

Sacre:Conversazione

an original screenplay by
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INT STUDIO APARTMENT/HELL'S KITCHEN NIGHT

Dark-haired FREDO sits at a dilapidated dinette in the middle of his eat-in-kitchen and stretches a canvass onto a frame. Fredo is a late twenty-something and whilst no bodybuilder, he is solid although perhaps insulated by one winter's fat. He wears a loose, heavy, torn, red flannel shirt, with sleeves folded up above his biceps. His hands are wrapped in bloodied gauze bandages.

FREDO

This oughta keep her for a while.

Fredo grabs an Olde English 800 tallboy off the dinette and guzzles it dry. He struggles to stand and straighten out his six foot frame. He adjusts his plaid boxer shorts. He snatches the empty can and takes a hook shot across the room into a large blue recycling bucket.

FREDO (CONT'D)

Mason rebounds. He scores.

Fredo grabs first the canvass and then his cane. He pushes away the mismatched kitchen chairs and hobbles past an alleged Louis XIV gold-fabric love seat, which a cat mistook for a scratching post, and a big old cathode ray tube television on a shaky trolley, on his way to the empty easel near an open window. Curiously, a PAINT BALL GUN, like those used in survival games, dangles by its sling from the easel. CAR HORNS and stray VOICES, inflected with Puerto Rican, Arab and Irish accents, barge in from the street.

Notably, several other canvasses hang by strips of duct tape from the walls or cabinets. These all feature a painted heart of one color violently splashed with another color. The words "ART ATTACK" appear on a few.

Fredo lays the prepared canvass onto a stack of others. He kicks it. His feet are bandaged too.

FREDO (CONT'D)

Yeah. This oughta keep her for a while. I guess.

He cleverly guides the crook of his cane into the vent of his boxers. He scratches his crotch and sighs.

FREDO (CONT'D)
 Aaaaah... if only the New York
 State Department of Labor could see
 me now.

EXT STREET/HELL'S KITCHEN NIGHT

JUNE LEE, a late twenty-something blond girl, with a round, full but very pretty face, strides up to a brick wall covered with graffiti and concert posters. Her plush body will not conceal itself beneath her NARAL t-shirt or within her loose, dark blue sweatpants. Both are smeared with many colors of oil paint. From the bowling ball BAG she carries, June Lee pulls a large stencil and a can of spray paint.

She locates a bare patch of brick and holds the stencil up to it. She blasts it with purple paint, which leaves the silhouette of a heart with a crack through it and the phrase "ART ATTACK." She does this twice more elsewhere. June Lee takes out a hard pack of Marlboro Lights and finds the last cigarette. She lights it and takes a deep drag. She crumples the box and tosses it into the gutter. A suppressed Southern accent is sometimes evident in her voice.

JUNE LEE
 It is the evening of Maundy
 Thursday, Anno Domini...
 (says letters)
 ...M-C-M-X-C-I-I. Or, if you will,
 in the second year B. G. Before
 Giuliani.
 (a beat)
 And before Pfizer's little
 Celestine rhomboid... Before the
 rare event of an erection lasting
 more than... Before women who
 are, or could become, pregnant
 should not handle... In the twenty-
 fourth Olympiad of the pneumatic
 age... When no one in The City was
 at peace... I awaited my
 boyfriend's sexual services, his
 gracious coming. Only to be
 thwarted by... I bet I've gotten
 ahead of myself...

She darts off into a...

INT BODEGA NIGHT

...where she buys a new pack of Marlboro Lights and a box of condoms. The CASHIER is of course from Southern Asia. June Lee exits.

INT STUDIO APARTMENT

From the refrigerator, Fredo grabs another Olde English tall boy and cracks it open.

FREDO
Thank you, Mario Cuomo.

He hobbles around the apartment whilst he sings an Echo and the Bunnymen song, but more in the style of a lounge act.

FREDO (CONT'D)
"Lips like sugar, sugar kisses."
Bah dah bah bah. "Lips like sugar,
sugar kisses." Shoo bee doo yeah!

He grabs a box of audio cassettes from atop the bureau. He picks through them and flips the rejects to the floor.

FREDO (CONT'D)
Tom Jones... Louis Prima... Keely
Smith... Louis Prima with Keely
Smith.
(holds one cassette up)
Hazy Fantasy? Must belong to June
Lee. Jackie Gleason... "Shiny
shiny sha la la la..."

He finds a cassette box marked up with Art Attack broken hearts and wiggly-tailed spermatozoa.

FREDO (CONT'D)
Ah-hah!

The BUZZER RINGS and Fredo walks with the aid of his cane, not to the door, but to the window.

INT/EXT STUDIO APARTMENT

Fredo sweeps aside the chintz curtain and raises the screen. He sticks his head out and looks over the fire escape down to the sidewalk at June Lee.

JUNE LEE
Forgot the keys.

FREDO
Cheese and crackers.

INT STUDIO APARTMENT

Fredo hobbles around and inspects every flat surface. He pushes some papers and things to the floor, then moves around the junk under the dinette. He opens the front door and finds a set of keys still in the lock.

INT/EXT STUDIO APARTMENT

He walks back to the window and leans out.

FREDO
Fire in the hole.

He tosses the keys out to her and she catches them.

JUNE LEE
Ringer!

FREDO
Yeah. Now don't deconstruct it.

INT STUDIO APARTMENT

He slams the screen shut and walks to a paint-smearred boom-box where he swaps out the cassettes. With a flourish of his finger, he pushes the play button. BIG BAND MUSIC starts.

KITCHEN

Cane in hand, Fredo makes like Fred Astaire. He sways from side to side then tries to twirl his cane. It flies away from him. As he moves to catch it, Fredo falls backwards to the floor. The cane lands a few feet away. His fingers claw at it and he even tries to snare it with his leg but the cane is just out of his reach.

June Lee enters, a Marlboro lit on her lip, box of condoms in her hand. She throws the bowling ball bag onto the floor.

JUNE LEE
Ah-hah, I hear the overture and I
sing of arms and the man...
(sees Fredo on the floor)
Oh my God! Sweetie!

FREDO
Please... no allusions.

June Lee kneels next to him.

JUNE LEE
I told you not to risk something we
hope to use tonight.

FREDO
The rest of me is all right too,
thanks.

JUNE LEE
I'm more concerned that thy rod and
thy staff comfort me. The Twenty-
Third Psalm, verse four.

FREDO
Just hand me down my walking cane.

She gets him the cane and helps him to a chair. Fredo
snatches the cigarette from her mouth and puffs on it.

JUNE LEE
I just want you to keep it up.

FREDO
You keep it up, and I'll be saying,
"Arise, take up thy pallet and go."
Matthew, nine, six.

She notices the can of Olde English.

JUNE LEE
And why are you consuming alcohol?

Fredo holds up a short stack of PORN MAGAZINES.

FREDO
It doesn't matter. I looked
through all these skanky rags...

JUNE LEE
Nary a pulsation?

June Lee goes to the bed, with its beaver-bitten corner
posts, holds up the blanket. Dozens of paint tubes and
brushes and even a painter's palette slide onto the floor.

FREDO
It's just not the same since Traci
Lords went legit.

Glass Rosary beads rattle against the headboard as June Lee smoothes out the blanket.

JUNE LEE

If only we could get lost in the Vatican pornography collection.

She picks up the painter's palette and rests it on the easel.

FREDO

I even looked at your Duane Reade tampon instruction booklet.

June Lee bends over Fredo and hugs him cautiously.

JUNE LEE

Tonight I'm determined to ride my Italian Stallion once again.

FREDO

Okay, so the doctor says I oughta be hauling the plough by now but cheese and crackers...

JUNE LEE

Oh no, you're sowing some wild oats even if I have to put on spurs.

FREDO

(smiles broadly)
Uh... he's up.
(frowns)
Awwwww... he's down.

He wraps his hands around her face and moves to kiss her.

JUNE LEE

Yecch! Your palms are sweaty! Nervous?

FREDO

Nuh-uh.

JUNE LEE

(sniffs)
Did you shower today? I told you to shower today.

FREDO

I did. Go feel the towel.

JUNE LEE

We're goin' all the way, Adlai, but not that way. You smell.

FREDO
Cheese and crackers, I smell like a man.

JUNE LEE
A cheesy man.

She waves him away. Fredo holds out his bandaged hands.

FREDO
Undo my wrappings.

She uncovers his hands to reveal knotty scabs in his palms.

JUNE LEE
I know why you didn't take a shower today. You know why you didn't take a shower today?

She balls up the bandages and tosses them into the trash.

FREDO
Tell me, Madame Blavatsky, why didn't I take a shower today? Which I did by the way...

JUNE LEE
It's too difficult. Without anyone to help, it's too difficult.

FREDO
Please don't start.

JUNE LEE
If you were willing to get a better settlement from the Department...

FREDO
You're gonna start.

JUNE LEE
I'm not starting.

FREDO
No, 'cause you never stopped.

JUNE LEE
I never stopped.

She unwraps a roll of GAUZE and cuts two strips three feet in length. She snips off a few pieces of white bandage TAPE and tags them onto the back of a chair.

FREDO

I didn't want to be one of those
guys who cons the city.

JUNE LEE

It was negligence. Their
negligence.

FREDO

You blamed me. You. Blamed. Me.

JUNE LEE

I've changed my mind.

FREDO

You called me a klutz.

JUNE LEE

If I can change your bandages, I am
most certainly entitled to change
my mind.

FREDO

You called me a klutz in Russian.

JUNE LEE

I've never called you a klutz. In
Russian, English or even...

FREDO

They paid the hospital bills.

JUNE LEE

And they did not pay for a visiting
nurse. Or a house-keeper.

FREDO

You insulted me with a word I can't
even pronounce. Which is why I
think you said it...

JUNE LEE

What about emotional distress?

Fredo hobbles to the bathroom.

FREDO

What about emotional distress?

JUNE LEE

Do you know what it was like to
diaper you for six weeks?

Fredo turns on his heel.

FREDO
Surprisingly fun.

JUNE LEE
Except for that one night.

FREDO
Yeah, the Indian restaurant.

JUNE LEE
No, the Ethiopian restaurant. Now
go out-put completely so you can
put-out completely. Tonight there
will be no excuses!

Fredo limps through the eat-in-kitchen to the...

BATHROOM

...and evacuates his bladder.

FREDO
Insulting me with words I can't
even pronounce.

KITCHEN

JUNE LEE
Well, pronounce this sweetie. When
I woke up this morning I could feel
your Van Dyke poking me in the...
assertion that it still functions.

BATHROOM

Fredo tucks himself back into the vent.

FREDO
It's not voluntary.

He flushes the toilet.

KITCHEN

JUNE LEE
Yes, I've read Saint Augustine.

JUNE LEE opens the refrigerator. She takes three paint balls
from the egg rack. At the easel, she grabs the paint ball
gun by the sling and loads it.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)
 Lock and load. Three, two, one...

She mouths Fredo's words, which paraphrase Benét's "By the Waters Of Babylon."

FREDO (O.S.)
 I touched the one that says "hot"
 but it's not hot.

JUNE LEE
 You have to turn the one that says
 "hot."

FREDO (O.S.)
 Oh! The magic is gone.

JUNE LEE
 (mutters)
 By the waters he babbles on and on.

June Lee slides the paint ball gun between her thighs. She takes the palette and squeezes blue paint onto it. With a thin brush she paints a blue heart on the canvass.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)
 And I wouldn't talk about the magic
 being gone.

BATHROOM

Fredo scrubs his hands and wipes them on a towel, which he throws onto the toilet tank. He steps into the...

KITCHEN

...and from the doorway watches as June Lee grips the gun by the trigger.

JUNE LEE
 (shouts)
 I thought you said no allusions.

She takes three steps back. Like an experienced marksman, she raises the gun to her hip and points it at the canvass.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)
 Fire in the hole.

She squeezes the trigger. Blood-orange PAINT splatters across the canvass.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)
Lazarus, come out! I'm rutting.

FREDO
I'm here.

June Lee swiftly pivots and points the gun at him. He holds his hands up.

FREDO (CONT'D)
You look like Calamity Jane.

JUNE LEE
And you just look like a calamity.

June Lee pretends to re-cock the gun as she CLUCKS her tongue.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)
Oh, there's one more thing you've got to get clean. Squeaky clean.

She hangs the gun on a chair and grabs a SPONGE from the kitchen sink. She pushes Fredo back into the...

BATHROOM

...and yanks down his boxers.

JUNE LEE
Turn the one that says "hot."

Fredo twists the faucet and the water runs.

FREDO
You did call me a klutz, you know.
In Russian. You called me a
razmina.

June Lee wets the sponge, smears it on a bar of soap and scrubs between his legs.

JUNE LEE
It's "razmiznyà."

FREDO
(falsetto)
Cheese and crackers! Insulting me
with words I can't even pronounce.

JUNE LEE
Razmiznyà?

Fredo's blood begins to fill his manhood noticeably.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)
Just add water and watch it grow.

FREDO
My weathervane's not pointing south
anymore.

JUNE LEE
Let's go where the wind blows.

June Lee carefully pulls up his shorts. Fredo follows her out of the bathroom.

KITCHEN

June Lee tosses the sponge into the sink. They sit at the dinette. June Lee winds the clean bandages around his palms. She kisses him between turns of gauze.

FREDO
Do you know how insulting it is to
be insulted with words you can't
even pronounce?

JUNE LEE
Wear it as a badge of honor. And
yes I do know.

Fredo snatches her hand.

FREDO
From living in Russia?

June Lee rubs the finger of her free hand in the blue paint of her palette. She teases his mouth with hers as if to kiss him but she smears paint on his nose.

JUNE LEE
No. The Union...

JUNE LEE/FREDO
...of Soviet Socialist Republics.

June Lee grabs the box of condoms from the table and holds it up with confidence. She takes out a pouch.

JUNE LEE
One individually wrapped - lock and
load.

FREDO
Fire in the hole?

JUNE LEE
Sure is.

FREDO
I'd believe you are your father's
daughter, if I'd believed.

JUNE LEE
You better believe it.

June Lee jumps on...

THE BED

She bounces around until she settles with her head at the
footboard. Fredo feels himself as he hobbles over to her.

FREDO
Cheese and crackers. I've gone
cold. What if you turn the TV on?
Tune it to Channel J.

JUNE LEE
Don't turn that on. Turn me on.

She tears the condom pouch open.

FREDO
C'mon. Please.

June Lee grabs an ancient, clunky remote control off the
night table. She places it between Fredo's legs.

JUNE LEE
If only it was this easy.

She then points the remote over her shoulder at the
television and - TICK - presses a button. The set warms up
and STATIC becomes the THUNDER of race horses which overtakes
the big band music. Fredo hears the hooves and gawks over
June Lee's shoulder.

FREDO
Hey, it's Ben Hur.

JUNE LEE
Ben Hur, a Tale Of the Christ? Of
course. It's Holy Week. I'm going
to remove your shirt.

As Fredo watches TV wide-eyed, June Lee cautiously slips off his left sleeve.

FREDO
(gasps)
Ouch! Owww...

JUNE LEE
Stay still, razmiznyà. Now place your left hand on your side.

FREDO
How do I stay still and move my arm?

Fredo's body is wrapped thickly, just above his navel, with wide gauze BANDAGES. He places his hand over what appears to be a thick metal clamp or a large catheter on his right side. June Lee removes his right sleeve and he SIGHS with relief. She twirls the shirt and flings it to the floor with the fanfare of a stripper.

JUNE LEE
Lights on?

FREDO
C'mon, it's the chariot race.
Let's just watch...

JUNE LEE
Tonight. Now. No excuses!

FREDO
Classic cinema is not an excuse.

JUNE LEE
Take me, sweetie. Take me right here on the air hockey table.

FREDO
But we're not on any...

A determined June Lee pushes Fredo backwards onto the bed. As he lies there, she straddle his legs. June Lee CLAPS and ALL LIGHTS GO OUT.

In the bluegrey flicker of the TV, clothes migrate to the floor. Between the HOOVES and WHIPS of the movie, there are the mouth sounds of KISSES and LAUGHS.

JUNE LEE
Is that your cane or you?

FREDO
Don't waste time with jokes.

Suddenly there is a SNAP of latex rubber.

FREDO (CONT'D)
Cheese and crackers! Let me roll
it down. Please.

JUNE LEE
Whilst you attend to the business
of prophylaxis.

June Lee again points the remote at the TV and - TICK, TICK,
TICK - lowers its volume. The BIG BAND MUSIC returns and
June Lee attends to Fredo.

OOHS, AAHS, MMMMS and GASPS compete with the BIG BAND MUSIC.

Across the room...

THE WINDOW

...the screen slides up. SQUEE-EEK. The chintz curtain
billows and swirls.

THE BED

June Lee and Fredo kiss passionately, repeatedly.

JUNE LEE
Sweetie, how do you feel?

FREDO
The spirit is willin'. The flesh
is illin'.

KITCHEN

An AGÉD HAND rests an ORANGE CLUTCH PURSE on the counter.

THE BED

The naked bodies of June Lee and Fredo slither and rustle
around on the bed as he unsuccessfully assumes various
postures.

JUNE LEE
Let me check Old Anchises.

FREDO

Huh?

June Lee tugs the condom.

FREDO (CONT'D)

Cheese!

JUNE LEE

It's still on.

FREDO

Yeah, it's still on.

KITCHEN

The Agéd Hand grabs a metal, electric Farberware COFFEE POT. CLICK-CLACK. The lid comes off and the basket comes out.

THE BED

JUNE LEE

Get on top.

Fredo turns over and spreads his knees as June Lee slides under him. He winces in pain when he tries get his pelvis close to her's.

FREDO

Oooooooh. Ouch. Owwwwwww.

JUNE LEE

Soyuz to Apollo, proceed Apollo.

FREDO

Baikonour, we have a problem.

(whines)

I... I can't reach.

June Lee grabs the pillows and hands them to Fredo.

JUNE LEE

Oh for Pete's sake. Slide these under me.

FREDO

Where your brain is?

JUNE LEE

No. My backside.

FREDO
Yeah, where your brain is.

KITCHEN

Water from the tap fills the coffee pot. A tall stack of dirty dishes sits in the sink.

THE BED

June Lee arches her back and Fredo slips the pillows under her butt.

JUNE LEE
Touch me with your rubber tip...

Fredo struggles to bring himself to June Lee's body.

KITCHEN

The Agéd Hand spoons coffee into the metal basket.

THE BED

FREDO
The Fredo has landed.

JUNE LEE
Aaaaah... and opened the doors of
perception

KITCHEN

CLICK-CLACK. The lid goes back on the pot. The cord plugs into an outlet.

THE BED

Fredo thrusts his body about once per second.

JUNE LEE
Sweetie, congress is in session.

FREDO
(sings)
"When the music goes around,
everybody goes to town.

The rate of Fredo's pace quickens.

FREDO (CONT'D)
 "Sing, sing, sing, sing, everybody
 start to sing..."

The Rosary on the bedpost RATTLES to and fro. Even the brass
 Crucifix over the headboard bounces against the wall.

KITCHEN

Coffee perks into the clear plastic dome of the pot.

THE BED

FREDO
 "Bah dah bah bah, shoo bee doo woo."

JUNE LEE
 Sweetheart... ?

FREDO
 "Now you're singin' with a swing!"

Fredo stops and needs to catch his breath.

JUNE LEE
 Sweetheart... where'd you go?

Fredo hovers inertly above June Lee.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)
 Damn it! For a moment we became as
 one flesh.

FREDO
 S-s-s-sorry... Gotta take a
 breather.

JUNE LEE
 Don't tell me it's the altitude.
 There are no excuses!

FREDO
 Cheese and crackers. I'm tryin' to
 put rubber to the road.

JUNE LEE
 If they could put a man on the
 moon...

FREDO

Or not.

JUNE LEE

Then why can't they put a man
inside me? Invent a pill or
something?

KITCHEN

Over the steamy spout of the coffee pot a NOSE sniffs.

THE BED

FREDO

(still winded)

There's no magic bullet for this.

June Lee sternly smacks Fredo's bottom. The LIGHTS GO ON.
Fredo is on all fours, with his bare backside in the air.

KITCHEN

AUNT FIL, a thin, pale elderly lady, dressed very elegantly
with a corsage of lilies, jitterbugs with a rag mop.

THE BED

JUNE LEE

Perhaps there is a magic bullet?
Sweetheart, dare we risk it?

FREDO

Risk it.

JUNE LEE

Aquiring the vacuum constriction
enlarger device. Where is it?

FREDO

The bureau. Top drawer.

JUNE LEE

Oh practicing, were we? Going to
condition red! On our way to
condition purplish red.

June Lee, on her back, wiggles out from under Fredo.

KITCHEN

Aunt Fil dances to the dinette with a coffee pot and mugs.

THE BED

JUNE LEE

I'll find it, you just relax... no
don't relax.

June Lee stands up, positively naked.

THROUGHOUT THE APARTMENT

Fredo follows her with his eyes then notices Aunt Fil at the dinette. His mouth flops open.

JUNE LEE

Is it me, or do you...
(cannot bring herself to
mispronounce)
...Chock Full Of Nuts?

Fredo is nearly petrified.

FREDO

Huh-huh-Heavenly ca-ca-Coffee...

June Lee steps past Aunt Fil and over to the bureau.

JUNE LEE

(points to table)
You see. Coffee. It wasn't just
me.

AUNT FIL

Yeah. Hope ya don't mind.

JUNE LEE

Not at all...

June Lee opens the top drawer of the bureau and finds the vacuum constriction enlarger device - a PENIS PUMP. She takes it and waves it around like a pennant.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)

Lock and load.

June Lee freezes as she realizes Aunt Fil is there. June Lee does not know what to cover first. Fredo jumps out of bed as he wraps the sheets around himself like a toga.

He stands in front of June Lee, grabs the pump from her and points it towards Aunt Fil to keep her at a distance. June Lee throws on her t-shirt and sweat pants.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)
This is a new one. Perking and entering.

Fredo opens the door and waves the pump.

FREDO
Leave the Farberware and get out.

Aunt Fil pours coffee into a mug.

AUNT FIL
Ya's don't want a hot cup a' coffee?

JUNE LEE
No!

Aunt Fil pulls back a chair and sits.

AUNT FIL
Whaddaya want then, a punch in the nose?

JUNE LEE
What do I want? What do I want?
(desperately)
Sex with my boyfriend.

AUNT FIL
For now I just want a nice cup a' coffee.

JUNE LEE
You're welcome to take your nice cup of coffee to go.

AUNT FIL
(drinks)
Yecch! Well this ain't it.

Aunt Fil stands takes her mug to the sink and dumps out the coffee.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)
I bet your pot needs a good scouring. Where's your S. O. S.?

Aunt Fil looks in the cabinet under the sink.

FREDO

I use Brillo. And you gotta go.

AUNT FIL

This whole damn place needs the good once-over. Twice-over.

She opens a second cabinet door and grabs the Brillo box which she points at Fredo.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)

I expected more from you.

JUNE LEE

Spare us the Hints From Heloise.

FREDO

And lady, I expect you to get out now or I'm calling the police.

Aunt Fil takes apart the pot, whacks the wet grounds into the trash and starts to fiercely scour everything.

AUNT FIL

The police! Get 'em, Alfredo. Be my guest. Maybe they'll bring something I can dunk in my coffee. And if the cop's worth his cruller, he'll say, "Shoot 'im and drag 'im on in." That's right, shoot 'im and drag 'im on in.

FREDO

We don't have to drag you in.

JUNE LEE

Sweetie...

AUNT FIL

And I bet ya can't.

JUNE LEE

Sweetie darling...

FREDO

The shooting or the dragging?

AUNT FIL

Both, Alfredo. Both.

JUNE LEE

This woman knows your name.

Fredo SLAMS the door shut.

FREDO
What'd you say?

JUNE LEE
Do you know her?

AUNT FIL
Alfredo, ya was a smart boy and I
expected better from ya.

Fredo points to Aunt Fil with the pump.

FREDO
What'd you say before?

AUNT FIL
Drag 'im on in.

FREDO
Before that.

AUNT FIL
This whole place needs the once
over.

FREDO
Before that. The punch.

AUNT FIL
Ya know what I said, I said,
"Whaddaya want then, a punch in the
nose?"

Fredo walks around the dinette.

FREDO
Say that again.

June Lee grabs the paint ball gun, kneels and fires off a
shot. The ball appears to pass right through the unfazed
Aunt Fil because - SPLOSH - it splatters behind her on a
cabinet door.

AUNT FIL
(to June Lee)
Ya really do want that punch in the
nose.

JUNE LEE
Holy Ghost Batman!

FREDO
Punch in the nose! Do you want a
punch in the nose!
(MORE)

FREDO (CONT'D)
 Cheese and crackers! Only one
 person ever said that.

Fredo lurches to the sink and attempts to hug Aunt Fil.

AUNT FIL
 Stop right there!

Fredo freezes - but not supernaturally. June Lee jumps up
 and grabs him around the waist.

JUNE LEE
 No! It's assault and battery.

FREDO
 But "punch in the nose."
 (pronounces "aunt" as
 "ant")
 It's my Aunt Fil.

AUNT FIL
 Ya think you're gonna touch me
 before ya's wash your hands?

JUNE LEE
 Your whom?!

AUNT FIL
 After ya's been all over each
 other's come si chiam'? You'll get
 a punch in the nose all right.

FREDO
 Those words. I'd have given
 anything to hear those words again.

He breaks free of June Lee, grabs his cane and dances around
 the kitchen.

FREDO (CONT'D)
 Hah-hah! 'Smy Aunt. 'Smy Aunt
 Fil.

AUNT FIL
 Ugh! I bet that fancy filthy
 plunger is... I don't wanna think
 what it's for.

Aunt Fil waves her hand and with her supernatural power
 causes Fredo to stumble over to June Lee and hit her on the
 nose with the pump.

JUNE LEE
 Hey!

AUNT FIL
That's whatcha get for shootin' at
me. And now Alfredo, your "goo-
mahd" is miffed at ya too.

FREDO
Aunt Fil. Cheese and crackers.

JUNE LEE
Yes sweetie yes. Sit down.

June Lee pushes a chair under Fredo. He continues to kick
his feet and throw around his arms.

AUNT FIL
(to June Lee)
He knows when I call him Alfredo
I'm mad at him. At least ya got
paper towels.

She grabs the roll and dries off the parts of the coffee pot.

FREDO
'Smy Aunt. 'Smy Aunt Fil.

JUNE LEE
Yes, and she's back from the grave
for a coffee klatch surprise.

FREDO
Punch in the nose.

JUNE LEE
(pronounces aunt as
"ahnt")
Are you really... Aunt Fil?

AUNT FIL
Filomen' Terez' Crocifesso. In the
flesh.

JUNE LEE
Almost.

AUNT FIL
Almost.

JUNE LEE
A pleasure.

She takes the can of Chock Full O'Nuts and makes a fresh pot.

AUNT FIL

Yeah, I bet if ya knew I was comin' you'd a' baked a cake. Are ya my nephew's "goo-mahd"?

JUNE LEE

"Goo-mahd"? I don't know.
(to Fredo)
Am I your "goo-mahd"?

FREDO

Hah-hah! Cheese and crackers!
Punch in the nose.

Aunt Fil plugs in the pot and sits at the table.

AUNT FIL

Well, kiddo, ya got a name?
"Shidrool" over there ain't gonna innerduce us.

JUNE LEE

June Lee.

AUNT FIL

And you can call me Aunt Fil.

JUNE LEE

This is quite a shock.

FREDO

'Smy Aunt. 'Smy Aunt Fil.

June Lee sits.

JUNE LEE

The closest I've gotten to a ghost is the Haunted House in Disneyland. I thought you all were pale, and dragged heavy, noisy chains, and everything you say echoed...

AUNT FIL

Gotta keep an open mind. Now, Judy, be a good girl and tell me ya got a cookie. I can't have a cap a' coffee without something to dunk in it.

JUNE LEE

I don't believe we do.

AUNT FIL

Ya break your leg? Go look.

June Lee walks over to the cupboard. As she looks through the cabinets, she notices the orange clutch purse.

JUNE LEE
Is this yours, Aunt Fil?

AUNT FIL
Yeah. I traded some drunk driving "dizgraziahd" the coupl'a pennies they slipped in the lining of my coffin for it.

FREDO
Cheese and crackers! Punch in the nose.

AUNT FIL
A coupl'a pennies. To pay the ferryman ya know.

JUNE LEE
But you didn't find him.

AUNT FIL
Heck yeah I did. Took me 'cross the river.

JUNE LEE
Hmmm....
(a beat)
Very nice. The purse that is.

AUNT FIL
(to Fredo)
Your girl Judy's got class.

FREDO
Hah-hah! 'Smy Aunt Fil.

Aunt Fil waves her hand but this time Fredo whacks himself on the head with the pump.

FREDO (CONT'D)
Owww! Why'd you do that?

AUNT FIL
Ain't a freakin' wedding ring in sight.

June Lee closes the cupboard door and returns to the table.

JUNE LEE
That unstuck his needle.

AUNT FIL

From what I heard, an' I thought I heard it all, the needle ain't even made it to the record. Cookie?

JUNE LEE

Nothing, sorry.

Aunt Fil waves her hand. Fredo whacks himself again.

FREDO

Aunt Fil!

AUNT FIL

Ya talk about cheese and crackers but ya ain't got any.

JUNE LEE

That's his story by half.

June Lee takes the pump from him and throws it on the bed.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)

(to Fredo)

What's a "goo-mahd"?

Fredo and June Lee light up Marlboros. They continue to smoke throughout.

AUNT FIL

Don't worry about that, Judy.

JUNE LEE

Not Judy. June Lee.

AUNT FIL

Oh, sorry, Julie.

JUNE LEE

Not Julie. Not Judy. June Lee.

AUNT FIL

Suzy Q, have class. Don't sass.

(points to Fredo)

Look at my nephew. Dressed up just like a "Babaleen."

JUNE LEE

(sits)

Careful, he doesn't like unpronounce-able insults.

FREDO
 (to June Lee)
 It's not an insult. Papalino.
 A Roman.

JUNE LEE
 Oh... broken English.

FREDO
 Yeah.

JUNE LEE
 Will one of you tell me what a
 "goo-mahd" is?

AUNT FIL
 It just means girlfriend.

JUNE LEE
 (skeptically)
 Sure...

AUNT FIL
 It does, Suzy Q, that's all.

FREDO
 Really.

JUNE LEE
 It's not a synonym of "puta"?

FREDO
 Nuh-uh. But that's Spanish anyway.
 The Italian word you're thinking of
 is "putana".

Fredo goes over to Aunt Fil and with difficulty kneels next
 to her.

FREDO (CONT'D)
 Aunt Fil, you don't know how I've
 wished for this. Wished! To see
 you one more time.
 Ever since you... you... you...

AUNT FIL
 Ya know I'm dead. I know I'm dead.
 There. Our cards is on the table.

FREDO
 And to be here to meet June Lee...

AUNT FIL
 All right. Both a ya's. Sit down.
 Coffee's ready.

As Fredo sits the coffee perks to a finish. Aunt Fil goes to the counter, unplugs the pot and removes the basket

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)
 An' what kind of Italian name is
 June Lee?

JUNE LEE
 It isn't.

AUNT FIL
 I know. It's a "Med-a-gahn" name.

Aunt Fil brings the pot to the table and pours the coffee.

JUNE LEE
 "Med-a-gahn"?

FREDO
 Just means American.

JUNE LEE
 With a sniff of contempt.

AUNT FIL
 More like a snort.

JUNE LEE
 I certainly didn't think I was
 going to get a lesson in broken
 English tonight.

AUNT FIL
 Whadja think ya was gonna get?

JUNE LEE
 Laid.

FREDO
 Uh, yeah, hope this isn't like the
 mud I used to get at your house.

AUNT FIL
 It'll put the lead back in your
 pencil.

Aunt Fil sits at the dinette.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)
 I bet no Sweet-N-Low?

FREDO

Nuh-uh.

AUNT FIL

You're a smart boy and I expected
Sweet-N-Low.

Aunt Fil goes to her purse and takes out a pink PACKET of
Sweet-N-Low.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)

Livin' in sin! Madonn', I come all
this way to find Alfredo mio livin'
in sin. And with some "Med-a-gahn"
no less!

She returns to the table and adds the Sweet-N-Low to her
coffee.

FREDO

We're not living in sin.

AUNT FIL

An' see what ya get? Your victrola
needle's wore out. An' ya ain't
got no cookies.

(to June Lee)

He knows I gotta have a cookie with
my coffee.

FREDO

Sorry, I don't have any.

AUNT FIL

Maybe a Ritz. How 'bout a Chicken
In a Biscuit?

FREDO

No crackers either.

AUNT FIL

And to think I figgered ya might
even have a Melba Toast.

FREDO

The Rolls Royce of baked snacks.

AUNT FIL

Ya talk about cheese and crackers
but ya ain't got any.

JUNE LEE

There's no Ritz. Nor Town House.
Neither Triscuits nor Wheat Thins.

AUNT FIL
 Madonn', s'good I bring my own.

Aunt Fil goes to her small purse and pulls out a HUGE BAG OF COOKIES, Stella D'Oro Anisette Toast.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)
 Alfredo, your house is a delapidated mess. You look like some...

JUNE LEE
 Calamity?

Aunt Fil tears open the bag and takes out two cookies.

AUNT FIL
 A calamity, yeah! An' livin' in sin with Calamity Jane here.

From the refrigerator Aunt Fil grabs a QUART OF MILK and returns to the dinette.

JUNE LEE
 Honestly, we're not living together.

AUNT FIL
 Suzy Q, I may be dead, but not from the neck up.

She puts the cookies next to her mug.

JUNE LEE
 May I?

AUNT FIL
 Ain't ya gonna wash your hands?

JUNE LEE
 No offense, but you're, you know... What are you going to catch?

Aunt Fil slides the cookies away from June Lee.

FREDO
 June Lee's just staying here a lot until I fully recover.

AUNT FIL
 Yeah, I heard all about her "just stayin' here" while the lights was out.

Aunt Fil opens the milk carton and sniffs.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)
Hmph, "menza cosh'"...

Undeterred, she pours the milk into her coffee.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)
What am I gonna catch? But I bet
if I was young today, I would do
what you're doin' and live in sin.

JUNE LEE
Aunt Fil, insofar as living in sin,
it's perhaps... what do you
Catholics call it? The Near
Occasion Of Sin.

AUNT FIL
And I shoulda bet that she ain't
even Catholic.

FREDO
Aunt Fil...

AUNT FIL
And she snapped your yo-yo.

JUNE LEE
Me?

AUNT FIL
Well it ain't my fault.

FREDO
I got hurt at work.

AUNT FIL
And how did the horse get out of
the barn at work?

JUNE LEE
If they can put a man on the
moon...

FREDO
Or not.

JUNE LEE
You think they'd invent a pill...

AUNT FIL
His Uncle never needed no pill.

JUNE LEE

Oh no?

AUNT FIL

The needle always reached the groove.

(shivers)

That Gramophone played sweet music.

JUNE LEE

Oh how I know that song! The dreamy "melody haunts my reverie."

FREDO

Cheese and crackers! The only thing more humiliating than getting caught doing it is getting caught not being able to.

AUNT FIL

(to June Lee)

I bet ya didn't know the needle wears out before...

FREDO

Madonn'! That mouth. That mouth'll never wear out.

JUNE LEE

The mother of all aunts.

AUNT FIL

What in the heck happened to ya? Tell me.

FREDO

It was rather typical, usual...

AUNT FIL

Typical? Usual?

JUNE LEE

Except your nephew, you know what he did?

FREDO

Don't start.

AUNT FIL

What'd he do?

JUNE LEE

I'm not starting.

FREDO

Because she never stops.

JUNE LEE

I never stop because he agrees not to sue.

AUNT FIL

Madonn'! Not sue! But ya hit the jackpot...

JUNE LEE

No! The jackpot hit him.

AUNT FIL

I oughta hit him.

JUNE LEE

I'll hold him. You hit him.

FREDO

I was being honest.

June Lee quotes from Samuel Coleridge Taylor's Rime Of the Ancient Mariner.

JUNE LEE

"Ah wretch! Said they / The bird to slay / That made the breeze to blow!"

FREDO

No allusions. And don't deconstruct it either.

JUNE LEE

Look around at this... place.

AUNT FIL

I bet there is a dead bird here...

JUNE LEE

This is where we live.

AUNT FIL

I thought ya didn't live together.

JUNE LEE

All right. He lives. I visit. You visit.

AUNT FIL

I ain't sayin' nothin'. I ain't gonna interfere. Just because he's my nephew. And he's wrong.

FREDO

Damn it! They paid the hospital bills.

(to Aunt Fil)

She knows they paid the hospital bills.

AUNT FIL

(to Fredo)

I ain't sayin' nothin'. I ain't gonna interfere. But do ya think it begins and ends with hospital bills. Did it begin and end with hospital bills for me?

JUNE LEE

But they're not paying for a visiting nurse...

AUNT FIL

I don't believe it.

JUNE LEE

Nor extra therapy...

AUNT FIL

I don't believe it.

JUNE LEE

Nor a cleaning woman.

AUNT FIL

That I believe.

JUNE LEE

Nor...

Fredo fumes as he slams the cane on the table. Then with the crook he pulls June Lee to him face to face.

FREDO

"Stata zeet'!" "Stata zeet'!"

This startles June Lee. Then she grabs Fredo's ears and kisses him on the mouth.

AUNT FIL

What was that outburst about?
Didn't I teach ya better than that?

FREDO

Yes Auntie.

JUNE LEE

But Aunt Fil, I haven't seen animal passion up close and personal like that in a long time.

AUNT FIL

'Cause the needle wears out before the record.

June Lee continues to kiss Fredo.

FREDO

He's up...

June Lee runs her hand down Fredo's body and reaches under the table.

FREDO (CONT'D)

He's down...

June Lee settles back into her chair.

JUNE LEE

Tahkovah zhehzhen.

AUNT FIL

Huh?

FREDO

That's Russian. For c'est la vie.

AUNT FIL

Now let's just enjoy a nice cup of coffee.

(sips coffee)

Mmm, delicious. Haven't lost my touch. Ya know, it ain't tough to keep a clean house.

JUNE LEE

Furthermore, you never know who'll drop dead. I mean drop dead. Drop by. Drop by...

AUNT FIL

I expected more from you.

FREDO

It's hard to clean house. In my condition that is.

JUNE LEE
 Everything is hard. Everything
 but...

Aunt Fil WHISTLES at June Lee's comment.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)
 They can put a man on the moon, why
 can't they invent a pill...

AUNT FIL
 His Uncle never needed no pill.

FREDO
 We never went to the moon. And I
 don't need a pill.

AUNT FIL/JUNE LEE
 No. You are a pill.

The women stare briefly at each other and giggle.

JUNE LEE
 Aunt Fil, I have so many questions
 for you. What's God look like? Or
 feel like? And Heaven? Are there
 angels?

FREDO
 Is Chock Full O' Nuts really The
 Heavenly Coffee?

AUNT FIL
 "Va fa' Nahboolah"! You artists!

JUNE LEE
 Sweetheart, aren't you curious?

FREDO
 My Aunt's here. That's enough.
 Believe you me, more than enough.

June Lee kisses Fredo on the cheek.

JUNE LEE
 You thought you'd be happy to see
 her again.

AUNT FIL
 Go ahead and ask, Suzy Q, but I
 ain't gonna tell ya.

JUNE LEE

Is that some special code of the dead?

AUNT FIL

Special code of the... She's a beaut! A beaut!

FREDO

Very attractive...

AUNT FIL

I can't tell ya 'cause I ain't been there. Like the other faithful departed, when I died I went to Purgatory.

JUNE LEE

Ahhhh... il Purgatorio.

FREDO

Purgatory? Didn't you suffer enough on Earth?

AUNT FIL

Ya ain't a saint, then Purgatory. Period. Now, if I had my druthers, I'd let in saints and chemotherapy patients.

FREDO

Because if the cancer don't kill ya...

AUNT FIL

The chemo will! But I don't make the rules.

June Lee stubs out her cigarette.

JUNE LEE

You, uh, succumbed to cancer?

AUNT FIL

If ya mean cancer killed me, yeah.

JUNE LEE

How can you smoke in front...! You were a smart boy and we expected better from you.

Fredo continues to smoke throughout, whilst henceforth June Lee steals an occasional puff.

AUNT FIL
Smokin' won't kill me. I'm dead.
Yeah, dead, sorry, and ready for
Heaven.

FREDO
Is Heaven ready for you?

AUNT FIL
Better be ready, 'cause we all
shipped out.

FREDO
All who?

AUNT FIL
All us Souls that got released
today. On Good Friday, Fredo.
Always Good Friday, Fredo.

FREDO
When Jesus sprung open The Gates Of
Paradise.

JUNE LEE
Perhaps it's that "Father forgive
them" clause.

FREDO
I always wondered what put the good
in Good Friday.
(a beat)
But it's not Good Friday.

JUNE LEE
Yes, it's Maundy Thursday, not Good
Friday, Fredo.

AUNT FIL
What the heck is Maundy Thursday,
Fredo?

JUNE LEE
It's the old name for Holy
Thursday.

AUNT FIL
I bet somewhere it must be Good
Friday, huh, Fredo?

FREDO
Maybe Heaven goes by Jerusalem
time. It would be Good Friday
there.

JUNE LEE

Although... Dante thought Purgatory was on the exact opposite side of the world from Jerusalem.

AUNT FIL

Guess he was wrong this Dante guy. Anyway, Good Friday's when ya get out of Purgatory. And I didn't sneak out the coal chute.

FREDO

Then you must be reformed.

AUNT FIL

I'll reform your mouth.

JUNE LEE

So if you can't tell me about Heaven, can you describe Purgatory?

AUNT FIL

Ya ain't there to sightsee. It's Purgatory. It ain't Parrot Jungle.

JUNE LEE

Parrot Jungle?

FREDO

Cheese and crackers, it's gotta look like something.

AUNT FIL

Why? To make ya's freakin' artists happy, is that why?

JUNE LEE

What's a Parrot Jungle?

FREDO

Purgatory must have left some impression.

AUNT FIL

(makes a fist with her left hand)

I'll give ya a left impression.

(makes a fist with her right hand)

And a right impression.

JUNE LEE

The mother of all aunts. So what's a Parrot Jungle?

AUNT FIL

Oh that freakin' bird crapped on my head!

JUNE LEE

Sweetie, what's a freakin' Parrot Jungle?

FREDO

Madonn', relax. There's this little park outside Miami with parrots and pink flamingoes and other exotic birds. I'll show you.

Fredo goes over to bed, crouches down and, with his cane, yanks a SHOE BOX out from underneath. He struggles to his feet and sits on the bed.

JUNE LEE

You want to risk opening that in front of your Auntie?

FREDO

Huh?

Fredo shrugs off her question and removes the shoe box lid.

JUNE LEE

You don't keep French postcards in there?

Fredo finds PHOTOS and SOUVENIRS of a non-offensive nature.

FREDO

(holds up a handful)
Only domestic.

He takes out the tiny vintage BOOKLET from Parrot Jungle.

FREDO (CONT'D)

I knew I still had it.

June Lee walks over to Fredo and plucks the booklet from his hand. She flips through it.

AUNT FIL

What's he still got?

JUNE LEE

Why didn't you ever show this to me? I want to make color Xeroxes and use them in a painted collage.

Fredo hobbles over to June Lee and takes back the booklet.

FREDO

'Cause I knew you'd want to make color Xeroxes and use them in a painted collage.

He shows the booklet to Aunt Fil.

AUNT FIL

I'd a' won that bet.

FREDO

(to June Lee)

And you can, as long as it's not socially relevant.

Aunt Fil points to the canvasses.

AUNT FIL

By the way, Fredo, did ya do this?

JUNE LEE

No. I did.

AUNT FIL

Thank God.

June Lee spouts off a quotation from William Blake.

JUNE LEE

"...The enjoyments of Genius; which to angels look like torment and insanity." Blake.

AUNT FIL

Yeah... yeah...

FREDO

I said no allusions, no deconstructions. But speaking of Blake, it's that bird from "Barretta" but he's ridin' a bike.

Fredo points to a photograph in the booklet of a cockatoo riding a miniature bicycle over a tightwire.

AUNT FIL

"Freghetta"! That's him! That's the darn bird!

FREDO

Remember, they tried to make amends by treating you to a free lunch.

JUNE LEE
I hope you ordered the chicken.

AUNT FIL
(doesn't get it)
No, I ordered the tuna "sang-wich".

JUNE LEE
Now I know where he gets not
getting it. Okay, so Aunt Fil...

AUNT FIL
Yeah?

June Lee grabs the Parrot Jungle booklet and waves it around.

JUNE LEE
We've clearly established that
Purgatory doesn't look like this.
Will you describe, to the best of
your ability, your activities in
Purgatory?

AUNT FIL
(to Fredo)
What's she, freakin' F. Lee Bailey
all of the sudden?

FREDO
Creatures of habit.

AUNT FIL
What we did? Nothing much...

JUNE LEE
No standing in cold rivers, which
recede when you bend down to take a
drink?

AUNT FIL
I went across the river. I didn't
stand in it.

JUNE LEE
No rolling stones uphill, which
roll back down on their own?

AUNT FIL
Nah. Where do ya's kids get these
freakin' ideas?

JUNE LEE
From drugs.

FREDO

And TV.

JUNE LEE

No doubt.

AUNT FIL

I bet.

(slaps forehead)

"A bahtz in cahb."

FREDO

(to June Lee)

"Crazy in the head."

JUNE LEE

Her or us?

FREDO

(ponders)

Hmmmmmm.

AUNT FIL

Anyway, in case ya wanna know, we
went to, uh, come si chiam'...

(knocks on the table)

...seminars.

JUNE LEE/FREDO

Seminars?

AUNT FIL

Ya know, like a classroom.

JUNE LEE

We know what a seminar is.

AUNT FIL

"Va fa' Nahboolah"! I bet ya
didn't think I knew.

FREDO

Well, yeah... no.

JUNE LEE

Not from a hole in the ground.

AUNT FIL

And ya was right, I didn't.

FREDO

This isn't the picture of Purgatory
I got from my nuns in grammar
school.

JUNE LEE

At these seminars, what topics were presented?

AUNT FIL

What'd they learn us? Lots a' stuff. All by dead people. Some famous people from history even.

JUNE LEE

Did you ever see...

FREDO

(interrupts)
Grandmom or Grandpop?

AUNT FIL

It's a big place kiddo...

JUNE LEE

Perhaps you saw...

FREDO

(interrupts again)
Uncle Danny! Did you run into Uncle Danny?

AUNT FIL

Ain'tcha ever heard of "'til death do ya's part?" Anyway, he should go to... Hades.

(to June Lee)

Danny was my husband.

FREDO

Judge not lest you be judged.

AUNT FIL

Shut your yap unless ya wanna slap.

June Lee covers Fredo's mouth with her hand.

JUNE LEE

Did you meet anyone famous?

June Lee takes her hand away with Fredo's cigarette between her fingers and steals a puff.

AUNT FIL

Yeah, but ya know what?

JUNE LEE

What?

AUNT FIL
Everybody, even famous people who
are workin' off their sins, are
very boring.

JUNE LEE
I believe that.

AUNT FIL
Except actors. Very melodramatic.

FREDO
Oh, definitely, definitely.

AUNT FIL
All the time.

JUNE LEE
No doubt.

AUNT FIL
Nope, didn't know what a seminar
was. Oh! The best was this: Mary,
ya know, the Mother of God?

FREDO
Yeah, the Mother of God...

AUNT FIL
She gives concerts.

JUNE LEE/FREDO
Concerts?

AUNT FIL
Ya know, she sings. For a crowd.

FREDO
We know what a concert is.

JUNE LEE
Like we know what a seminar is.

AUNT FIL
Oh no, you ain't got any idea what
a concert is until ya seen the
Blessed Mother sing. Oh, she got a
wonderful voice. A great singer.
Terrific singer.

FREDO
She should be. After all, she is
the Mother of God.

JUNE LEE
Grazia plena. Full Of Grace.

AUNT FIL
Full of Grace? Full of talent! Ya see what she really wanted to do in Fatima and Lourdes, and even that new place...

FREDO
Yugoslavia...

AUNT FIL
Did I go where? How could I?

JUNE LEE
Medjugorje, that's the town...

AUNT FIL
See, when the Blessed Mother gets in front of a crowd all they want is for her to tell the future. And cure. And make roses bloom. And bring the Sun down to the Earth. Usually in the middle of her act she says, "After two thousand years, ya think I'd stop doing requests."

JUNE LEE
Must bring down the house.

AUNT FIL
Never fails. I think secretly she wants to appear...

FREDO
...In Atlantic City?

AUNT FIL
Vegas. 'Cause the last time, Liberace opened for her.

JUNE LEE
Liberace went to Heaven?

AUNT FIL
Of course. He's a nice Catholic boy.

JUNE LEE
Explains the fascination with candlelabrum.

Aunt Fil carries the mugs to the sink.

FREDO

Is she trying to get Elvis to open
for her?

AUNT FIL

Can't. He went to... Hades.
Straight to Hades.

FREDO

The King?

Aunt Fil returns to the table grabs the milk carton and
coffee pot.

AUNT FIL

Straight to Hades.

JUNE LEE

In death just as in life...

AUNT FIL

That pelvis did him in. You need
new milk.

Aunt Fil dumps the milk down the sink and starts to wash the
coffee pot.

FREDO

You know, this doesn't sound like
Purgatory. It sounds like the
freakin' "Love Boat."

(to June Lee)

Go give her a hand.

JUNE LEE

But first I'll get you a sleeveless
undershirt.

AUNT FIL

You can help me by just letting me
do this myself. And don't worry,
Fredo, I had plenty of time to
think about what I did wrong and I
was heartily sorry for it.

FREDO

Like stealing silverware from
restaurants.

AUNT FIL

Borrowed.

FREDO

Whole place settings at a time.

June Lee WHISTLES.

AUNT FIL

It's a talent.

JUNE LEE

Aunt Fil, why'd you step off the stairway to Heaven?

AUNT FIL

Sit around for years and years, Suzy Q! I bet ya'd feel kinda restless too. I bet ya'd miss the little things of life. Like a cup of coffee.

JUNE LEE

Didn't you miss your family?

AUNT FIL

My family? Heck no! None a' ya.

FREDO

Cheese and crackers! Not even me, your favorite nephew?

AUNT FIL

Aw, Fredo mio. Nope. Not even you. And why should I? Ya talk about cheese and crackers and then ya ain't got any.

JUNE LEE

If you don't miss him, why are you here?

FREDO

Yeah?

AUNT FIL

I missed progressive slots at the Trump Taj Mahal. I'm goin' to Atlantic City tonight and New York was on the way.

JUNE LEE

Babylon at the fork in the road to one New Jerusalem or another.

AUNT FIL

Nah. I'm talking Atlantic A. C. City.

FREDO

And how'd you know you'd find me?
I moved here after you... after
uh... You had my old address.

AUNT FIL

I coulda followed the smell, but
this being New York, I'd a' got
lost. I looked in the phone book.
I'm dead, but not from the neck up.
I thought I'd come here and find ya
on the top of the heap, not a heap
a' junk. Breakin' my heart.

Aunt Fil finishes at the sink and walks up between June Lee and Fredo.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)

But, Suzy Q, tonight your luck's
gonna change.

JUNE LEE

Will it get worse?

AUNT FIL

Let's go.

FREDO

Where?

JUNE LEE

Atlantic City?

AUNT FIL

No, no. To the grocery store
around the block.

JUNE LEE

Why?

AUNT FIL

Ya gotta play me some numbers. And
nobody's gonna sell a lottery
ticket to a ghost.

FREDO

You came back from the dead for
this?

AUNT FIL
 Nah, "stoo-nahd." I'm still dead.
 By the way, can ya loan me a
 coupl'a dollars?

FREDO
 Coupl'a dollars?

JUNE LEE
 Nobody will sell a lottery ticket
 to a ghost who's broke.

As Aunt Fil flicks the petals of her corsage...

AUNT FIL
 Ya's sent me off on this trip with
 flowers not traveler's cheques.

FREDO
 How much do you need?

JUNE LEE
 (to Fredo)
 I'm sorry. We can't throw our
 money away on lottery tickets!

AUNT FIL
 Ya ain't got five dollars for your
 Aunt Fil?

JUNE LEE
 Absolutely not. Anyway, you said
 two dollars.

AUNT FIL
 I said a coupl'a dollars.

FREDO
 In my family, a coupl'a anything
 always means more than two.

AUNT FIL
 But I'll take two dollars. For
 your favorite aunt.

JUNE LEE
 Positively no.

AUNT FIL
 One dollar, for your dead favorite
 aunt.

FREDO
(begs June Lee)
One dollar.

JUNE LEE
But only one dollar.

AUNT FIL
One dollar? One freakin' dollar?

FREDO
She is my dead favorite aunt.

JUNE LEE
All right! All right! I'll give
her two dollars. Our two dollars.

June Lee takes cash out of her pants pocket.

AUNT FIL
That's better. Now play me oh-
twenty-nine... Aw heck! I can't
borrow it. The money has to belong
to me.

JUNE LEE
What now?

FREDO
Yeah, if you gamble with borrowed
money you won't win.

AUNT FIL
It's bad luck.

JUNE LEE
I've never read the fine print.

AUNT FIL
Neither did anybody who took a loan
from your Uncle Danny.

FREDO
Auntie, you made coffee and cleaned
up.

JUNE LEE
We could say you earned it.

Aunt Fil grabs the two dollars.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)
Hey!

AUNT FIL
 Ya said I earned it. Play me
 oh-twenty-nine and nine-forty. And
 box 'em.

June Lee grabs the money back and heads to the door.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)
 Where ya goin'?

JUNE LEE
 To the corner bodega.

AUNT FIL
 Come si chiam'?

FREDO
 The grocery store.

JUNE LEE
 To play your lottery numbers.

AUNT FIL
 Not that way. This way.

Aunt Fil wraps an arm each around June Lee and Fredo. She walks them to the window, where the screen is still up.

JUNE LEE
 Should we believe we can fly?

AUNT FIL
 I wish ya'd believe in cleaning.

INT/EXT STUDIO APARTMENT

Aunt Fil flies out the window with June Lee and Fredo, one under each arm. They plummet heads first. June Lee and Fredo SCREAM like police sirens. Before they hit the pavement, Aunt Fil pulls out of the dive and they sail down the street over the stoops.

INT BODEGA

Aunt Fil flies in and spins June Lee dizzily to the counter. The LOTTERY MACHINE noisily coughs up two TICKETS. June Lee smiles and pays the Cashier. She waves to him as Aunt Fil yanks her, Fredo and the tickets out the door.

INT STUDIO APARTMENT

WHOOSH! All are back in their respective seats.

AUNT FIL

I thought ya was givin' up your first born.

FREDO

Yeah, June Lee sure sounded like a Stuka divebomber.

AUNT FIL

(to Fredo)

I meant you.

FREDO

You used to be afraid to fly.

AUNT FIL

Yeah. In a plane. Wouldn't risk it. Made your Uncle Danny drive to Florida for thirty-five years. That's okay, he was stoppin' off in Virginia to buy cheap cigarettes and Maryland to buy cheap liquor. To sell up in Jersey.

JUNE LEE

But airplanes are so safe.

FREDO

Yeah, even a stewardess could fly one. I mean if she had to.

AUNT FIL

Safer than cancer, I bet. I'd a' easily settled for a plane crash over lingering illness.

June Lee SNORTS a laugh and then stifles it.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)

Something funny about cancer?

JUNE LEE

No, it's not... Talking about a fear of flying, tonight of all nights.

AUNT FIL

I don't get it.

FREDO

Remember that trip when I was a kid
and I locked the keys in the car.

JUNE LEE

"Stoo-nahd" from way back.

AUNT FIL

Was that at South Of the Border?

FREDO

Yeah.

AUNT FIL

Your father was mad as heck.

FREDO

Uncle Danny broke into the car with
a wire coat hanger. Saved my skin.

JUNE LEE

Aaaah. The wire hanger and its
variegated uses.

AUNT FIL

It's a talent.

FREDO

And you and mom were always
stealing towels from the hotels.

AUNT FIL

Borrowed!

(sighs)

See, it's the little things we
miss.

FREDO

Remember, you and Uncle Danny came
up for San Gennar' every fall after
I moved to New York.

AUNT FIL

La "vest".

FREDO

I miss Uncle Danny.

AUNT FIL

(knocks the table)

Aaaah. That "palline" buster.

Fredo looks at June Lee as if to explain.

JUNE LEE
I get it. I get it.

FREDO
(to Aunt Fil)
But Uncle Danny loved you. At your funeral he even threw himself on your coffin and screamed, "I'll never forget you. I'll never forget you."

AUNT FIL
He could forget me while I was alive! That bum ran around on me for I don't know how many years.

FREDO
Uncle Danny?

AUNT FIL
(to June Lee)
Is that how a good husband behaves?

JUNE LEE
No.

AUNT FIL
Whadda you know? You ain't even married!

FREDO
Uncle Danny cheated on you?

AUNT FIL
If you wanna remember him with respect, fine. But he ran around.

FREDO
I never knew. So he wasn't a Victrola. He was a freakin' juke box.

AUNT FIL
And I bet your Uncle Danny won't get past Saint Pete. He'll try every trick. But he ain't gettin' into Heaven!

JUNE LEE
Not even with a wire hanger.

AUNT FIL
(to June Lee)
You remember this.
(MORE)

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)

When a husband cheats, the wife is the first to know.

(a beat)

And the last to admit it. But my Fredo will never break your heart.

(to Fredo)

Not like he's breakin' my heart right now, living in sin on this junk heap.

JUNE LEE

Why didn't you leave him your husband?

AUNT FIL

Leave him? A woman didn't do that kind of thing back then.

(a beat)

You tried to find a witch to put a hex on him. Wasted a lot of money that way. I tell ya, between you and me and the come se chiam'... I bet if I was young today, I would do what you're doin' and live together.

(laughs then stops suddenly)

But my son better not be.

FREDO

By the way, your son and his girlfriend are living together.

AUNT FIL

Please tell me he's not still goin' 'roun' with that Tokyo Rose!

FREDO

He's still going 'roun' with that Tokyo Rose!

AUNT FIL

How could he do that to me!

(makes the Sign of the Cross)

Ya know whose fault this is. It's your Uncle's fault. If he died first, the way husband's are s'posed to...

JUNE LEE

Tokyo Rose?

FREDO
His girlfriend is Chinese.

JUNE LEE
Tokyo Rose? Tokyo?

FREDO
Think of it as "creative bigotry."

JUNE LEE
Again, for the record, Aunt Fil,
we're not really living together.

FREDO
Anyway we couldn't move in
together. All I'd hear from my
mother, your sister, is, "If that's
the way ya want to live."

JUNE LEE
It's what you hear anyway.

AUNT FIL
(to Fredo)
Well, ya oughta then.

FREDO
Should I tell my mother, your
sister, that this is the advice my
Aunt Filomen' gave me? She'll say
I'm fruit loopy.

AUNT FIL
You love June Lee? Baptist, "Med-a-
gahn" June Lee?

JUNE LEE
Aunt Fil, I am not a Baptist. I
was raised Methodist, but until
recently I was an agnostic.

AUNT FIL
What's that?

FREDO
An agnostic doubts the existence of
God, but doesn't deny the
possibility.

AUNT FIL
Like betting with the house.
(to June Lee)
Ya said, "until recently."

JUNE LEE

In light of the evening's events, I may have crept back up at least to Unitarian.

(to Fredo)

By the way, you owe Aunt Fil an answer. Do you love your "Med-a-gahn" June Lee?

FREDO

What's it look like?

AUNT FIL

"Stoo-nahd", it's an easy question.

FREDO

Yes. Yes I do.

AUNT FIL

Ya ain't gotta tell me. Tell her.

FREDO

(to June Lee)

I love you, June Lee.

AUNT FIL

(sings)

"I love you, a bushel and a peck.
A bushel and a peck and a hug
around the neck. A hug around the
neck."

FREDO

(to June Lee)

Do you love me? Maybe a bushel and a peck.

AUNT FIL

Ya better 'cause I'll beatcha up if you're stringin' my nephew along.

June Lee hugs Fredo around the neck and gives him a peck.

JUNE LEE

I love you, although you exhibit an habitual disregard for common sense.

AUNT FIL

If ya mean he's stupid, say he's stupid.

JUNE LEE

Signs away his right to sue...

FREDO

Think she'd love me for my honesty.

AUNT FIL

Honesty!

(brushes fingers under
chin)

But'cha know, kids, money ain't
everything. What do ya think your
Uncle was doing when I married him?

FREDO

Whatever it is, I guess the statue
of limitations...

JUNE LEE

Statute of limitations!

FREDO

...statute of limitations expired a
long time ago.

AUNT FIL

My Danny was selling fruit off the
front end of a push cart and off
the back, cartons of cigarettes
without a tax stamp. Ya wait for
every-thing to be perfect, ya never
got married.

(dreamily)

On our wedding night Danny
serenaded me playin' a washboard.

JUNE LEE

Does any aspect of your family life
not involve cleaning?

AUNT FIL

So many songs. "Return To
Sorrento." "Cella Luna." "Yes, We
Have No Bananas." He was a fruit
vendor ya know.

JUNE LEE

He loves me but he will not move
out of this awful apartment in this
awful neighborhood. He refuses.
He claims it's going to improve.

FREDO

It is improving.

JUNE LEE

Yes, I notice fewer Puerto Ricans
and fewer drug dealers every week.

FREDO

But not fewer Puerto Rican drug
dealers?

AUNT FIL

So what awful neighborhood is this
awful apartment in?

FREDO

Hell's Kitchen.

JUNE LEE

It's never going to improve.

AUNT FIL

This apartment's pretty small. Are
ya sure it ain't Hell's Closet?

As Aunt Fil laughs at her own joke, she claps her hands.
Suddenly the LIGHTS GO OUT.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)

What the...?

June Lee claps and the LIGHTS COME BACK ON. Aunt Fil points
to Fredo.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)

Madonn'! Look.

A blood stain the diameter of a tennis ball forms on Fredo's
sheet. June Lee pulls the sheet away to reveal that Fredo's
bandages are not held in place with a metal clamp. The
bandages wind tightly around a COCA COLA CAN, which is wedged
into Fredo's rib cage. Out of the can's mouth runs both
BLOOD and a clear, watery bodily FLUID.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)

(points to can)

What the heck's that?

FREDO

It's what it looks like it is.

JUNE LEE

(to FREDO)

Sit up and drain.

June Lee pushes Fredo to lean forward.

AUNT FIL
 Gesu, Maria, é San Giusepp', he's
 gonna bleed to death.

JUNE LEE
 Don't worry. This happens.
 Usually when I'm not here. When he
 forgets to take his water pill,
 didn't you?

AUNT FIL
 (again points)
 How the heck did you get a Coca
 Cola can stuck in your ribs?

FREDO
 'Cause I don't like Royal Crown.
 I told ya. I had an accident at
 work.

JUNE LEE
 The doctor didn't want to remove
 it. Too dangerous.

FREDO
 Cheese and crackers, I wanted the
 nickel deposit back.

AUNT FIL
 Ooooh... That's like your Uncle's
 buddy. The doctor wouldn't take
 out the bullet near his heart.

JUNE LEE
 I bet the procedure was too risky.

AUNT FIL
 It was risky all right. If they
 took out the bullet, it could be
 used as evidence in a trial.

The final drop drips out of the can.

JUNE LEE
 Good to the last you know what.

AUNT FIL
 Whadda ya work as a freakin'
 vending machine?

FREDO
 I work at the reclamation plant
 uptown.

AUNT FIL
Recla... come se chiam'?

FREDO
The reclamation plant.
(a beat)
Recycling.

Aunt Fil shrugs hopelessly.

JUNE LEE
He works for the Department Of
Sanitation.

AUNT FIL
A garbage man?

FREDO
I manage the plant.

JUNE LEE
You managed to have an accident.

FREDO
I'm not a garbage man.

AUNT FIL
Madonn', a garbage man. You were a
smart boy, a college boy. An' I
expected better from ya.

FREDO
Six semesters of art classes, no
job. One semester of art
management and bada bing, New York
City Department of Sanitation.

AUNT FIL
There'll always be garbage. Ya got
a future.

AUNT FIL/JUNE LEE
What a future.

JUNE LEE
You should have settled with the
City for more money.
(a beat)
Bada bing...

FREDO
You can be real greedy some time.

JUNE LEE

You can be tremendously needy. All the time.

AUNT FIL

(to June Lee)

Speaking of money, I hope ya don't rely on my nephew. I mean, do ya do something...

(waves index finger in circles)

...beside this?

JUNE LEE

I work in a gallery.

AUNT FIL

Shooting gallery? Like in Coney Island.

JUNE LEE

An art gallery.

AUNT FIL

Of course, pardon me, Suzy Q. Now what's that?

JUNE LEE

We sell paintings and prints and sculpture. All works of art.

AUNT FIL

Why didn't ya say so? Ya know, in a furniture store back home they sold a "pitcher" of a house with real lights in the windows of the house that ya could switch on and off. Heck, that's art! Do ya's sell anything like that?

JUNE LEE

No. Not even ironically.

AUNT FIL

Too bad.

JUNE LEE

I'll keep a lookout.

AUNT FIL

Ya know, Mona Lisa, why don'tcha do a little "pitcher" of me and my Fredo mio.

FREDO

Yeah!

JUNE LEE

Absolutely! I'm embarrassed that I didn't I think of that. I guess I'm a little "stoo-nahd" too.

AUNT FIL/FREDO

A little?

June Lee goes to the easel and sets up a clean canvass. Fredo moves closer to Aunt Fil.

JUNE LEE

Sweetie, I'll need more canvasses.

June Lee takes a piece of charcoal and sketches lines on the canvass.

AUNT FIL

Bet ya thought that'd keep her for a week or so.

FREDO

Yeah.

AUNT FIL

Don't ya know by now?

FREDO

Guess not.

AUNT FIL

Don't make me look dead, Suzy Q, or I'll beatcha up.

JUNE LEE

Of course.

FREDO

Hey, paint it in a Renaissance style, you know, one with the Saints. Where it looks like they're having a conversation. What's that style called?

JUNE LEE

I don't remember. But I don't do Renaissance.

FREDO

How 'bout seventeenth century Dutch or Flemish? Like the collection you studied at the Heritage...

JUNE LEE

Hermitage!

FREDO

Just not pale and blotchy.

JUNE LEE

I don't do Flemish either.

FREDO

Hell's Kitchen Gothic?

JUNE LEE

I do June Lee.

AUNT FIL

Well Suzy Q, while you're doin' your thing, can ya at least make us look like real people?

FREDO

You mean, lifelike?

AUNT FIL

Yeah, lifelike. Not Disneyland. Or I'll beatcha up.

JUNE LEE

That begs the question, can one paint a lifelike portrait of a dead person?

AUNT FIL

Here's another question, can we talk while ya work?

JUNE LEE

Sure.

AUNT FIL

How long have you two been going steady?

JUNE LEE

Going steady?! There's a concept from the dustbin of history.

FREDO

Aunt Fil, it's nineteen ninety two,
not nineteen fifty two.

AUNT FIL

Ya ain't married, and ya ain't
living together, so what should I
ask? How long ya been screwin'
this girl?

JUNE LEE

The mother of all aunts.

FREDO

Madonn'!

JUNE LEE

We've been going steady for about a
year. And we've been screwing for
all but the last three months. Or
should I say, the last coupl'a
months?

FREDO

Since the accident.

AUNT FIL

Did that tin can cut off
circulation to your yo-yo?

FREDO

Filomen'!

AUNT FIL

Okay then, how'dja meet?

JUNE LEE

We were friends... in college...
Senior year.

FREDO

She disappeared for a while.

JUNE LEE

I took a semester abroad. I wasn't
in the federal witness protection
program.

(a beat)

No offense intended to the Italian-
Americans in the room.

FREDO

She came back to New York and we
met by chance on the subway.

JUNE LEE

No, we ran into each other at my gallery. At an opening.

FREDO

No, we ran into each other on the train and you invited me to the opening.

JUNE LEE

I saw you on the train before I went away.

FREDO

I liked that show. It was all bauxite and plastic and glass. Good recycling themes. Anyway that was the second time we saw each...

AUNT FIL

How's that old saying go? "Ah yes, I remember it well."

FREDO

What saying?

JUNE LEE

That is the saying. "Ah yes, I remember it well." Your Auntie was waxing sardonic.

June Lee squeezes some paints onto her palette. She takes a brush and begins to paint.

AUNT FIL

Ya sure ya two ain't married?

JUNE LEE

Greedy and needy.

FREDO

Attorneys at law.

AUNT FIL

What happened after ya hit the bulls eye at her shooting gallery?

JUNE LEE

He didn't win this kewpie doll in one visit.

FREDO

Did you ever, you know, run into somebody you haven't seen in a long time? Who you hoped you'd run into again? And you do. And you get all excited? Like it's an answer to a prayer.

AUNT FIL

No. Never. But I think your Uncle Danny did. A lot. He got excited over girls he ran into. A few days a week.

JUNE LEE

As you can see by his injuries, your nephew falls for everything.

AUNT FIL

Where was you at while I bet my nephew was here sayin' The Rosary that ya'd come back to him?

JUNE LEE

Russia. Studying.

FREDO

June Lee's Russian.

AUNT FIL

"Rushin'" to the next sale at E. J. Korvettes?

JUNE LEE

Huh?

FREDO

Nevermind. It's regional humor.

JUNE LEE

Actually, Russia was still the Soviet Union then... Oh, you might not know Aunt Fil, but the communist government collapsed.

FREDO

For the time being.

AUNT FIL

It did? There was no seminar on that.

FREDO

Because it's a trick.

AUNT FIL

No, ya see, Our Lady of Fatima
promised to redeem atheist Russia.
And she did!

FREDO

Hope she got more than a nickel
back when she redeemed it.

JUNE LEE

Admittedly, it is an intriguing
coincidence...

AUNT FIL

Whadda ya mean? Coincidence?

JUNE LEE

The U. S. S. R. was replaced by The
Commonwealth Of Independent States,
which was declared on December
eighth, which I know to be the
Feast of The Immaculate Conception.

FREDO

It intrigues me to see you talk
about any sort of conception in
that t-shirt.

AUNT FIL

So what were ya doin' in Russia?
Besides freezin' your "pishocla"
off.

JUNE LEE

Am I being insulted by an insult I
cannot pronounce?

AUNT FIL

Don't ya know by now that ya know
when I insult ya.

FREDO

She studied in the Heritage.

JUNE LEE

The Hermitage! I just said it two
minutes ago. The Hermitage.

FREDO

All right, The Hermitage. A museum
in Saint Petersburg.

AUNT FIL

Ain't Saint Petersburg in Florida?

FREDO

There's one in Russia. The original one.

JUNE LEE

Yes, Saint Petersburg, Russia.

AUNT FIL

I'd prefer Saint Petersburg in Florida.

JUNE LEE

So would I. Russia was too damn cold. I don't like the cold.

AUNT FIL

So you was "rushin'" back to New York.

JUNE LEE

Yeah, I did come "rushin'" back. I missed this crazy cat house of a town from the Metropolitan Museum Of Art to Times Square to that architectural abomination called the World Trade Center.

AUNT FIL

No place like it.

FREDO

The Bronx is up and the batteries are two for a dollar on the A train.

AUNT FIL

(to Fredo)

Kiddo, ya got an ace in the hole here. Don't toss her away.

FREDO

I won't.

JUNE LEE

Grazie mille, Filomena.

(a beat)

Okay, you don't need to pose any longer.

Aunt Fil walks to her purse. From inside it, she lifts out a long SCROLL, which resembles a Torah, and appears to be an authentic antiquity.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)
That's like Pandora's purse?

AUNT FIL
No, I told ya, it's mine. I traded
for it fair and square.

Aunt Fil carries the scroll back to the dinette. She slams
it down. THUD.

FREDO
Whaddaya doing with this come si
chiam'?

AUNT FIL
It's a list.

JUNE LEE
It's a scroll.

FREDO
Yeah, a scroll.

AUNT FIL
"Stoo-nahd", so it's a list on a
scroll. Do ya have a little
something I can write on? Gimme a
clean canvass.

JUNE LEE
Hey! I work hard for those.

Fredo places the canvass in front of Aunt Fil.

AUNT FIL
Don't fret, Suzy Q, you'll be able
to buy lots more. Now gimme your
artsy fartsy pencil.

June Lee hands her the charcoal.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)
You thought this'd keep her for a
while.

FREDO
I know. I know.

AUNT FIL
So this here is apartment four ten,
right?

FREDO
Yep.

Aunt Fil writes "410" at the top of the canvass.

AUNT FIL

I like that number. And the address is four sixty nine. I like that too. And we're two women and a man so that's eight-eight-nine. Or two-eight-nine. And nephew is one-forty.

JUNE LEE

What are you doing?

FREDO

She's making a list of numbers.
(slaps forehead)
Madonn'! Why didn't I see this coming!

AUNT FIL

'Cause ya were a smart boy, Fredo. Ya ain't no more.

JUNE LEE

See what coming?

FREDO

Numbers. Lottery numbers.

AUNT FIL

Ya ain't got no idea a' my plan so "stata zeet'". Of course, there's nine-forty and oh-twenty-nine. Those were my addresses.

JUNE LEE

Aunt Fil... ?

AUNT FIL

I'd like ya's to play some numbers for me. Every day. Ya know, three number numbers.

FREDO

She really didn't come to visit me.

AUNT FIL

It's the little things ya miss.

FREDO

She really came back to gamble.

JUNE LEE

No, I bet it's for us to gamble for her.

AUNT FIL

Let me finish. Play these numbers every day, fifty cent straight and fifty cent boxed.

JUNE LEE

I'd love to do this for you, but you know, we don't have the money...

FREDO

And who am I anyway? Policy Pete?

AUNT FIL

No. You're my favorite nephew. And I wouldn'ta bet that I'd come back and find you such a "chewngum". But I planned this all out.

(points to scroll)

Here's a list of all the state lottery four digit numbers that will hit from now 'til the end of time.

JUNE LEE

Until the end of time?

AUNT FIL

Yeah. The end of time. Play these and use the winnings from those bets to pay for the numbers ya play for me.

FREDO

Where'd you get this?

AUNT FIL

Let's just say it fell off the back of an archangel dancing on the head of a pin.

FREDO

You stole this.

AUNT FIL

Borrowed. Now go out and buy a dream book...

JUNE LEE

A what?

FREDO

A dream interpretation book.

AUNT FIL

Yeah, but the kind that gives ya a number for what ya dream of.

JUNE LEE

There is such a thing?

FREDO

Oh yeah.

AUNT FIL

And when ya's have a dream, ya play those numbers too.

JUNE LEE

I bet we could buy an excellent dream book in Chinatown! And how 'bout hunch numbers?

AUNT FIL

Of course.

JUNE LEE

Like when I see a license plate with my initials.

FREDO

Yeah, D-U-M. Why didn't you get a list of the winning three digit numbers?

JUNE LEE

Sweetie, it's the hunt. It's not the kill.

AUNT FIL

You're a sharp girl, Suzy Q.

(a beat)

But don't get greedy with this. Ya ain't gotta hit the four numbers everyday. Ya just gotta do "menza-menz'".

JUNE LEE/FREDO

(to each other)

Break even.

AUNT FIL
"Capeesh"? Nobody needs to know
this list is...

FREDO
Stolen?

AUNT FIL/JUNE LEE
Borrowed.

AUNT FIL
'Cause if ya have a lucky streak...

Aunt Fil points straight up.

JUNE LEE
We'll risk getting noticed.

FREDO
Nuh-uh. I will not play them with
a fox. I will not play them
straight or box.

Aunt Fil unrolls the scroll and points.

AUNT FIL
That's tomorrow's number.

JUNE LEE
Eleven twenty-four?

AUNT FIL
Yeah.

FREDO
Hold it.

JUNE LEE
That's a bad number for me. Can we
skip it and start the next day?

AUNT FIL
Ya know, ya can make a bad number
good by winning with it.

JUNE LEE
Never thought of that.

FREDO
Hey Butch and Sundance.

AUNT FIL

But if ya don't want to feel like a winner, one more day's not gonna kill me.

JUNE LEE

Of course not. You're dead. But I'm alive, and I want to feel like a winner.

Fredo pushes through them and tries to roll up the list.

FREDO

We're not talking spoons, forks and knives here! This is a cosmic felony. Not since Prometheus has anyone tried this.

JUNE LEE

I thought you said no allusions.

FREDO

Theft beyond even the Ten Commandments.

June Lee hugs the scroll to her body.

JUNE LEE

Yeah! So let it be written. So let it be fun.

AUNT FIL

Alfredo, it's a simple game of chance.

JUNE LEE

What would you choose? Risk being chained to the top of a mountain for all eternity? Or chained to the top of this heap?

FREDO

Hey, the afterlife you save may be your own.

Fredo wrestles June Lee for the scroll.

JUNE LEE

You'll rip it up!

AUNT FIL

Alfredo stop!

He let's go of the scroll and June Lee hugs it tightly.

FREDO

You know, Aunt Fil, I miss you. I miss the way you would ask if I wanted anything when I visited your house. "I bet you want a cup of coffee?" you'd say. "No," I'd say.

AUNT FIL

I bet ya want a soda?

FREDO

No.

AUNT FIL

I bet ya want a cold beer?

FREDO

No.

AUNT FIL

Whadda ya want then? A punch in the nose?

FREDO

I'd give anything to hear you speak those words again. Anything...

JUNE LEE

No, not anything.

FREDO

To risk the Wrath of God Almighty?

AUNT FIL

Cheapskate.

FREDO

Why don't you do it yourself?

AUNT FIL

I said it before, who's gonna sell a lottery ticket to a ghost?

JUNE LEE

When she's already got her ticket to Paradise.

FREDO

Why don't you go ask your good for nothin' son?

AUNT FIL

'Cause he's good-fer-nuthin'.
Ya "sfah-cheem".

Aunt Fil waves her hand and the scroll falls from June Lee's grasp to the table.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)
I'm goin' to Jersey anyway. If I'm gonna argue, I might as well go argue with him.

Aunt Fil takes the scroll. She walks to the counter and slips it deep down into the purse.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)
You are dead to me, Alfredo. Dead to me.

FREDO
That's not fair.

AUNT FIL
Dead to me.

FREDO
How can I say, "You're dead to me," back to you? You're already dead.

AUNT FIL
(brushes fingers under chin at Fredo)
That's your tough luck.

JUNE LEE
I'll do it! Aunt Fil, I'll do it.

AUNT FIL
No, no, if it's too freakin' much, him doing a favor for his Aunt Filomena, his favorite Aunt, his dead favorite Aunt...

Aunt Fil CLAPS and the LIGHTS GO OUT. In the darkness - WHOOSH! - Aunt Fil and her purse are out the window.

JUNE LEE
Looks like you locked the keys in the car again.

There is a CLAP and the LIGHTS COME ON. June Lee continues to applaud slowly.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)
"Stoo-nahd".

FREDO

I like it better when I can't
pronounce your insults.

Both sit at the dinette. Fredo picks up the Parrot Jungle
souvenir booklet and vacantly flips through it.

FREDO (CONT'D)

I'll never forget the last time I
saw her. You know, before tonight.
The night she died. In her bed.
I had never seen anyone in such
pain. She looked up at me and
said, "Alfredo, you're a smart boy.
Tell me why I'm so sick, why I
can't get better?" My favorite
person in the world. The whole
world. I couldn't do anything but
watch her die.

June Lee takes Fredo into her arms and holds him like a baby.

FREDO (CONT'D)

I've never felt smaller. Like when
Fred Flintstone would shrink into a
pipsqueak? All my talent, all my
smarts, couldn't buy her another
moment of life. Since then, every
stupid thing I do...

JUNE LEE

And they are legion...

FREDO

...reminds me how small I felt that
night.

June Lee kisses him on the lips.

JUNE LEE

God's Friday.

FREDO

Huh?

JUNE LEE

Good Friday is a corruption of
God's Friday, the original English
name.

FREDO

Corruption?

JUNE LEE
Linguistically.

INT/EXT STUDIO APARTMENT

Fredo walks to the window and leans out over the fire escape.

FREDO
I'm sorry. Please come back.

AUNT FIL (O.S.)
(echoes)
I will if ya do what I ask.

FREDO
I'll do it. I'll risk it. I love
you.

INT STUDIO APARTMENT

Aunt Fil pushes the front door open and enters the apartment.

AUNT FIL
Now you're really gonna do this
right?

She places the purse on the counter and takes out the scroll.

JUNE LEE
You bet.

AUNT FIL
I hate to haunt and run...

FREDO
No, don't go yet.

JUNE LEE
Yeah. Stay a coupl'a more minutes.

AUNT FIL
Nah, I don't wanna get down to
A. C. too late!

FREDO
Will you visit again?

JUNE LEE
To check on your winnings?

AUNT FIL
 Just knowin' I'm back in the game
 is winning enough for me.

Aunt Fil grabs her purse and starts out the window. She turns and looks back.

AUNT FIL (CONT'D)
 An' hey, June Lee, remember...

JUNE LEE
 Just gotta do menza-menz'.

AUNT FIL
 C'mere.

June Lee walks to Aunt Fil. The older woman whispers a few words into the younger's ear.

JUNE LEE
 Downstairs...?

Aunt Fil whispers a bit more.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)
 For lunch...? Madonn'...

AUNT FIL
 Listen to that June Lee. We'll
 make a good ginker outta ya yet.

JUNE LEE
 I bet you will.

FREDO
 Aunt Fil, stay there.

Fredo jogs over and wraps his arms around her.

AUNT FIL
 Fredo mio.

JUNE LEE
 Aunt Fil, you'll have been in
 Heaven, Purgatory and Hell's
 Kitchen all in the course of a day.

Aunt Fil steps THROUGH his arms and up onto the window sill. PFFFT - she's out into the night. Fredo walks past June Lee to the window and pokes his head through.

FREDO
 Eternal rest grant to her, and may
 Perpetual Light shine upon her.

JUNE LEE
Happy motoring, mother of all
aunts.

June Lee pats Fredo on the back.

FREDO
(sighs)
Did you ever think you'd be Satan's
favorite bookie.

JUNE LEE
I bet I'd prefer to make book in
Hell, than run numbers in Heaven.

FREDO
Don't give me any odds on that.

June Lee claps her hands and the LIGHTS GO OUT. In the copper glow from the street, she unwraps the sheet from Fredo's waist and hips. He stands fully naked at the window as she holds him from behind. She turns his face to the side and kisses him on the cheek. She glides her hands over his chest and belly.

JUNE LEE
You know, that coffee's got me all
revved up.

June Lee traces a finger around the Coca Cola can in his side, then down to his hips and then begins to stroke him.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)
How about that? I wouldn't have
bet the rubber would've stayed on.

Fredo becomes hard.

JUNE LEE (CONT'D)
I can't sleep and I bet you'll be
up for a while too.

Fredo turns to June Lee and runs his hands up her t-shirt. He rubs her breasts with his thumbs and playfully touches his lips to hers.

FREDO
Ya wanna do some cleaning?

He lifts her shirt off and slides one hand down the front of her sweat pants.

JUNE LEE
No.

She grabs him by the horn and guides him through the bluegrey dimness of the room onto the bed.

FREDO

Do ya wanna go play some numbers?

He slides the other hand into her pants and slowly moves both hands around to her bottom. He tucks his thumbs outside her waistband and lowers the pants to her thighs.

JUNE LEE

No. Except maybe "oh-oh-oh-oh."

They LAUGH. Then kiss. Fredo presses his body up against June Lee and they slowly recline.

FREDO

Ya wanna do some art?

JUNE LEE

No, "stoo-nahd", I want you to put the needle on the record.

Aunt Fil steals back into the room and turns the easel around so that the LIGHT FROM A STREET LAMP shines on it. The incomplete portrait is painted in the style of an ancient Etruscan mural: Fredo and Aunt Fil in the middle of a heart.

AUNT FIL

What'd he think she wanted?

(shrugs)

A punch in the nose?

She exits through the window.

THE END