

FINAL DRESS  
by Joe Hanrahan

Setting: Piano stage right, extra chair, small table  
next to piano. Chair stage left.  
couple of glasses on table.  
Standing mike right center  
Mike for piano player

Character: BETTY Cabaret Singer  
JIMMY Her Music Director  
HARVEY A Walk In

Piano Player, JIMMY, enters, brings in a folder or two with him,  
sits at piano, plays a bit, warms up

GAYLA/BETTY enters. In rehearsal clothes.  
Carries a purse, bottle of water, garment bag.  
Puts purse down, garment bag over a chair,  
bottle on table.

BETTY: Hey, there. How ya doin'?

JIMMY: Good, Betty. Good. You?

BETTY: All right.

JIMMY: Good. All right. Feeling Good?

BETTY: Feeling Ready.

JIMMY: Yep.

BETTY: Anxious. Ready to go.

JIMMY: Just to have to wait till tomorrow night? (does a bit of a piano flourish)

BETTY: Tomorrow. Thinkin' we're gonna be good

JIMMY: We're gonna kill 'em. How are tickets looking?

BETTY: Good. Few seats left. There'll be  
walk-ins.

JIMMY: Yeah. People buying late.

BETTY: That's how they buy these days. (Takes a sip of water.)

JIMMY: How was your weekend?

BETTY: Took it easy. Rested my voice. You?

JIMMY: Had a couple gigs.

BETTY: Fun?

JIMMY: Yeah, pretty much.

BETTY: Didja play that new bar...?

JIMMY: Yeah. First time for me. I like it. I'll be back.

BETTY: New bar. New band.

JIMMY: Yep.

BETTY: Blues?

JIMMY: Yeah. Some old time stuff. Willie Dixon...

BETTY: Willie Dixon! "Hoochie Coochie Man."

JIMMY: No, but...

BETTY: "I Just Want to..."

BETTY JIMMY: "...Make Love To You."

(MUSIC: BETTY/JIMMY can do a line or so of this.

JIMMY: Elmore James...

BETTY: Yeah.

JIMMY: Ruth Brown.

BETTY: Ruth Brown! What'd you do?

JIMMY: "Lucky Lips."

BETTY: "LUCKY LIPS!"

MUSIC: BETTY starts singing, JIMMY picks up. Ragged but fun version of LUCKY LIPS (Ruth Brown) SONG #1. BETTY can grab mike s song gets underway.

(after, both laughing)

JIMMY: You should come sing with us sometime.

BETTY: Anytime.

JIMMY: We're back there next month.

BETTY: That's a date. We'll do it.

JIMMY: Cool. (JIMMY riffs a bit of song they just did, or similar tune)

So, watcha wanna do? Wanna do the show...?  
uh, like, in order, or...?

BETTY: No. I think we're pretty good with most of them, dontcha think?

JIMMY: Oh, yeah.

BETTY: We only have a couple hours here. Why don't we start with...  
like, uh... I don't know...something fun..

JIMMY: How 'bout something...illegal?

BETTY/JIMMY: SING It oughta be illegal! (laughing)

BETTY: All right

(BETTY grabs mike)

JIMMY: All set?

BETTY: Wait. (takes a moment) OK. Let's go.

MUSIC: BETTY/JIMMY sing ILLEGAL (Streisand/Gibb) SONG #2

(laughing)

JIMMY: That's so cool

BETTY: I feel so guilty.

JIMMY: So illegal. So, what's next?

BETTY: Mmmmm...

(BETTY wanders, thinking)

JIMMY: What? What are you thinking?

BETTY: I'm thinking...there's gonna be an audience out there tomorrow night.  
People.

JIMMY: Hope so.

BETTY: I haven't sang in front of people for a while. People here. I usually had some old friends...some fans...in the crowd...when I sang back...back.

JIMMY: You're not nervous.

BETTY: Uh...

JIMMY: Just imagine an audience. They're out there. They're watching. They're loving it. Just give it to 'em. There's somebody over there, just loving it, loving your songs. Oh, and there's a guy over here, loving you. And then that couple in the back...they're not listening. Hey! Get a room! Look at 'em. They love you!

BETTY: They love me! (laughter) Ok, OK, got 'em. I'll be fine.

JIMMY: More than fine. All right. So...wanna try Rock a Bye, Baby?  
We still haven't nailed how exactly we're going to...

BETTY: I know, I know. Think we need to slow it down a bit.

JIMMY: Think so?

BETTY: The ending. Maybe. Try it that way.

JIMMY: OK.

BETTY: Big finish.

JIMMY: Yeah.

MUSIC: maybe a false start here, then BETTY sings ROCK A BYE  
BABE, SONG #3, something slower/medium

JIMMY: Yeah.

BETTY: I like that.

JIMMY: A little slower.

BETTY: Yeah, that works.

JIMMY: All right.

BETTY: Let's do that one part once more...

JIMMY: OK

MUSIC: BETTY sings a section from ROCK A BYE BABY SONG #3

JIMMY: Got it.

BETTY: Uh-huh.

(JIMMY riffs a bit, while BETTY grabs a drink)

JIMMY: So...the man?

BETTY: Yeah, the man.

JIMMY: Back to back Judy.

BETTY: OK, let's go.

MUSIC: BETTY sings THE MAN WHO GOT AWAY. SONG #3A

JIMMY: OK.

BETTY: Yeah.

JIMMY: So...What next? Wanna do Alanis?

BETTY: We better. Haven't done that enough.

JIMMY: Yeah. Let's do Alanis.

BETTY: OK. Let's do that.

MUSIC: Betty sings UNINVITED/SONG #4

(HARVEY walks in. Stops, looks, listens for a moment.

Then takes a chair, moves it to stage left, sits.

BETTY & JIMMY slow, then stop, mid-way)

BETTY: Hi...uh, can we help you?

HARVEY: Can you help me? Yeah, you can help me.

And if you help me, that means I can get out the hell out of here and get back home. Soon as possible.

Jesus, this is flyover country, mmm?

Good name for it. Good thing to do. Fly right the fuck over it.

But...because of you...I couldn't do that. I had to stop. Here.

Because of you...Gayla.

BETTY: Do I know you?

HARVEY: Do you know me. No, you don't know me.  
But I know you. Gayla.  
I'm Harvey  
So how do you like the Middle of the West?

BETTY: It's fine, now what do you...?

HARVEY: Back in the game, huh? Looks like you're...getting ready  
for...another show?  
Man, I love your shows. I loved her shows. Saw most of 'em.  
You didn't see me.  
I would be in the back of the place. Or at the bar.  
Digging on your singing.

BETTY: You saw me...back...?

HARVEY: Oh yeah! Back...at the Blue Dot. Mary's Place. Cabaret Corner.  
Didn't miss many.  
(Up, wanders, over to JIMMY) So, when's the new show?

JIMMY: Tomorrow night.

HARVEY: Tomorrow night! So this is...what?...final rehearsal?

JIMMY: Yeah.

HARVEY: And you're, what? Music director? What's your name?

JIMMY: Jimmy.

HARVEY: Jimmy. Harvey.  
So Jimmy's the new Davey  
Davey was her keyboard guy. He misses you. We all do.  
Left a lot...a lot of people...behind, huh, Gayla?

BETTY: You know...Davey...? How's he doing?

JIMMY: OK. Scrambling for gigs.  
Man, I hate interrupting your song. And you're doing a new show?  
You gotta get ready for this show.  
(to JIMMY) Jimmy! You getting paid for this?

JIMMY: Well...yeah.

HARVEY: Then play. Earn your money. Let me hear something.

JIMMY: Uh, Betty...?

HARVEY: (taking his seat back) Betty? (laughs) Betty. That's a good flyover name. Great flyover name. Betty. Betty. I've been traveling. Sing me a song.

BETTY: Uh...sorry about this...(JIMMY shakes his head)...let's do something...(to HARVEY)...we only have this place so long, we... let's do something. How 'bout...How 'bout...Melody Gardot?

JIMMY: (laughs) Yeah, that seems appropriate

MUSIC: BETTY sings YOUR HEART IS AS BLACK AS NIGHT #5.  
(delivering title line directly to HARVEY.)

HARVEY: (claps) You've still got it, Gayla!  
Or, Betty.  
So...what?...was that song...you heart is black as night...dedicated to anybody special?

BETTY: What makes you think that?

JIMMY: That's just a good song, Harvey.

HARVEY: (up) OK.  
So you're doing...this your first show here? (BETTY nods)  
That's good, that's great. How many? How many shows you doing?

BETTY: Just this one.

HARVEY: Just one? That's it? Jesus.  
You not going to make much money, one show. You gotta do weeks!  
And Gayla - Betty, whoever - YOU certainly gotta do weeks. Weeks! To make some money.  
Cause you know what you left behind.

BETTY: So you're from...?

HARVEY: Yeah. I'm from...I'm here...to find you. I should get combat pay.  
I'm here because of what you left behind.  
To start - shows. You were booked for 16 weeks - at four different clubs.  
You know how many people you left holding the bag? You know the money that entails?

JIMMY: Betty, should I... (start to rise)

HARVEY: Sit down, Jimmy. Jimmy, Gayla...our Betty...was all set to do 5 weekend shows at one club back home - early, late shows. But she didn't show up, just disappeared.

And the money lost from those shows was just the start of the payback for what you owe management.

BETTY: You're from management.

HARVEY: (nods) There was...(takes out notebook) Hair. At the most...most place in town. Clothes. She likes clothes  
Apartment. Nice. Car. New one. Brought that with you. Cash...lotta of cash...for food, drink, recreational...recreation.  
Ghose little trips you liked to take. All first class.  
Management rewarded you. Cause you delivered.  
See, they did all that...set you up...to be a long-term asset.  
Uh (laughs) singing lessons! Oh yeah, Jimmy. Your star here - Gayla - Betty - she got singing lessons. Like, regular.  
Top vocal coaches. The best. People who work Broadway.  
You know how much that cost?

BETTY: I had to leave. I...I sang...I performed...for years. Years.  
Hundreds of shows. And I did...deliver. Big crowds, night after night.  
But I was just a front. A shiny ornament. The clubs...Mary's, Blue Dot...  
all of 'em. They're all...management runs all of them, don't they?  
But they hide all that, don't they? Those clubs are just front for other...  
business.

HARVEY: What do you care about other business? It never touched you.

BETTY: Never touched me? It rubs off. Don't you find that, Harvey?

HARVEY: This is about you. Why'd you have to leave? You love to sing. I know  
You had nice clubs, fans, at home, why couldn't you just...?

BETTY: Frankie.

(longer pause)

HARVEY: Mmmm. Frankie.

JIMMY: (up) Listen, Betty, I'll stay, but if you want this...

HARVEY: Hey! Music Director! You're rehearsing, man. Showtime! Show must go on.  
Tomorrow night! Let's get to work. Do another song.  
My plan is to get my money, and split. But...Music is money. Music is money  
And Betty needs to do a bunch of songs tomorrow night.  
So, these songs you're doing...part of the show tomorrow?

BETTY: Well, yeah, sure.

HARVEY: Let's hear 'em. (sits) Get back to work.



BETTY: (stare, then) Sorry, Jimmy, we gotta do this.  
(looks at HARVEY, softly to JIMMY). It's Too Late

MUSIC: Betty sings IT'S TOO LATE/SONG #6

HARVEY: (claps) Very nice.  
But this show tomorrow. This one show. It can only bring in...what's the capacity?

BETTY: 120. If there's a sellout.

HARVEY: 120. And you're not charging a \$1,000 a ticket, are you?

BETTY: No.

HARVEY: What?

BETTY: \$30

HARVEY: (up) \$30. Look, Gayla. You have any...  
any money...anything to...start paying them back?

BETTY: Not really.

HARVEY: I figured. (paces) Look, if I go back there, and I bring nothing back, they're not going to be very happy.

BETTY: What do they care? Money. They don't need any money.

HARVEY: Why do you think? See, Jimmy, Gayla was...close...very close to a gentleman back east. Frankie. Who just happened to be the son of someone who was a senior partner in management. And this privileged son...took a great liking to Miss Gayla here. He was at all her shows. Just like me. But he always sat up front. He was real proud of their...relationship. Squired her all over, showed her off. So when she just up and left...left him and everything and everybody...everybody knew it. He was humiliated.

So management is taking this very seriously. They don't need your money.  
This is personal.

So, I go back with nothing, they're going to be disappointed.  
See, they want to make you pay. For the insult.  
And, I don't know, you never know about these things.  
But they just might send somebody else.  
Somebody who - unlike me - isn't a Gayla fan. And this somebody...he'll make you pay...one way or another. So, what are we going to do?

(pause)

BETTY: So who are you? Is this what do you do? What are you...bill collector, errand boy?

HARVEY: Enough. I'm a lawyer. Member of the New Jersey State Bar Association.  
I have a private practice. One client.  
I don't do errands.  
But this, you...you disappeared...and they wanted you found...I volunteered.  
Like I said. I'm a fan.

BETTY: So you came after me just to hear me sing.

HARVEY: Aaaah...that's a bonus. Lucky I got here tonight, to hear you. I'm am here to collect.

BETTY: Collect?

HARVEY: Like I said, it's personal.

BETTY: Yeah. It was definitely personal. Frankie...Frankie was...you know him.

HARVEY: Frankie...

BETTY: Frankie is a monster. All smiles. Drinks are on him. Opened the door for me. Pulled out my chair.  
But then...

HARVEY: Yeah?

BETTY: Too me home...and knocked me around.

HARVEY: I figured.  
He's a vicious little shit. But he's daddy's little shit.

BETTY: So why...

HARVEY: Gayla...It's also...the principle of the thing, darling. People know what happened.  
And management can't afford to be be taken advantage of. You do it, then someone else is like,  
"Hey, I can do that, too."  
So what are we going to do here?

BETTY: I guess...we do...the show, tomorrow.

HARVEY: Going to show up for that one?

(BETTY paces a bit, thinks)

BETTY: You saw my shows?

HARVEY: All of 'em. Most of 'em.

BETTY: What'd you think? See the last couple shows I did?

HARVEY: Just after Christmas? Blue Dot. Yeah I was there.

BETTY: I was trying some new songs...

HARVEY: I am old school. I prefer the standards. But you always sound good, no matter what you sing.

BETTY: You gotta stay loose, you gotta keep up with the times. I like trying new things.

HARVEY: Like running away?

BETTY: (ignores that) New songs. Different style. Different audiences want different songs. There's this one...Jimmy suggested it...I'm not sure about it... We've never done it for anybody but us...gonna try it tomorrow night. I need somebody to talk to me about it. Why don't you tell me what you think?

HARVEY: Me?

BETTY: Sure, you saw all my shows. You know what I do. Help me out. You want me to be a big hit, right?

HARVEY: Well, yeah, to start bringing some money in.

BETTY: So?

HARVEY: Me? Well, OK. Let me hear it.  
(sits) World premiere of your version of this, huh?

BETTY: Absolutely. Jimmy. (whispers to him)

JIMMY: Right.

MUSIC: BETTY sings I HEARD LOVE IS BLIND/SONG #7

BETTY: Watcha think?

(HARVEY thinks.)

HARVEY: That's good. I like it. Who is that?

BETTY: Amy Winehouse.

HARVEY: Amy Winehouse. Oh yeah, she sang with Tony Bennett.  
(up, pacing) Was this song your idea?

JIMMY: Yeah.

HARVEY: Figures. It's different, a different type song for you.

BETTY: That's why I like it.

HARVEY: Where's it going to go in the show?

JIMMY: In the middle.

HARVEY: Not tryin' to hide it?

JIMMY: No. Middle of the show, you want to recharge people. Get 'em into it, ready for more.

BETTY: So...?

HARVEY: Maybe. Yeah. It's good.

BETTY: Thanks. I appreciate this. You never get to have a critic before a show.

HARVEY: Hey I'm not a critic.

BETTY: No, you're more like...one of my producers.

HARVEY: Producer? Me?

BETTY: Yeah. Artistic Consultant.

HARVEY: Whoa!

BETTY: And we're going to put that last song right before this one. You know this one. Tell me if this works. (murmurs to JIMMY)

MUSIC: BETTY sings GOODY GOODY/SONG #8

(HARVEY sits)

HARVEY: (HARVEY up, pacing) Now there's a song. I haven't heard that in 20 years.

BETTY: We'll dedicate it to you.

HARVEY: All right. And you're doing that? That's definitely in?

BETTY: Yes.

HARVEY: (up) All right. Your producer approves. This show's starting to shape up. (spots her dress)

So what's this?

BETTY: My dress. For the show.

HARVEY: Oh yeah, so this, tonight is...

BETTY: Final dress.

HARVEY: Final dress. So dress! Put it on. Let me see ya!

BETTY: I just...

HARVEY: Hey, your producer needs to see your costume.

BETTY: OK. Jimmy...be right back.

(BETTY exits to change. HARVEY sits in chair near JIMMY. Pulls out a flask. Pours himself a drink. Offers it to JIMMY.)

JIMMY: Sure.

(HARVEY pours JIMMY a drink.)

HARVEY: So, you're Gayl...Betty's piano player.

JIMMY: Music Director.

HARVEY: Oh, that's right. You do this for a living?

JIMMY: Sometimes.

HARVEY: Sometimes. What else you do?

JIMMY: Stand up.

HARVEY: Comedy? Oh my God! Tell me a joke.

JIMMY: Give me a twenty.

HARVEY: Now that's funny. Like working with Betty?

JIMMY: Yeah, sure. She's great.

HARVEY: Man, I saw her do some killer shows back home. Standing ovations. Encores. You guys got an encore?

JIMMY: Maybe.

HARVEY: You sound good. You don't do a lot of...my songs, though.

JIMMY: What are your songs?

HARVEY: Great American songs...from the songbook. I'm from Jersey. It's gotta start with Sinatra

JIMMY: Oh yeah.

HARVEY: Like him?

JIMMY: Sure. Who doesn't?

(HARVEY looks around. Looks at mike. Has a thought.)

HARVEY: Can we do one?

JIMMY: What?

HARVEY: Sinatra song. Let's do one.

(HARVEY grabs the mike)

HARVEY: This OK?

JIMMY: Sure. Knock yourself out.

HARVEY: (pouring himself another drink) That I will.  
This is perfect. Piano. Booze. Perfect.  
C'mon, help me...uh...have this fantasy. I've always wanted to...

JIMMY: Watcha gonna do?

HARVEY: (looks at his watch) Well, it's quarter to three...

(HARVEY waits for JIMMY to respond with a note. HARVEY laughs and goes on.)

MUSIC: HARVEY sings ONE FOR MY BABY/SONG #9

(BETTY comes in half-way through. Watches. At end of song, applauds.)

HARVEY: Thank you so much. Thank you, thank you.  
I have to give some credit to my musical arranger here - Jimmy!  
Just like Frank always thanked his people.  
Whoa! And then there's...

(HARVEY applauds.)

Let me give you a hand right back. You look sensational.  
I haven't seen that before.

BETTY: It's new. So...Harvey. Harvey. I remember Frankie mentioning you.  
Weren't you with...? Yeah. You were with Donna. Waitress. Yeah...

HARVEY: All right.

BETTY: Yeah, so? For a while, yeah?

HARVEY: Yeah. That episode...ended.

BETTY: You're better off.

(laughter)

HARVEY: Let's get back to the show. C'mon now, we're uppin' the classy  
quotient of this show.  
Sinatra. And this dress!  
Let's keep it goin'. Do another Sinatra song.

BETTY: Sinatra. We haven't practiced any...

HARVEY: I've heard you do a ton of 'em. I'm sure your music director  
arranger can pick it up.

JIMMY: Sure, Betty. Hum a few bars, and....you know.

BETTY: OK. Let's see. (to HARVEY) We're not doing My Way.  
Or New York New York. But how 'bout...(does a line or two to  
JIMMY)

JIMMY: We can do that.

(HARVEY sits in stage left chair)

MUSIC: BETTY sings THE BEST IS YET TO COME/SONG #10

HARVEY: (clapping) Now that's the way. That's a song, my way.  
And you guys don't have that song in your show?

(BETTY/JIMMY look at each other)

BETTY: Not at this time.

HARVEY: No Sinatra? No? And you call that a show. Gayla - uh, Betty -

didn't you always have Sinatra in your shows back...

BETTY: Not every show.

JIMMY: All songs are Sinatra songs, aren't they? (HARVEY laughs, nods) It could be our encore.

HARVEY: Now you're thinking. I see why you're paying this guy so much.

BETTY: So what'dya think? Have we got a show?

HARVEY: You just might. You sound better than ever.

BETTY: Thanks. That means a lot, coming from you. My new producer.

(some laughter)

HARVEY: Wait a minute. Yeah. Hey, but what was that song you were doing when I walked in? I haven't heard that one before.

BETTY: That was...uh...(looks at JIMMY)

JIMMY: Alanis. When you walked in...Uninvited.

HARVEY: I walked in...Uninvited. So I wasn't welcome...

JIMMY: That's the name of the song.

HARVEY: Yeah, OK, but I interrupted you. Do that one.

BETTY: OK. We need to.

MUSIC: BETTY sings reprise UNINVITED/SONG #4. (Now SONG #11)

HARVEY: (up, applauding) Yeah. Yeah. The show's gonna work. Good songs. Let me hear one more. For the road.

BETTY: One more...and then you gotta go?

HARVEY: Yeah. I'm flyin' out of flyover.

BETTY: OK. (BETTY/JIMMY regard each other, smile. They know what they want to do.)

MUSIC: BETTY sings SUDDENLY SEYMOUR SONG #12

HARVEY: (slow clap) What the hell was that? Oh, I guess, it's a...kind of a...novelty song. All right. All right. Nice. Nice show. Variety of songs. Some old, some new. Some blue. Novelty song. All right.



JIMMY: That's not in the show.

HARVEY: What? OK, ok.

BETTY: So what next?

HARVEY: What next? You go out there tomorrow night, you kill 'em.

BETTY: I mean...what next...for me?

HARVEY: Aaaah. You. Well, my job was to find you. And if you had nothing to give me...which you don't...I was then to come back home, report the bad news, and maybe one of my...colleagues...would had back this way.

(pause)

But I don't want to do that. You should keep doing your shows. And, hey, I'm kind of a producer, right?

BETTY: Oh yeah. You were a big help?

HARVEY: Yeah?

BETTY: Jimmy?

JIMMY: Man, wished you were here when we were starting this. Right?

BETTY: Yeah. You gonna come to the show?

HARVEY: No. New York Knicks tonight. Season tickets, three rows behind Spike Lee. And I have a plane waiting.

BETTY: It's waiting?

HARVEY: I don't fly commercial.

BETTY: We could put your name in the program? Harvey, Producer.

HARVEY: No, no. I was never here. I'm gonna go back home...and tell them... I couldn't find you. You're in the wind. No use investing any more resources trying to locate you. Frankie's...just gonna have to suck it up. The sonavabitch.

BETTY: But you found me. Won't they hear about me here or...

HARVEY: I'm good at this. And...flyover country. You're safe.

So. Tomorrow night. Break a leg. Jimmy. (nods)

One more question. How you gonna end the show? Big finish?

BETTY: Oh yeah. (looks to Jimmy.)

JIMMY: Oh yeah.

HARVEY: Let's hear it. (takes a seat in audience) I'll be your audience.  
Big finish.

MUSIC: BETTY sings WHAT DID I HAVE THAT I DON'T HAVE/SONG #12

(HARVEY applauds, up. Keeps applauding.)

HARVEY: Standing O. Standing O for a good show.

(HARVEY start to exit...stops, turns back...points at them. Laughs. Leaves)

(pause JIMMEY/BETTY look at each other.)

BETTY: Wanna get a drink?

JIMMY: Fuck, yeah!

(BETTY picks up stuff quickly, JIMMY picks up his bit of music  
off piano quickly, they hurry out.)

BLACKOUT

Curtain Call: Sinatra's I'VE GOT YOU UNDER MY SKIN

END



