

ACT ONE**Scene Two**

(The club car of a train from Zurich. The ORCHESTRA is playing a bright Cole Porter type tune underneath. A very attractive French woman in her thirties – RENEE – sits at a table. As the CONDUCTOR passes through:)

CONDUCTOR

Beaumont sur Mer, quinze minutes. Mesdames et messieurs, quinze minutes a Beaumont sur Mer.

(The CONDUCTOR exits. LAWRENCE is settling in, when the door bursts open and FREDDY BENSON enters. Thirty, American and attractive in a cheap linen jacket and t-shirt. He plops himself in the empty seat between LAWRENCE and RENEE.)

FREDDY

Excuse me.

(He smiles politely to RENEE, pulls out a well-worn bible and begins to read. The WAITER approaches with a menu.)

WAITER

Monsieur –

FREDDY

(eyes on the bible)

One second please.

(He continues to read another moment, comes to the end of a passage and looks up at the WAITER.)

That Judas. What a character, huh?

(takes menu)

Thanks, I'm starving.

(scans prices)

Whoa! Is this to rent or to buy?

(hands back menu)

I'll just have a napkin, please.

WAITER

One napkin.

(The WAITER moves off. FREDDY reaches into his bag, pulls out a large raw beet, dusts it off, takes a bite.)

RENEE

The food here is very good.

FREDDY

I'm sure it is. But I had such a big breakfast –

(suddenly seizes up and moans)

RENEE

Are you all right?

FREDDY

Hunger pains; they'll pass.

RENEE

You must eat something.

FREDDY

To be honest with you I never was very good with money. I just seem to take whatever salary the Red Cross pays me and donate it right back to them. At this rate Grandma will never get her operation.

RENEE

Your grandmere, she is ill?

FREDDY

No, she just tips over sometimes. I can't wait to see her face Christmas morning when she wakes up and finds that new hip under the tree.

RENEE

(opening her purse)

You must let me help.

FREDDY

Oh, no, I couldn't.

RENEE

Nonsense. Waiter, bring this gentleman the specialty du jour.

(FREDDY takes Renee's hands in his, looks her in the eyes and leans in sincerely.)

FREDDY

Thank you. Gosh, I never knew angels had such beautiful breasts.

RENEE

Well...

(Suddenly a very large MAN enters.)

MAN

Renee?

RENEE

Oui, ici, Gerard.

(to FREDDY)

This is my husband Gerard. And you are?

(FREDDY stands to introduce himself to this rather imposing husband.)

FREDDY

Father Peter O'Malley.

RENEE

Excuse us, mon Père.

FREDDY

(as they go)

See you in church.

(They exit. FREDDY shrugs philosophically, sits, puts aside the Bible, pulls out a Mad Magazine, removes a bookmark from it and begins to read. LAWRENCE has, of course, been observing all this throughout, now leans in to FREDDY.)

LAWRENCE

My condolences to your grandmother.

(FREDDY looks up)

You said she tends to tip over.

FREDDY

Only when she's loaded.

LAWRENCE

...Oh. I see.

FREDDY

Uh-huh.

LAWRENCE

Rather a dirty trick, isn't it?

FREDDY

Just giving the people what they want.

LAWRENCE

Which is?

FREDDY

Beautiful woman like that, how often does she get to feel all good and charitable about herself? And what did it cost her? Looka this — she gave me twenty bucks.