. Is the doll in the safe?

SUSAN. ... Yes.

MIKE. Then what's the combination?

SUSAN. I won't tell you. (*She starts to back away from Mike. He follows.*)

MIKE. Give it to me.

SUSAN. You'll have to hurt me. More than you imagine. I don't think you can do that.

MIKE. You don't know me.

SUSAN. Some people you can know very quickly, under extreme circumstances.

MIKE. Don't bet on that.

SUSAN. You won't be able to do it. You might hit me once, but that'll be too much for you.

MIKE. It won't be too much for Roat. You wanna know what *Roat's* like under extreme circumstances? Ask Carlino. He's seen him. He's seen his *work*!

SUSAN. Anything he does to me, you'll be doing too! You won't be able to live with that! (*Sound: A sudden and violent revving-up of a truck engine outside. We hear a shout and a crash. Then the truck roars off, its tires screeching.*) ... What was that? (*Mike exits to the bedroom. She calls to him:*) What just happened? (*Mike reenters.*)

MIKE. Roat's dead.

SUSAN. ... Is this another lie to make me tell you / the ...

MIKE. No, it's not a lie! ... Roat killed that woman. He would've killed us too, once we got the doll for him. So we flipped a coin. I would convince Roat to go around and check in the alley, and Carlino would drive two tons of steel through the back of his head.

SUSAN. ... What happens now? ... Mike.

MIKE. ... If we go ... if we leave you alone ... what will you tell the police?

SUSAN. What *can* I? I can't describe you. I don't know who you are.

MIKE. (*Sad smile.*) ... You do, actually.

SUSAN. What about Carlino? The doll / isn't ...

MIKE. I don't want to know. I just wanna get out of here. It's not like we ever knew what's inside of the thing. Could be it's nothin' but stuffing!

SUSAN. (*Almost laughs, eyes wet.*) Yeah.

MIKE. I'll tell Carlino a story, you called the cops before we cut the wire, somethin' ... Give us a running start?

SUSAN. Sure.

MIKE. Thanks. (*For a moment, we can see a faint flicker of light under the hall door, as if someone has struck a match.*)

SUSAN. If that twenty-dollar bill was still at the back of the freezer, I'd give it to you.

MIKE. Fatso said he took *that* yesterday. (*Susan and Mike laugh. He takes her hand. She puts her other hand up to feel his face, but he takes it gently with his other hand and pulls it down.*) No see, no tell. (*Mike turns and goes up the steps.*)

SUSAN. Good luck, lieutenant. (*Mike opens the hall door and turns to Susan.*)

Stop

MIKE. You know the funny thing? I actually *was* a lieutenant once. It wasn't in the — (*Suddenly Mike stiffens. His eyes go wide. He pitches forward and falls down the stairs, clutching at the railing until he collapses at the foot of the steps, dead.*)

SUSAN. Mike? MIKE! (*Roat enters and closes the hall door, locking it. He wears gloves. He wipes his knife and puts it away.*)

ROAT. All the children have gone to bed now, Susan. Now we can talk. (*Roat attaches the chain, padlocks the door, and starts down the steps.*) I knew they'd try something. When Carlino saw the truck coming at him, he did seem awfully taken aback. (*As Roat continues to speak, he checks to make sure Mike is dead, then shoves his body out of our view.*) I understand you noticed my shoes. Wanna know why they squeak? They're orthopedic. Club foot. I wasn't born with it. When I got my draft notice, I wore a work boot two sizes too small for a week and a half. Day I go down for my physical, my foot's bent backwards almost. I get my 4F, but not for the club foot. "Mental Exception." Doctor didn't even *look* at my feet. Well, you know the saying: "The good they take, the bad get to