

# MY HUSBAND, THE DICK

A SCREENPLAY BY  
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FADE IN:

EXT. DEEP WOODS - NIGHT

It's a dark and stormy night. Angry black clouds blow across a blood-red moon. THUNDER RUMBLES. Trees CREAK in the HOWLING WIND. Branches clutch at four shadowy figures tramping through the eerie woods.

A FLASH OF LIGHTNING reveals they're children, dressed as pirates. Two of the three boys lug big shovels. On a mission.

Their leader, KATHY, stops at the edge of a small clearing. She flips up her eye-patch for a better look.

The ominous Grissom House looms ahead. Light radiates from an upstairs window. WIND in the eaves sounds like the house is BREATHING. SHUTTERS BANG. Spooky shadows dance on curtains. It's enough to make the bravest pirate shiver their timbers.

Kathy screws up her courage, then steps forward.

KATHY

C'mon. Are we pirates or chickens?

Chickens.

KATHY

Well I'm going. And I have the treasure map.

She bolts across the open yard like a cat on fire. The others stand frozen, fixated on the creepy house

A MOURNFUL WAIL from the upstairs window. An old woman's ghoulish face glares down at them through distorted glass.

They SCREAM, then tear after Kathy. A little pirate stampede.

Reaching the sanctuary of the woods, they GASP FOR BREATH. Ahead, Kathy checks an old treasure map in a FLASH OF LIGHTNING. She looks up as another FLASH reveals a huge, gnarled oak tree.

KATHY

Harrrr, Maties, this be the tree!

She marches off five paces from the tree, draws her wooden sword and SCRAPES an X in the dirt.

KATHY

Here it be! Captain Grissom's buried treasure!

They look at one another with greedy anticipation. The two boys with shovels jump forward and DIG FEVERISHLY. A few feet down, a shovel THUMPS into wood. They unearth a big, rotten chest.

TALL BOY PIRATE  
Hope it's gold!

SHORT BOY PIRATE  
Spanish doubloons, I'll bet!

Kathy grabs a shovel and PRIES the lid open. Her expression changes from greed to horror.

A CHILD'S SKELETON stares at her with dark, hollow eyes.  
Its jaw falls open.

Kathy opens her mouth to let rip a bloodcurdling scream --

INT. DARK OFFICE - NIGHT

Hunched at a laptop, ED, a dignified man in a gray flannel suit, SCREAMS LIKE A GIRL.

He CHORTLES with wide-eyed glee as he continues typing like a man possessed; a distinguished English editor immersed in his one guilty pleasure -- writing pulp.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Snow drifts down onto an art deco building whose grandeur faded decades ago. The CLACKING KEYS of a manual typewriter emanates from a second-story window.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lit by a desk lamp, the roguishly charming DAVID KNIGHT, 30s, sits at an old Underwood. Unshaven, wearing a ratty fedora and Dick Tracy pajamas, he types away.

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - NIGHT

In a film noir world, light spills onto the floor through the opaque glass door, casting shadows of the lettering DAVID KNIGHT - DETECTIVE. A haunting 1940s torch song plays softly on a radio somewhere in the dimly-lit office.

The blades of a ceiling fan slice slowly through the heavy air. Below, David is slumped over his desk, motionless.

DAVID (V.O.)  
My name's Knight. David Knight.  
I'm a private eye.  
(MORE)

DAVID (V.O.) (cont'd)

There's only my name on the door,  
but I've got a partner that brings  
in a steady stream of business. He  
goes by the name of Human Nature.  
Sure, it's a lousy job, but I'm  
good at it. At least I was, until  
a few hours ago.

Harsh light from a hooded desk lamp bleeds onto his face.

DAVID (V.O.)

Somewhere in the distance, music  
was playing. It wasn't harps, so I  
guess I didn't make it to heaven.  
No surprise. But it wasn't  
accordions either, so it couldn't  
be hell. And that's when it hit me  
-- maybe I wasn't dead after all.

His eyes pop open. He sits up, holding his throbbing head.

DAVID (V.O.)

But it sure felt like it. I'd had  
three cases so far this week. Two  
of them were scotch, the other was  
gin. So I figured this was just  
one doozy of a hangover. But I  
couldn't shake the cobwebs loose.  
I needed some air.

He crosses the room, then stares into the distance, as if  
looking out an open window. Rising over traffic noise comes a  
tune from a honky-tonk piano.

DAVID (V.O.)

Across the street was a joint  
called Harlan's. They serve meat,  
and plenty of it. You don't order  
a salad at Harlan's. Not even on a  
dare.

He puts a pack of Luckies to his lips and draws one out.

DAVID (V.O.)

Harlan's was built for the kind of  
guy who'd go to a slaughterhouse  
with a loaf of bread just to sop up  
the floor. And I was its best  
customer.

(digs out some matches)

But tonight the fog was so thick  
you couldn't even see the neon cow.  
Yeah, night falls hard at this end  
of town.

(MORE)

DAVID (V.O.) (cont'd)  
But I'd never seen it this dark  
before.  
(lights a match)  
Then I realized why.

Squinting, he holds the match out in front of him.

DAVID (V.O.)  
I was staring into the closet.

He shakes out the match and heads back to his desk.

DAVID (V.O.)  
I was in rough shape, all right.  
All I knew for sure was, I needed a  
drink.

He floods his glass with three fingers of scotch and takes a slug. Through the bottom of the tumbler he sees a distorted image of a woman on his couch.

DAVID (V.O.)  
Twelve years in this racket had  
taught me one thing -- just when  
you least expect it, there's always  
another bombshell waiting around  
the corner.

He steps closer. A sleeping FEMME FATALE stretches across the couch, half in shadow, half in the glow from the 1940s radio. She seems to have forgotten her clothes.

DAVID (V.O.)  
I had no idea what a naked woman  
was doing on my couch on a Tuesday,  
and for the moment I didn't care.  
She looked as smooth as a fresh-  
peeled egg.

The woman shifts into the light. A choice morsel, all right.

DAVID (V.O.)  
It was dames like her who put the  
hard in hard-boiled detective.

Sparkling eyes peek out from a curtain of tumbled blonde hair.

FEMME FATALE  
Well, hello there.

DAVID (V.O.)  
She said, in a voice so husky it  
could've pulled a sled.

FEMME FATALE

I could use a stiff one.

DAVID (V.O.)

By the time I realized she meant a drink, she'd already taken mine.

As she takes a swig, he grabs his trench coat off the rack.

DAVID

Here, make yourself decent.

FEMME FATALE

This isn't gonna do it.

She climbs into it anyway. He takes a seat at his desk and fills a second tumbler.

DAVID (V.O.)

It was late, and I had a wife to go home to. Not mine, of course. Still, I didn't like to keep her waiting.

The femme fatale glides seductively onto his desk.

DAVID (V.O.)

But I wasn't going anywhere until I found out what this dame wanted.

I sure knew what I wanted.

(out loud)

Fork over the lips, Baby.

And don't be stingy.

She leans in slowly for a seductive kiss. A moment straight out of a dream. He closes his eyes and puckers in anticipation... The lights pop on, revealing he's back in --

THE APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Glaring from the door is LAURA, late 20s. Ragged coat, unkempt hair, weary, she's barely recognizable as David's Femme Fatale.

LAURA

Hey! Paws off!

She marches up and dumps her shopping bags by the desk.

LAURA

If you're bored, take the dog for a walk.

Their scruffy terrier, WATSON, pokes his head up from the couch.

DAVID

It needs to be punchier.  
My biggest case ever, and you're  
making it sound like your other  
books.

He glances at two framed book jackets on the wall, each marked "A Laura Wills Mystery" -- LAURA WRITES A WRONG and DEATH HAS NO ALIBI, BUT I HAVE TWO. Each has a colorful illustration of a beautiful Laura, hair up, holding a gold magnifying glass.

LAURA

It's a novel based on a true story,  
which means I -- What's wrong with  
my books?

DAVID

They're fine, I guess, but you  
can't glamorize a real murder.

LAURA

Sure I can. I have a license.

DAVID

Artistic license. I get that.

She rolls his chair back from the desk.

LAURA

The only mystery you should be  
working on now is over there.

Reluctant, David grabs a cane topped with a gold lion's head, then limps past the Christmas tree to their bar. He stares down at the half-done jigsaw puzzle of a green vintage roadster.

DAVID

How do you expect me to finish a  
puzzle with pieces missing?

She rolls her eyes and sits at the desk. David steps to the TV and selects a Robert Mitchum film from his impressive collection of detective classics. He pops it in and flops on the couch.

LAURA

Why don't you go outside and get  
some exercise?

DAVID

Well I tried jogging yesterday, but  
I kept spilling my drink.

Not amused, Laura gives his pages a quick skim. Beside her, a corkboard overflows with copies of police and autopsy reports...

...a newspaper clipping with a photo of the four children from the opening, posing with a skeleton in a rotted wood chest...

...a photo of Laura, age fifteen, with another girl. And more.

LAURA

Naked on the couch? That is not  
how we met.

DAVID

You've gotta sex it up. You're not  
writing this for the Spinsters  
Mystery of the Month Club.

She yanks his last page from the Underwood and tosses them all in the waste basket. Discouraged, David starts his movie. Distracted by the blaring TV, Laura slowly starts typing. The sound of STRIKING KEYS becomes HIGH HEELS ECHOING SHARPLY...

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

...as a woman strides down a dark hall. Ahead, rich orchestral music drifts out through a half-open door.

(Note: While David's versions are always film noir, and Ed's are 1940s pulp, Laura's versions emulate the glamorous Hollywood films of the 1950s, with rich Technicolor, soft focus, Max Factor makeup, Christian Dior fashion and a lush musical score.)

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The woman steps in -- it's Laura, looking like her alter-ego on the book jackets. Dressed in a fabulous vermillion gown and glittering diamonds, she's a stunning combo of Grace Kelly beauty and Lauren Bacall attitude.

She lowers the volume on a glowing 1950s radio, then wanders the room like a kid in a candy store, taking it all in -- colored pins in a city map... WANTED posters... a gun holster draped on the chair... a tumbler of ice on the desk...

...and a gleaming .38 Special resting next to a tiny oil can and a barrel brush. Entranced, she puts down her purse and reaches for the gun. A posh English voice stops her.

DAVID (V.O.)

I wouldn't. It's loaded.



She turns with anticipation... but her face falls. Flopped on the couch, David's a mess -- stained shirt, mussed hair and five o'clock shadow. He's also inebriated.

LAURA  
Said the kettle.

He gives a snort as he heads for his desk.

LAURA  
Are you a real detective?

DAVID  
That's what it says on the door.

LAURA  
There's a door down the hall that says "Ladies", but the woman inside wasn't.

DAVID  
My secretary. She's new.

LAURA  
She didn't look new.

He pulls his license from a drawer and tosses it on his desk, then pours himself a drink.

She glides over and leans across the desk to check the license, letting her diamond necklace drop into the lamp-light. The sparkling ice entrances David... until his focus moves to her cleavage. Seeing this, she quickly escapes with his drink.

DAVID  
Can I help you?

LAURA  
I don't know. The bartender at Harlan's seemed to think so. He said you were the best.

DAVID  
Was he drunk?

LAURA  
What, you're no good?

DAVID  
Well, I'm the best you can afford.

She gets in a huff.

DAVID

Oh, don't be offended. I like the high society look. And you almost pull it off.

LAURA

Well I guess you're not much of a detective after all.

DAVID

(rising to the challenge)  
Really? Your gown may be Dior, but the fit is a little off. True, you may have put on a few pounds since you bought it --

Laura fires a sharp look.

DAVID

-- but I'm betting you bought it second hand. And the purse doesn't quite match. Shall I go on?

LAURA

Could anyone stop you?

Feigning disinterest, she scans a framed clipping on the wall.

DAVID

When you leaned closer a moment ago, you wanted me to notice your diamonds. I was more interested in your, ah, "gems"...

(glances at her breasts)

Can't tell about the gems, yet, but the diamonds look real enough.

He winks, shocking her with his impertinence.

DAVID

You borrowed them just for today. Perhaps you think I'm impressed by money. Perhaps I am.

LAURA

Then this ought to buy your services.

She digs a thick envelope out of her purse and tosses it on the desk. Peering in at the wad of bills, he gives a slow whistle.

DAVID

Who is it you want me to kill?

LAURA

Oh, I don't want him killed.  
I want him found.

DAVID

All this just to find someone?  
What's the catch?

LAURA

The catch is, he doesn't want to be  
found.

DAVID

All right, I'll go a round.  
Who doesn't want to be found?

LAURA

Whoever killed Tammy Miller.

She pulls today's newspaper from her purse and unfolds it in front of him, pointing to a headline.

DAVID

"Treasure hunters dig up skeleton  
of missing girl. Fifteen-year-old  
case reopened."

He examines the photo of the four children posing with the skeleton in a rotted wood chest.

DAVID

You do realize I'm a detective, not  
an archeologist? Fifteen years is  
a long time.

LAURA

It's never too late for justice.

DAVID

Say, that's rather good. I should  
hang that on the wall. How are you  
at needlepoint?

She's about to fire a retort, but unexpectedly weakens.

LAURA

She was my best friend. I need to  
find out who killed her. Please?

Looking into her pleading eyes, his tough shell starts to crack. But a KNOCK on the door interrupts. Laura turns.

INT. THE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ed waltzes in, looking distinguished in a gray silk suit. He carries a thick leather case.

ED  
Evening, one and all. And just how  
is the happy couple?

David ignores him. Laura's despairing look says it all.

ED  
(beaming with delight)  
Honeymoon over so soon?

He sets his case on the desk and removes a bottle of champagne.

LAURA  
Are we celebrating something?

ED  
We are indeed. You are now in the  
presence of Baxter Publishing's new  
Editor-in-Chief.

LAURA  
You got it! That's wonderful, Ed!

ED  
It gets better. My very first act  
was to persuade Mr. Beedle to push  
your book to the head of the queue.

Laura's face lights up. Before she can ask for details, Ed recoils at the sight of the Underwood.

ED  
Where's your laptop?

LAURA  
What? Oh. We had a little  
"accident". First my watch...

Ed follows her accusing look to David, absently tossing a ball to Watson while watching the movie. Watson leaps after it, BANGING into a table, knocking a book to the floor with a THUD.

ED  
Yes, I see. Hold your course a  
trifle longer. Things could change  
very quickly for you.  
(MORE)

ED (cont'd)

I convinced Mr. Beedle to print an initial run of -- hang on to your boot-straps -- forty thousand copies.

It's beyond her wildest expectations.

ED

He wants them in stores while the case is still fresh in people's minds. So we go to print right after New Year's.

Her smile withers. She checks the calendar and calculates --

LAURA

Ten days? You expect me to be finished in ten days?

ED

Two days. That's when Mr. Beedle leaves for Rio. He wants a draft for a read-through over the hols.

Oblivious to her anxiety, Ed peels the foil off the champagne.

ED

Not to worry. It doesn't have to be polished. That's my job. Just give me what you've got and I'll get started right after we toast...

He trails off as she holds out just a dozen completed pages.

ED

You're joking. You said you were almost done!

She looks away. Ed's face explodes in panic.

ED

Right. No need to panic. Not yet. Mr. Beedle... he probably won't have time to read, what, four chapters? But we do have to give him two hundred pages of something.

From his case, he pulls a 1940s SPICY CRIME pulp magazine. He tosses it on the desk as he digs out his typed sheets.

ED

I've already reworked your prologue.

His words don't register. Laura is transfixed, appalled at the lurid cover -- a madman suspends a scantily-clad blonde over a boiling cauldron as a gun-toting detective rushes to her rescue.

LAURA

Reworked? What do you mean?

He skims the pages she's been writing.

ED

This is rather clever.

She looks hopeful. But he slaps her pages onto the desk.

ED

Clever doesn't sell, darling!  
Lucky for you, true crime does.  
Look, this is finally your big  
chance at a bestseller. Which  
means, in case you're unclear on  
the concept, you've got to write  
for the masses. Do you know what  
the masses like?

DAVID (O.S.)

Naked women on roller skates.

ED

Thrills and chills, my dear.  
Thrills and chills. The public has  
an appetite for the lurid. The  
gruesome. You're simply going to  
have to tap into humanity's darker  
side.

LAURA

I think you're underestimating the  
public's intelligence.

He stares at her like she's insane... then breaks into a laugh.

ED

You almost had me! "Underestimating  
the public's intelligence." I do  
so love your sense of humor!

LAURA

But I'm --

ED

You've got to grab them by the  
salt-and-peppers, right from page  
one, and never let go.

(MORE)

ED (cont'd)  
 (glances at her framed  
 book jackets)  
 No more glamour. Not this time.

He puts his arm around her shoulders and talks in hushed tones.

ED  
 It's not just my neck on the block  
 here, Laura. Your career is riding  
 on this. You have two days to  
 finish the draft, and you can't  
 afford distractions. Why isn't he  
 back at work by now?

LAURA  
 His leg needs more time to heal.

ED  
 It's been three months.

She can't meet his gaze.

ED  
 Mind you, I'd milk it too, to stay  
 at home with you.

She isn't listening.

LAURA  
 I don't know what's wrong.  
 He's not the man I married.

ED  
 No, darling, I'm not the man you  
 married.

LAURA  
 Oh Ed...

Masking his pain with a smile, he digs into his case and pulls  
 out his laptop for her.

ED  
 While you get started, I'll see if  
 I can talk some sense into the  
 brute.

He looks to the couch, but David is gone. The sound of a  
 BLENDER draws Ed to --

## THE KITCHEN

-- where he strides through the swinging door and helps himself to the cocktail David is pouring. Miffed, David limps down the counter to make another drink.

DAVID

Don't you have some Christmas shopping to do?  
 (to himself)  
 Or a cliff to drive off of?

ED

I'm afraid it's going to be a rather bleak Christmas for all concerned should Laura fail to finish the book by Friday.

DAVID

How's that?

ED

Have you even the remotest concept of how good a writer Laura is? Of course not, you can barely read.

David fires a dirty look.

ED

Well, this book is her big chance. And her last chance, I'm afraid.

DAVID

But her other two novels --

ED

Didn't turn a profit, wonderful though they were. Let me put it in language you'll understand -- three strikes and you're out, yes?

David looks shocked.

ED

And she won't even get to bat if she doesn't make the deadline. So, do you think you could possibly find it within yourself to keep out of her hair for the next forty-eight hours? Hmmm?

DAVID

Sure. I just want to see her happy.



Ed roots through the fridge.

ED

Shouldn't have married her, then.

DAVID

I'd be offended by that remark if I didn't enjoy your bitterness so much. Still can't handle the fact that it's me she loves?

Ed hauls out items, building a Dagwood sandwich.

ED

She doesn't love you, old boy. She loves the idea of being married to a detective.

David is taken aback.

ED

She was weaned on Nancy Drew, then cut her teeth on Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie. Becoming a mystery writer with her alter-ego as a sleuth... well that was just the natural progression.

He pulls out a steady stream of condiments.

ED

But it wasn't until her involvement in the Miller case that she thought her fantasy could finally become a reality. She saw you as her ticket into that realm of mystery and excitement. Only it's not that exciting, is it, your sleazy little world of private eyes?

DAVID

It has its moments.

ED

Indeed? And what were your previous cases prior to the Miller case? Infidelity? Insurance fraud? Nothing so intoxicating as murder. Am I right? Of course I am. And if you hadn't solved the case, she never would have married you.

He relishes the sour look on David's face.

ED

Surely you've figured that out by now. But then, there's a certain comfort that denial provides, isn't there?

DAVID

You tell me. I'm real sorry, taking her off the market like I did. Did you have your tux already picked out? Maybe even toyed with some clever names for your kids, like Ed Junior, or Edwina if it's --

Ed whips out a carving knife. A flash of menace. David steps back, his wince of pain surprising Ed.

ED

Well, well... Was I wrong? I thought you were milking your injury so you could stay home and be mollycoddled by her. The leg still hurts, does it? Still, that shouldn't keep you from work. Not a tough guy like you. So why...?

He stares, probing. Then the realization hits.

ED

Oh, I see... You're afraid to go back to work. Afraid because you know how disappointed she'll be when she learns what a detective's life is really like.

(mimicking Laura)

How was your day, Dear?

(mimicking David)

Smashing. I figured out who stole the lunch money, and I got a lead on Widow Brown's missing cat.

Bubbling with glee, Ed slices the crusts off his sandwich.

ED

Face facts, David. You can't afford to give her the glamour she desires. Not on the salary of a second-rate gumshoe. Worse, you can't provide the excitement she craves. What's it like, dashing someone's dreams like that?

DAVID  
She's happy enough.

ED  
"Happy enough?" That sounds rather limiting, don't you think? But perhaps that's your idea of what real love is all about -- settling. Did she realize that was the covenant when you proposed?

David looks away. Caught in his line of sight are the piles of dirty dishes in the dripping sink, the ancient appliances, the rusty fire escape out the window... He grows despondent.

Ed cups his hand to his ear.

ED  
Can you hear that ticking, David? It's the sound of the clock winding down on your marriage. Perhaps you should give her luggage for Christmas. She'll be needing it when --

DAVID  
She made her choice.

ED  
And yet she's writing you with an English accent. What could she be thinking?

David's expression grows grimmer.

ED  
You know I'm right. Otherwise, you'd have wiped this smirk off my face by now.

DAVID  
I'm just finishing my drink first.

Ed's smirk vanishes. David drains his glass and puts it down. When he looks up, Ed is gone, the swinging door evidence of a hasty retreat. David hears the front door slam shut.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

With a face of joy, Laura types away on the laptop.

David watches from the kitchen doorway, lost in melancholy.

Laura pauses, trying to recall something. She opens a colored folder marked DAVID'S NOTES. A quick scan comes up empty.

LAURA

David, what was the name of that club we met at?

DAVID

The, ah... The Chez Pierre.

She's too absorbed in her story to notice something's wrong.

DAVID

I was just thinking... this book, if it's, you know, a big seller... you think it might help put me on the map? Maybe send a few exciting cases my way? Big ones?

LAURA

I suppose. Sure.

A glimmer of hope for him.

Laura's RHYTHMIC TYPING dissolves into DRUMMING.

INT. THE CHEZ PIERRE NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

A drummer POUNDS AWAY on the CHEZ PIERRE bandstand. The swing band is hopping at the posh nightclub. High society at play.

A swarm of silk-suited men fawn over the glamorous Laura. In a magenta gown even more exquisite than what she wore earlier, she radiates an angelic glow as she finishes a joke.

LAURA

Hot dog? I thought you said hedgehog!

The men laugh uproariously.

At the door, Watson now looks like a show-dog as he strains to get in. And at the other end of the leash, with a newspaper tucked under his arm, David looks debonair in a pinstripe suit, hair slicked back and pencil-thin moustache.

LOUIE, a gorilla squeezed into a tux, blocks his path.

LOUIE

(phony French accent)  
Pardon Monsieur, but we do not allow dogs --

Recognizing David, his accent changes to Brooklynese.

LOUIE  
 Detective Knight! Sorry, didn't  
 recognize ya without da hat.  
 (looks at Watson)  
 What're ya huntin' tonight, Watson?  
 Blondes or brunettes?  
 (to David)  
 There's a classy dish at table  
 seven... if ya don't mind a little  
 competition.

David follows Louie's gaze to table seven. Through the crowd of men, he catches a glimpse of Laura.

DAVID  
 (English accent again)  
 Like moths to a flame.

LOUIE  
 They've been buyin' her drinks all  
 night. 'Course no one's thought of  
 buyin' her dinner yet.

DAVID  
 Do you have frogs legs?

Louie grins, his phoney French accent returning.

LOUIE  
 But of course, Monsieur.

DAVID  
 Then hop to the bar and get me a  
 drink.

Louie's face falls.

DAVID  
 And bring it to table seven.

Louie brightens. He watches with admiration as David elbows his way through the crowd.

DAVID  
 Pardon me. Coming through.

PLAYBOY  
 Hey bud, take a number.

DAVID  
 My number's 38.

He flashes the .38 Special in his shoulder holster. He reaches for it, and the men scatter.

David takes a seat, impressed by the row of empty crystal glasses in front of the tipsy Laura. She does a double-take, registering his improved appearance.

LAURA  
You clean up nice.

DAVID  
I even washed behind the ears.

Watson hops onto a chair beside her and gives a friendly bark.

LAURA  
And hello to you too. Did Rover track me all the way here?

DAVID  
Watson. And he is part bloodhound. Of course, this matchbook you left on my desk helped too.

She looks coy as he holds up a CHEZ PIERRE matchbook.

LAURA  
Am I to assume you've changed your mind about taking the case?

DAVID  
A dangerous habit, assuming.

He's drowned out by the trumpeter blowing his heart out. David turns to watch JACK GREEN, Laura's age, his horn gleaming in the spotlight.

Louie delivers two highballs, nods to David, and disappears. Laura downs her drink, then raises her voice to be heard.

LAURA  
I used to like this song.

People glare. David gives her a shhhh.

LAURA  
Don't shush me. I'll have you know I was the second best trumpet player in all of Bennett Corners.

Applause as the song ends. The applause dies suddenly, and her next words are heard by all --

LAURA

I can play better than that!

People stare. Jack looks down at her with a smirk.

JACK

Would the lady care to demonstrate?

He holds out his trumpet as a challenge. David lunges for her -- too late. She's on stage in a flash, taking the trumpet.

LAURA

You boys know "Bugle Boogie" in A?

Grinning band members nod, prepared to enjoy this. Laura takes a deep breath, puts the trumpet to her lips, and hiccups.

David covers Watson's ears.

DAVID

This could get ugly.

Laura launches into the song... and plays beautifully. Jack grabs a second trumpet and joins her in an impressive duet.

David and Watson both look stunned.

DAVID

Watson, old boy, we've been had.

He lifts his glass in admiration, and Laura winks back as she plays. David can't take his eyes off her.

The short song ends to wild applause, and Laura takes a bow.

As the band takes a break, she escorts Jack to the table. An odd, nervous sort of fellow, he's thrilled to see Laura.

JACK

What a treat, playing that song again. Why didn't you tell me you were coming?

LAURA

Mr. Knight, I'd like you to meet the best trumpet player from Bennett Corners, Jack Green.

DAVID

(shaking hands)

Green? I'll go out on a limb here and surmise you're related to Colonel Green?

JACK  
Do you know my father?

DAVID  
Only what I just read in the  
Bennett Corners Gazette.

He tosses the newspaper down in front of Laura. The headline screams "COLONEL GREEN ARRESTED FOR CHILD'S MURDER!"

DAVID  
You neglected to tell me they'd  
already arrested someone.

LAURA  
The wrong someone.

Jack turns his head to read the headline.

JACK  
M-m-murder?

LAURA  
I'm sorry, Jack. Some children dug  
up a body near the house. It was  
Tammy Miller.

JACK  
Oh God. But... Boo Grissom...  
I mean, they convicted him...

DAVID  
Would you care to fill me in?  
Or shall I go buy another paper?

LAURA  
We used to play together as kids.  
Me, Jack and Tammy.

JACK  
The Three M-M-Musketeers, Dad  
called us.

Another stutter. Laura looks concerned.

LAURA  
One day Tammy just vanished.  
Our neighbor Boo --

JACK  
Why would they think my father...



LAURA

I don't know. Mr. Knight's a professional detective. I'm trying to persuade him to help me find out, but it's a bit like pulling teeth. Apparently he's one of those reluctant heroes.

JACK

Please, Mr. Knight. Will you help?

David looks into Laura's pleading eyes.

DAVID

Well... I think I'd very much like to see the look on your face when I do solve the case. You've got yourself a detective.

She smiles in relief. He can't help stare -- she's radiant.

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Watson's ears flap in the wind, his head out the window of a Barracuda. Laura sits between David, at the wheel, and Jack.

DAVID (V.O.)

Make it a convertible.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Laura discovers David reading over her shoulder. It's all she can do not to scream.

LAURA

But you don't own a convertible.

DAVID

Well you don't play the trumpet, so as long as you're taking liberties...

LAURA

I do so play the trumpet. There's a lot about me you still don't know.

DAVID

Sure. A convertible will make me look more successful. And lose the wimpy accent and the moustache.

She hesitates. He wheels her chair back from the desk.

DAVID

Look, why don't you get some air.  
You'll be up all night with this.  
Let me take over for a bit. I'll  
write the section where we meet the  
Colonel.

She's about to explode. Then a devious look comes over her.

LAURA

Oh, all right. Thanks.

She surrenders the chair. He sits and reads where she left off.  
Unaware she's opening the front door, he starts to TYPE.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD / INT. CAR - DAY

Back in his noir world, David now drives the roadster from the  
jigsaw puzzle, Laura and Jack at his side. He shaves off his  
moustache with an electric razor as he drives.

DAVID (V.O.)

(still with the accent)

We had only been driving a short  
while, and I was...

(clears his throat and the  
accent vanishes)

...I was already regretting taking  
the job. I don't know why I said  
yes. Maybe I wanted to see the  
rest of her wardrobe. Or maybe I'm  
just a sucker for a woman who can  
blow like that.

The car goes into a spin. David drops the razor and grabs the  
wheel with both hands. He can't control it.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Laura wheels David wildly to the front door, picking up speed,  
and FIRES the chair out into the hallway.

DAVID

AAAAAAAAAAAAH!

Seeing Watson staring, puzzled, she grabs David's jacket and  
flings it after David.

LAURA

Fetch!

Watson bolts after it. Laura SLAMS the door and LOCKS it.  
She pulls up another chair and starts typing.