

TINSELTOWN

Screenplay by

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&

Stiller Studios

ANIMATIC DRAFT
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1 EXT. THE COLLINS HOME - NIGHT

Under a star-studded sky, amidst the expansive, undulating prairies of Midwest America, sits the time-worn, run-down COLLINS FARM. Drawn in by a female voice singing a lullaby, we edge closer to a faintly lit window on the upper floor.

THERESA
*What good is life
Without a song
What will be there
When all is gone
But a melody
That sweet melody
It sang to me*

2 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

THERESA COLLINS, a graceful and caring young mother, gently lulls her five-year-old son, LUKE, to sleep with her soft singing.

THERESA
*If you can dream it
Oh, you can be...*

A troublesome cough interrupts her singing.

LUKE
Mom, your voice is so good, you should be on the radio, you should go to Tinseltown!

THERESA
Oh, I've been there. And so have you.

LUKE
I have?

THERESA
Yes, Luke. You were born there.

FLASHBACK

3 EXT. R.A.T.S. VENUE - NIGHT

A limousine pulls up to a swanky club where a gala event is being hosted. A banner reads: "Welcome to the 1960 RECORDING ARTISTS OF TINSELTOWN SHOWCASE." R.A.T.S. for short.

Amidst a sea of enthusiastic fans and paparazzi, a 5-year younger Theresa steps out. She is greeted by TONY CASH, an industry big wig.

TONY CASH

Theresa, look, tonight you go from
a nobody to a somebody, alright?
Remember: don't just sing it - sell
it, babe!

FLASHBACK ENDS

4 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

We're back with Luke and Theresa.

LUKE

But you never got to sing?

THERESA

I was busy doing something way more
important... Having a baby... Now go
to slee-

Theresa's troublesome cough returns.

5 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - DAY

Theresa and Luke share a tender moment at the piano, her pale
fingers guiding his through the notes. Theresa blindfolds
Luke as he plays. GABE COLLINS, a stern, emotionally distant
farmer, walks in holding an open envelope. He stops short at
the sight of them.

THERESA

Just trust the music, Luke.

GABE

I talked to the bank. It really,
really doesn't look..

THERESA

Not now, hun.

GABE

Sighs

THERESA

It will be ok, hun. Come

CUT TO:

6 EXT. THE COLLINS HOME - PATIO - NIGHT

The music continues.

Under the starlit sky, Luke, Theresa, and Gabe sit together on a porch swing. Theresa, frail and wrapped in a blanket, points at a bright star. Luke spots it, snuggling closer to his mother.

THERESA

Why don't you guys make a wish?

Theresa offers Luke a comforting smile, hiding her pain.

LUKE

I just want you to get well, Mum.

THERESA

I will.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. FARM - MORNING

A new day beaks. A rooster crows.

8 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - MORNING

Luke performs a solo at the piano, while Theresa blindfolds him mid-performance. The visible decline in Theresa's well-being adds a poignant layer to the scene.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COLLINS HOME - MORNING

Theresa sits in a chair, listening, as Luke skillfully plays the piano with remarkable precision, all while blindfolded. Gradually, Theresa becomes a subtle silhouette in the background, blending into the chair.

9 EXT. THE COLLINS HOUSE - PATIO

A melancholy Luke sits on a porch swing with his arms wrapped around himself. He shivers from the cold. Luke looks at the bright star that Theresa pointed out, but as he watches it, the star fades and vanishes.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. CHURCH

Melancholic organ music resonates through the church as people somberly enter.

CUT TO:

11 INT. CHURCH - DAY

The organ music persists as Luke and Gabe listens on the church bench. Theresa's coffin is positioned in front of the priest. As the priest officiates, Luke notices a bird on the windowsill. Gabe places a flower on the coffin. The camera zooms in on the SONGBIRD, while Luke stands by the coffin, fixating on a picture of Theresa.

THERESA (V.O.)

*Let your fear
Have no say
At the end of the day
Trust in the music
To show you the way
I just know
If you can dream it
You can be it
So keep dreaming away*

The SONGBIRD lands on the coffin. Luke gazes at the Songbird, and his sorrow dissipates. He discerns a gaze filled with resolve and optimism.

The music swells as the Songbird gracefully lifts off, signaling for Luke to join. Without hesitation, he follows, chasing the Songbird out of the church and hopping onto his bike

12 I/E. MOURNVILLE

MONTAGE BEGINS

The Songbird takes Luke past a water tower with the town's name - "MOURNVILLE" - emblazoned on the side and then leads him down the town's streets to a music store.

In the window, a poster announces Tony Cash's star SKY's R.A.T.S. win, and another advertises guitar lessons. Luke steps inside.

Inside, Luke learns guitar from a patient teacher.

Later, he's back on the farm practicing guitar by himself as a disapproving Gabe watches from afar.

The Songbird flies above "Jess's Junkyard", where Luke and JESS, a quirky forty-something tomboy, work outdoors with a band-saw, surrounded by an arsenal of tools and old electronics. Moments later, Luke leaves with an electric guitar and an amp on a small wagon.

The Songbird, done with its deeds, flies to the top of a bell tower and perches there while singing loudly. Suddenly, BONG! The bell clangs, sending the Song Bird straight up into the air. SQUAWK! Feathers go flying.

MONTAGE ENDS

13

INT. THE COLLINS FARM - BARN - DAY

A stage is set up. The "house" is packed with fans. Standing in the bright spotlight is nineteen-year-old LUKE COLLINS, a country kid with big-city dreams.

As the introduction to "THE MAGIC OF A SONG" plays, Luke leans into the microphone, his voice steady, confident.

LUKE

Alright. I'd like to dedicate this
song to my mom, who I know is
watching from her VIP seat up
above.

Luke breaks into the first verse:

LUKE (CONT'D)

*We all have a memory
Colored by a song.*

Luke unhooks the microphone from its stand and starts to strut, radiating confidence.

LUKE (CONT'D)

*Growing sweeter with time
You've got yours I got mine
As the past has been and gone.*

Colored lights illuminate the stage, revealing the BAND and BACKUP SINGERS.

Luke attempts a dramatic knee slide across the stage but messes it up and somersaults into a crumpled heap.

Suddenly, ZAP! The power goes out.

The dazzling concert lights are replaced by stark sunlight streaming through the open barn doors. The reality is revealed: Luke is performing to a group of unimpressed COWS. The band members are SCARECROWS posed with instruments.

Through the glaring sunlight, a shadowy figure stands in the doorway, having just flipped off the electricity switch.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Oh, hey, Dad.

Smoke is billowing from Luke's amp.

The shadowy figure in the doorway is revealed to be Gabe.

LUKE (CONT'D)
I think I blew a fuse.

GABE
For crying out loud. How many times
have I told you? The livestock
don't need to be serenaded.

Gabe turns to leave.

LUKE
I sent it in - the song. To that
contest...

GABE
What for?

LUKE
Well, I just thought that-

GABE
It won't do us any good.

Beat.

LUKE
But mom thought that-

GABE
Enough! Get those scarecrows back
to the fields and feed the hogs.

14 EXT. THE COLLINS FARM - PIG PEN - LATER

Luke dumps a bushel of corn into the pen. The HOGS descend on it like locusts. One LITTLE HOG gets edged out. Luke has saved a few ears of corn for him. He feeds the little guy through the fence, away from the other hogs.

A RHYTHMIC SOUND in the background catches Luke's attention. He starts tapping his foot, then stops abruptly.

LUKE
Ah, this isn't who I am.

He returns to feeding the pigs. The rhythmic sound continues. Luke starts tapping his foot again - and stops abruptly.

LUKE (CONT'D)

As far back as I can remember, all
I care about is music!

Guilty, he glances at Gabe, who is driving a tractor on the field, and returns to feeding the pigs. The rhythmic sound continues. Luke starts tapping his foot once more and finally gives in. The "MAGIC OF A SONG" begins to play again. Using an ear of corn as a pretend microphone, Luke breaks into song.

LUKE (CONT'D)

*My first year of Junior High
I was the Rocket Man.*

Luke does a spin turn, and magically, he is wearing a vintage Elton John glam-rock costume.

LUKE (CONT'D)

*Then came Yellow Brick Road
Thought my mind would explode
I remain the biggest fan...*

As Luke continues to serenade his audience of pigs, his chores become a part of his performance.

15 EXT. THE COLLINS FARM - LATER

Back in his familiar jeans and flannel shirt, Luke sets about mending a section of the farm fence that borders the property.

LUKE

*They don't make 'em like that no
more
But you are in for bliss...*

After he's done, he handsprings over the fence and heads off to the farm. The section of the fence wobbles and falls over. Then, like dominos, the other sections fall.

16 EXT. THE COLLINS FARM - LATER

In the glow of the setting sun, Luke shears a SHEEP, leaving it with a woolly Mohawk.

LUKE

*So don't get too cynical to explore
What can happen with a mirror
And a little pizzazz...*

17 INT. THE COLLINS FARM - BARN - LATER

Luke is brushing one of the HORSES. He uses the brush as a microphone.

LUKE

*Where were you
When a hairbrush turned you into a
star...*

An accidental kick from the Horse sends Luke flying out of the barn.

18 EXT. CROP FIELD - LATER

Luke is in the field playing air guitar along with several SCARECROWS that have come to life.

LUKE

*Where were you
Hitting hard on your very first air
guitar...*

19 EXT. THE COLLINS FARM - LATER

Luke is behind the wheel of the tractor, plowing the fields.

LUKE

If your moments finally come along

From above, we see the tractor making crop patterns in the shape of musical notes.

20 EXT. THE COLLINS FARM - LATER

Luke loads crates of produce into the back of an old truck.

LUKE

*Then lose yourself somewhere in the
magic, Magic Of A Song
Magic, Magic, Magic...*

He gets behind the wheel and backs into the barn, causing the family farm logo to tilt. Unaware that the truck's tailgate is down, he drives off, leaving a trail of fallen produce behind.

21 INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Luke plays an imaginary keyboard on the dash. He has no clue.

22 EXT. FARMER'S MARKET - LATER

Luke pulls into the parking lot where other FARMERS are selling their produce off the back of their trucks.

MUSIC ENDS.

Luke discovers the back of his truck is empty. He smacks his forehead in disbelief.

23 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - LATER

Gabe paces the kitchen floor, his face a mix of anger and frustration, while Luke watches.

GABE
That was a month's worth of income
you scattered on the side of the
road there! How am I supposed to
pay the bills now?

Avoiding eye contact, Luke glances at his watch.

GABE (CONT'D)
Are you listening to me?

Gabe storms out of the kitchen and--

GABE (CONT'D)
Darn crooning, For the love of my-

-- SLAMS the front door, leaving Luke alone in the room.
After a beat, Luke--

24 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

-- races down the stairs to the basement. He wades through various musical equipment; a drum kit, electric guitar with amp, and an old upright piano.

He turns on a small black and white TV. He adjusts the rabbit ears antenna and tunes in his favorite show, "The Tinseltown Sound". The show is akin to old music shows like "American Bandstand" and "Soul Train".

Luke stares at the screen, mesmerized.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
And here's the host of the
Tinseltown Sound, Gig Starling...

ON TV

We meet GIG STARLING, slick, charming, handsome.

GIG
Greetings, all you dudes and foxy
mama's out there! Are you ready to
get some boogie down in Tinseltown?

TEEN DANCERS clad in outlandish polyester clothing cheer.

GIG (CONT'D)
Now, before we get our groove on,
I've got a far-out guest.
(MORE)

GIG (CONT'D)

This man is a songwriter, a music producer, and dig this, oh my goodness Gig, this man is so fly that even his name is ca-shing, money. Mister Tony Cash!

Luke's eyes are glued to the screen. He idolizes TONY CASH. He looks to the wall where he has a Tony Cash poster hanging.

Gig greets Tony, who is in his mid-forties. Although he's a little old for the town, he's keeping it together with his snazzy leisure suits and gregarious personality.

TONY CASH

You know what Gig, you're beautiful. That's right. Alright, listen up, all you wanna-be train wreck Casanovas and disco queens out there, listen. If you sent in a song to the RATS committee, make sure you check your mailbox. Why?

25 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - SAME

As we continue to hear Tony speak, we watch Gabe bring in the mail and sort it out.

TONY CASH (V.O.)

Invites have gone out for the special wild card you-wish-you-could-be-me category. Alright?

Gabe comes across an envelope from Tinseltown. He studies it.

TONY CASH (V.O.)

Amateurs will audition for a single spot to perform at the RATS right here in Tinseltown.

Gabe throws the envelope in the trash.

26 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - BASEMENT - SAME

Luke's eyes are still glued to the screen.

GIG

And don't forget! The first prize at the Recording Artists of Tinseltown Showcase is --

Gig holds up a check for "100K DOLLARS".

GIG (CONT'D)

-- 100 000 dollars!

TONY CASH

You're damned right, Gig, so good
luck to everyone, straight from us
in Tinseltown. And remember always:
don't just sing it - sell it!

(BEAT)

Now it is my pleasure to introduce
a vocal superstar, singing her
classic hit, "Casanova", which I
wrote and produced, my client and
friend: the lovely and talented
Sky!

SKY appears on screen and breaks into her disco hit
"CASANOVA". She's evocative of Chaka Khan; powerful voice,
effervescent stage presence, and impressive wigs.

SKY

*You can go to town
In the spotlight
You can spin my body
Hold me real tight
And you're free to use
Any pick up line
But you got yourself to blame
When falling from cloud number nine
Do I have to say the obvious...*

CROSS CUT TO:

27 EXT. THE COLLINS HOME - FRONT LAWN - LATER

Luke excitedly checks the mailbox but finds it empty. His
enthusiasm fades to disappointment.

28 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - LATER

Gabe's in the kitchen doing the dishes. Luke enters.

LUKE

Hey, I'm sorry about earlier.

(BEAT)

But after I make it big in
Tinseltown, I will take care of all
your money problems.

GABE

Oh yeah, sure, and if you don't get
invited?

Gabe stiffens and accidentally breaks the glass that he
washes. Blood on his finger.

GABE (CONT'D)

Holy buckets.

Gabe goes to a cupboard to find a plaster for his small wound.

LUKE

Don't worry. I will. Like Mama always said: If you can dream it, you can be it.

GABE

Well, Sometimes dreams turn into nightmares.

The moment turns maudlin. Awkward silence. Luke cleans up the broken glass and throws it in the trash.

LUKE

What's this?

As Luke pulls the trash bag out, he spots the envelope from Tinseltown. He picks it out of the bag and eyes Gabe.

LUKE (CONT'D)

You threw this out?

GABE

I threw that out because I was trying to save you some heartache.

Luke opens the envelope and scans the letter.

LUKE

Holy camoly- I'm in!

Gabe lets out a heavy sigh.

LUKE (CONT'D)

They want me to audition. Gosh, almighty, I need to pack. I gotta get the keys to the truck...

GABE

You're not driving my truck to Tinseltown. Look, your home is here in Mournville.

Gabe hands Luke a newspaper, "The Mournville Gazette", folded to show the job listings

GABE (CONT'D)

It's time you quit daydreaming, clean up, and start acting like an adult.

LUKE
But I got in...

GABE
Son. There's nothing for us there.

Gabe leaves the room.

29 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - BASEMENT - LATER

Luke looks through the "wanted ads". He groans and starts hammering chords on the piano. This is the intro to "NOBODY'S BUSINESS".

LUKE
*Music is my life. Why can't you
understand that, Pa?*

He tosses the ads aside and starts singing:

*Cut your hair
Get a job
Or you end up
A slob.*

Gabe enters from behind and tosses the "wanted ads" down on Luke's keyboard. He sings.

GABE
Stop the hammering on that piano.

30 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - BEDROOM - LATER

Gabe has dressed Luke in his oversized suit. Luke looks like he's going to choke as Gabe knots the necktie.

GABE
*It's not art, Only noise
But you still have a choice...*

31 EXT. STREET - LATER

Luke walks through downtown Mournville. He passes a MAN IN A SUIT. The Man sings to Luke.

MAN IN SUIT
*Wear a suit, and you got places to
go...*

Luke sheds his dad's suit, revealing his own relaxed country-boy attire underneath.

LUKE
*Seems like everyone has got
opinions
You don't need when you are young.*

32 EXT. USED CAR LOT - LATER

Luke is looking at a cool, used sports car. The sticker on the windshield shows the price, "\$100". Luke smiles until the SALESMAN wipes off the dust on the windshield, revealing the real price, "\$1000".

LUKE

*Now so what
If I slip
I don't care
This is it
Threw the dice and bet my soul
Paid the price of rock and roll.*

33 INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Luke walks in, holding a "HELP WANTED" sign. A beat later, he is dressed as a waiter. He spins and dances his way through the busy kitchen, picking up food orders and adding them to his waiter's tray.

Luke explodes through the kitchen's double doors, carrying a ridiculous amount of plates on his tray. Instead of going directly to the table, he prances around the dining area.

LUKE

*So call me crazy
But I can't make out the sense and
rhyme
If I step out of line
If I waste all my time
Should be nobody's business
Nobody's business but mine.*

He spins to a stop, and the plates slip off his tray, covering the CUSTOMERS with greasy food.

34 EXT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Gabe drives by in his pickup truck just as Luke is being booted from the restaurant. Gabe cruises alongside Luke as he tosses his waiter apron aside.

GABE

Suit yourself, If you fail.

Luke comes face to face with a COP.

COP

*If you end up in jail
This society can really get cold.*

A chorus of CITIZENS bark at him.

CITIZENS
*Think of that, Think of this
 What you're putting at risk.*

A disheveled HOMELESS MAN wags his finger at Luke.

HOMELESS MAN
*Where you hang your hat the day you
 get old.*

Luke ignores them all and turns the corner. He's immediately greeted by an ARMY RECRUITER. Luke waves him off. Next, he is approached by a WOMAN looking for Peace Corps volunteers; Luke shakes his head—lastly, a CLERGYMAN beckons to him. Luke walks right past.

LUKE
*Seems like everyone has got
 opinions
 You don't need when you are young
 Now so what
 If I slip, I don't care
 This is it
 Threw the dice and bet my soul
 Paid the price of rock and roll.*

35 EXT. WATER TOWER - LATER

Luke climbs the ladder to the town water tower.

He reaches the top and dances around the railing.

LUKE
*So call me crazy
 But I can't make out the sense and
 rhyme
 If I step out of line
 If I waste all my time
 Should be nobody's business
 Nobody's business, but mine.*

36 EXT. THE COLLINS FARM - LATER

Luke hangs off the outside of a tractor, hauling a hay baler. Gabe is at the wheel.

LUKE
*Father, father show some mercy
 Why do you hold on so tight*

Gabe grips the wheel tight, and stares straight ahead.

37 EXT. THE COLLINS HOME - LATER

Luke trails Gabe as he heads to the farmhouse.

LUKE

*Take a step back, try to trust that
Your only son will get it right.*

Gabe enters the house and closes the door on Luke.

38 EXT. FIELD - LATER

Luke runs through the open field with reckless abandon.

LUKE

*Call me crazy
But what do I have got to lose*

Luke leaps on top of a rolled-up hay bale. Like a log roller, he rides the big wheel of hay, down into a valley and up to the top of a hill with a beautiful vista.

LUKE (CONT'D)

*Now if God had a plan
Making me a song man
I can't walk in someone else's
shoes.*

Luke spies a Greyhound bus heading out of town. He smiles.

LUKE (CONT'D)

*So call me crazy
But I can't make out the sense and
rhyme*

Luke races back to Mournville on a bike.

CUT TO:

39 EXT. MOURNVILLE - LATER

Luke leaps and spins as he dances down Main Street. The citizens look on and shake their heads.

LUKE

*If I step out of line
If I waste all my time
Should be nobody's business
Nobody's business but mine.*

He ends the song by attempting to do his dramatic knee slide in front of the bus station. He's unsuccessful, and ends up flat on his face. The bus leaves without him.

40 INT. BUS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Luke is at the counter with the bus station CLERK. Luke empties his wallet of all his money.

CLERK

Not that it's any of my business,
but why are you heading to
Tinseltown?

LUKE

A little something called...
Destiny.

CLERK

Well, your destiny might well be in
Bakersfield. 'Cuz that's as far as
\$24.31 is going get ya. Next.

Luke looks at the clerk, pleadingly.

The clerk moves on to other things.

41 EXT. STREET - LATER

Luke is sitting on the curb, head in his hands.

LUKE

Okay. I can't afford a car. Not
even a bus ticket.

The Songbird flies up to Luke and tweets. Luke looks up.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Ah. If only I had wings, I could
fly to Tinseltown.

The Songbird continues to tweet as she flies around Luke's
head. Luke eyes the bird with curiosity as she flutters above
a handbill attached to a light pole.

He takes a closer look at the flyer and raises an eyebrow.

LUKE (CONT'D)

(reading)
Harvest Festival Talent Show. \$500
first prize? This is exactly what I
need!

42 EXT. JESS' JUNKYARD - LATER

Luke wanders through a junkyard filled with old furniture,
outdated electronics, and dilapidated cars.

LUKE

(calling out)
Jess! Jessica Doggett! Are you
here?

From atop a mountain of decaying vehicles, the trunk of the
car on top of the pile opens up. Out pops JESS, the quirky
forty-something tomboy. She calls down to Luke.

JESS

Hi Luke! Up here! What's going on?

LUKE

I've entered the talent contest tomorrow. Just wondered if you have a spare fuse for the amp.

Jess quickly descends the mountain of cars like a skilled rock climber. She reaches the bottom.

JESS

Guess so. Hold on, I'll be right there
Ok, come on, follow my lead...

Luke follows Jess through an impossible maze of junk. They exit a corridor of scrap metal into an area filled with discarded furniture. Jess pulls off a couch seat cushion and reaches around in the crevices.

JESS (CONT'D)

You're gonna have some stiff competition. Bobby over at the fillin' station is doing his barnyard animal impressions. And I gotta tell ya, his Anglo-Nubian Goat is spot on.

She laughs as she finds the fuse.

JESS (CONT'D)

Here you go, honey. Anything else you need?

LUKE

(Thinks)

Do you have anything, something -- like spectacular? Really selling?

43 EXT. JESS' JUNK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

They stop at a corroded shipping container hidden behind a wall of scrap. Jess hesitates before pulling the door open, revealing stacks of old marine flares.

JESS

Spectacular? I found those in an old boat that I scrapped, so maybe you can use them...

Luke's eyes light up.

LUKE

Oh, Jess, this is genius! Oh, thank you

Luke holds up a flare, fires it, and almost hits the bird, flying above them.

JESS
Are you sure about this?

LUKE
Absolutely!

44 EXT. THE COLLINS FARM - NEXT DAY

Gabe tinkers with the engine of his tractor. Luke exits the farmhouse with his guitar slung over his back, wheeling the small amp behind him.

He pauses and clears his throat. Gabe looks up from his work.

LUKE
Hey Pop! I finished my chores.

Gabe nods.

LUKE (CONT'D)
I go on at noon... At the festival...

Gabe stares at him for a beat, then returns to working on the engine. Luke heads off down the road to town.

45 EXT. HARVEST FESTIVAL - LATER

Gasoline Bob is on stage, wrapping up his crowd-pleasing barnyard animal impressions. As the audience roars with laughter, off to the side, Luke is setting up a makeshift fireworks launcher.

HOST
All right, all right, Give it up
for Gasoline Bob, everybody!

Gasoline Bob waves and exits the stage, the crowd's applause lingering.

HOST (CONT'D)
All right, all right. Now, Next
let's welcome to the stage,
Mournville's very own: Luke
Collins!

Luke takes the stage, leaving the launcher behind him. With a spark in his eyes, he walks up to the mike. The opening notes of "MAGIC OF A SONG" ring out and he begins to sing:

LUKE

*Where were you
When a hairbrush turned you into a
star.*

Jess, in the audience, watches Luke. She gives him a supportive thumbs up.

LUKE (CONT'D)

*Where were you
Hitting hard on your very first air
guitar...*

Out in the crowd, next to Jess, Luke spots a familiar face - Gabe. His presence seems to give Luke a jolt of energy, and he pours even more enthusiasm into his performance.

Gabe's expression is unreadable, his thoughts hidden.

Following an electrifying guitar solo, Luke reaches the song's grand finale.

LUKE (CONT'D)

*If your moments finally come along
Then lose yourself somewhere in the
magic, Magic Of A Song!*

As the final note hangs in the air, he steps on a foot switch, igniting the fireworks. The first rockets shoot upward, dazzling the crowd.

Luke, in the height of his performance, sure to win, goes for his signature rock-and-roll knee slide. In his fervor, he accidentally tugs his guitar cord on the foot-switch, causing it to snag the fireworks launcher. It tips over, its angle now aimed at the audience and the nearby buildings.

A stream of flares rockets into the crowd and towards the community hay barn, which ignites instantly.

JESS

Oh geez, the blazes, I'm burning up.

The Harvest Festival descends into chaos. Luke, still on his knees on the stage, watches the pandemonium he's unintentionally caused unfold. Off-stage, Jess stares in horror at the scene, her eyes wide in shock. Across the panicking crowd, Luke locks eyes with Gabe, whose look of disappointment is painfully clear.

46

INT. THE COLLINS HOME - LATER

Gabe and Luke enter the house. Luke finally breaks the ice.

LUKE

So, did you like the song?

GABE

That's what you want to talk about? Did I like the song? You caught the communal hay barn on fire, Luke! Who do you think is going to have to pay for all the repairs and the damages?

LUKE

Uhm... I'll pay for it.

GABE

Oh! Swell. With what? We might lose our farm here. Your farm.

LUKE

If you would just let me go to Tinseltown, I'll figure it out. There is a hundred-thousand dollar prize. If I'll win it, then we're solid. I'm good at music. Why can't you just see that I suck at everything else?

GABE

You don't seem to be doing so well with music either.

LUKE

Why can't you just believe in me, pop? Is it that hard? This is why mom gave up, isn't it? Because you didn't believe in her either?

Gabe freezes in place. He gives Luke a stern look.

GABE

I've been there! It's not about belief. I know what they want, and you're not it. And about Theresa; You don't know what you're talking about.

47

INT. THE COLLINS HOME - LUKE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Luke is packing a bag. Gabe enters.

GABE

What do you think you're doing? Are you gonna walk there?

LUKE

If I have to. You crushed Mom's dream, but you're not gonna crush mine. I'm gonna finish what she started.

Luke grabs his guitar and puts it in the case.

GABE
Okay. Swell. We'll see how far you get.

LUKE
Oh, I'm gonna go far. Real far!

48 EXT. DIRT ROAD - LATER

Luke is determined as he marches down the country road alone.

LUKE
Alright. It's 300 miles to Tinseltown. If I walk 3 miles every hour, it'll take 100 hours. That's, like, four days of... continuous walking.

He stops.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Who am I kidding? I can't do this.

A horn honks. Luke flashes a smile of relief.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Pop? I knew he wouldn't let me down.

Luke turns, expecting to see his father, but instead, it's Jess, in an old ramshackle car from the junkyard.

Jess pulls up and hops out.

JESS
Hey Luke! You can't walk to Tinseltown, you know?

LUKE
Yeah, I... I figured.

Jess holds out the keys to the car.

JESS
I.. Here. Take these keys. You know, that whole fireworks thing. It was my fault it happened. I know it's just an old junker, but I figure it'll get you there.

LUKE
What? No foolin'? No, no, no, I can't take this from you.

JESS
No, It's all yours. And here...

She hands him a slip of paper.

JESS (CONT'D)
My nephew Gregory just moved out there from Nebraska last year. Go look him up. He knows you're coming. He says you can stay with him for a while.

LUKE
Jess, oh my goodness, I don't know what to say. I don't know how, but I'll pay you back. Whatever you need.

JESS
Don't worry about it. Just go make us proud. Okay?

Luke is all smiles as he grips the keys. But then he's hit with a sudden wave of hesitation.

JESS (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

LUKE
My whole life, I've been dreaming about this moment. What if I mess up? What if I fail?

JESS
Honey, there's no such thing as failure. There's only... Early attempts at success.
(Beat)
And with each attempt, you'll get closer and closer to realizing your dreams, so don't give up.

Luke thinks about it for a beat. He sighs and smiles.

LUKE
I'm doing this. I'm really doing this!

JESS
Well, then it's time to stop talking and start doing!

LUKE
I'm going to Tinseltown!

JESS
Okay! Still talking, not doing.

Luke settles in behind the wheel. Dramatic music swells as Luke pulls away. Then chugga-chugga, CLUNK - the car stalls.

Luke turns the key, and the car comes to life again. He slowly pulls away, a plume of black smoke belching from the exhaust pipe.

JESS (CONT'D)

You might want to keep it under 25
for the first 20 miles or so.

LUKE

I can't hear you, I'm already...
Love you too, thanks, Jess!

JESS

Push the gas! Push the gas!

LUKE

I appreciate you too!

Luke's on his way to Tinseltown.

49 OMITTED

50 OMITTED

51 INT. LUKE'S CAR - NIGHT

The sky is filled with stars and a slender crescent moon. The car, a beacon of light in the darkness, whizzes past a sign: "TINSELTOWN 275 MILES". Luke yawns.

CUT TO:

52 INT. LUKE'S CAR - DAWN

Luke passes a sign that reads, "TINSELTOWN 1 MILE AHEAD".

As Luke follows a bend in the road, he is met with the glorious sight of the Tinseltown skyline in the distance. With the sun rising in the background, it looks magical.

As soon as Luke passes by the "WELCOME TO TINSELTOWN" sign, he is awe-struck. Then he sees the "TINSELTOWN" sign nestled in the hills above the city. Like a tourist, he slams on the brakes to get a picture with his Polaroid camera.

Tires screech, horns blare. Angry MOTORISTS bark at him.

MOTORIST

Move that piece of junk!

Luke gives them an apologetic wave.

LUKE
 Sorry, I'm new in town.
 (BEAT)
 Sorry!

Luke proceeds into Tinseltown, but slams on his brakes every time he sees a famous landmark to take a picture.

He spots the JIVE TOWN RECORDS building, designed to look like a stack of vinyl records sitting on a turntable. Stop. Screech. Horns.

LUKE (CONT'D)
 Sorry!

He drives by the iconic STARLIGHT BOWL, with its distinctive enormous bandshell. Stop. Screech. Horns.

LUKE (CONT'D)
 Sorry. I'm making a scrapbook!

Luke continues down Tinseltown Boulevard, through the heart of the city. He is wide-eyed as he cruises past music clubs, fancy restaurants, and high-end luxury stores.

He spots one club in particular, "THE VELVET ROPE".

LUKE (CONT'D)
 Oh, my goodness. There it is, Tony Cash's club.

Luke parks the car and gets out. He approaches the outside of the building as if it were a holy shrine. He eyes the poster of Tony Cash out front. Luke trains his camera on the poster.

LUKE (CONT'D)
 King of Tinseltown.

As Luke takes a picture, we freeze frame on the poster of the grinning face of Tony Cash.

CUT TO:

53 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - SAME

CU on Tony's face.

TONY CASH
 What do you freakin mean I'm no longer the king?

Reveal Tony speaking with Sky in his swanky club. His eager, much younger right-hand man FRANK at his side.

SKY

To be honest, I've heard whispers
that you've lost your touch.

TONY CASH

Sky-Licious, have you been seeing
other producers on me?

SKY

Baby, of course I have. Hip. Young.
Fresh blood. I mean, new beats...

TONY CASH

Well, I'm hip. And I'm young...ish.

Tony runs his fingers through his hair, causing the wig he's
wearing to slip on his head. He straightens it.

SKY

Listen. I need a chart-buster,
Tony! You have it, or you don't?

Tony stammers, his confidence waning.

TONY CASH

I, um...

FRANK jumps in, quick to his rescue.

FRANK

Of course, Tony has a song for you.

SKY

Oh, ok, good, great? Well, let's
hear it.

FRANK

Ah, there is refinement. Sky wants
the best, Sky gets the best.

Sky looks unimpressed.

SKY

When? What are we talking about
here?

FRANK

Three days.

Sky laughs

SKY

You got two.

She leaves.

TONY CASH

What about this song you just promised her?

FRANK

It's outta sight. She's really gonna dig it.

TONY CASH

There's nothing to dig. I ain't got no song!

FRANK

Yet! But thanks to me, you have two whole days to crank one out.

TONY CASH

Have you lost... have you been paying attention? Look, there's no way! Sky's rejected like the last twenty-seven songs I brought her, right? We need some new blood! We need new blood, Frank. A fresh new songwriter who can write a hit. It ain't me.

FRANK

Genius. That makes a lot of sense; I like it.

TONY CASH

Cause if I can deliver Sky a number-one song that will lead to record deals and big fat contracts, you know what that means?

FRANK

Ca-shing?

Tony's eyes go wide. He launches into "CASH IS KING".

TONY CASH

*Ca-shing, Ca-shing, Ca-shing
Shing-shing.*

All of a sudden, the empty safe pops open, revealing wads of money. Tony grabs fists full of bills and stuffs them in his pockets.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

*Got an odd fascination
You can call obscene
With the mighty dollar
And the color green.*

54 INT. TONY'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Tony fluffs his pillow filled with cash. He leaps on his bed, causing dollar bills to shoot out from his mattress. He lays on a bed covered with money.

TONY CASH
*My pillow's stuffed
 My mattress too
 Cause I sleep on dough
 Hey, what else is new?*

55 EXT. TONY'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

In his house, Tony approaches the walk-in wall safe with a greedy look. He opens it up, to find it completely empty - besides a few pennies. Tony looks shocked and concerned.

TONY CASH
*Got to save what you can from the
 IRS
 I am a pennies man
 Take a guess.*

56 INT. TONY'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Tony flips over the seat cover on his couch and finds loose change. Tony finds money in the pockets of a pair of pants in the laundry.

TONY CASH
*I love cash
 Cash is king
 I love cash
 Bling, bling, bling
 Oh, I love it
 When the change goes
 Ca-shing, Ca-shing, Ca-shing
 Shing-shing.*

Tony dances around his luxury home, emptying piggy banks and taking wads of cash out of coffee cans.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)
*Every single coin's
 Getting my respect
 Every Benjamin
 That I collect
 Working for what's dear to me
 This life ain't no lottery.*

Tony drops down to his knees as if he's about to pray. Instead, he removes a floorboard and empties the crawl space of cash.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

*Praise the Lord what a straight-up
guy
Who can make it fall down from the
sky
A little bread
For everyone
Now forget what I said
And have some fun*

Tony's on a ladder. He has removed a ceiling panel and pulls a large bag of money out of the space. He pulls so hard that the bag bursts open and rains down on him.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

*I love cash
Okay
I love cash
Alright
I'm just a little crazy about it,
honey
Whatever
It's raining money
Ooh
Wow*

Tony pulls out a vacuum with a long suction hose. He sucks up money from the floor. The vacuum bag balloons get bigger and bigger.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

*I love cash
Cash is king
I love cash
Bling, bling, bling
Oh, I love it
When the change goes
Ca-shing, Ca-shing, Ca-shing
Shing-shing.*

Tony opens the empty walk-in wall safe. He switches the reverse flow button on the vacuum and shoots the cash into the safe.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

*I love cash
Cash is king
I love cash
Bling, bling, bling
Oh, I love it
When the change goes
Ca-shing, Ca-shing, Ca-shing
Shing-shing.*

57

INT. HIP CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Tony breezes past the DOORMAN and tosses a wad of cash at him.

Tony settles into a VIP booth with a bunch of YOUNG ATTRACTIVE PEOPLE, including a STUNNING WOMAN in a shimmering green dress with gold dollar signs.

Tony pops a bottle of champagne.

TONY CASH
*Spread em' like confetti on the
 floor
 Where that came from there's a
 whole lot more
 A whole lot of cash you're in
 Tony's world
 You don't have to ask, these are
 Tony's girls.*

We follow the cork as it shoots through the ceiling and into the sky. The cork passes a private jet with dollar signs on the tail. We push in through the window to find Tony and his gang having a mile-high party.

Reveal the PILOT is a vivacious female. She gives Tony a wink, puts the plane on autopilot, and joins the party.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)
*Limitless credit
 Dreaming bout my own jet
 Sippin' on them cool drinks
 Looking at the sunset
 Ask the captain
 Man, did we land yet
 No speaking English
 Love is my language.*

CUT TO:

58 INT. TONY'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

In a bookshelf is an old black and white photo of 5-year-old Tony, living in a shantytown under the bridges of New York with his poor Italian parents. A tear on his chin.

TONY CASH
*Come on and bring a friend
 For a while
 He'll teach you how to spend
 It's going to get wild
 Tony style.*

59 EXT. TINSELTOWN BLVD - DAY

Tony is the grand marshal of the "Money Parade". He sits atop a float made entirely of paper money and coins.

SPECTATORS toss coins to him. He catches them with a large butterfly net.

TONY CASH

*I love cash
Cash is king
Oh
Bling, bling, bling*

Tony jumps off the float and leads the MARCHING BAND down the street.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

*Oh, I love it
When the change goes
Ca-shing, Ca-shing, Ca-shing
Shing-shing.*

Spectators clap along with Tony.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

*Clap your hands if you like money
Clap your hands have no worry
Clap your hands
Hey baby
Ca-shing, Ca-shing, Ca-shing
Shing- shing.*

Fireworks explode above into the shapes of dollar signs. The Band assumes the formation of a dollar sign. Tony ends up at a beautiful city fountain. He jumps in the water and prances with joy as he scoops up coins.

*Clap your hands if you like money
Clap your hands have no worry
Clap your hands, Hey baby
Ca-shing, Ca-shing, Ca-shing
Shing -shing!*

Tony reaches his hands to the sky as gold coins rain down on him. While showered with money, we hear Frank calling out:

FRANK (V.O.)

Tony...
(BEAT)
Tony!

Tony snaps out of his fantasy. He's back in *The Velvet Rope* with Frank. Instead of money raining down on him, it's water from the ceiling.

TONY CASH

What's going on?

FRANK

The pipe in the ceiling. It burst again.

Tony looks at the table. The same photo of him as a 5-year-old. Water pouring down over it.

TONY CASH
 Get a freaking bucket and a wrench.
 And then find me a songwriter!

60 OMITTED

61 OMITTED

CUT TO:

62 EXT. EAST TINSELTOWN

LUKE
 1207 Starlight Boulevard...

This is the side of Tinseltown you don't see on TV: no flashy architecture or glowing neon, just rundown storefronts and low-rent apartments.

Luke drives down streets lined with overflowing dumpsters, boarded-up windows, and homeless people in rags lying on cardboard mattresses.

Luke rolls up to an old red brick building next to the elevated freeway. A sign out front reads, "Villa Elaine Apartments - No Vacancy".

63 INT. VILLA ELAINE APARTMENTS - LOBBY - LATER

Luke looks up Gregory's apartment number in the directory posted in the lobby. He finds it.

LUKE
 14B.

When he turns, he is met with a frightening sight. Is she a witch? No, she's TRUDY LARUE, an aging actress in her late 70's. A relic from the silent movie era, her dramatic makeup is almost clown-like. She roams the halls in her housecoat and slippers. She speaks with an affected accent.

TRUDY
 Well, hello there, cutie. I'm Trudy LaRue.

LUKE
 Luke Collins.

TRUDY
 New in town?

LUKE
 Yepp. Just got here today.

TRUDY

I remember my first day: September 15th, 1927. Sure, the first decade was rough, but oh - do I have things I could tell you...

LUKE

Oh, I bet you would, which I'd also love to hear, but I've got someone to meet right now, so I'm so sorry. I got to boogie.

Luke starts to leave.

TRUDY

Best of luck to you, young Romeo. May your path to success be as fruitful as mine.

Luke is a bit disturbed at the notion of ending up like her.

64 INT. VILLA ELAINE APARTMENTS - HALLWAY - LATER

Luke pushes the doorbell to the apartment, and the hallway lights flicker. The door opens, and we meet GREGORY, early 20's, affable and effervescent.

GREGORY

Luke! Fantastic, you made it.

65 INT. GREGORY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

GREGORY

I'm making ramen noodles for dinner. You wish to partake?

LUKE

Eh. Sure. Thanks!

Gregory fills up a pack of noodles with water from the coffee maker. Shakes it and splits the content between two old mugs. Luke looks confused.

GREGORY

Anyway. The stove is on the fritz, so I cook everything in my coffee maker, primo!

He sets the mugs on the wobbly table and hands Luke a fork.

GREGORY (CONT'D)

I don't have any plates, though. So we eat a'la poverty

Gregory digs in. Luke is hesitant, but eventually joins him.

GREGORY (CONT'D)
So, You have your audition for the
R.A.T.S. tomorrow. How are we
feeling? Nervous?

LUKE
A little.

GREGORY
I was a wreck.

LUKE
You auditioned?

GREGORY
Last year. Of course I didn't get
in. There were like 300 singers
competing for one measly little
wildcard spot. It's more of a
publicity stunt than anything else.

LUKE
And you stayed even though you
didn't make it?

GREGORY
I haven't made it yet. Look, the
whole overnight success deal is...
it's not a thing.

Gregory gets up and starts putting on a jacket and a bow tie.

GREGORY (CONT'D)
You know, you write like a 100
songs, maybe more, and THEN maybe
they'll listen to one. It's all
about the hustle and grind.

GREGORY (CONT'D)
Anyway, I gotta go.

LUKE
Oh...

Luke inspects Gregory, all dressed up.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Are you going now? I just met you.

GREGORY
I valet cars over at La-La's.
You'll never guess whose car I
valeted last night...

LUKE
Who?

GREGORY

Tony Cash.

LUKE

What? No way! I love Tony Cash!

GREGORY

Oh my god, me too. I left a demo tape on his front seat; fingers crossed he'll listen to it.

(BEAT)

I gotta scoot.

LUKE

Okay, I'll see you tomorrow, Greg.

GREGORY

Oh, by the way, close the window before you go to sleep. There's a pesky raccoon in the neighborhood. He's a bit of a bandit. He likes to take things.

66 INT. GREGORY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Luke closes the window and retreats to the saggy couch. He winds up his alarm clock, lays down, and pulls up a ratty sheet to cover himself. Sound of police sirens speeding by. Static glow from a flickering street light illuminates the ceiling.

Luke closes his eyes for a beat, then opens them.

LUKE

Oh man, I'm... I'm never gonna fall asleep.

Luke is wide-eyed, staring at the ceiling. After a few moments, he faintly hears an ANGELIC VOICE singing. Intrigued, he goes to the window and opens it.

The singing comes from one of the other apartments and softly echoes through the courtyard.

ANGELIC VOICE (O.S.)

*Sunshine outside
Rain inside
People everywhere
But you're nowhere*

LUKE

Wowsers, That's what I call a good voice.

Luke finds the heavenly voice soothing - his entire face relaxes. He rests his head on the window sill as his eyes grow heavy.

CUT TO:

67 INT. GREGORY'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

No more singing. Luke is sound asleep at the window. Out of the darkness, a RACCOON appears and crawls into the apartment. He rummages around, looking for something to pilfer. He zeroes in on the alarm clock.

DISSOLVE TO:

68 INT. GREGORY'S APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING

The sun is up, but Luke is still sound asleep at the window. The Songbird starts buzzing around Luke's head, tweeting madly. Luke stirs awake. He gets up and looks for the alarm clock, but it's gone. Luke looks back at the open window.

LUKE

Oh, no...

He eyes the clock on the wall and freaks.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Oh, I'm late!!!

69 EXT. VILLA ELAINE APARTMENTS - LATER

Luke fires up the junker car and speeds away.

70 EXT. STARLIGHT BLVD - LATER

Luke races down the street, weaving in and out of traffic. He checks his watch - he can still make it. Suddenly, the car in front of him comes to a stop. Luke slams on the brakes.

LUKE

(irritated)

Why did you stop!?

The DRIVER takes a picture of a Tinseltown landmark. Luke lays on the horn and pulls around him.

DRIVER

Sorry...

LUKE

Are you!?

Luke speeds ahead, then turns onto Tinseltown Blvd. Once again, he has to slam on the brakes because of gridlock traffic. Cars are not moving.

Luke looks at his watch, then the map.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Okay. Two blocks, I can make it.

Luke bails and leaves his car. He races down the street, between cars. At one point, the cars are so close together that he has to run over them, leap-frogging from one vehicle to the next.

71 EXT. RATS VENUE - LATER

Luke finally arrives. He approaches the beefy TALENT COORDINATOR out front. Luke's out of breath.

LUKE
Collins. Luke Collins. Nine o'clock slot. Right there.

The talent coordinator looks at his clipboard and nods.

TALENT COORDINATOR
Ah, what did you say, Luke Collins?
Oh yeah, there you are - the nine o'clock slot.

LUKE
Thank you!

TALENT COORDINATOR
Unfortunately, it's nine fifteen.

LUKE
What?

TALENT COORDINATOR
Means see you next year. Maybe.

72 EXT. TINSELTOWN BLVD - LATER

Luke, heart heavy, stumbles down Tinseltown Blvd. As he walks past the Velvet Rope club, Tony's grinning picture stares down at him. The sight only deepens his melancholy.

Suddenly, he spots his car being fastened to a tow truck outside the Velvet Rope Club. The TOW TRUCK DRIVER, a burly man with no-nonsense air, secures the chains.

LUKE
No! Wait, please stop! This is my car!

The Driver, hardly looking at Luke, continues his work.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
Ya got any money?

Luke instinctively pats his empty pockets, his face falling further.

LUKE

No.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

Cause, if you ain't, got no cash,
this car's heading straight to the
lot, buddy.

LUKE

But... I...

His protest is cut off as he sees his guitar case being nabbed by a THIEF. Panic surges through him.

LUKE (CONT'D)

What the heck! Hey, that's mine!

Luke runs after the crook, gaining on him. The thief opens the guitar case and takes out the guitar. On its face, a faded logo reads 'TC' - a constant reminder to Luke of his mother, Theresa Collins.

LUKE (CONT'D)

It was my mothers... Give that back
you...

Just as Luke is about to catch him, the thief swings the case at him. Luke hits the pavement hard. The thief, clutching the guitar, flees into the shadows as the guitar case pops open, sending sheet music flying in all directions. With sheet music all over him, Luke picks himself up, the loss hitting him like a punch in the gut - his mother's guitar, his car, his dream... everything, gone in a heartbeat.

73

INT. THE VELVET ROPE - UPSTAIRS OFFICE - SAME

Frank's on the phone. On the walls around him hangs framed magazines with pictures and articles about Tony throughout his career.

FRANK

So you're actually telling me you
don't want to write a hit for Tony
Cash? Hello? Hello?!

The line goes dead. Reluctantly, he crosses out the last name on a list. Tony's threat echoes in his mind.

TONY CASH (V.O.)

A brand new songwriter, Frank, in
twenty-two hours, or you're minced
meat Tinseltown toast, ok?

Frank gazes out the window. Down below, he spies Luke dodging traffic while trying to recover the sheet music.

74

EXT. TINSELTOWN BLVD - MOMENTS LATER

Frank, risking life and limb, helps Luke recover his sheet music from the street.

FRANK
Are these your songs?

LUKE
Yeah... Just scribbles, really.

Intrigued, Frank scans one of the sheets.

FRANK
This is good. Have you ever thought of writing like professionally? Have you ever thought about writing for Tony Cash?

LUKE

(laughs)
Tony Cash? I can't even handle a contest, let alone the big leagues, buddy!

Frank's eyes widen at an opportunity too good to pass up.

Cue the music for "FAKE IT 'TIL YOU MAKE IT".

FRANK
What if the big leagues came to you?

Luke chuckles in disbelief.

LUKE
Look. My dad said I don't have what it takes to make it in this town. And you know what? I'm starting to believe him, so I'm just gonna go.

FRANK
Ahh! This is Tinseltown. No such thing as wrong or right. If you can't make it, just fake it. Until you make it.

LUKE
Yeah? And if I can't?

Frank fixes his gaze on Luke, his own survival on the line.

FRANK

Then we adjust, we adapt, and we
keep faking it until it's real.

Frank drags Luke into a high-end men's clothier. A beat later, they emerge dressed to the nines: silk disco shirts, bell-bottom pants, and platform shoes.

The price tags are still hanging off the sleeves. Instead of ripping the tags off, Frank tucks them up his sleeve.

FRANK (CONT'D)

*If you're gonna crash a party
You gotta crash it dressed to kill
But make sure you're out of sight
now
When they're handing out the bill.*

75 EXT. TRENDY NIGHTCLUB - LATER

Frank puts a set of perfect false teeth in his mouth and struts up to the BOUNCER. He hands the bouncer a business card that simply reads, "BIG SHOT".

FRANK

*You strut up to the bouncer
Wearing that million-dollar smile
Tell him that you're expected
And his boss is on your dial.*

The Bouncer is impressed and lets them in. Luke is still getting used to the platform shoes and stumbles as he walks.

76 INT. TRENDY NIGHTCLUB - CONTINUOUS

Frank hands Luke a pair of dark shades. They both slip them on and cruise through the club. While Frank looks right at home, Luke has to lower his shades so he can stop bumping into people.

FRANK

*You want to be that someone
You want to pass the test
Better listen up now
And learn from the best.*

Luke looks on while Frank shows him how to do this thing.

Frank struts through the club, nodding and pointing as if he knows everyone. The club goers aren't sure they know him, but acknowledge him anyway, just in case he's someone important.

FRANK (CONT'D)

*Fake it 'til you make it
Tell it like you sell it
Bling it like you sing it
And everybody gone believe.*

Frank unabashedly approaches a VIP table occupied by a couple of male and female HIGH ROLLERS. Frank acts like he's one of the gang, slapping hands with the Men and giving chin kisses to the Females.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Woo! Let's get this party going!
Let's go!

Frank slides into the booth and helps himself to a glass of champagne. One of the High Rollers gets up to leave; Frank mouths a very insincere, "Hey, let's keep in touch" to him.

FRANK (CONT'D)
You want to be a player
You never talk too much
Stick to empty phrases like
"Hey let's keep in touch".

When the food comes, Frank digs in, even stuffing some of it in his pockets. In mid-chew, he spots the High Roller talking to the CLUB OWNER. The High Roller points to Frank, and the Club Owner shakes his head "No". That's Frank's cue to leave.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Fill your empty stomach
'Til you can't take anymore
But remember when you're busted
Run for the door.

Frank grabs Luke and skedaddles out of the club.

77

EXT. TRENDY NIGHTCLUB - CONTINUOUS

The suspicious Club Owner follows them out to the sidewalk. Frank pulls out some keys and walks up to a bright red sports car. When the Club Owner sees what kind of luxury automobile he's driving, he gives Frank a friendly wave.

FRANK
Fake it 'til you make it
Tell it like you sell it
Bling it like you sing it And
everybody go believe Fake it 'til
you make it Walk it like you talk
it
Talk it like you walk it
And everybody go believe

A beat later, the REAL OWNER of the car walks up. Frank is cool and calm. He hands the guy a card and gestures with his hand to "Call Me".

The lyrics are cut, but the instrumental continues in the background.

78 INT. MEN'S CLOTHING STORE - LATER

Frank returns their outfits and gets his money back.

LUKE

Look, sir, I really appreciate your advice and all, but I'm just not sure I can change who I am...

79 EXT. TINSELTOWN BLVD - LATER

As Frank parades down the street, Luke stops when he sees his guitar in the window of a pawn shop.

FRANK

You don't need to change. You just need to adapt!

LUKE

Well, I'm not sure. So far this town has done nothing but crash the one dream I ever had.

Frank hands the OWNER a signed 8 X 10 headshot of Sky. He proudly puts it on the wall with other celebrities, then hands over Luke's guitar.

FRANK

Oh, it's cause you have a baby dream. Very easy to crush. But if you make it big... a big, sturdy dream, nothing can crush it!

81 INT. TOWING COMPANY - LATER

Frank is with the dowdy DESK CLERK. Frank frames her face with his hands, Hollywood director style. The young woman is flattered. Frank hands her a card that reads, "BIG MOVIE DIRECTOR".

FRANK (V.O.)

Look, my boss, he can help you.

LUKE (V.O.)

Oh yeah? Who's your boss?

The desk clerk gushes and hands over the keys to Luke's car.

82 EXT. THE VELVET ROPE - LATER

The song ends with Luke pulling up to *The Velvet Rope* in his car. Luke goes slack-jawed.

CUT TO:

83 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - LATER

Frank escorts Luke through the club.

LUKE
I can't believe I'm inside the Velvet Rope! I can't believe I'm going to meet Tony Cash! I'm gonna meet Tony Cash.

FRANK
Hey, hey, hey. Chill. Even if you're excited to meet him, you gotta act like you're not.

LUKE
Why?

FRANK
Because you've got to play the part, and professionals don't gush. You got that?

LUKE
Got it, got it. No gushing, no gushing.

CUT TO:

84 INT. TONY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Luke is visibly starstruck, and Tony Cash, the legendary record producer, looms larger than life in his plush office. Frank, eager and anxious, watches the interaction closely.

LUKE
Mr Cash, sir, so great to meet you. I have all your records man. I've read your book "Cash Only" four times, and I got it fake-signed by watching your signature. Oh my goodness, I'm sorry; I'm just so absolutely ecstatic to meet you.

TONY CASH
And it just got weird.

LUKE
I'm sorry. Was I gushing?

FRANK
Just a little.

TONY CASH
Listen, Luke. Right now, I don't need a fan. I need a songwriter.
(MORE)

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

A damn good one. Any shot at you being that?

Luke doesn't know what to say.

FRANK

That's him; That's your guy.

Tony gives Frank an irritated glance. Luke starts fumbling for something in his pockets.

LUKE

I've got a tape I can show you...
It got some of my songs...

TONY CASH

I'm not talking about tape and recycled stuff. Can you write a hit in one day, kid? Yes? No?

LUKE

Uhm, wowzers, that's a short amount of time. But I can definitely try, sir.

TONY CASH

Try? Try? We don't try here; we deliver. You get one shot. Do you get me?

Luke looks hesitant. Frank steps in with a forced smile.

FRANK (SOTTO VOCE TO LUKE)

Remember, fake it.

LUKE

(fired up)
Yes, Mr. Cash. I'll get it to you straight away. One shot. Not gonna miss this chance or blow it.

Tony hesitates, then gives him a nod of approval.

TONY CASH

Alright then. Listen up, Here's the deal. You've got 24 hours to write a hit song for Sky. This could be your big break, or it could be the end of the road and back to where ever that outfit came from. Got it?

LUKE

Yes. Yes, sir, Mr. Cash. You won't regret this decision. Again - huge fan! I watch your program all the time.

TONY CASH
 Studio. Downstairs. pronto capisce!

As Luke leaves, Tony turns to Frank.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)
 Is this the best you could do? A
 street dog nobody? God, Frank.
 (BEAT)
 You better pray he's the one.

Frank gulps.

FRANK
 Oh, don't worry. He'll deliver,
 Tony. He has to. It's important for
 him too.

TONY CASH
 He better, or you'll never work in
 this business again.

85 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - CONTINUOUS

Luke heads down the stairs from Tony's office to the main club level. As he passes the kitchen, he hears the sound of someone rapping.

Luke sticks his head in the door. The incredible sound is coming from MIKE's talented mouth. He's a seventeen-year-old African-American who works as a dishwasher. He's rapping as he works; Luke is thoroughly entertained, and freezes in the door-opening, blocking it.

WILL
*Your looking at the king of pots
 and pans.
 Who'll be cooking up the swing when
 he gets a chance.
 Won't need nobody to keep the beat
 tight,
 when I'm done doing dishes'll grab
 the mic..
 I represent a bit of future poetry..*

Female voice (O.S.)
 Excuse me! Hey, coming through,
 coming through.

Luke turns to discover LOLA, a twenty-year-old waitress loaded with an armful of plates. She's a natural beauty with a tough exterior. She rarely lets her guard down.

LUKE

LOLA
(impatient)
I kind of got a job to do here!

LUKE
Me too. Tony just hired me as a
songwriter—my first day in town.

Lola rolls her eyes and scoots past him into the kitchen.

As Luke continues through the club, his attention is drawn to a saxophone player on the stage. This is REGGIE (62), a seasoned house band member. He plays a sultry saxophone solo. The man has talent.

Reggie stops playing and calls out to Luke.

REGGIE
Hey, kid, you look lost.

LUKE
Sorry. I'm... I'm new. I'm looking
for the studio. I'm Tony's new
songwriter.

REGGIE
Oh, wow. Ain't that something?

LUKE
Yeah, it is! I'm super excited.
What an opportunity, right?

REGGIE
Well, everybody gets a shot in
Tinseltown. Shit, I had mine. I
could have signed with a label.
Could have been big time.

LUKE
What happened?

REGGIE
I guess old Reggie stopped being
Reggie. You know? Got a little
sidetracked. I lost sight of the
fact that it's not about me; it's
all about the music.

LUKE
Wow. Well, I'm all about music.

REGGIE
Well, if you stick with it, you'll
be alright, my man. I like you.

Frank joins them.

FRANK

Hey Luke! What are you doing? We ain't got time. Go. Go write me a hit song.

LUKE

Eh... Yes, sir, Mr Frank. Sorry.

86

INT. TONY'S STUDIO - LATER

Luke, wide-eyed, takes in the impressive view of the state-of-the-art recording studio. Frank stands beside him, every muscle in his body radiating intense, nervous energy.

LOOK FRANK

Luke, look, this is yours. For 24 hours. But we're not here for fun and games - we're here to create a masterpiece, you got it?

LUKE

Yes, sir, Mr Frank. Yes sir.

FRANK

This is high stakes. We need a hit, you got it?

LUKE

Yes, sir!

Frank looks at Luke, the gravity of his words sinking in.

FRANK

It's Frank. My Tinseltown future is in this.

Luke swallows hard, nodding his understanding.

LUKE

I'll give it everything I've got, sir, Frank, Frank, sir, Frank.

Frank claps him on the shoulder, a moment of shared camaraderie and mutual pressure.

FRANK

That's not good enough, Luke. You got to deliver.

Frank exits the studio. Luke sits at the keyboards. Frank's speech missed its goal. Luke hovers his fingers above the keys and waits for inspiration. Nothing comes to him.

87

INT. TONY'S STUDIO - LATER

Luke plays a few notes, then stops. He plays a few more, then stops again. He fidgets in his seat.

LUKE
 Okay, come on! Come on, Luke, this
 is your chance. Don't blow it.
 Super easy

He thinks for a beat, then gets up and opens his guitar case.
 He takes out a picture of his mom and sets it on the
 keyboard. Inspired, he begins to play a melody.

LUKE (CONT'D)
 Yes, I need a C.

CUT TO:

88 INT. TONY'S STUDIO - LATER

Luke is playing the melody for Frank. It sounds good.

FRANK
 I'm totally digging this! This
 could be it! The lyrics. Are the
 lyrics as good?

LUKE
 Ehhh... I'm working on'em. You
 know, I am more of a music first,
 lyrics second kind of --

FRANK
 Well, come on, chop, chop. It's
 getting late; We gotta get the
 lyrics.

89 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - LATE NIGHT

Luke nervously wanders through the club. The night is over,
 and if he doesn't get the lyrics right, so is his career.
 Around him, the wait staff is cleaning up and prepping for
 the next day.

From the kitchen, Luke hears Mike rapping. He goes there for
 inspiration.

90 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - KITCHEN - LATER

Mike is laying down some funky rapping skills for Luke,
 spicing it up with some slick rap lyrics through his vintage
 cassette tape recorder.

LUKE
 Hmm. Wow Not my kind of lyrics,
 but it's awesome. How did you learn
 to do that?

MIKE

Got it from my cuz in NYC, brother.
It's what's grooving in the
underground clubs out east.

LUKE

That's wild, man. You gotta share
it with Tony. It's solid gold!

MIKE

Tony? The man? Nah, I don't get
down with the man.

LUKE

No, no, no, I'm telling you - when
he hears what you got, he's gonna
flip. Just watch out; no gushing.
He doesn't like that.

MIKE

Psch, Brother, I don't gush.

Suddenly, Luke's ears pick up a sweet singing voice flowing
from the lounge. The female singer is crooning the tune "LADY
IN WAITING."

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

*Sunshine outside
Rain inside*

Luke reacts.

LUKE

Hang on, I know that voice. She was
the one singing last night at the
apartment.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

*People everywhere
But you're nowhere*

Moved by the music, Luke leaves the kitchen.

91

INT. THE VELVET ROPE - LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

From the nightclub floor, Luke looks up to the stage where
the musicians are setting up, but the singer is not there.
Suddenly, the enchanting female voice floats through the
lounge.

FEMALE VOICE

*I don't want to live in this
contradiction
Like a slave to my addiction
Waiting while I am waiting
Waiting while I am waiting...*

Luke turns towards the source. It's Lola, the waitress, in the midst of the bustling lounge, setting the tables, singing with all her heart, eyes fixed on the stage.

LOLA
*Waiting while I am waiting
 Here for you.*

The musicians on the stage, captivated by her voice, start playing along with her melody. The song picks up tempo. While Lola sings, she watches her life play out in front of her. The club is packed, and Lola serves drinks to a table of VIP CUSTOMERS. Though she feels self-conscious in her skimpy outfit, she puts on a brave face.

She works at a dizzying pace, moving from table to table, all while managing her drink tray like a circus acrobat.

LOLA (CONT'D)
*Pouring bottles
 Every night
 In a bra
 That fits too tight
 Sexy smile, swaying hips
 Anything to make some tips
 Going crazy
 Taking crap
 Go and sit
 On someone's lap
 It's so sad but it's so true.*

Two other female waitresses chime in, their harmonies adding to the song. Luke watches, fascinated.

BACKUP SINGERS
*That girl's a lady
 She's a lady in waiting.*

LOLA
*Should have been next in line
 Given my spot to shine
 But instead I work away.*

BACKUP SINGERS
*That girl's a lady
 She's a lady in waiting.*

Lola's eyes are locked on Tony, who's counting receipts at the cash register, oblivious to her performance.

LOLA
*Only serving your dream
 Without you on my team
 I can't cope another day.*

We go split screen. One side is Lola's work life, the frenetic pace of working in a hot nightclub.

The other side is her aspiring singer life: being rejected at auditions, getting "RENT DUE" notices on her apartment door, and riding public transportation.

BACKUP SINGERS

*Pouring bottles every night
In a bra that fits too tight
Sexy smile, swaying hips
Anything to make some tips
Going crazy taking crap
Go and sit on someones lap*

LOLA

*It's so sad but it's so true
I'm just waiting here for you*

Back with Lola. She trails Tony to his office as he goes up the stairs. She's a ghost to him; he can't even see her. He closes the office door on her.

BACKUP SINGERS

*That girl's a lady
She's a lady in waiting*

LOLA

*Would have jumped at the chance
Got to sing and to dance
but just throw my life away*

BACKUP SINGERS

*That girl's a lady
She's a lady in waiting.*

LOLA

*Only serving your dream
Without you on my team
Waiting for my lucky day...*

END MUSIC - BACK TO REALITY

Luke's clapping echoes in the now silent lounge. His face is one of sheer admiration.

LUKE

That was fantastic. I love the lyrics. Did you write that?

LOLA

Oh, well, surprisingly, I did. But I'm sure the lyrics aren't quite up to your standard, with you being in town a whole day and all...

Luke grins, a little embarrassed.

LUKE

That's a dig, right?

LOLA
Wow, Fast learner.

Luke blushes.

LUKE
I don't get it. You work in Tony
Cash's club. and you're that good
and all. How has he not discovered
you yet?

Lola pauses, her smile fading.

LOLA
Well, I guess he just sees me as a
nameless, faceless waitress. You
know, In three years I've been
here, he's never even said "hello".

LUKE
Three years? That's a long time.

LOLA
You're telling me? Some people wait
their whole lives and never even
get a chance.

LUKE
Well, you don't have to worry about
that anymore.

LOLA
How would you know that?

Lola gives Luke a probing look, trying to see through him.

LUKE
Look - I'm in over my head and need
someone with your talent to help me
write this song.

LOLA
Whoa, whoa, whoa... I'm not a
professional songwriter. I never
said that.

LUKE
Hey, neither am I. So we just fake
it 'til we make it.

LOLA
Weird. But I don't know...

Luke pushes forward, his words painting an enticing picture.

LUKE

Hey, listen, if we do this thing,
Sky will be singing our song at the
R.A.T.S.

LOLA

I don't know, I'm supposed to be
waitressing for that event...

LUKE

Well, you can either go as a
waitress or a hit songwriter. Your
choice. Oh c'mon. Please!

A spark lights up in Lola's eyes, catching Luke's enthusiasm.
She smiles back at him.

LOLA

Are you for real?

Luke gives her an innocent, pleading look.

LUKE

I think so.

Lola thinks for a moment, then nods at a small battery-
operated keyboard on the stage.

LOLA

Okay. Get that keyboard thing and
follow me.

92

EXT. THE VELVET ROPE ROOFTOP - LATE NIGHT

Luke and Lola emerge from the rooftop doorway. Luke has a
portable keyboard with him. He takes in the shimmering lights
of Tinseltown below.

LUKE

Wowzers. Neat view.

Lola chuckles.

LOLA

You're such a farm boy.

LUKE

How'd you know I was raised on a
farm?

LOLA

Because no one in Tinseltown says
"neat".

LUKE

Should I not say that anymore?

LOLA
No, it's who you are. I think it's
cute.

Luke sees the Songbird flutter behind Lola's head. His eyes
get stuck on Lola.

LOLA (CONT'D)
What?

Luke smiles. They have an awkward moment of mutual
attraction.

LUKE
Oh, noth- Nothing.

The Songbird flies away. Lola suddenly looks nervous.

LUKE (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

LOLA
I just don't want to get too
excited, you know?

LUKE
Why not?

LOLA
Things... Things don't always work
out. For me, at least.

LUKE
Well, hey, that was before you met
Luke Collins.

LOLA
Oh yeah? And what's so special
about you?

Luke fingers the keys on the keyboard.

LUKE
There's one thing I'm exceptional
at... That's music.

Luke begins to sing "BEYOND THE VELVET ROPE".

LUKE (CONT'D)
*I got a gift
They come at ease...*

LOLA
*Those brilliant words
And melodies...*

LUKE

No one got to hear...

LOLA

Don't take your hands off the keys.

The piano keys suddenly turn into glowing stairs that lead to the night sky. Luke holds out his hand to Lola and leads her up into the musical heavens.

LUKE

*Are you listening
I need this bad
I pray it shows...*

LOLA

Well, even your piano knows...

LUKE

Got a lot at stake...

LOLA

I know how that story goes...

LUKE

I'm done wishing...

LOLA

*Well, I got a plan that works both
ways
And you picked the perfect time and
place...
Here's what we should do
The night belongs to us
I tell you...*

They transfer off the piano stairs onto a giant piece of sheet music and ride it like a magic carpet over the shimmering lights of Tinseltown.

TOGETHER

*Once we pass the line
Heaven could be yours and mine
It's on the other side
Don't let it go
While we decide...*

LOLA

*This uncertain path
Can seem so long
But life can turn on a single song.*

Their sheet music magic carpet ride swoops down over the Velvet Rope, then soars into the night sky.

LUKE

It would be so dope.

TOGETHER
*I see faith and hope
 Beyond the velvet rope.*

Luke and Lola are hanging onto a huge bar of music without notes, clefs, accidental or time signatures.

LUKE
*I'd fantasize
 That I'd succeed...*

LOLA
*That critical hit
 Is all you need...*

LUKE
So where do we start...

LOLA
I'll follow you take the lead.

As Luke climbs the rungs of the music bars, Lola follows.

LUKE
*My mind's spinning
 I got this one
 A hundred more...*

They both begin writing music, filling the bars and measures with magical paint brushes. It's like they are painting a giant mural, only they are creating a song. The sheet music elements sparkle as they come to life.

LOLA
*You're just what
 I've been waiting for.*

LUKE
Let's go somewhere fresh.

LOLA
Where I've never been before.

TOGETHER
*Keep on singing
 I ain't gonna be some fallen star
 There's no turning back
 I've come too far...*

LUKE
*We should see this through
 The night belongs to us...*

LOLA
Me and you...

TOGETHER

*Once we pass the line
Heaven could be yours and mine
It's on the other side
Don't let it go
While we decide...*

Luke and Lola walk up a series of escalating notes, that act as stairs to the top bar of the music. Once on top, they dance eloquently together.

LOLA

*This uncertain path
Can seem so long
But life can turn on a single song.*

The flying sheet music is back; this time, Lola takes Luke by the hand and leads him on board. As they fly over the city, the sun begins to rise in the distance.

LUKE

It would be so dope.

Luke pulls up on the flying sheet music; they soar towards the stars in the pre-dawn sky.

TOGETHER

*I see faith and hope
Beyond the velvet rope.*

TOGETHER (CONT'D)

*Come with me
We don't have much time before the
sunrise*

Stars turn into musical elements like notes, sharps, flats, and clefs.

TOGETHER (CONT'D)

*The moment when the neon lights
dies
Come with me
Find the tune to change the rest of
our lives.*

Luke plucks a special rainbow-colored note from the sky. The flying sheet music guides them back to their music mural and drops them off. Luke places the special note at the end of their song. The whole song is then illuminated with beautiful rainbow colors.

TOGETHER (CONT'D)

*Let's do something drastic
Brand new and fantastic
And share the grand prize.*

Luke and Lola face each other; the moment becomes intimate. They are about to kiss when the winds pick up and blow the sheet music out of Luke's hands. The breeze sends the pages flying over the edge of the rooftop. Luke races to the edge, and looks over; he sees the Song Bird.

She flaps her wings, creating an upward wind current, allowing the sheet music to float back up to the roof. Luke grabs the airborne sheet music without noticing how close he is to the edge.

TOGETHER (CONT'D)

*Once we pass the line
Heaven could be yours and mine
It's on the other side
Don't let it go
While we decide...*

He makes a misstep and loses his balance. He is about to fall when Lola grabs him by the hand and pulls him to safety.

LOLA

*This uncertain path
Can seem so long
But life can turn on a single song.*

93

INT. TONY'S STUDIO - LATER

Reveal Luke and Lola recording their song with Reggie and the HOUSE BAND.

LUKE

It would be so dope.

TOGETHER

*I see faith and hope
Beyond the velvet rope.*

END MUSIC

Frank looks on as they finish the song.

FRANK

Luke! Get over here.

Luke joins him. He's not sure how to read Frank's poker face.

FRANK (CONT'D)

It's funky.

LUKE

Is funky... good?

Frank smiles and puts his arm around him.

FRANK
 Funky is very good. Let's go tell
 Tony he's got a hit song for Sky.

Frank grabs the demo tape and ushers Luke out of the studio.

LUKE
 Oh, great! Let me just go get Lola.

Frank's not listening.

FRANK
 Ah, no, let's.. We're running out
 of time; let's get outta here.

Lola's left wondering what's going on.

94 INT. TONY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Mike is pitching to Tony.

MIKE
 Check this out, Mr Cash; it's
 what's happening in the hood. It's
 called Rap Music.

TONY CASH
 What did you say, wrap?

MIKE
 Yeah.

TONY CASH
 Look, man, you don't do wrap. You
 wrap presents, not music. Now get
 back and wash me some dishes.

Frank enters with Luke.

FRANK
 Tony, ya gotta hear this...

95 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - LOUNGE - SAME

Reggie packs his sax. He eyes Lola, who looks confused.

REGGIE
 Don't seem right, Lola. You co-
 wrote the song; you should be up
 there, too.

Lola nods; Reggie makes sense.

96 INT. TONY'S OFFICE - SAME

Tony pops the cork off a bottle of champagne. The cork
 rockets off the bottle and ricochets around the room.

It grazes Tony's head, causing his wig to go askew. Tony doesn't notice, but Frank does.

FRANK
Tony, your hair is...crooked.

TONY CASH
Whaddayamean?

Tony looks in the mirror and straightens it. He toasts Luke.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)
Heey, you did it, kid! You made it happen. I knew you could.

Luke is beaming—such a grand compliment from his childhood idol. Tony dials a number on his speakerphone.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)
Listen. Let's tell Sky the good news together, alright?

After a few rings, Sky answers.

SKY (O.S.)
This is Sky, talk to me, baby.

TONY CASH
Sky, pumpkin, it's your favorite producer, Tony Cash, and do I have the song for you!

SKY (O.S.)
Tony, Babe, You're too late. I already signed with Diamond Entertainment. I'm sorry. They have a song for me.

TONY CASH
You're cheating on me, girl. But you know what? I forgive you. And the song Frank told you about; it's the best ever! The number one hit you've been dreaming about, woman.

SKY
Tony... I'm not cheating on you because it is over. Okay, Tony? What we had is OVER...

CLICK. She hangs up. Tony swallows. Tries to play cool.

TONY CASH
What am I gonna do with this woman? What am I gonna do? I've got a slot at the RATS, a hit song, and no one to freakin' sing it. Frank?

LUKE
(Hesitantly)
What about Lola?

FRANK
The waitress?

TONY CASH
Who?

LUKE
She's the one singing on the demo.

Tony mulls it over. Looks at the phone...

TONY CASH
Better than nothing... I guess.

97 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - LOUNGE - SAME

Lola seems agitated as she glares at Tony's office.

LOLA
Do you really think Luke would
actually cut me out of the deal?

REGGIE
Listen, I honestly don't know. This
town does crazy things to people.

LOLA
Well, if he thinks he can just cut
me out, he's messing with the wrong
woman...

Lola makes a beeline up the stairs to Tony's office. She
confronts Luke as he exits.

LOLA (CONT'D)
Hey, pal! We need to talk business.

LUKE
(Surprised) How... Eh... How did
you know?

LOLA
How did I know? How did I know?
Because this is what happens to me
in this town ALL THE TIME!

LUKE
What?

LOLA
But I thought you were different,
pal, new in town and all. Well,
stupid, stupid me!

LUKE
No, you don't understand. Sky's
out. You're in!

LOLA
Wait, what?

LUKE
Sky's no longer the choice, Lola.
You are! Two days from now, you'll
be the one singing our song at the
RATS!

LOLA
RATS? Me? I... I need a drink!

CUT TO:

98 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - LATER

Lola pops open two bottles of root beer, sliding one over to
Luke. Their eyes meet over the rim of their bottles.

LOLA
To the wildest dreams we never even
knew to dream!

LUKE
Yeah! Big dreams! They're harder to
crush!

They clink bottles and drink. Luke's eyes are shining with
happiness.

LOLA
Can you believe this is happening?

Takes Luke's hand.

LOLA (CONT'D)
You know what? We need to celebrate -
Come on. My treat.

LUKE
(quirking a brow)
Okay? Where are we going?

LOLA
(winking)
A childhood haunt. You'll love it.
Trust me.

Lola raises her eyebrows comically, trying to convince him
with a "What do you say?" look. Luke laughs, infatuated.

LUKE

Okay. I trust you. Did you go there with your family when you were a kid or something?

LOLA

I never had one...

LUKE

Had what?

LOLA

A family.

(BEAT)

But hey, you should call yours!

LUKE

Oh, it's just me and my dad, and to be honest, he doesn't really care about me.

LOLA

That's bullshit. If you have a dad, that's family. And family cares. You should call him.

CUT TO:

99 EXT. THE COLLINS FARM - A BIT LATER

Gabe is working on his truck. He hears the phone ring from inside the house.

GABE

(under his breath)

Luke... Ouch!

He's in such a hurry to answer the phone that he bonks his head on the open hood, causing it to slam shut on his shirt sleeve. He tries to loosen it, but can't. He ends up pulling hard and ripping the shirt off his back.

The shirtless Gabe races inside the house.

GABE (CONT'D)

Don't hang up! I'll be right there.

100 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - SAME

LUKE

Just as I thought. No answer.

Luke hangs up the phone.

101 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - SAME

Gabe scrambles across the room and answers the phone.

GABE
Hello? Luke? Luke!

Too late - the line is dead. Gabe groans.

102 INT. LUKE'S CAR - LATER

Luke drives towards the beach side of Tinseltown with Lola.

LOLA
You can always try calling him
later.

LUKE
I don't know. There's always been
this like fence between us. You
know, like we're talking right now -
I could never do that with him.

LOLA
I know what you mean.
(BEAT)
I never talked with *anyone* like
this, really.

Luke's blushes. Looks out the window at the beautiful coastal
scenery.

LUKE
(BEAT)
Hey, is it getting hot in here? Or
is it just me?

Lola is all smiles.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Maybe I should put the top down.

Luke reaches up and releases a lever that detaches the roof.
But instead of folding back, the roof rips right off the car.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Oh! Wowzers, I did not see that
coming.

103 EXT. ROAD TO THE BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Luke goes back to retrieve the roof with Lola. Cars swerve
around the roof, which is in the middle of the road. Traffic
clears; they are about to run out and get it when a truck
horn blares. THWOMP! THWOMP!! The semi-truck crushes it.

LUKE
Ahh... let me just... Ahh... Can you
stop driving so furiously for two
seconds...

104 INT. LUKE'S CAR - LATER

Luke is back on the road with Lola. The damaged roof is in the back seat.

LUKE
It's okay. I have to get a new car
anyway.

LOLA
Why?

The music begins; "YOU'RE SO DIFFERENT".

LUKE
Well, Tony says: if you want to be
a player, you have to look the
part.

Luke and Lola arrive at the beach next to a pier. Luke tries to exit the car but realizes that none of the doors are working.

LOLA
This talk about Tony. You'll never
stand out if you try to be like
everybody else, especially him.
That's why I like this car. It's
unique - like you.

Luke hops out of the car and helps Lola get out as they start singing:

TOGETHER
*You're so different
That's what I love about you.*

WHIP PAN TO:

105 EXT. THE PIER - SAME

Luke and Lola stroll down the pier together. They both run to the carnival game, where you shoot water into a clown's mouth to inflate a balloon. Lola's balloon pops first; she wins.

TOGETHER
*You're so different
You're so lovely
So peculiar
And so bubbly.*

Luke turns his squirt gun on Lola and soaks her.

They exit a candy store. Luke has a huge all-day sucker, and Lola is chewing a wad of gum, blowing bubbles. She blows an enormous bubble; Luke pops it.

TOGETHER (CONT'D)

*There's no hurry
Or things to get to
When I take my time
With you...*

The two are in a photo booth, making funny faces.

TOGETHER (CONT'D)

*Beyond my old ways
I have found something new
In a dark shallow place
You're the light shining through.*

On a wooden roller coaster. Hanging on to each other through the turns. When the coaster comes to a stop, Luke and Lola are face to face. They are about to kiss, when --

-- suddenly a SEAGULL lands on Luke's head and kills the moment.

TOGETHER (CONT'D)

*You're so different
That's what I love about you.*

They ballroom dance together to the instrumental interlude, weaving through the crowded boardwalk.

They end up in front of a large aquarium tank where MERMAIDS are performing.

TOGETHER (CONT'D)

*Beyond my old ways
I have found something new
In a dark shallow place
You're the light shining through...*

Luke and Lola come face to face. The passion builds.

TOGETHER (CONT'D)

*You're so different
That's what I love about you.*

The mermaids swim up to the glass and act as backup singers.

MERMAIDS

*Different,
Different,
Different...*

TOGETHER

*You're so different
That's what I love
That's what I love
About you.*

As the music ends, Luke closes his eyes, gathers courage, and goes in for a big sweeping hug - *just* as Lola turns to look at the mermaids. In an awkward moment, Luke ends up wrapping his arms around himself. Lola looks at him, confused. Luke commits and acts as if it was on purpose.

LUKE
Heh... Chilly.

The sun is beating down. Luke has sweat on his forehead. Lola giggles.

LOLA
...In the sun?

Luke blushes. They smile at each other. Lola returns to the mermaids. Luke groans for himself.

DISSOLVE TO:

106

INT. THE VELVET ROPE - LATER

Tony and Frank talk in Tony's office.

FRANK
But this... *waitress* - she's a nobody.

TONY CASH
Ehhh, listen to me, everybody's a nobody before Tony Cash loves them, and a somebody right after. I can turn any pigeon poop with pipes into a star.

FRANK
Ok, ok, but Sky's *already* a star.

TONY CASH
She's a low-rent cigarette girl. I made a star!

Frank looks displeased.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)
Kid, sit down, relax. Have a cream soda, I've done this a million times before.

Frank nods and leaves the office. He sighs.

He hears Lola practicing the song on stage - it's really good. He puts a finger to his lips and thinks for himself, visibly getting an idea.

FRANK
 (to himself)
 Am I betting on the wrong horse
 here??

107 INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - LATER

Frank is on the phone.

FRANK
 No, this is not about the song.
 It's about your gold records.
 Tony's pissed because you didn't
 sing the song, so now he's going to
 chuck'em. You should come pick them
 up right now.

Off-screen sounds of STILETTOS in motion.

CUT TO:

108 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - LATER

Sky walks through *The Velvet Rope* towards Tony's office.
 Lola's up on stage, but she's not singing. Frank panics and
 rushes up to her.

FRANK
 Shouldn't you, like, rehearse?

LOLA
 Oh, I'm just taking a break.

FRANK
 Honey, this is not a very good time
 to take a break. It's your future
 we're talking about. You have to-

The door to Tony's office SLAMS SHUT - Sky just entered.
 Frank groans and hurries up the steps.

TONY CASH (PRE-LAP)
 Well, if it isn't the cigarette
 girl who stuck a cold stiletto into
 my soul.

109 INT - TONY'S OFFICE - SAME

Sky stands in Tony's office.

SKY
 Come on, stop being so dramatic.
 People meet, people split up. It
 happens all the time.

TONY CASH
 Mmmm, how did you get in here
 anyway, what are you here for,
 anyway?

Frank sneaks in.

SKY
 I came to pick up my gold records.

TONY CASH
 Your gold records? Really? Funny, I
 don't see your name on 'em. 'Cause
 I wrote and produced those hits!

SKY
 Erm, right. But if you care for
 them so much, why are you going to
 throw them out?

TONY CASH
 You wanna share with me who said I
 was throwing them out?

SKY
 Frank did.

FRANK
 Listen, Sky, Tony, I think we got
 our wires crossed here.

SKY
 I'm leaving.

Sky leaves the office.

INT. THE VELVET ROPE - SAME

As Sky walks down the office steps, she hears Lola rehearsing
 the song. She's stunned.

SKY
 Wow... Damn...

Sky runs back up the steps and rushes into Tony's office.

INT. TONY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

SKY
 Tony, Tony, Tony, Tony... Tony!
 Tony? Tony! Ah!

TONY CASH
 Okay, caffeine Sky, what?

SKY

Ok, I know we've just had our little dispute, but I have to sing this song.

TONY CASH

Well, I told you.

Frank wipes his forehead in relief.

SKY

I know, but this, this isn't like your other stuff. This is a number-one hit.

TONY CASH

Oh, but what about Diamond Cubic Zirconia Entertainment?

SKY

Listen! If you've got a song like this, I'm strictly Cash only.

110 INT. TONY'S OFFICE - LATER

A chocked Luke is with Tony and Frank.

LUKE

Wait! Sky's in? Hold on, I thought she was out?

FRANK

She was out, but now she's back in.

LUKE

Oh no... Lola's gonna be crushed.

TONY CASH

Now listen, it breaks my dead mother's heart, alright? But that's show business.

LUKE

No! There's gotta be another way. Maybe they could do a duet?

TONY CASH

Listen! Okay, kid. I know you have the hots for this girl, but is that why you came here? For some puppy love romance? Or did you come to be a star?

LUKE

(lost in thought)
I mean, yeah.

TONY CASH

Yeah, that's right! So look, I drew up a contract for you. It's very simple, very standard; there are no tricks or traits to it all, whatever, okay? You work exclusively for me, Tony Cash. You write for me, and your dreams will all come true, alright? Do you understand the words that are coming out of my mouth?

Tony lays down a contract on the desk.

LUKE

And then, we help Lola?

Tony hands Luke a pen.

TONY CASH

This is *your* moment, alright, Luke. What are you gonna do?

LUKE

I don't know.

Luke hesitates, but suddenly hears the Songbird scabble around on Tony's windowsill. He watches her for a moment, then takes the contract and leaves, without signing it.

111

INT. THE VELVET ROPE - LATER

Lola is at the piano tinkering with the melody to "YOU'RE SO DIFFERENT". Luke joins her.

LOLA

Hey! I've been looking for you everywhere. Is there like a paper or something I need to sign? I can't wait to tell the guys at R.A.T.S that I actually can't waitress because I'm actuall...

LUKE

Yeah, Yeah, look, Lola, about that. There's been a change...

LOLA

A change?

Looks at him. Understands.

LOLA (CONT'D)

Oh... Sky's back?

LUKE

I know this sounds like bad news,
but it's not. Sky's going to
premier my song at the RATS.

LOLA

Your song?

LUKE

Our song. Sorry. Our song. And
that's good news 'cuz Tony believes
in us.

Pulls up the contract.

LUKE (CONT'D)

He just offered us a three-year
contract. It's a dream come true.

LOLA

Us or you?

LUKE

Eh... Me...

LOLA

You. He offered you a three-year
contract. What about me?

LUKE

Ok, well, see... That's the beautiful
part, like, it's *in the works*.
They're going to circle back and
loop you in later, after they're
done with me; it's a sure-in deal.
It's all gonna work out. I trust
Tony. I trust him more than my own
father.

LOLA

Yeah. You trust Tony, right? Well,
I hope he's worth it.

Lola leaves.

112 INT. THE COLLINS FARM - BARN - SAME

Gabe is working in the old barn when he comes across one of
Luke's old guitar picks.

CUT TO:

113 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - BASEMENT - LATER

Gabe places the guitar pick with Luke's other musical
equipment. He misses his son.

He eyes the poster of Tony Cash and lets out a heavy sigh.

CU OF TONY ON POSTER.

CROSS CUT TO:

114 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - SAME

CU of the real Tony Cash in his office.

He holds up a wad of cash.

TONY CASH

Tada!

LUKE

What's this for?

TONY CASH

Just a little taste of what happens
when you sign with Tony Cash.
You're gonna go meet the town
tonight and they are gonna meet
you.

Tony pushes the wad over to Luke's side of the table. Puts a
business card for "Resplendent Fashion" on top.

I want you to go meet these people
right here, get yourself some
groovy threads, and meet me at La-
La's for dinner. Do you know where
it is?

Luke nods. Looks at the cash. hesitates. Takes it.

115 OMITTED

116 EXT. TINSELTOWN BLVD - LATER

Lola's in a pay phone booth outside of *The Velvet Rope*.

LOLA

(on phone)

Yes, I get paid tonight, and I have
a paid gig tomorrow; so I'll have
my half of the rent by then. Yes,
yes, I promise.

(Sighs)

Thank you.

As she hangs up the phone, she notices a man struggling to
walk down the street in his platform shoes. The guy is
dressed outlandishly: tight bell-bottom pants, a garish
polyester shirt with a wide collar, gold chains, tinted
shades, and permed hair with tight curls.

As the guy gets closer, she recognizes him.

LUKE
Lola, what's crackalackin' babe? As they say. How do I look?

LOLA
Ridiculously stupid?

LUKE
Yeah, I know, I thought so too, but--

Luke looks up to a lamppost where the Songbird is perching. It's got a new look as well - sporting shades and slicked-back feathers.

LUKE (CONT'D)
(looking at the bird)
-- It's what the in-crowd is wearing, you know?
(looking at Lola)
And I'm having dinner with Tony at La-La's tonight. Why don't you join us?

LOLA
I can't, remember? No contract. You got the contract. I still have to work.

LUKE
Come on. We'll take care of it tonight with Tony. I promise! Just join us after work.

LOLA
No, I don't know.

LUKE
Lola, please!

Lola thinks about it. Luke smiles his charming smile. She decides to give it another shot.

LOLA
Okay. But you promise you're going to talk to him?

LUKE
Promise!

117 EXT. LA-LA'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A blue sports car pulls up to the valet. The license plate reads, "CASH FLOW".

Tony emerges from the vehicle and tosses the keys to the VALET.

TONY CASH
Keep it up front, will ya?

Luke exits the passenger's side. He's still getting used to his new platform shoes and stumbles.

LUKE
Tony, these platform boots are really not that comfortable to walk in.

TONY CASH
Do you think the president complains about wearing a tie? It comes with the job.

One of the other valets catches him before he falls. It turns out to be his new roommate, Gregory.

GREGORY
Luke, is that you?

LUKE
Oh, hey Gregory!

GREGORY
You're here with Tony Cash? Oh my God!

Gregory reaches into his vest and pulls out a cassette tape.

GREGORY (CONT'D)
Can you do me a solid? Can you give him this?

Luke looks at the demo tape.

LUKE
You know what? It's really not a good time, right now. We're in... negotiations.

Tony whistles for Luke to join him.

TONY CASH
Hey, train wreck, are you coming?

LUKE
Yes sir.

As he makes his way past the popping flashbulbs from the paparazzi's cameras, Luke gains more confidence. He's beginning to look more comfortable in his new shoes.

118 INT. LA-LA'S RESTAURANT - LATER

A feeding frenzy of glitz and glam, the restaurant bustles with showbusiness's finest.

LUKE
Oh my goodness, this is like who is
who in Tinseltown.

Tony and Luke are seated at a prominent booth. Luke's head is on a swivel.

TONY CASH
When you're in the game, Luke, this
is where you eat your steaks.

Their focus shifts to a frail man, KIP CARSON, shuffling past their table, an elderly aura around a legend, settling into a corner booth.

LUKE
Holy cannoli, is that Kip Carson?

TONY CASH
Yeah, best producer ever.
(BEAT)
'Til there was me!

Tony shoots Luke a conspiratorial wink. GIG STARLING approaches, his outward bravado contrasting his introverted demeanor.

GIG
Tony!

TONY CASH
Gig!

GIG
Hey, so I'm hearing good things
about this new song.

TONY CASH
Well, Gig, you know it's supposed to
be a secret.

GIG
Uhm...Also. Any chance that you and
Sky could come to the show this week?

TONY CASH
I'll tell you what. I'll have my
little people call your smaller
people.

Gig nods, and stumbles away. Luke watches him leave, a perplexed look on his face, then it all falls into place. He turns to Tony.

LUKE
Wait, you mean Sky might perform the
song on "The Tinseltown Sound?"

TONY CASH
If that piece of paper, all in words,
is signed by you.

LUKE
(stunned)
Yeah... about that... You remember
Lola?

Tony leaves the table.

119 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - LATER

Lola punches her time card and heads to the ladies' room.

CUT TO:

120 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - LADIES ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Lola exits the bathroom stall wearing a stunning glittery
cocktail dress. She glances at her watch. Realizes she is
late.

LOLA
Oh geez!

Lola runs towards the door.

121 INT. LA-LA'S RESTAURANT - LATER

Tony returns to the table.

TONY CASH
Ya having a good time?

LUKE
Yes! It's super neat.

TONY CASH
Neat? Really?

LUKE
Oh, sorry. I mean, uhm, dope-
diggity-dog. The freshest.

TONY CASH
You ever hear of "Boogie's"?

LUKE
Whoa, "Boogie's Discotheque"?
That's like the most famous club in
the world.

TONY CASH

Well, you ready to get your groove on? Do some stuff in them shoes right there? Alright? 'Cuz when your hanging with Tony Cash, that's where you're headed next, kid.

122 EXT. LA LA'S RESTAURANT - LATER

Tony and Luke hop into Tony's sports car and speed away.

A beat later, Lola shows up and speaks to the MAÎTRE D'.

LOLA

Hi, I'm meeting with Tony Cash. Is he here?

MAÎTRE D'

Je suis désolée. He just left...
With a kid.

The Maître d' points in the direction they headed. Lola spots the speeding car as it drives away from her.

CUT TO:

123 EXT. TINSELTOWN BLVD - LATER

Lola walks home alone. She's sad. Busts a heel. Now she's mad.

LOLA

Well, screw you, Mr. Luke Collins!

124 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - THE NEXT DAY

Luke struts into the club, wearing the same clothes from the night before. He greets Reggie.

LUKE

Reggie! My man, my main man - my best man.

REGGIE

Looks like you had a good time last night.

LUKE

Oh, I did. It was *the bomb*. Out of sight, you dig?

REGGIE

Mmm. Lola quit.

LUKE

What? Why?

REGGIE

I guess she couldn't bear the sight of coming to work and seeing you here.

LUKE

Not seeing me here - Wait, why?

REGGIE

Could be something about a contract and not getting credit for the song she co-wrote...

LUKE

Wait, no. I'm working on that.

REGGIE

How about working on this - the fact that you stood her up last night on top of everything else?

Luke searches his foggy memory; then it dawns on him.

LUKE

Oh, no. I totally forgot. I gotta go talk to her. I'm sorry, Reggie.

Frank calls out to Luke.

FRANK

Luke! You have a meeting with Tony at the deli.

Luke is confused.

FRANK (CONT'D)

LUKE!!! Now!

125 INT. DELI - LATER

Tony takes a big bite of a giant sandwich. Food falls out of his mouth. Luke arrives, lost in thought.

TONY CASH

I need eleven songs for Sky's new album. And three of them gotta be top ten hits. Alright? And hey, look at me, sign this?

He slides the contract over the table.

LUKE

I don't know.

Luke looks like he's wrestling with a ghost. His eyes are locked on the contract.

TONY CASH

Kid, what's your deal? You're not thinking right. Something's eating at you? Bothering you? What? Talk to me.

LUKE

Yeah, well, uh, I think Lola's mad at me.

TONY CASH

Hey, who cares? There's always another girl, but there might not be another dollar. You're way better off without her. Okay? Her voice to be honest, and I'm just being honest you know... A little bit pitchy. Always south of the note.

LUKE

But I promised her... Tony, you don't understand, She's-

TONY CASH

No, you see kid. You don't understand, alright? When you're with Tony Cash, life is good, and when you finally sign that contract, guess what's gonna happen? It's only gonna get better.

The background tinkling of glasses and plates, with the clanging of pots and pans from the kitchen, morphs into a rhythmic percussion intro to the song, "HAVE MY PEOPLE CALL YOUR PEOPLE".

As Tony starts singing, Luke wrestles with the momentous decision before him.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

*Got a good idea
Got a great setup
I can make you pop
Yeah, just like that
Life is good
And it's gonna get better...*

CUT TO:

126

EXT. TINSELTOWN BLVD - CONTINUOUS

Tony is at a ceremony for the unveiling of his star on the Tinseltown Walk of Fame. His words still echo in Luke's mind as he observes the grandeur of Tony's lifestyle, and the adulation he commands from fans and peers alike.

TONY CASH
*You want to roll like me
 You got work to do
 Hell, I live the life
 I've always wanted to
 The money's good
 And it's gonna get better...*

A NEWS CREW tries to interview Tony, but he grabs the mic and parades down the street with fans following him. Luke tries to keep up while still writing. Tony points, winks, and waves to other BIG SHOTS he passes in the street.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)
*I'm gonna have
 My people call your people
 Have my people call your people
 tonight
 Pick up the phone,
 Pick up the phone
 I'm gonna have
 My people call your people
 Have my people call your people
 tonight.*

A FEMALE FAN approaches Tony. He turns to Luke.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)
*Just put your name
 on the dotted line*

Luke hesitates, his gaze moving from the lifestyle on display to the contract and the pen in his hand.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)
*Stick with me, baby,
 you'll be fine
 Life is good
 And it's gonna get better.*

127 EXT. TINSELTOWN SIGN - LATER

Tony is standing on the iconic "TINSELTOWN SIGN" in the hills above the city. Tony throws Luke a rope and pulls him up.

TONY CASH
*Here in Tinseltown
 Anyone can flop*

TONY CASH (CONT'D)
*But if you go down
 I'll take you up
 Life is good
 But you can do better*

Tony sings to a group of music industry EXECUTIVES crowded below the giant sign. They all want to talk to Tony.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

*I'm gonna have
My people call your people
Have my people call your people
tonight.
Pick up the phone,
Pick up the phone
I'm gonna have
My people call your people
Have my people call your people
tonight.*

128 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - UPSTAIRS OFFICE

Tony is sat at his work desk. Luke is on the couch. He notices the phone lines blinking. He's going to pick up the phone, but Tony waves him off.

TONY CASH

*What's good for me
Is good for you
Pick up the phone
Pick up the phone
Pick up the phone
And just in case
You can't get through*

ANSWERING MACHINE (V.O.)

*Hi, you've reached the office of
Tony Cash; please leave a message.*

129 EXT. FLAMINGO APARTMENTS - DAY

Tony leads Luke through a "fun in the sun" apartment complex for the young and beautiful. Tony hands Luke the keys to his new apartment. A trio of STARLETS beckon Luke to join them at the pool.

TONY CASH

*Got a good idea
Got a great setup
I can make you pop
Yeah, just like that*

LUKE

This is too much, Tony. Thank you

TONY CASH

*Life is good
And it's gonna get better.*

130 INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Tony is standing up, head through the sunroof of the limo. He looks like the King of Tinseltown as the limo cruises down the boulevard bathed in neon light.

Luke pops up through the sunroof, the unsigned contract in hand. Tony looks at it and smiles. The Songbird flies next to the Limo, more bedazzled than ever - still sporting shades and slicked-back feathers, but now in a white suit jacket with a golden chain around the neck. The weight of the chain wears her down, but she flaps extra hard to make up for it.

TONY CASH

*My people call your people
Have my people call your people
tonight
I'm gonna have
My people call your people.*

The limousine pulls up to a towering high-rise building. Tony and Luke get out, both dressed for another night on the town.

They enter a glass elevator and ride up to "CLUB GLITZ" on the top floor. The bedazzled Songbird follows them on the other side of the glass, flying all the way to the top.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

*Have my people call your people
tonight
My people call your people
Have my people call your people
tonight
Have my people call your people
tonight!*

131

INT. TV STUDIO

Gig and Tinseltown Sound is hosting a gala birthday soirée for Sky; the ambiance of celebration is infectious. Underneath a banner that reads "HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SKY", Luke makes up his mind. He signs, and hands the contract to Tony. He's made his choice, for better or worse.

END MUSIC.

While Luke gawks at all the celebrities in attendance, Tony turns to him.

TONY CASH

Listen, you did the right thing,
son.

Luke is not sure.

LUKE

Yeah. I guess I should get back to
work.

TONY CASH

What do you think we're doing here?
Circulate and mingle. This is how
we do business! Hello.

Tony leaves. Luke searches the crowd for someone to talk to. He spots a familiar face behind the scene...Lola. He blushes, ashamed. Lola's dressed oddly, in a top hat, tuxedo jacket, nylons, and high heels. She has straightened her hair and wears much more make-up than usual - no longer looking like the girl Luke has feelings for. Luke hesitates but walks up to her.

LUKE

Lola? What are you doing here?

LOLA

It's a job... Delivering singing telegrams, need the money, you know.

LUKE

Look... Lola... I'm really sorry...

LOLA

About what? Ripping me off or standing me up?

LUKE

Hey, look, I'm gonna fix all that - I'm working on it, just give me a break ok - I just want us to be... friends.

LOLA

Friends? Listen, I could be friends with the guy I met a couple of days ago. But this Tinseltown turkey? No. I think I'll pass.

LUKE

What do you mean, Tinseltown turkey? Have you seen yourself?

Luke gestures towards Lola.

Lola is on the verge of tears.

GIG (O.S.)

Can I have your attention, please?
We have a special singing telegram!

The spotlight hits Lola, who is still visibly upset. The crowd applauds, then goes quiet.

It's an awkward and emotional moment for Lola. She tries to sing, but her voice cracks.

LOLA

It's a special day, it's a special day, and we all have gathered here to sing you happy birthday.

(MORE)

LOLA (CONT'D)

*With glasses filled, we've come to
toast a shining star, a generous
host. Happy birthday to you, our
dear Sky*

She can't get the words out. She breaks into tears and runs out. Luke doesn't know what to do; he's paralyzed. Tony joins him.

TONY CASH

Wow. That was like fingernails on a chalkboard. You got instincts, kid. Good thing you dumped her.

Luke looks heartbroken.

132

INT. TV STUDIO

We're on the set of "The Tinseltown Sound". Gig Starling greets the audience.

GIG

Are you ready to get down and boogie down in Tinseltown? Come on now!

ANGLE ON

Luke is backstage in his Tinseltown turkey outfit. He waits anxiously, tapping his foot, sweat on his brow.

He joins Frank, who is watching the show on a monitor. Gig's interviewing Sky and Tony.

LUKE

Hey, Frank. When do I go on?

FRANK

I'm not sure...

ANGLE ON GIG, TONY, AND SKY

GIG

Sky, you have a new song that you'll be premiering at the RATS tomorrow night. Can you tell us about it?

SKY

I sure can, Gig. When Tony brought me this song, it had my name written all over it.

We are back with Luke and Frank watching the show. Luke looks proud over Sky's words.

GIG

And Tony, who's the songwriter?

Luke is filled with anticipation. He's dreamed about this moment his whole life.

TONY CASH

You know I gotta tell you, Gig.
That would be none other... than
ME. That's right - Mr. Genius,
Tony Cash. I wrote it up a bit.

Luke can't believe what he just heard. His head is spinning.

LUKE

What's going on? What's Tony
saying? Did he just say he wrote
the song?

FRANK

We'll clear it up later; it's just
Tony being Tony.

LUKE

No, Frank. Lola and I wrote that
song; he can't do that. He just
took credit for a song he didn't
write!

FRANK

Look, kid! You signed a contract
that says he can do that.

Luke's jaw drops.

133 INT. TV STUDIO - LATER

The show is over. Tony stands by the craft service-table
backstage. Luke confronts him.

LUKE

How can you take credit for a song
you didn't write?

TONY CASH

Time to grow up. I've got news for
you, alright? Sky's not going to
sing some song written by some
unknown guy with my poster over his
bed, alright? She wants Tony Cash's
original, and that's what she's
got. Because of me.

LUKE

Because of a fake. Have you ever
written a hit song in your entire
career?

TONY CASH

(pointed)

Yeah. I wrote one. It's called "The Tutti-frutti Twist".

LUKE

Wait, hold on. That's impossible; Kip Carson wrote the Tutti-frutti twist. It's his number-one hit.

TONY CASH

Ahh, clueing in now - Kip took credit for my song, I took credit for yours, and someday, you little punk, you're gonna take credit for someone else's. Nothing in Tinseltown is real; it's all just an illusion, man...

Luke's stunned. He can't believe it. After a beat, he turns and storms away.

134

EXT. TINSELTOWN BLVD - LATER

Luke wanders down the sidewalk in his Tinseltown turkey outfit with his head in a fog. He spots a brand new billboard with Sky and Tony touting the release of their next big hit.

A Greyhound bus pulls up, and a YOUNG GUY with a guitar and big dreams hops off. He eyes Tinseltown with wonder and hope. Luke can't believe this was him just a few days ago.

Luke sees his reflection in a storefront window. He can't recognize himself. As he keeps walking, the bedazzled Songbird swoops down and pulls his collar in the opposite direction. Luke tries to whisk her away.

LUKE

Hey, cut it out! Stupid bird!

The Songbird continues. Luke loses his temper.

LUKE (CONT'D)

LOOK, I SAID STOP IT!

The Songbird stops. Luke looks her straight in the eyes as she hovers in the air.

LUKE (CONT'D)

What do you want from me!? Why did you even lead me here? Why did you make me sign that *damn* contract? I don't understand!

(BEAT, then with voice breaking:)

Why did you, Mom?

The Songbird gives Luke a quizzing look. Both equally bedazzled, they look like each other's reflection. Luke wipes away a tear.

LUKE (CONT'D)

But you're not even really her, are you?

Luke turns and walks off, leaving the stunned Songbird behind. As he walks, he strips out of his ridiculous outfit one item at a time: tossing his sunglasses, throwing off his jacket, and kicking off his shoes until he's walking down the street barefoot in nothing but trousers and a t-shirt.

Soon, Luke hears a saxophone cut through the city noise. Luke follows the music to a park. He spots Reggie performing a free concert. Luke sits down and enjoys the music.

Luke looks around at the crowd. There are no industry bigwigs or hotshots, just real people enjoying pure and honest music.

135

EXT. PARK - LATER

The concert is over. Luke is hanging out with Reggie as he packs up his instrument.

REGGIE

Hey kid. How's it going?

LUKE

Hi Reg. In one word? Shit!

REGGIE

That's the word. You know all that glitters ain't gold, right, kid?

(BEAT)

By the way, how's Lola?

LUKE

I don't know. Pretty sure she hates me now. You know I don't blame her for it.

Points at a big, mirror-like window across the street.

LUKE (CONT'D)

See that guy over there. I don't even know who he is.

REGGIE

Tinseltown does that to people. It's the only place in the world where you spend more money than you make, to buy stuff you don't need, to impress people you don't give a shit about.

LUKE
I don't think I can live in a place
like that.

REGGIE
That's the whole thing - it's for
you to figure out.

136 OMITTED

137 EXT. FLAMINGO APARTMENTS - LATER

Luke exits his apartment with his bags packed. He closes the door, slips the key under the mat, and leaves.

138 EXT. TINSELTOWN BLVD - LATER

Luke loads his bags into the trunk of his car. A craggy voice calls out to him:

CRAGGY VOICE
Luke..?

Luke turns to find Trudy LaRue. She's dressed in a halter top, spandex leggings, and high heels. Very inappropriate for a woman in her 70's.

LUKE
Oh, hi Trudy.

TRUDY
I have an audition for a film
called "Keep On Truckin'". Do you
think I can still pull off 27?

LUKE
Trudy, in this city, it is all
smoke and mirrors. I bet you can
pull off 22.

139 EXT. TINSELTOWN BLVD - LATER

Luke heads out of town in his noisy car. He stops by the RATS venue for one last look. In his rearview mirror, he sees Lola on her way to work. She looks like her old, charming self again. Luke panics and--

LUKE
Oh, darn it!

--slides down in his seat to avoid being noticed. Footsteps draw near, and soon we see--

LOLA
Luke?

--Lola standing by the door, towering over him. Luke sits upright again.

LUKE
Oh! Hey.

LOLA
...You're hiding from *me*?

LUKE
Uhm... Yeah.
(BEAT)
I promise I didn't drive here to see you. Or, eh, I mean-

LOLA
That's good to know. Thank you.

Luke sighs.

LOLA (CONT'D)
It's okay.
(BEAT)
Heard it went well with Tony.

LUKE
Look, I'm so sorry, I --

Luke pats the steering wheel.

LUKE (CONT'D)
-- I just wanna be me.

Lola gives him a once-over. He's wearing the same clothes as the first time they met.

LOLA
Well, you look a lot better like this.

Luke glances at Lola.

LUKE
You too.

Luke tries to start his car. It misfires.

BEAT.

LOLA
You don't *have* to leave, you know?

LUKE
No, I do. I do.

LOLA
 (holding in tears)
 Okay.

They sit in silence, both looking away from the other. After a while, without another word, Luke starts puttering away. Lola watches him leave and enters the RATS.

Cue the music for "HOW CAN YOU MAKE SOMEBODY HAPPY".

140 INT. RATS VENUE - CONTINUOUS

A melancholy Lola is setting tables with elegant plate-ware. She pauses to look at her reflection in one of the dishes.

LOLA
*You only have one life to live...
 So live it.*

141 INT. LUKE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Luke passes a sign that reads, "THANKS FOR VISITING TINSELTOWN. COME BACK SOON". He eyes Tinseltown in the rearview mirror and registers a look of defeat.

LOLA (V.O.)
*Whatever you may have to give...
 Just give it.*

142 INT. DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sky is reading the headline from one of the trade papers - **"IS SKY'S COMEBACK TOO LATE?"**

LOLA (V.O.)
*Go and see it through with your own
 eyes.*

143 INT. TONY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Tony eyes the album cover for "The Tutti-frutti Twist". He focuses on "Music and Lyrics by Kip Carson" and sighs. His eyes move over to the photo of his 5-year-old self.

144 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Gabe opens the locked attic door with a key. Reveal a guitar case in the corner, covered with dust and cobwebs.

LOLA (V.O.)
*Your heart don't need a good
 advice. A fool could steer it off
 its course. And keep the world from
 being yours.*

145 INT. LUKE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

As Luke hits a bump that causes the glove box to open. The photo booth picture from the day at the pier falls out. The wind catches the photo and plasters it on the inside windshield. Luke looks at the picture with profound sadness.

LOLA (V.O.)
*I sadly got the picture. I could
 have done much better.*

146 INT. RATS VENUE - CONTINUOUS

Lola sets down reserved placards for VIP's at a prominent table. She places cards down for Tony Cash and Sky.

LOLA
Another lifetime I would reconsider

147 INT. GAS STATION CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Luke pulls into a gas station.

Luke eyes the celebrity magazines on the counter. There's a picture of Tony Cash and Sky from the birthday party on the cover. He sees himself in the background, only it's not really him; it's who he was pretending to be.

LOLA (V.O.)
*How do you make somebody happy
 When you're not happy with yourself*

Gabe is in the attic. He opens an old guitar case and removes a guitar. Inside, there are sheet music and other items. Gabe retrieves a gold envelope and removes the card inside - it's an open invitation to perform at the RATS.

LOLA
*How do you make somebody feel your
 love
 When you don't even love yourself.*

147 OMITTED

148 INT. LUKE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The music continues. Lyrics are cut out.

It begins raining. The rain turns into a downpour. He pulls over by a church, walks to a nearby payphone, and calls a number.

149 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Gabe seems haunted by a picture in his hand - it's a snapshot of himself with Tony Cash, both with ear-to-ear grins. Startled, Gabe hears the phone ringing. He rushes to the trapdoor but knocks the ladder down, now stuck in the attic.

GABE

Luke!

Gabe pokes his head down the trapdoor as a message starts playing.

LUKE (V.O.)

Hi, Dad. I don't know if you'll hear this, but... I'm coming home.

150 EXT. CHURCH - PAYPHONE - CONTINUOUS

A soaking-wet Luke is talking a message into the pay phone.

LUKE

My car's flooded, and I'm stranded in some town called...

Luke looks around. He sees a road sign that says "ASH VALLEY".

LUKE (CONT'D)

Ash valley? I don't know what to do; I need help! Please, Dad.

151 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Gabe listens to the last of the message.

LUKE (V.O.)

Please.

The line cuts off. Gabe looks pained. The song continues, and the lyrics come back in.

152 INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Luke enters and is met by the sight of a GOSPEL CHOIR singing. He takes a seat in a church pew and bows his head.

LOLA (V.O.)

*How do you make somebody happy
When you're not happy with yourself
How do you make somebody feel your
love
When you don't even love yourself.
When you don't even love yourself*

(MORE)

LOLA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*When you don't even love
 yourself...*

MUSIC ENDS

153 OMITTED

154 INT. CHURCH - MORNING

The dawn sunlight streams through the stained-glass windows, illuminating the pews where Luke has drifted off.

GABE
 Luke...

Luke stirs, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes. He's startled to find --

LUKE
 Dad?

-- his father, Gabe, standing over him, a look of concern on his weathered face.

GABE
 Hello, son.

Both of them stand, the silence between them heavy. It's the perfect moment for a hug, a word of comfort, but they hold back, creating a tense, awkward moment.

LUKE
 I guess you were right, Dad. I don't have what it takes to make it in Tinseltown. You were right, not wanting Mom to live there either.

GABE
 Well, that's not quite the way it was.

LUKE
 What do you mean?

GABE
 It was the other way around. I believed in her. I pushed her to chase her dreams in Tinseltown.

LUKE
 You did?

GABE
 She had a voice, a gift, and songs that could make angels cry. I knew she could make it. And when the money started comin', this ol' mind ran wild.

(MORE)

GABE (CONT'D)

I saw us rebuilding the farm, living a life we'd only dreamt of... But we returned with less money than we left with...

LUKE

What happened?

GABE

Tony Cash happened. He took your mom's songs and claimed 'em as his own. It was my fault. I told her to sign that contract. My shame, my anger, it was too much. We left... And then she fell sick, and we couldn't afford the treatments. If only I hadn't pushed her, then maybe... just maybe...

Gabe's voice breaks. It's a hurt he's carried for years.

LUKE

Why didn't you tell me?

GABE

I couldn't... I couldn't stand the thought of you hating me. You're all I have left.

LUKE

I'm sorry, Dad.

Once again, a perfect time for a hug. But no. They are not yet ready. Luke shrugs.

LUKE (CONT'D)

I made the same mistake. Tony ripped me off, too.

GABE

(shakes his head)

Like father, like son.

LUKE

Dad, I signed away my rights. The next three years, anything I write, Tony gets the credit. My dream, it's over.

Luke and Gabe share a silent, heavy moment before heading towards Gabe's pickup parked outside the church. The trip back home to Mournville awaits.

155 INT. GABE'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

GABE

It was the same with mum.

The two are silent; nothing more to say.

Gabe begins to get agitated.

He jerks the steering wheel and makes a U-turn.

LUKE

Dad, what are you doing?

GABE

I gave it up last time; I'm not gonna do it again. We're going to Tinseltown to fight for your dream!

LUKE

Wait, what? What does that even... What does that even mean?

GABE

You're singing at the RATS tonight.

LUKE

Dad, are you..? Are you bonkers? I can't even get in without an invitation.

Gabe reaches into his shirt pocket and hands a card to Luke.

GABE

Your mom left this behind.

LUKE

Wait... This is... This is the real deal... It's not even a wildcard invite; it's an authentic RATS invitation!! But didn't Mom use this already?

GABE

She never got to perform. The night of the contest, she had you.

LUKE

No... No, no, no

GABE

You weren't supposed to come for another month but couldn't wait to be a part of the world.

LUKE

I was born in Tinseltown?

GABE

Yep. Tony was furious. He found someone else to sing her song and took credit for it himself. It was a big hit. Casanova.

LUKE

Mom wrote Casanova?

GABE

It sounded a little different back then. But it's the same song.

Luke looks at the invitation, flabbergasted.

LUKE

But - look. Even if this works, I have no song to sing.

GABE

Well, I do.

Gabe pushes a cassette tape into the stereo. It's Theresa singing "If You Can Dream It".

LUKE

Wait... Mom used to sing this to me when I was a kid.

GABE

It's the one song Tony didn't get his hands on. Your mom wrote it for you. After we got back. After the three years.

LUKE

So what do we do now?

GABE

That's for you to figure out.

A surge of emotions fills the truck, leaving the two men in an awe-filled silence as they head toward Tinseltown, their hearts filled with renewed determination.

CUT TO:

156 EXT. TINSELTOWN - LATER

Gabe's truck rolls past the "WELCOME TO TINSELTOWN" sign.

157 INT. GABE'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Luke strums the melody to "If You Can Dream It" on his guitar, lost in thought. Writes down an arrangement.

LUKE

Wow. I've got things to do! What size pants are you?

158 INT. LA-LA'S RESTAURANT

At the entrance, Gregory is at the door. Luke goes up to him. Gabe, dressed in a white leisure suit, black silk shirt, boogie shoes, gold chains, and mirrored sunglasses, is standing by.

LUKE

Hey Greg. Could you do me a solid?

GREGORY

(imitates Luke from earlier)

You know what? It's really not a good time right now. We're in... negotiations.

LUKE

Hey, I know. I'm an idiot. I'm really sorry, buddy, but...

GREGORY

I'm just kidding!

LUKE

Oh, sweet. Oh man, thanks. This is my dad. Gabe.

GABE

Hello.

Gregory gives Gabe a glance.

GREGORY

Nice outfit.

LUKE

See the guy over there?

GREGORY

Frank?

LUKE

Yes. Can you give my dad a table next to him? And then when I call, hand him the telephone?

GREGORY

Sure!

Gregory brings Gabe to a table next to Frank as Luke slips out.

159 INT. PHONE BOOTH

Luke dials a number.

160 INT. LA-LA'S RESTAURANT

Gregory brings a landline phone to Gabe's table.

GREGORY

Excuse me. Phone call, sir. From
DCM Publishing, London.

Frank listens in.

161 INT. PHONE BOOTH

LUKE

(Into the telephone) Just repeat
after me. In this accent.

He starts talking in a not-so-good cockney accent.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Yeah, I think I've met with all the
people representing songwriters
here. Not exactly what we are
looking --

162 INT. LA-LA'S RESTAURANT - LATER

Gabe is on the phone, repeating Luke's words, with Frank
eavesdropping.

GABE

-- for. Best I've found so far is
Diamond Entertainment, but I don't
know if they can deliver. Elton
will be displeased.

Gabe hangs up, Frank approaches his table.

FRANK

I'm sorry. I couldn't help but
overhear you talking. Is Elton the
Elton I think he is?

GABE

There's only one Elton.

FRANK

If he is, you need to meet my boss.

163 INT. PHONE BOOTH - SAME

Luke dials another number.

164 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - KITCHEN - LATER

Mike answers the phone

MIKE

Yeah!

LUKE

Hey, Mike. It's Luke. I need you to do me a favor. Could you talk to the guys in the band for me? And do you still have the tape recorder?

MIKE

Sure thang!

LUKE

Good. Listen. You know, the toilet by the entrance...

165 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - LOUNGE - LATER

Frank escorts Gabe into the club.

FRANK

Ah, Mr. Nobble, you will not regret this.

GABE

Is there a lavatory?

FRANK

Huh?

GABE

A toilet.

166 INT. THE VELVET ROPE - MEN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Gabe reaches for Mike's tape recorder on the water tank above the toilet. He looks at it, presses some buttons, and places it in his pants, behind his back.

167 INT. TONY'S OFFICE - LATER

Tony is shaking hands with Gabe.

GABE

Mr Cash, it's a pleasure.

TONY CASH

Yeah, ehm. Mr Lord, listen. I don't ever forget a grande schnoz. You know what I'm saying? You look familiar. Have we ever met?

GABE

No, not unless you've been to London.

TONY CASH

No. That's funny, though. Because you don't sound like no London I ever met.

GABE

Oh, probably because I'm from southern London.

TONY CASH

Right.

GABE

So listen, what I need is someone to deliver songs that my artist can put his name on.

TONY CASH

Well, everybody around here wants a Tony Cash original. That's why I have kids in the cellar writing them for me all day long.

Gabe nods at a newspaper on the desk. The first page reads, "Sky and Tony Cash; Together again!"

GABE

Like the song Sky's singing tonight?

TONY CASH

Yup. Written by some farm kid who's got posters of me above his bed. And a nobody waitress. They couldn't sell that song if they tried. Until I put my name on it.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

Listen; We're heading over to the R.A.T.S, tonight. Do you want to come?

EXT. RATS VENUE - BACK DOOR - SAME

Reggie and the band are carrying instruments from an old van. Luke sneaks up to them. Simultaneously, Trudy makes her entrance from the opposite direction.

LUKE

Thank's Reggie. Guys. I can't say how much I...

REGGIE

No worries. Do you have the sheet music?

LUKE

Absolutely.

Luke hands him a bunch of papers. Nods towards Trudy.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Oh, by the way. This is Trudy. Actress extraordinaire. She's giving the performance of her life tonight.

TRUDY

Enchanted.

Reggie gives Luke a flight-case to carry. Trudy takes the role of the band's manager, and they all enter the R.A.T.S Building.

INT. RATS VENUE - MAIN ROOM

The room is empty, except for Lola, who is doing some final touch-ups. She throws a glance at the stage, her face a mask of disappointment. Suddenly, the sound of the kitchen door opening echoes in the room. She looks up to see Luke entering, weary face, sheet music in hand.

LUKE

Lola...

Lola looks at him, her expression guarded. She crosses her arms protectively across her chest but doesn't say a word.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Look. I'm sorry. I don't know what to say... What I did... It was wrong

Lola softens a little, but remains silent, prompting Luke to continue.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Lola. And I'm sorry that the song... our song.. I shouldn't have let Tony take it.

Lola finally breaks her silence.

LOLA

It wasn't just about the song, Luke...

LUKE

I know. It was about trust. And I broke that. I trusted the wrong guy. And guess what.

(MORE)

LUKE (CONT'D)

Turns out we're not the first ones getting screwed by Tony Cash. You know, Casanova. My mom wrote that song.

LOLA

Your mom wrote Casanova? I didn't know she was a songwriter.

LUKE

Me either. Turns out she was supposed to perform it right here, but went into labor. And she had me backstage.

Lola looks at Luke, seeing the remorse and resolve in his eyes. She finally nods, offering him a small, forgiving smile.

LOLA

Wow. So, you were literally born to perform here. Then who am I to stop you?

LUKE

I'm going to make this right, Lola. And I need your help.

LOLA

Okay. Let's do it... together.

Luke gives Lola the handwritten sheet music...

168

EXT. RATS VENUE - NIGHT

A stretch limo pulls up, and Gabe gets out with Tony and Frank. The crush of the paparazzi and the popping flashbulbs trigger a quick flashback to the last time Gabe was here with Theresa. He hesitates.

TONY CASH

You okay?

GABE

Yeah. Yeah.

169

INT. RATS VENUE - MOMENTS LATER

Well inside, there are big screens playing highlights from previous R.A.T.S Galas. Tony takes a seat, but when Gabe grabs the chair, the tape recorder falls out of his jacket. He quickly picks it up and shoves it back into his coat. Tony reacts.

TONY CASH

Hey. What's with the tape recorder?

Gabe's on the spot.

GABE
I'm gonna make a bootleg.

TONY CASH
Hey! You're not bootlegging Sky.

GABE
Just kidding. Can I meet her? I'm a big fan.

TONY CASH
'Course you can. Backstage, after she performs. She's opening the show with "my song".

GABE
"Your song" Haha. Now, if you excuse me. I have to go to the men's room.

Gabe leaves. Frank joins Tony at the table.

FRANK
Hey, Tony. Where did our guy go?

TONY CASH
To the men's room, like a bad habit.

FRANK
He sure does pee a lot, eh?

Tony stares across the room.

FADE OUT.

171 INT. RATS VENUE - GREEN ROOM - SAME

Gabe is speaking with the SECURITY GUARD outside Sky's dressing room.

GABE
I have a little something to miss Sky from Tony Cash.

SECURITY GUARD
I'm sorry. Nobody sees Sky before she performs - no one.

172 INT. RATS VENUE - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A logo on the big screen is showing "1960". The film, in black and white shows the exterior of the R.A.T.S venue, same angles as in the intro, scene 3.

FRANK

Look. 1960. Ahh. Hey. Look, look,
that's you! Thinner. More hair.

Tony throws Frank an evil eye. The film on the screen shows the same shots as in the intro. A limousine pulls up to the same swanky club where the gala event is being hosted. A banner reads: "Welcome to the 1960 RECORDING ARTISTS OF TINSELTOWN SHOWCASE."

There is a crush of screaming fans and paparazzi.

The door to the limo opens, and Theresa emerges. She is met by young TONY CASH. He says something, but the film is silent.

A young Gabe emerges from the limo shortly afterwards. In a wider shot than in the first flashback, we reveal that Theresa is pregnant. Gabe puts a hand on her belly. Whispers in her ear. Happy.

Theresa has a strained expression. Tony eyes Gabe suspiciously.

Then it all comes together in Tony's head.

TONY CASH

(to Frank)

Luke! What's his last name?

FRANK

Ahh. Collins.

TONY CASH

Collins. Theresa Collins. Gabe!

(to the approaching
security guard)

The guy from London, where did he
go?

SECURITY GUARD

That is what I'm here about. He's
at Sky's. Insists to see her.

TONY CASH

Guess what? He's not who he says he
is. The Englishman.

It's Gabe Collins. Luke's father.
And he recorded me... Run!

Frank takes off, and Tony follows.

ANGLE ON

Sky emerges from her dressing room. Gabe tries to get her attention.

GABE
Sky, you need to hear something.

SKY
OK, what?

Gabe pulls out the tape recorder and is about to hit play when Frank tackles him from behind. The recorder hits the ground and slides across the floor. There is a scramble for the recorder.

GABE
Give it to me!

Luke appears out of nowhere.

LUKE
Actually, that belongs to my friend Mike.

He grabs the recorder and runs. Frank takes off after him.

FRANK
Stop! Where do you think you're going?

They race through the club, weaving in and out of tables. Luke slides underneath the stage and is gone. Frank looks for him but gives up as Sky is announced.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Ladies and gentlemen, The Recording Artists of Tinseltown Showcase is proud to present --

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
-- The one and only: Sky!

The curtain rises, revealing Sky on stage. The audience applauds.

SKY
Thank you! Thank you it's good to be back. Thank you all for coming.

Just as she's about to sing, an elderly woman cries out.

ELDERLY WOMAN (O.S.)
Oh, my artificial heart!

The music stops. Reveal the elderly woman is Trudy LaRue. She staggers to the front of the stage in a melodramatic fashion, clutching her heart. As she speaks, she climbs the stairs, on to the scene.

TRUDY

Alas, my heart has failed me in
love, and now in life. And so I say
goodbye, cruel world!

Trudy twirls around a few times, then plops down on the
ground. The place goes silent.

Sky leans over her.

SKY

Ehh, can I do something for you?

Trudy opens one eye. Smiles.

TRUDY

You could lend me that microphone.

She takes the microphone from Sky's hand, and pulls out
Mike's tape recorder from under her dress. She pushes play.

The tape plays over the P.A. system.

TONY CASH (ON TAPE)

Well, everybody around here wants a
Tony Cash original. That's why I
have kids in the cellar writing
them for me all day long.

GABE(ON TAPE)

Like the song Sky's singing
tonight?

TONY CASH(ON TAPE)

Yup. Written by some farm kid
who's got posters of me above his
bed. And a nobody waitress. They
couldn't sell that song if they
tried. Until I put my name on it.

The audience reacts with gasps. From the wings, Tony tries to
rush the stage, but Reggie and Luke hold him back.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

Hey! That ain't me talking!
Somebody edited that together!

Tony is furious and points at Luke, standing next to the
scene.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

You better get yourself a new
poster; your career is over!

Gabe appears.

GABE

So is yours, Tony! Time to cash out.

ANGLE ON

Tony tumbles across the stage. His wig comes off, and his corset pops open, exposing his expanding gut. He lies in a heap in front of Sky.

SKY

(to Tony)

I don't even know who you are right now.

(to audience)

You know what? Why don't we all bring out Luke and Lola? You know, the ones who really deserve the credit. The ones who wrote this song. Please, come up and sing it.

Luke walks out on stage. Lola stands below it. The audience cheers. Luke holds out a hand towards her and raises his eyebrows comically, trying to convince her with a "What do you say?" Look - just like she did to him. Lola finally smiles and takes his hand, allowing herself to be pulled up.

A bald and fat Tony stands up defiantly.

TONY CASH

If you sing that song, I'll sue you and the rest of your family for breach of contract.

LUKE

Oh man, I wish we thought of that, Tony... Oh wait - we did.

(to audience)

Hey everybody. We're gonna be singing a different song. It's a song my mom wrote. She used to sing to me at night.

Luke takes a seat at the piano.

LUKE (CONT'D)

So, I'd like to dedicate this song to my mom, Theresa Collins, who I know is watching from her VIP seat up above.

(a beat)

And to my dad, who always believed in me and her.

Luke begins to play an all-new arrangement of "IF YOU CAN DREAM IT". He is backed up by Lola, Sky, Mike, Reggie, and the Velvet Rope house band.

LUKE (CONT'D)

*What good is life
Without a song
What will be there
When all is gone
But a melody
That sweet melody
It sang to me.*

Luke gets up from the piano and joins Lola.

TOGETHER

*If you can dream it
Oh you can be it
And my fear had no say
At the end of the day
I trust the music
To show me the way
I just know
If you can dream it
You can be it
So I am dreaming away.*

The audience loves it and sings along with the chorus. They raise their lighters.

175 OMITTED

176 INT. RATS VENUE - STAGE

Luke and Lola are singing their hearts out.

LUKE

*Stuck with my vision just like I
was blind
Let no distractions take over my
mind.*

177 INT. MOURNVILLE DINER - SAME

Jess and a crowd of TOWNSPEOPLE are cheering as they watch the show on the TV.

JESS

I knew he could do it

176 INT. RATS VENUE - STAGE

LOLA

*I had the answer within me
And now I know why.*

INT. VILLA ELAINE APARTMENTS - SAME

Gregory and FRIENDS are watching the show on TV. Gregory indicates to the others that he knows Luke.

INT. RATS VENUE - STAGE

BACKUP SINGERS

*If you can dream it
Oh, you can be it.*

Gabe watches from the wings. He smiles through the tears of happiness. He couldn't be prouder of his son.

TOGETHER

*And my fear had no say
At the end of the day
I trust the music
To show me the way
I just know
If you can dream it
You can be it
So, I am dreaming away
Again.*

The song ends dramatically, and the audience erupts with cheers.

179

INT. RATS VENUE - STAGE - SAME

There's a swell of music as the audience continues to cheer. Luke and Lola embrace.

LUKE

We did it!

LOLA

We did it!!

Luke and Lola lock eyes.

LUKE

You know, there's this thing that I've always wanted to do since I met you, but I've never known how to actually go about it. I thought about it on the roof, at the pier - every time I'm with you. Every time I see your pic-

Lola kisses him to shut him up. Confetti falls over them. As they part, Luke blushes.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Yeah... That.

LOLA
Silly farm boy.

The couple is joined by Reggie, Mike, Sky, and others who congratulate them.

Luke spots his dad off in the wings. Luke waves him over.

LUKE
Dad, come over here!

GABE
On stage?

LUKE
Yeah!

No awkwardness this time for father and son. They embrace each other with a hug that is years overdue.

GABE
I'm proud of you, son.

LUKE
I love you, Dad.

GABE
I love you, too.

Lola looks on and smiles.

180 OMITTED

181 EXT. RATS VENUE - LATER

Luke, Lola, and Gabe exit the club and are swarmed by the paparazzi and media.

Trudy LaRue approaches them.

TRUDY
Luke, I just got offered a part in a laxative commercial.

LUKE
No shit. Congratulations, Trudy. You're gonna do great.

TRUDY
I'm living the dream.

182 INT. RATS VENUE - LATER

The club is empty except for Tony and Frank.

FRANK

Tony, I've looked everywhere. I can't find your head thing.

TONY CASH

It's a hairpiece, not a squirrel. Keep looking.

As Frank continues to search, he sings the chorus from "If You Can Dream It". Tony shoots him a look.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

Are you flippin' kidding me? Found it!

Tony puts the hairpiece on.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

How do I look, kid?

FRANK

Like you have a dead animal on your head. Tony, what are we going to do? Are we finished?

Tony takes off his hairpiece and holds it in his hands. He stares at it.

Tony looks at the hairpiece a little longer. Then he slaps it back on his head - suddenly determined.

TONY CASH

Are you serious? I gotta teach you all this over again? This is Tinseltown. Alright? A comeback is just around the corner.

Tony wraps his arm around Frank and leads him out of the venue. We see their backs as they head toward the jaws of Tinseltown once more. The image fades out slowly.

TONY CASH (CONT'D)

We just need to sign a new client and steal from them next.

FRANK

Like the dishwasher kid that does the rap music?

TONY CASH

No, I'm talking stuff that can fly. All right. Get big. Explode. Blow things up. Ca-shing.

183 INT. TV STUDIO - SAME

Gig Starling is on the set of "The Tinseltown Sound". The audience cheers.

GIG

It is my distinct honor to present
this year's winners of the RATS by
unanimous vote: Luke and Lola!

Luke and Lola walk out on stage, waving to the applauding audience.

GIG (CONT'D)

And as promised! The prize for
first place: 100 000 dollars!

Gig hands the m a check for "100K DOLLARS". Luke and Lola hold it up together.

GIG (CONT'D)

Now tell us: you are released from
the phony contract. what is next
for you two? An album? A tour, what
can we see next?

LUKE

Well, uh - pretty sure we're moving
back to Mournville.

CUT TO:

184 EXT. THE COLLINS FARM - DAY

As Luke and Lola continue explaining their dream, we see it become a reality.

LUKE (V.O.)

The one thing Tinseltown has taught
me was that the dream was never
about Tinseltown. It was about
music. You see, besides Lola, music
is the love of my life.

There is a major construction project happening at the farm.

A couple of new buildings blend in with the farm's rustic architecture.

Cars pull up, and excited young ARTISTS jump out. One of them is Gregory.

Luke is trying to help with the build by using a nail gun. But the powerful gun kicks back on him, and he drops it, causing it to rapid-fire nails haphazardly.

LOLA
We're going to build a new studio
in Mournville...

Reveal Gabe was on the receiving end of the nails. One has pierced his shirt sleeve and pinned Gabe to the wall. Jess uses a pair of pliers to remove the nail. Gabe and Jess have a little flirtatious moment together.

LUKE
And we're going to call it "Farm
Studios".

Gabe is on a ladder hanging a sign on the side of the barn that reads, "FARM STUDIOS".

185 INT. THE COLLINS HOME - DAY

Luke and Lola are tinkering at the piano, trying to complete a melody. Nothing sounds right.

LUKE
Like this?

LOLA
Not quite...

The Songbird, pure as ever, comes to the window and starts chirp the same melody with the correct ending.

LOLA (CONT'D)
What was that?

Luke imitates the birds melody on the piano.

LOLA (CONT'D)
Ah! That's it!

Luke smiles at the Songbird. Then he turns to the framed portrait of Theresa on the piano and smiles at her as if to thank her. The portrait comes alive and looks at Luke with pride, but shakes her head.

THERESA
It wasn't me. It was him.

Theresa nods towards a mirror on the wall. Luke looks in the mirror and sees himself.

THERESA (CONT'D)
Remember. Anyone who can dream it,
can be it.

Luke turns to Theresa's portrait, but she's no longer there - a mere picture again. He looks back at the Songbird. It takes flight, and as it flies away, it dissolves into the air. Luke's eyes tear up.

LOLA
Everything okay?

LUKE
For the first time - yeah.

Lola embraces him.

LOLA
Let's do this.

Luke begins playing the intro to "MUSIC IS THE LOVE OF MY LIFE".

LUKE
*I was just a kid
When you came knocking on my door
Tangled up my feelings
And left me begging for more
But everyone told me
That you weren't good for me
You got to break it up
It's all a fantasy
Somewhere deep inside I knew
I would never see it through*

As Luke sings the song about his love affair with music, he and Lola gets up and look at pictures of Luke on the wall from when he was younger. In every picture, he's either singing, writing music, or playing an instrument.

186 EXT. THE COLLINS FARM - AMPHITHEATER - CONTINUOUS

Luke sits alone on stage in a natural amphitheater built next to the old barn, into the side of the rolling hills, rehearsing for himself. While he rehearses, an audience slowly fills the amphitheater as musicians slowly fill the stage.

LUKE
*There was nothing left to say
I was swept away.*

Suddenly, Luke is on stage with a full band and backup singers. Frenzied fans cheer them on.

LUKE (CONT'D)
*Music is heavenly
Perfect bliss
Sweet like a virgin kiss
The music is anything
Everything I always dreamed about
I'm gonna work it out
So we can stay together
Forever
Music is the love of my life.*

Luke and Lola sing together.

TOGETHER

*Ever since that day
You've been the rhythm of my heart
The soul of my breathing
My inspiration my glowing spark
And when we're dancing
I'm lost in the chemistry
I am the harmony
You are the melody
Deep inside of me I know
I will never let you go.*

Sky joins them on stage.

TOGETHER (CONT'D)

*Music is heavenly
Perfect bliss
Sweet like a virgin kiss
The music is anything
Everything I always dreamed about
I'm gonna work it out
So we can stay together
Forever and ever.
Music is the love of my life.*

*The love of my life
The love of my life.
Somewhere deep inside I knew
I would never see it through
There was nothing left to say
I was swept away.*

The Gospel Choir from the church enters and sings back up.

GOSPEL CHOIR

*Music is heavenly
Perfect bliss
Sweet like a virgin kiss
The music is...*

Reggie breaks into a soulful saxophone solo. Jess and Gabe are in the audience dancing together. -Luke motions for them to join him on stage. Jess hops up on stage, but Gabe is apprehensive.

LUKE

The music, is the love of my life.

The Songbird appears one last time. She flutters around Gabe, seemingly encouraging him to join Jess. He gets the message and climbs on stage.

Everyone sings: Luke, Lola, Sky, Gregory, Mike - even Gabe.

ALL
*Music is heavenly
 Perfect bliss
 Sweet like a virgin kiss
 The music is anything
 Everything I always dreamed about
 I'm gonna work it out
 So we can stay together.*

ANGLE ON

Jess is backstage with Gabe, about to ignite the fireworks. She crosses her fingers, and Gabe gives her a wink and a smile. On cue with the music, the fireworks light up the sky.

ALL (CONT'D)
*Forever
 Forever and ever.*

Luke does his dramatic knee slide across the stage with his fist in the air. For the first time ever, he nails it.

LUKE
Music is the love of my life!

The audience cheers. The camera pulls out. The show is revealed to be playing on the small TV in Luke's basement. The CREDITS start rolling next to the TV.

GIG (O.S.)
*That was 'Music is the love of my
 life' by the wonderful, splendid
 Luke and Lola.*

Gig Starling appears on the TV screen as the program cuts to the *Tinseltown Sound* studio.

GIG (CONT'D)
 And now! With us live and direct,
 you've known him as--

A slideshow runs of every persona Tony Cash has ever had through the years. At the top, with every slide, the *Tinseltown Sound* logo evolves as the year-stamp on it changes.

GIG (CONT'D)
 --"Tony Cash", "Tony Motown", "Tony the Brit", "Psychedelic Tom", "Disco Antonio" and up until recently "Tony Cash" *again*, ladies and gentlemen, here to announce his almost overnight punk sensation premiering tonight at his new club "The Flaming Puke Bucket"--

A slide appears of the once disco-inspired *The Velvet Rope* that has now been transformed into a punk rock dive bar called "The Flaming Puke Bucket".

GIG (CONT'D)

--It's Tony the Menace and Frankie Fury!

"Tony the Menace" and "Frankie Fury" walk out on stage. They are in ripped t-shirts, black skinny jeans, leather vests, studded wrist bands, and clunky military boots. They both are wearing eyeliner. Frank's wearing a biker's hat adorned with rivets, and Tony's wearing a spiked Mohawk wig. The crowd goes crazy. Tony's mohawk slips, and starts leaning to the left. Frank notices and straightens it. The TV ZAPS off.

As the credits continue to roll, ever so often, the TV turns back on and shows a slide of a new persona from Tony as his career progresses, with a new logo for Tinseltown Sound and a new year-stamp on it each time. Among others, we meet:

"Antonio Glitterati" - A glam rock wonder.

"Tony Tronix" - A synth-pop master.

"Anthony Anguish" - The grandfather of grunge.

After his musical career, he tries running an infomercial shopping channel, hops on the reality-TV trend, starts a social media management house - that finally turns into a TikTok and Instagram challenge channel. All shown in very short clips as the credits roll to enlighten the moral of the story: Tinseltown will never change, but it clearly warps the people who desperately try to survive in it.

THE END