

"CYNTHIA HARMON"

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FADE IN:

EXT. CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF DETROIT - DAY

SUPER: DETROIT, MI, 9-4-1924

It's a large, Romanesque, four-story building.

Books and all, CCD students CYNTHIA HARMON (20, determined, poised) and JOSIAH WEAR (20, supportive; say "WEER") join OTHER CCD ENROLLEES in filing out of the building.

GROUPS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS walk or jog out of the place on this warm, somewhat-misty Thursday.

Josiah breathes a sigh of relief.

JOSIAH

Cynthia, I can't wait 'til Central High finally gets its own building...and CCD can have this building all to itself.

CYNTHIA

But we'll have graduated from here by the time Central gets its own building.

Cynthia and Josiah stop in their tracks...only to move out of the way of STILL OTHER STUDENTS.

MAIN TITLES APPEAR OVER ACTION.

JOSIAH

It's just that things have gotten too crowded on campus.

CYNTHIA

I've gotta admit you're right, Josiah.

EXT. CASS AVENUE - DAY

Josiah and Cynthia slow their walk to a leisurely pace while a few cars tool down the street.

JOSIAH

Don't you have to get home?

Cynthia's nod is slow.

CYNTHIA

I sure wish I didn't have to...I mean, I'd rather walk into a room filled with mustard gas than come home and face Aunt Johnanne.

JOSIAH

Oh...her.

CYNTHIA

Yeah, Josiah. Her.

Josiah shakes his head up and down.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Aunt Johnanne makes the wicked stepmother in "Cinderella" look like the Virgin Mary.

JOSIAH

Huh...huh?

CYNTHIA

Or somebody like that.

Now Josiah nods in slow motion.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Ever since my parents died two years ago in that freak accident at the Timken Detroit factory and Aunt Johnanne adopted me, she's treated me like her personal maid.

Cynthia shifts her books around for comfort.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

If I'd've known I was gonna be the family maid, I would've had her buy me a maid's uniform...no, she would've had me buy it myself.

EXT. WOODBURYS' HOUSE - DAY

This one's a boxy, new-looking two-story house in the Motor City's Dexter Linwood area.

JOHNNANNE WOODBURY (41, cagey, cutthroat, jealous) and her oldest daughter CARRIE (20, bashful) reach the house's front stairs at the same time.

JOHNNANNE

Carrie, it's your turn to open the door. I did it yesterday.

CARRIE

Oh, all right, Ma.

Carrie fishes through her purse and dredges up her copy of the house key.

INT. WOODBURYS' PARLOR - DAY

While Johnanne bursts through the door to this heavily-furnished space, Carrie saunters in.

Johnanne cringes.

JOHNNANNE

Where's Cynthia?

CARRIE

She's on her way home from classes.

JOHNNANNE

Hmph.

Johnanne brushes pillows off a sofa and sits down there.

CARRIE

Ma...Cynthia's a junior at the College of the City of Detroit. She just got offered a music scholarship.

Johnanne growls.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Until last year, it was Detroit Junior College. But now, it's a four-year school. And Cynthia was one of the first to get a music scholarship to stay at CCD.

Carrie watches her mother motion her into a seat on the sofa.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

(sitting down)

She's a better musician than all four of us.

JOHNNANNE

Hmph.

CARRIE
Combined.

JOHNNANNE
You're telling stories.

CARRIE
No, I'm not, Ma. In fact, Cynthia's
looking to break into vaudeville.

Johanne gestures her disbelief.

Carrie's sisters, books in hands, burst through the parlor
door: DAISY (16, levelheaded, a peacemaker) and EADWINA (15,
stagestruck, a go-getter).

Johanne jumps from her seat and points at Eadwina and Daisy.

JOHNNANNE
Did you two hear what your oldest
sister said about Cynthia?

EADWINA
No, Ma.

Daisy gravitates toward the family piano...a 1900-24 upright.

DAISY
(sits down at piano)
What did Carrie say about Cynthia?

JOHNNANNE
That she's...Cynthia's...a better
musician than the four of us in
this room.

Dead silence...for a few seconds.

DAISY
Carrie's right.

JOHNNANNE
Daisy Mae Woodbury, have you been
drinking the suds again?

DAISY
Ma, you know I don't drink!

JOHNNANNE
I mean your own bath water.

Eadwina bursts into laughter...but Carrie, Daisy, and
Johanne stare her into silence.

EXT. HARRISON STREET - DAY

Cynthia and Josiah walk on until they reach:

EXT. HARRISON STREET PUB - DAY

The two CCD students stroll toward a small, lengthy, two-story building marked by a circular entrance.

The pub adds spark to its residential neighborhood.

Once the door opens from inside, Josiah holds it for Cynthia, who nods with a smile.

INT. HARRISON STREET PUB BARROOM - DAY

The twosome amble inside a space that features an enormously-long bar (plus, across the aisle, tables for foursomes).

A built-in bench rests on a wall near the front entrance.

Cynthia's and Josiah's arrival triggers cheers from the place's owner, TOM "WINKY" HEILEMANN (42, jovial), who cleans glasses from behind the bar.

Three CCD enrollees show elation from a table: RUTH NALLIN (20, White), ELMER SCHULTE (19, White), and NARVIN RAY MCKINLEY (21, resourceful, Black). All three nurse Cokes.

WINKY

(to Cynthia and Josiah)

Welcome back, you two! Glad you could make it!

CYNTHIA

Thanks, Winky!

JOSIAH

That goes double.

WINKY

What can I get you two?

While Josiah joins Elmer, Narvin Ray, and Ruth at their table, Cynthia starts for an 1880-1909 upright piano at the back of the barroom.

CYNTHIA

(along the way)

Nothing for me yet. Right now, I just wanna bang out some tunes I've written.

Cynthia's four classmates applaud.

ELMER

Speaking of tunes, Cynthia...you
oughta perform 'em at the
Cinderella Theater.

Cynthia sets her books on top of the piano, then takes a seat
at the instrument's stool.

CYNTHIA

That new place way out on East
Jefferson Avenue?

RUTH

(nodding)

Opened up back in January.

Winky, Narvin Ray, Ruth, Josiah, and Elmer watch Cynthia pull
out a notebook. Johnanne's niece extracts some sheet music
from the notebook and spreads it out on the music rack.

NARVIN RAY

Yeah, Ruth. They're having a talent
show at the Cinderella this
Halloween...last Friday in October.

JOSIAH

And Cynthia, you won't have to
dress up like a pumpkin.

Josiah's fellow students laugh.

CYNTHIA

Anyway...I've been thinking a lot
about my ma and pa...and I've been
working on a little song about 'em.

Cynthia wallops out five or six introductory bars...then an
arpeggio. The piano's honky-tonky sound brings a smile to
Josiah's, Narvin Ray's, and her faces.

Now she slows the music down to set up the first verse.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

(singing, too)

*Edward and Eleanor were
lovers./They met at the ol' axle
plant./They made quite a team
stampin' out the gears./They had
the biggest love a twosome could
have.*

At the bar, a delighted Winky pours cola into two glasses. He hands one glass to Josiah and the other to Cynthia.

INT. WOODBURYS' KITCHEN - DAY

Eadwina, Daisy, Carrie, and a livid Johnanne lift canned goods from a shelf in this cozy, well-furnished spot.

JOHNNANNE

This oughta be Cynthia's job.

Johnanne slams a can to the kitchen table.

CARRIE

Ma...we can do it, too.

Johnanne's daughters place their canned items onto the table while Carrie absorbs a withering look from Johnanne.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Just...this once.

EADWINA

Carrie...are you out of your mind?

CARRIE

No, Eadwina. No.

Eadwina drapes an arm around Carrie's shoulders.

EADWINA

But think about how--

CARRIE

No...you think about this: You or Daisy or I might get married someday.

Daisy and Johnanne race to a kitchen cabinet.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

And even if we don't, being able to cook is a basic survival skill.

Middle daughter holds mother at arm's length...Eadwina removes her arm from Carrie's shoulders.

DAISY

Allow me.

Daisy takes a can opener from a cabinet drawer...Carrie grabs sauce pans from another drawer in the cabinet.

CARRIE

Eadwina...we're gonna have to learn
how to cook.

Daisy opens a can and empties its contents into a pan, then puts the pan on the range. Her sisters and their ma follow right along.

JOHNNANNE

(pointing at Daisy)

Let me ask you something: Who's the
mother in this house?

Carrie, Eadwina, and Daisy sit at the kitchen table.

DAISY

You are.

Eadwina and Carrie shake their heads "yes."

DAISY (CONT'D)

I was afraid you were gonna grab a
knife instead of a can opener.

Johanne stares in anger at Daisy.

INT. HARRISON STREET PUB BARROOM - NIGHT

IT'S NOW A PACKED HOUSE!

Cynthia continues to put on quite a show at the barroom's old upright...whose music rack has now been removed.

She treats the patrons to a rollicking, self-written rag.

Most of the new customers are CCD students; most drink Cokes or what passes for beer or what masquerades as whiskey.

Ruth and Elmer turn to Narvin Ray.

RUTH

Narvin Ray...Elmer and I can't wait
'til we get to be your age.

ELMER

So we can drink whiskey.

RUTH

Or beer.

NARVIN RAY

You mean to tell me you wanna drink
that crap that's been thrown at us
these last four years and eight
months...instead of the real thing?

A chuckling Josiah eyeballs Elmer and Ruth.

JOSIAH

He's got a point.

Now Cynthia brings her rag down the home stretch...and at the
bar, A MAN (60s) nurses a fake beer while talking with Winky.

MAN

Who's that on the piano? She's
playin' like she's about to go to a
fire!

WINKY

Cynthia Harmon. She goes to the
(pointing eastward)
College of the City of
Detroit...she's a music student.

MAN

I wish she'd come to the Cinderella
Theater.

Winky's nod is enthusiastic.

MAN (CONT'D)

She'd burn that place up!

WINKY

Let me get you another...almost
beer.

The man with the fake beer shakes his head up and down while
Cynthia wraps up her ragtime contribution.

When strong applause breaks out, Cynthia bows and bows before
she takes a sip of Coke.

CYNTHIA

Thanks so much, everybody!

JOSIAH

(to Cynthia)

What was that tune you just got
through playing called?

Cynthia takes another sip, then turns to Josiah.

CYNTHIA
Well...I think I'll call it "The
Glass Slipper Rag."

Applause rings out again. When it dies down:

NARVIN RAY
You know, Cynthia...I know a man
who knows a man who knows a man who
knows Eubie Blake.

Cynthia's eyes light up.

NARVIN RAY (CONT'D)
Somebody big oughta tell the world
about you.

ELMER
(standing up)
I'll drink to that!

Other customers click their glasses...Elmer downs the rest of
his Coke.

CYNTHIA
By the way...I think I'll enter
that talent show next month.

ELMER
I'll drink to that!

But Elmer realizes his glass is empty.

INT. WOODBURYS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

With dinner out of the way, Johnanne finishes putting the
dishes away; Eadwina, Daisy, and Carrie (she holds a dish
cloth) stand behind her.

JOHNNANNE
Sit down, you three.

Johnanne's daughters gravitate to the kitchen table while
Johnanne herself goes to another kitchen drawer...to pull out
a deck of playing cards.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)
(sits down at table)
We're gonna play poker.

DAISY
Not again!

CARRIE

Yeah, Ma...you always win.

JOHNNANNE

You've just gotta concentrate.

Eadwina nods...but draws cross looks from Carrie and Daisy.

EADWINA

We might as well play poker tonight.

(eyeballing Daisy)

It's the only way you and I are gonna get an allowance.

Carrie flings that dish cloth toward the sink...and earns a withering look from Johnanne.

All four now take seats.

At the kitchen table-cum-poker table, Johnanne, Eadwina, Daisy, and Carrie stare at their cards (when not looking at the stack of money in the middle).

Now a sly look crosses Johnanne's face.

JOHNNANNE

Be right back.

Johnanne grabs her cards and leaves the table.

Cynthia's aunt returns with a box of cigars (maybe White Owls or Wm. Penns) in one hand and her cards in the other hand.

All four poker players are seated.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)

(sets her cards down)

Everybody grab a cigar.

CARRIE

You've gotta be kidding.

DAISY

Ma, I'm only sixteen! And Eadwina's only fifteen!

Johnanne places the cigar box on the table.

JOHNNANNE

You know how old I was when I started smoking?

CARRIE
Ma...I don't wanna know.

JOHNANNE
Twelve.

EADWINA
That's how old I was when I started
smoking!

Carrie and Daisy stare at a grinning Eadwina.

LATER

As the poker game continues tight, Johnanne and Eadwina puff
away on their cigars as if Mark Twain or Amy Lowell.

JOHNANNE
That's it!

Johnanne throws a dollar into the pot.

Daisy and a coughing Carrie struggle with their own stogies.

DAISY
Yuck!

CARRIE
I've had it!

Carrie puts her cigar in an ashtray, then bolts out of her
seat to grab a glass from the cupboard.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
I wish this glass were the size of
Lake Superior!

Daisy places her own cigar in the same ashtray.

EADWINA
Carrie...grab your cards!

The oldest Woodbury daughter fills her glass with tap water.

CARRIE
But I've got a losing hand!

Carrie lets out one more cough before she sips from her
glass...just when THE FRONT DOOR OPENS O.S.

Cynthia arrives home...and reaches the kitchen.

She notices the Woodburys' smoke-filled poker exhibition...and heads out the front door again.

CYNTHIA
(shakes her head "no")
I'm outa here.

JOHNNANNE
Cynthia Mae Harmon, you get back in
this house! Right now!

Cynthia shrugs on her way up the stairs.

CYNTHIA
I will, Aunt Johnanne...but I've
homework to do!

JOHNNANNE
You're telling the truth! Put your
damn books down and grab a broom!

Johnanne gains stares from her biological daughters while
Cynthia jogs up the stairs with her books.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

INT. CYNTHIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cynthia sets her books on her bed in this modestly-furnished
space. She sprints out of there and goes to:

INT. WOODBURYS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

While Carrie, Daisy, and Eadwina TEAM UP O.S. ON PIANO,
Cynthia sweeps the floor, cleans the table, and empties the
ashtray(s)...while shaking her head sideways.

INT. CARRIE'S/DAISY'S/EADWINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In this cramped-but-lavishly-adorned room that features bunk
beds and a third bed, Cynthia sweeps away.

On Eadwina's and Daisy's bunk-bed side, Cynthia...shakes the
former's cigar butts from an ashtray into a wastebasket!

INT. JOHNNANNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cynthia sweeps the best-looking bedroom in the house...and
rids its ashtray of cigar butts.

INT. WOODBURYS' BATHROOM - NIGHT

Now Cynthia polishes the mirror before she cleans the toilet.

INT. WOODBURYS' PARLOR - NIGHT

While her daughters continue to pound the ivories, Johnanne listens from her favorite chair and puffs another stogie.

Cynthia listens, too...and flashes a "sure wish I could help my cousins" look.

Johnanne's niece settles for feeding the family goldfish.

INT. CYNTHIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She sweeps her own space.

EXT. WOODBURYS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Cynthia empties the contents of all the wastebaskets into a trash barrel.

END MONTAGE

INT. CYNTHIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

An exhausted Cynthia grabs her alarm clock and finds it reads 10:00 PM...too late for homework.

She sets her books on her desk, then grabs her pajamas from a chest of drawers.

EXT. CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF DETROIT - DAY

Josiah and a glum-looking Cynthia (books and all) saunter toward the building on this nippy Friday morning.

JOSIAH

You look like you're the one who lost the battle to get America to join the League of Nations.

CYNTHIA

I sure could've used their help after I got home last night.

The twosome reach the front door.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Aunt Johnanne made me do chores all night long after I got home.

Josiah holds the front door for Cynthia.

JOSIAH

What time'd you get done?

CYNTHIA

Ten.

She goes inside first...he follows.

INT. CENTRAL HIGH/CCD FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Cynthia notices a flyer on the bulletin board: "TALENT SHOW!
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 7:30 PM, AT THE CINDERELLA THEATER, 13305-
09 E. JEFFERSON AVE."

In smaller letters: "YOU DON'T HAVE TO DRESS UP LIKE A
PUMPKIN...OR WITCH...OR DRACULA. JUST BRING YOUR TALENT."

She turns to Josiah.

CYNTHIA

That's the show Narvin Ray McKinley
was talking about last night.

Cynthia reads on.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Says here that first prize is ten
dollars, a silver cup, and...a
weekend engagement at the
Cinderella Theater itself!

JOSIAH

Cynthia...tell me you still wanna
enter.

CYNTHIA

(pointing to Josiah)
I intend to win it hands down.

Cynthia and Josiah hug...while GROUPS OF OTHER STUDENTS pour
into the hallway.

INT. CENTRAL HIGH/CCD AUDITORIUM - DAY

Cynthia struggles with a rather tricky, rather demanding
classical piece on a grand piano onstage in this cavernous,
formidable space.

TEN OTHER CCD STUDENTS (all male) join with the instructor,
LOUIS AZNAVOUR (40s), as they stand around the piano.

Louis gestures Cynthia into a halt to her music.

LOUIS

More forceful, Miss Harmon! More
forceful!

Cynthia rests her hands on her lap.

CYNTHIA
I'm trying my best, Mr. Aznavour.

A few of Cynthia's classmates laugh.

Louis comes over to Cynthia's side.

LOUIS
I worry so much about you this morning. You've played better than this...are you all right?

CYNTHIA
Well, it didn't help that my Aunt Johanne piled a ton of chores on me as soon as I got home.

LOUIS
From...

Cynthia looks at the other students, then at Louis.

CYNTHIA
The Harrison Street Pub.

Louis' face freezes...until CLINT HUSING (19) eyeballs him.

CLINT
Hey, I've been there. And I've seen Cynthia--

LOUIS
WHAT?

CLINT
I didn't go there to drink, Mr. A. I went there to hear Cynthia--

LOUIS
(pointing at Clint)
Mr. Husing, you skate on thin ice!

A few students laugh...but Louis wheels around to gesture the laughers into silence.

CYNTHIA
I go there because they've got a swell old upright there.

Louis' nod is slow.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

The action in that old upright's
just like the one at home...nice
and easy.

Cynthia tries that troublesome piece again...for a staff.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

My sixteen-year-old cousin...the
weightlifter...would love this
piano here.

CLINT

He would, Cynthia?

CYNTHIA

She.

(plays an arpeggio)
Cousin Daisy lifts weights 'cause
she found out it helps her own
piano playing.

Students stare at each other in shock...Louis eyeballs
Cynthia in his own brand of consternation.

LOUIS

Miss Harmon...perhaps you should
also make with the barbells and
dumbbells.

A smiling Cynthia puts the piano through a glissando.

EXT. FIRST NATIONAL BUILDING - DAY

PEDESTRIANS hurry inside this twenty-six-story downtown icon.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE JOHNSON AGENCY - DAY

Johanne puts a death grip on her purse as she hurries toward
a door whose handpainted sign reads: "THE JOHNSON AGENCY."

With one hand on her purse, she muscled the door open with
her other hand.

INT. JOHNSON AGENCY LOBBY - DAY

Receptionist Carrie types away behind her desk in this plush,
well-furnished space...where THREE PEOPLE (one a man who
totes a trombone case) doze off in wooden chairs.

Carrie and the sleepers snap to attention when Johanne
bursts into the lobby.

CARRIE
Ma...you left with three other
agents and Jerome.

Johanne lunges toward Carrie's desk.

JOHNNANNE
That's right.

CARRIE
What happened?

JOHNNANNE
Now you know they can't keep up
with me.

Carrie shakes her head "yes" in a tired manner.

CARRIE
Emil's here...and he wants to
audition for you.

EMIL FILIPSKI (30s), the man with the trombone case, waves at
Johanne. He jumps out of his seat.

JOHNNANNE
You're Emil?

EMIL
Well, I'm sure not Ty Cobb.

Johanne's face lights up.

JOHNNANNE
Come with me.

Emil follows Johanne out of the lobby.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)
And you better make that horn talk.

INT. JOHNNANNE'S OFFICE - DAY

In this sparsely-adorned office, a seated Johanne props her
feet against her desk while Emil remains erect.

JOHNNANNE
Like I said...you better make that
horn talk.

Emil opens his trombone case and yanks out...an iron torch!

Johanne almost falls out of her seat.

EMIL
 Johanne, I'm not a musician.

JOHANNNE
 I'll be a damn--

EMIL
 I'm a fire eater.

JOHANNNE
 You want fire...you got fire!

Now Johanne pulls a big cigar out of a box and dredges her lighter from her purse.

She fires up the torch and the stogie at the same time.

EMIL
 You see, ma'am, I heard about this talent show they're gonna have at the Cinderella Theater this Halloween.

JOHANNNE
 AND YOU DIDN'T EVEN TELL ME?

Emil can't answer.

He's launched his fire-eating act.

INT. WOODBURYS' PARLOR - DAY

Eadwina, Cynthia, and Carrie watch Daisy, who sits at the old upright, work with hand weights.

EADWINA
 (to Cynthia)
 What are you doing here?

CYNTHIA
 I thought that if I worked with hand weights, it would help my own playing.

A huge smile forms on Daisy's face.

DAISY
 Be my guest.

Daisy passes one hand weight to Cynthia, who follows along with Daisy...who continues on with the other weight.

DAISY (CONT'D)
And besides...all four of us are family.

CYNTHIA
Thanks so much, Daisy.

CARRIE
Wouldn't it be keen if all four of us could get together and work together--

Eadwina charges toward Carrie until they're face to face.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
It was just a thought, Eadwina.

The front door bursts open...and reveals Johnanne, who enters with a shopping bag that bulges with sheet music.

JOHNNANNE
Cynthia, get in the kitchen!

A shrugging Cynthia hands that hand weight back to Daisy, who resumes her two-weight workout.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)
Now!

Cynthia scampers off to the kitchen as Johnanne tosses the shopping bag onto a coffee table. Some music sheets fall out of the bag and onto the table.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)
Carrie...Daisy...Eadwina...you've got work to do before dinner.

DAISY
(heads for kitchen)
You know, I wouldn't mind helping Cynthia out--

JOHNNANNE
Not that kinda work!

Johnanne gestures Daisy back to the parlor.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)
I found out from a fire eater at the agency this afternoon that there's gonna be a talent show this Halloween at the Cinderella Theater.

Three young heads nod.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)
Any of you three know anything
about it?

Daisy and Carrie shake their heads "no."

INT. WOODBURYS' KITCHEN - DAY

Cynthia shakes her head up and down while she puts spaghetti into a boiling pan...and overhears the parlor conversation.

INT. WOODBURYS' PARLOR - DAY

Johanne zeroes in on Eadwina.

EADWINA
Ma...I saw a flyer on the bulletin
board at school.

JOHNNANNE
Why didn't you tell me?

EADWINA
I...I wasn't ready.

JOHNNANNE
Don't gimme that!

EADWINA
I wasn't ready to enter...a talent
show.

JOHNNANNE
Don't you dare gimme that, Eadwina
Marie Woodbury! The way you play
piano and trombone, you're ready!

INT. WOODBURYS' KITCHEN - DAY

A grinning Cynthia grabs canned goods from a cupboard.

INT. WOODBURYS' PARLOR - DAY

Johanne points to the sheet music on the coffee table, then gestures her three daughters toward the coffee table.

JOHNNANNE
You three are gonna learn some
songs for the talent show this
Halloween. And you're gonna win
that thing!

Eadwina, Daisy, and Carrie browse the sheet music.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)
Hands down!

INT. WOODBURYS' KITCHEN - DAY

Cynthia chuckles as she opens a can of corn.

CYNTHIA
(pours corn into pan)
I wish Aunt Johnanne would let me
help them.

She sets the now-full pan on the stove.

INT. WOODBURYS' PARLOR - DAY

Johnanne smirks while she watches Daisy, Eadwina, and Carrie examine that sheet music.

JOHNNANNE
There's a copy for each of you.

Daisy's eyes sparkle.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)
Another thing: I found you the song
that's sweeping the country.

Daisy holds up her copy of "It Had to Be You."

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)
That's the one I'm talking about.

DAISY
Ma, I love this song...especially
the way Isham Jones and His
Orchestra do it.

JOHNNANNE
I'm glad you like it. You three are
gonna learn it...up and down, left
to right, side by side, forward and
backwards.

EADWINA
Don't worry, Ma. We will!

Carrie and Daisy shake their heads in the affirmative.

JOHNNANNE
You better!

But Carrie cringes when she finds three copies of "Sleep."
She grabs her own "Sleep" copy and holds it for all to see.

CARRIE
Hate to tell you this, Ma...but I
hate this song.

JOHNANNE
LEARN IT!

Eadwina and Daisy shrug as Carrie sets her "Sleep" copy back
on the coffee table.

LATER

Cynthia jazzes up "Sleep" at the family piano while Carrie,
Eadwina, and Daisy watch.

Daisy and Carrie look impressed...Eadwina's exasperated.

When Cynthia ends "Sleep" with a bang, Eadwina strides over
to her.

EADWINA
Don't you have some cleaning to do?

CYNTHIA
No, but I've got some homework.

Cynthia moves off the piano bench and goes toward her room.

CARRIE
(applauding)
Great job of playing, Cynthia!

CYNTHIA
(along the way)
Thanks so much, Carrie!

With the three Woodbury daughters now the parlor's only
occupants, Eadwina moves in on Carrie, who grabs a ukelele.

EADWINA
Ma doesn't want us fraternizing
with the help.

DAISY
Eadwina...she's our cousin, not the
help!

CARRIE
And I really like the way she plays
"Sleep."

Carrie tunes her ukelele while she turns to Eadwina.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
Cynthia really has some good ideas--

Eadwina and her oldest sister now stand face to face.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
Well...I like to think so!

EADWINA
You want some good ideas, Carrie?
Wait here!

And Eadwina runs upstairs...she returns to the parlor with a banjo in her hands.

EADWINA (CONT'D)
Put that uke down and wrap this
around you.

Carrie sets her ukelele aside and grabs the banjo.

EADWINA (CONT'D)
A uke won't carry all the way to
the back rows at the Cinderella.
You'll do better with that banjo.

CARRIE
(straps banjo on)
Okay. I'll give it a try.

EADWINA
Daisy...go to the piano.

DAISY
Okay!

While Daisy takes a seat at the family upright, Eadwina wrestles a trombone out of a case.

Johanne gravitates her way to the parlor.

EADWINA
I wrote a real stomper...and it
oughta work with a banjo, a piano,
and a trombone.

DAISY
(to Eadwina)
Where'd you put it, Winna?

EADWINA

Open up the bench, you strong one,
you!

Daisy jumps off the piano bench and pulls three copies of Eadwina's stomper from the bench. The family weightlifter hands a copy to each sister.

Johanne sets a music rack in front of Eadwina, then does the same for Carrie.

Each Woodbury sis sets the music in front of herself.

JOHNNANNE

(sits on sofa)
Whatcha three got?

EADWINA

Something I wrote
called..."Woodbury Stomp."

Johanne rubs her hands in delight.

JOHNNANNE

See? Cynthia ain't the only one in
this house who can write a song!

A beaming Eadwina puts her trombone together.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)

She thinks she can do everything we
can do...only better.

CARRIE

Ma...she can.

DAISY

You've gotta admit she's a better
musician than any of us.

JOHNNANNE

That's a load of applesauce!

Daisy, Carrie, and Eadwina eyeball each other.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)

Why don't you three show her who's
really in the money?

Eadwina holds her trombone with one hand and snaps the fingers of her other hand for a medium downbeat.

EADWINA
 (to her sisters)
 One! Two! One, two, three, four!

Daisy, Eadwina, and Carrie launch into Eadwina's stomper.

Johanne likes what she hears...even if "Woodbury Stomp" needs serious work.

EXT. CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF DETROIT - DAY

The rain beats down as Josiah and Cynthia stroll toward the dual-purpose building on this second Monday in September.

The twosome share his umbrella.

In front of them, CHS STUDENTS and THEIR CCD COUNTERPARTS strain to get inside.

CYNTHIA
 How're your classes coming?

JOSIAH
 Well...not too bad. But that new instructor they've got in domestic art's got me between a rock and a hard place.

Josiah closes his umbrella...and the two inseparables go inside at last.

INT. CENTRAL HIGH/CCD MUSIC CLASSROOM - DAY

With lots of time left before class begins, Cynthia walks into an empty classroom...and sits right down at a pre-1924 upright piano at the front of the class.

She bats out the first verse of "California, Here I Come." Clint enters the room by the time Cynthia reaches the chorus.

Halfway through the song's chorus, Cynthia stops the music.

Johanne's niece pulls out a sheet of music paper...and works out a similarly-paced tune.

CLINT
 Cynthia, why'd you stop?

CYNTHIA
 I just wanted to come up with my own take on "California, Here I Come."

Clint sits down alongside Cynthia at the piano.

CLINT

I know you're itching to get away
from that no-good aunt of yours.

CYNTHIA

(with a big smile)
Not only that...I keep thinking
about this saying my ma used to
have.

Cynthia scribbles notes onto her sheet music.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

She used to motivate herself by
saying: "Slowly but surely, I'm
getting better each and every day."

Clint's nod is slow as the classroom fills with MORE STUDENTS
FROM CCD.

CLINT

You gonna use that at the talent
show next month?

CYNTHIA

If I'm not, then we're not going to
college in a growing city in
Michigan.

Now Cynthia tries out some more notes.

CLINT

Just one thing: Keep that song away
from Mr. A.

Louis bounds into the room...and Cynthia hurries to put her
budding tune away.

EXT. THIRD AVENUE BAR AND GRILL - DAY

Here's a small, lengthy, two-story downtown building marked
by a black-and-orange awning.

INT. THIRD AVENUE BAR AND GRILL BARROOM - DAY

This space also houses an enormously-long bar...as well as,
across the aisle, tables for foursomes.

The barroom's half full of CUSTOMERS...mostly business types.

Johanne and fellow agents CLYDE SPEARS (46), ABE KRUMHOLZ (62), and SETH DONALDSON (45) sit, eat lunch, and nurse drinks at one of those tables.

At a table in back of theirs: JEROME JOHNSON (44), the man who runs the Johnson Agency...and who, today, eats as if he's got no tomorrow.

CLYDE
(eyeballing Jerome)
Mr. Johnson, you really must be hungry.

JEROME
And not just hungry for acts.

Two or three agents laugh.

SETH
(takes a bite)
Well, if it'll help, I'm trying to get Baby Peggy to come to Detroit to promote her upcoming picture.

Jerome turns around to point at Seth.

JEROME
You mean "The Family Secret?"

SETH
Opens on the twenty-eighth of this month...and if things work out, Baby Peggy should be here a week later.

Abe, Clyde, and Jerome look impressed.

Johanne just stews.

ABE
Seth Donaldson, you shrewd son of a gun--

SETH
Thanks a bunch, Abe!

Seth and Abe click their glasses.

JOHANNNE
That's nothing!

Clyde and Jerome drop their forks while Johanne sips away at her drink.

ABE

So, Johnanne...who you tryin' to
land? Buster Keaton? Doug
Fairbanks? Clara Bow?

JOHNNANNE

Amy Lowell.

Four men stare in puzzlement at Johnanne.

CLYDE

Amy Lowell's a poetess...not an
actress.

JOHNNANNE

Poet!

Johnanne points at Clyde with her knife.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)

Poet! Poet! POET!

CUSTOMERS AT THE BAR gaze at Johnanne.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)

Damn it, she's a poet!
(puts her knife down)
And she's my favorite poet...okay,
person who writes poems.
(takes a bite)
And she and I both like the same
brand of cigars.

Jerome and Seth go back to eating.

ABE

Whatcha gonna book her to?

JOHNNANNE

Orchestra Hall.

Clyde breaks out in convulsive laughter.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)

Listen, Clyde: She'll clear out the
Cinderella Theater if I book her
there.

CLYDE

You're better off booking your
three kids into Orchestra Hall.

SETH
 Johanne, maybe you'd better book
 those kids of yours into the
 Cinderella Theater instead.

A huge grin decorates Johanne's face.

JEROME
 (through bites)
 You guys...our agency's reputation
 is at stake.

Jerome receives a withering look from Johanne.

INT. CENTRAL HIGH/CCD FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Josiah and Cynthia stroll toward the exit when Daisy,
 Eadwina, and A FEW OTHER CHS ENROLLEES spot them.

All tote schoolbooks...Daisy and Josiah tote their umbrellas.

CYNTHIA
 Don't worry, Eadwina and Daisy.
 I'll be home as soon as possible.
 Got schoolwork to polish up.

DAISY
 (nodding at Cynthia)
 It's all right. Take your time.

Eadwina stares in anger at Daisy.

EADWINA
 No, it's not all right!

Daisy and Eadwina watch Cynthia and Josiah leave the
 combination high school/college.

DAISY
 Eadwina...Cynthia's in college.

EADWINA
 So?

DAISY
 College has more homework than high
 school.

The two youngest Woodburys stroll toward the exit.

DAISY (CONT'D)

For some people, college is the next step on the road to being on your own.

EADWINA

Carrie didn't need college.

Daisy opens the door for Eadwina...but A FEW OTHER STUDENTS beat Eadwina to the exit.

At last, Eadwina catches up to Daisy.

EXT. CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF DETROIT - DAY

Daisy and her cigar-loving sister walk on in the rain.

DAISY

(opens her umbrella)

Think how much better a musician Carrie would be if Ma hadn't put her foot down and made Carrie go work at the Johnson Agency as a receptionist.

EADWINA

At least Carrie's bringing money home.

DAISY

And she's gotta hide it from Ma.

EXT. HARRISON STREET PUB - DAY

Josiah holds the front door for Cynthia; he closes his umbrella and follows her into the watering hole. (Both continue to tote their books.)

JOSIAH

That instructor in domestic art's gonna be the bee's knees after all.

Cynthia nods.

INT. HARRISON STREET PUB BARROOM - DAY

Cynthia and Josiah walk inside...and receive cheers from Clint, Elmer, Narvin Ray, and Ruth (who sit at a table for foursomes).

Winky washes an empty glass...but sets it aside to clap for Johnanne's niece.

WINKY

Hey, Cynthia! Glad you're back to
liven this place up!

OTHER CUSTOMERS bring the pub to one-fourth capacity.

CYNTHIA

Thanks, Winky!

Josiah and Cynthia sit down at a table in back of the one
their CCD buddies occupy.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Been waiting all day to come back
here.

NARVIN RAY

That makes seven of us.

Narvin Ray points to himself and his six fellow collegians.

LATER

THE PLACE IS NOW FULL OF CUSTOMERS!

Most of the newcomers drink bogus beer or fake
whiskey...Clint, Cynthia, Elmer, Josiah, Narvin Ray, and Ruth
eat pizza and sip Cokes.

Josiah breaks out a notebook (maybe a Big Chief tablet) and a
pencil...to sketch the Harrison Street Pub crowd.

RUTH

Josiah, I've never seen you bring
your sketch pad in here before.

JOSIAH

Well, I've got a reason now.

ELMER

(through bites of pizza)
Wouldn't bringing a Brownie camera
in here and just snapping a picture
get the job done faster?

CLINT

Tell you what, Elmer: You bring
that Brownie camera in here next
time.

ELMER

I've gotta buy one first!

Elmer's tablemates bust out in laughs.

Cynthia rises from her seat.

NARVIN RAY
 (to Cynthia)
 How's that Cinderella Theater act
 of yours coming?

CYNTHIA
 Narvin Ray, we're about to find
 out.

And Cynthia strides over to that 1880-1909 upright piano.

When she sits down and hits the opening chords to
 "Charleston," the pub explodes in applause.

Between the song's first verse and the tune's chorus, Cynthia
 flashes a huge grin...and jumps off the piano stool to
 attempt to do the Charleston while she continues to play.

Josiah turns to a clean sheet of paper...to capture Cynthia
 in her dual role.

When Cynthia's turn as a piano-playing hooper heats up, the
 crowd's applause kicks back in.

Elmer hoists his glass as he turns to Ruth and Narvin Ray.

ELMER
 You know me...

His table buddies watch Elmer down his cola.

INT. WOODBURYS' PARLOR - DAY

In a suit, slacks, and bow tie, Eadwina sits at the family
 piano...where she scribbles out a George Gershwin-like tune
 and smokes a cigar.

Carrie and Daisy walk into the parlor...only to look puzzled.

CARRIE
 Well, if that doesn't beat all.

Eadwina turns around to look at her two sisters.

EADWINA
 I figured: "If I'm gonna write like
 George Gershwin...I need to look
 like him."

CARRIE

Uh...huh.

EADWINA

And we still need some material for next month's talent show...in case the stuff Ma bought us doesn't work.

DAISY

(with a slow nod)

Winna...what you're writing does sound pretty good.

EADWINA

We've all heard of "Rhapsody in Blue."

Daisy and Carrie shake their heads "yes" while Eadwina takes a long puff.

EADWINA (CONT'D)

Well, I'm calling my number..."Adagio in Red."

CARRIE

Oh...kay.

EADWINA

Don't worry, Carrie. I know an adagio is a slow number.

Carrie leads Daisy into the kitchen...but Eadwina (cigar and all) runs after them.

EADWINA (CONT'D)

Come on, you two! Have I ever failed you?

INT. WOODBURYS' KITCHEN - DAY

Daisy and Carrie sip a glass of water each as Eadwina WORKS O.S. on "Adagio in Red."

CARRIE

I still can't get over Eadwina acting like George Gershwin.

DAISY

I know George Gershwin is one of the best composers around today...but what in the world's he got against lollipops?

Eadwina's two sisters chuckle.

INT. JOHNNANNE'S OFFICE - DAY

In her seat at her desk, Johnanne props her feet up while SADIE MCGONIGLE (25) and VIOLETTA COOPERMAN (26) stand next to the office's 1910-19 upright piano.

JOHNNANNE
Okay, you two. Give.

SADIE
Violetta and I work downstairs at the bank.

VIOLETTA
Sadie and I are secretaries.

Johnanne shakes her head "yes."

SADIE
When the rest of the staff at the bank saw our act, they kept begging us to enter next month's talent show at the Cinderella Theater.

VIOLETTA
On top of that, they asked us to find an agent.

SADIE
And that's why we're here.

Sadie and Violetta lock arms.

JOHNNANNE
So...what do you two do?

VIOLETTA
Sadie and I sing and play the piano.

JOHNNANNE
So do my three daughters. And my niece.

SADIE
Well, Mrs. Woodbury...wait 'til you hear this.

Arm in arm, Violetta and Sadie stroll over to the piano, sit down, and tickle out "School Days, When First We Met."

The two bank employees play a treacly eight-bar, waltz-timed intro, then add their own vocals:

SADIE, VIOLETTA
*Parting brings a lot of
 things,/While sunshine of youth is
 a blaze.*

SADIE
I recall the best of all--

VIOLETTA
The scenes of my dear school days.

An arpeggio from the twosome brings the tune into the chorus.

Johanne looks unimpressed.

SADIE
I met you in school days.

VIOLETTA
And I can never forget.

SADIE, VIOLETTA
We were kids together then--

SADIE
And parting was my one regret.

SADIE, VIOLETTA
*Though we've drifted through the
 years--*

VIOLETTA
You're in my memory yet.

SADIE
Oh, take me back to childhood days--

Violetta stops playing...only to break down in racking, hysterical sobs.

An infuriated Johanne and a bewildered Sadie (the latter quits playing) eyeball Violetta.

VIOLETTA
 (still in tears)
*I'm so sorry...it's just that this
 song always makes me puddle up...*

Sadie tries her best to console her buddy.

JOHNANNE

Don't you two know any "up" tunes?

SADIE

We do...but they're just not as fun.

Johanne jumps out of her seat...Sadie and Violetta remove themselves from the piano bench.

JOHNANNE

You two bring me an "up" tune...and I'll represent you two.

Violetta and Sadie saunter away from the office.

SADIE

Okay.

VIOLETTA

(drying her eyes)

Thank you for the opportunity.

Sadie shuts the door when she and Violetta leave the room.

Johanne sits back down, stuffs a cigar between her lips, and grabs her phone.

JOHNANNE

All right, Seth. You win.

Johanne places the phone's cradle on the desk and lifts the receiver to her ear.

EXT. CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF DETROIT - DAY

At last...a sunny day in the Motor City!

INT. CENTRAL HIGH/CCD FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Between classes, Daisy walks alongside classmates RUDY CULVER (16) and THEDA KELLEY (17).

RUDY

Sure, Daisy, sure. You're a weightlifter.

THEDA

(pointing to Daisy)

If you're a weightlifter, then Warren Harding never died.

RUDY

Take it from me: Girls don't lift weights. My sister proves that hands down. She's so darn weak.

THEDA

Girls aren't strong enough to lift weights...and that's all there is to it.

DAISY

You don't think I lift weights? Watch this!

All three stop in their tracks when Daisy spots Clint...the first male she finds afoot.

Daisy hands her books to Theda and Rudy.

After a bit of effort, Daisy lifts Clint off his feet.

Clint's mouth flies open while he's in flight.

Daisy's two classmates watch in puzzlement.

DAISY (CONT'D)

Don't worry. I'll be gentle.

Theda and Rudy eye each other in shock before they turn their attention back to Clint and Daisy.

SOME MORE STUDENTS stop to watch Daisy's exhibition.

With the utmost of care, Daisy puts Clint back on his feet.

CLINT

(eyeballing Daisy)

So...you're Cynthia Harmon's weightlifting cousin.

DAISY

Well...you're right.

(offers Clint her hand)

I'm Daisy Woodbury.

CLINT

Clint Husing.

Clint and Daisy shake hands.

CLINT (CONT'D)

Cynthia and I take music at CCD.

Theda and Rudy look even more bewildered. Nonetheless, they give Daisy her books back.

DAISY

Clint...meet classmates Rudy Culver
and Theda Kelley.

While OTHER STUDENTS walk by, Clint, Rudy, and Theda shake hands with each other.

CLINT

Nice to meet you two.
(heading off)
I've got a class to go to...see you
later.

Clint heads in one direction and Theda, Rudy, and Daisy the opposite way.

RUDY

Daisy...you could've tried to lift
a Central High student instead of
one from CCD.

THEDA

(to Rudy)
Do you know of a good clairvoyant?

Rudy looks puzzled.

THEDA (CONT'D)

Somebody who can hold a seance?

The three Central High enrollees reach their destination:

INT. CENTRAL HIGH/CCD ENGLISH CLASSROOM - DAY

The busily-furnished classroom fills with MORE STUDENTS when teacher CLARA SCHOOLMASTER (50s) approaches Daisy, who just about finds her seat.

CLARA

Daisy...the principal handed me a
note to give you.

Clara gives the note to Daisy, who accepts it.

DAISY

Mrs. Schoolmaster...is it bad?

CLARA

(with a slow nod)
Open it up.

A reluctant Daisy unfolds the note.

CLARA (CONT'D)
Your younger sister Eadwina
received the same note.

Daisy reads the note...and shakes her head sideways.

DAISY
Oh...boy...

CLARA
It's all right. You're excused for
the remainder of the day.

The other students watch Daisy wince out of the room.

EXT. CASS AVENUE - DAY

The Central High/CCD complex is far in the background as
Daisy and a distraught Eadwina lug their books home.

EADWINA
I can't believe it! I just can't
believe it! Carrie's dying!

DAISY
She was in the best of health this
morning.

The two teenagers watch cars roll down the street.

DAISY (CONT'D)
Maybe that cigar Ma made her smoke
when we were playing poker caught
up with her.

EADWINA
Nonsense!

DAISY
What I don't get is: Why didn't Ma
tell Cynthia that Carrie's dying?

With her free hand, Eadwina points at Daisy.

DAISY (CONT'D)
Just a thought, Eadwina.

Carrie's two sisters walk on.

DAISY (CONT'D)

Anyway, I'm surprised we've gotta meet Carrie at the agency.

EADWINA

Daisy...Ma told me there's a doctor on one of the middle floors of the First National Building.

DAISY

Yeah...maybe she's there.

Daisy and Eadwina stop, rearrange their books, and link arms to resume their stroll.

DAISY (CONT'D)

Here's another thing I'm trying to wrap my brain around: Ma wants you to bring your trombone and me my accordion.

Eadwina forces a smile onto her face.

EADWINA

Maybe she wants us...to play a dirge for Carrie...

Daisy tries to hug her little sister.

INT. JOHNSON AGENCY LOBBY - DAY

The piano from Johnanne's office now rests in the middle of the lobby...and a radiant-looking Carrie sits at it. (Her banjo rests next to the piano.)

Cigar in hand, Johnanne herself sits next to Jerome; they, Seth, Clyde, and Abe occupy the chairs meant for clients.

At the receptionist's desk: PUNI PANOKE (a woman of 25; Asian)...who looks amused by the show about to happen.

JEROME

Johnanne, what in the world have you got against cigarettes?

Jerome receives a withering look from Johnanne.

JOHANNANE

Do you like drinking beer out of a shot glass?

Clyde and Puni laugh.

JEROME

You mean real beer or the kind
they've been forcing on us these
last four years and eight months?

Abe and Seth join Puni and Clyde in laughter.

Daisy (with her accordion case) and Eadwina (trombone case in tow) burst into the lobby, where they spot Carrie.

Puni eyeballs the two youngest Woodburys...and earns shocked looks in return.

PUNI

What can I do for you two?

EADWINA

We're...we're Carrie's two sisters.

DAISY

Yeah.

Eadwina and Daisy put their instrument cases next to Carrie's banjo, then turn to Johnanne.

EADWINA

Ma, you said Carrie was dying!

JOHANNANNE

She is!

Daisy turns in a grin...but Eadwina does a slow burn.

JOHANNANNE (CONT'D)

She's dying to audition alongside
the both of you.

A smiling Carrie points at Johnanne.

ABE

(pointing to Johnanne)
That was pretty sneaky.

SETH

Abe, we've gotta talk about the
definition of sneakiness.

Puni looks at Carrie's two sisters.

PUNI

Go ahead, you two...let's hear how
you and Carrie sound together.

Daisy and Eadwina open their cases and pull out their respective instruments.

CLYDE

All right, you three Woodbury sisters, whatcha got?

CARRIE

Here's our version of...Paul Whiteman's "Linger Awhile."

EADWINA

And we hope you'll sit back and do what the song's title says.

Clyde and Puni laugh...Daisy nods at Eadwina...a huge smile decorates Johnanne's face.

Pianist Carrie bangs out an eight-bar intro that leads accordionist Daisy into soloing the next sixteen bars (a verse) while trombonist Eadwina toots a counter melody.

So far, Jerome looks impressed with "Linger Awhile's" nice, easy, steady beat.

Puni and Clyde study Cynthia's cousins hard.

Abe and Seth cast hopeful looks at each other.

And Johnanne's face features an I-told-you-so look.

INT. WOODBURYS' PARLOR - DAY

Books, bags, and all, Josiah and Cynthia enter the house.

CYNTHIA

It's been a long time since I came home to an empty house.

Josiah looks around.

JOSIAH

Maybe your cousins and their ma went shopping.

CYNTHIA

If that's the case, Josiah, Aunt Johnanne's spending my cousins' money.

Cynthia and Josiah place their books on the coffee table.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

I remember when Carrie got her first paycheck from the Johnson Agency.

JOSIAH

I know Carrie had to find that really keen.

CYNTHIA

It was...until Aunt Johnanne took Carrie's first paycheck and spent it at Foley's over on Woodward.

Cynthia and her guest sit on the sofa.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

And spent every cent of Carrie's money on a box of every brand General Cigar Company makes.

Josiah bolts out of his seat.

JOSIAH

Speaking of Johnanne...I've got an idea.

A wide grin decorates Cynthia's face.

JOSIAH (CONT'D)

Since she's not home...and your cousins aren't home...let's get this house ship-shape.

CYNTHIA

(claps her hands)

Fine with me.

(standing up)

You take the upstairs...and I'll take the downstairs.

JOSIAH

Copacetic!

Cynthia heads for the kitchen while Josiah goes upstairs.

He comes back downstairs...where she hands him a broom.

INT. JOHNSON AGENCY LOBBY - DAY

Carrie plays banjo, Daisy tums the old piano, and Eadwina remains on trombone in a "Woodbury Stomp" that moves along a bit faster than before...but is still not yet a barnburner.

Jerome still looks impressed...Puni and Abe like what they hear...and for Johnanne, the Woodbury Sisters can do no wrong. Period.

Puni catches Seth's skeptical look.

PUNI
C'mon, Seth. They're just warming
up.

Seth watches Clyde shrug at Puni.

INT. WOODBURYS' BATHROOM - DAY

Josiah polishes the mirror, cleans the sink, and removes the dirt from the bathtub.

Next: Yep...the toilet.

INT. WOODBURYS' KITCHEN - DAY

Cynthia transfers the last of the kitchen dirt from the dustpan into a wastebasket...then grabs a few cans from the shelf in an effort to start dinner.

INT. CARRIE'S/DAISY'S/EADWINA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Josiah sweeps the floor...then looks aghast when he finds an ashtray. He grimaces as he dumps Eadwina's cigar butts from the ashtray into the wastebasket.

INT. WOODBURYS' KITCHEN - DAY

Lard melts in a frying pan under medium heat...and Cynthia unwraps a package of pork chops.

INT. JOHNNANNE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Josiah's face stays in frown mode: He dumps cigar butts from this room's ashtray into the room's waste receptacle.

INT. WOODBURYS' KITCHEN - DAY

Sauce pans and the frying pan cover up all four burners on the stove as Cynthia continues to cook.

INT. JOHNSON AGENCY LOBBY - DAY

Abe, Clyde, Jerome, Johnanne, Puni, and Seth watch Daisy, Eadwina, and Carrie (left to right) pound out a rollicking six-hand, one-piano version of "Yes! We Have No Bananas."

Of the six Johnson Agency staff members, only Seth doesn't look convinced...and Johnanne stares in anger at him.

Daisy jumps off the piano bench; Eadwina and Carrie move over so that Daisy occupies Carrie's old spot...and the threesome take "Yes! We Have No Bananas" through one final chorus.

Johnanne's daughters play a crude glissando before one crashing, six-handed chord ends the song.

Puni joins Johnanne in boisterous applause.

Jerome breaks into a huge smile.

JEROME

Carrie, would you and Daisy and Eadwina excuse us for a minute?

CARRIE

Of course, Mr. Johnson.

EADWINA

(to Puni and the agents)

We would've played my "Adagio in Red," but it works better if the three of us played a piano each.

CLYDE

I'll buy that, Eadwina.

Jerome gestures Clyde into joining him; Johnanne, Seth, and Abe grow the huddle into a quintet.

PUNI

Mr. Johnson...may I join up?

JEROME

Sure, Puni. Come on over.

Puni jogs into a spot in the employees' huddle.

LATER

Eadwina, Carrie, and Daisy watch from the piano bench as Jerome, his agents, and Puni break the huddle.

SETH

Carrie, Daisy, and Eadwina...you three do have some things to work on in order to be a top-notch vaudeville act.

JOHNNANNE
 (pointing at Seth)
 Watch it!

SETH
 But then...even Al Jolson has some
 things he's gotta work on.

Abe and Jerome look dumbfounded.

CLYDE
 Seth, how long you been with us?

Jerome takes a step toward Eadwina, Daisy, and Carrie.

JEROME
 Welcome to the Johnson Agency
 family of acts.

The Woodbury Sisters whoop it up from the piano
 bench...Johanne dances in place in ecstasy.

When the cheering dies:

EADWINA
 We're very, very, very happy to
 join your roster.

DAISY
 My sisters and I ask just one
 thing.

Seth and Abe shrug.

JEROME
 What can we do for you three?

CARRIE
 We'll gladly join your roster of
 acts...as long as you let Clyde or
 Abraham or Seth represent us.

Johanne's fellow agents nod at each other.

JOHNNANNE
 NOT ON YOUR LIFE!

Eight sets of eyes stare at Johanne.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)
 I mean...not on your THREE lives!

Carrie looks at the piano's keys...Eadwina rests her chin on her fists...Daisy manages a shrug.

INT. WOODBURYS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Cynthia (now dressed like a flapper) washes Josiah's and her dirty dishes and Josiah dries them before he kisses her.

CYNTHIA
Thanks for all your help, Josiah.

JOSIAH
Glad to do it, Cynthia.

The two lovers head toward:

INT. WOODBURYS' PARLOR - NIGHT

While Cynthia walks toward the family piano, Josiah reaches into his bag and...pulls out a Brownie camera.

JOSIAH
That was some dinner you put together.

CYNTHIA
Thank you!
(sits at piano)
As long as the food doesn't get cold when Carrie, Daisy, Eadwina, and Aunt Johnanne get back.

Cynthia rearranges the sheet music on the upright's music rack...only to turn around to spot Josiah and his camera.

JOSIAH
Elmer had a point about a camera.

CYNTHIA
That's the great thing about him:
He's so full of surprises.

Johnanne's niece pulls out a copy of "It Had to Be You." She opens it up and spreads the copy on the music rack.

Josiah positions himself closer to Cynthia and the piano.

JOSIAH
Whaddya say you go from one kind of cooking to another kind?

CYNTHIA
I'm all for that!

LATER

Under Cynthia's hands, "It Had to Be You" is a sensuous, passionate, slow-tempo number.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

(singing, too)

*It had to be you./It had to be
you./I wandered around and finally
found the somebody who/Could make
me true, could make me blue,/And
even be glad just to be sad,
thinking of you.*

Josiah snaps as many pictures as possible of his musically-talented girlfriend.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

*Some others I've seen might never
be mean,/Might never be cross, or
try to be boss, but they wouldn't
do,/For nobody else gave me a
thrill. With all your faults, I
love you still.*

Now Josiah sits next to Cynthia on the piano bench.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

*It had to be you, wonderful you, it
had to be you.*

Cynthia delivers an arpeggio or two to end the tune.

JOSIAH

You know...you oughta play that at
the talent show next month.

Josiah studies Cynthia's slow nod.

CYNTHIA

Why not?

Cynthia's boyfriend sets his camera atop the piano; the twosome hold hands.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Josiah Joshua Wear...I'm glad it
had to be you.

JOSIAH

And Cynthia Mae Harmon...I'm so
glad it had to be you, too.

The two CCD students lock lips and hug each other...when...the front door opens.

Johanne, Eadwina, Daisy, and Carrie troop into the parlor.

Johanne fumes once she sees Cynthia and Josiah make love.

JOHANNNE

(gesturing)

Get upstairs, you three!

Her daughters trudge up the stairs...Johanne reaches into a closet...and pulls out a rifle.

She points the weapon at Josiah, and...

JOHANNNE (CONT'D)

YOU! GET OUT!

...BANG! Johanne shoots at Josiah (and the bullet hits a vase instead of him).

CYNTHIA

Aunt Johanne! What's the big idea?

Josiah hurries to grab his bag, books, and camera. He scurries out of the house and shuts the front door...to the tune of another gunshot that misses him and hits a wall.

Eadwina, Carrie, and Daisy sneak a peek...but:

JOHANNNE

GET BACK UPSTAIRS!

Cynthia's three cousins scurry back upstairs.

Johanne chases Cynthia around the parlor with the rifle.

CYNTHIA

Don't start this again! I'm not gonna pay for the fact that you and Ma couldn't get along with each other!

JOHANNNE

You're just like her!

CYNTHIA

What did I ever do to you that you've gotta chase my boyfriend out of the house? I mean, I've got a life that includes more than cooking and cleaning--

BANG! Johnanne fires another shot...Cynthia barely ducks and the bullet hits the sofa.

JOHNNANNE

This is MY house! And you've got
the kinda life I'm gonna give you!

That's enough for Daisy, Carrie, and Eadwina...who run down the stairs.

Carrie and Eadwina try to shield Cynthia while Daisy sneaks behind Johnanne.

CARRIE

Stop it, Ma!

JOHNNANNE

STAY OUTA THIS, CARRIE!

As Johnanne sets to launch one more shot, Daisy barely lifts her off her feet.

DAISY

Ma...put the rifle down!

JOHNNANNE

I'm your mother! Put me down!

EADWINA

Ma, drop the rifle!

Johnanne throws her rifle to the floor.

Carrie teams up with Daisy to carry Johnanne to her favorite chair. Cynthia and Eadwina breathe relief.

JOHNNANNE

I'm not through with you, Cynthia.

Cynthia, Carrie, Eadwina, Daisy, and Johnanne attempt to recline on chairs or the sofa.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)

I saw you and that...that...

CYNTHIA

His name is Josiah.

JOHNNANNE

Yeah, and you and he were showing
off at the piano. You were singing
him those damn songs of yours!

CYNTHIA

(with a slow nod)

And some of the songs Daisy,
Eadwina, and Carrie are learning.

(to her cousins)

I really love "It Had to Be You."

Daisy beams.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

I found that if I slow it down to
about half the tempo of Isham
Jones' version--

Johanne bolts out of her favorite chair. She moves to a spot
inches away from Cynthia.

JOHANNNE

You're trying to horn in on that
talent show at the Cinderella
Theater next month.

CYNTHIA

That's right. I've entered.

Now Johanne goes after her rifle...but her daughters jump up
to block her path.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Same contest that Carrie, Eadwina,
and Daisy have just entered.

JOHANNNE

Just remember, Miss Harmon: If you
set foot on that Cinderella stage,
you ain't gonna live to tell about
it!

Dead silence...for a few seconds.

CYNTHIA

I'll just have to take that chance.

Johanne reaches back to slap Cynthia...only to return to her
favorite chair instead.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

I might end up having a ninety-
minute vaudeville career...but at
least I'll die happy.

Cynthia's remark draws smiles from Carrie, Daisy, and
Eadwina...and a slow burn from Johanne.

EXT. WOODBURYS' HOUSE - DAY

TWO KIDS pedal bikes down the street on this sunny Saturday.

INT. WOODBURYS' PARLOR - DAY

Cynthia tends to the goldfish...Eadwina, Daisy, and Carrie dance to A RECORD playing on the family Victrola.

Johanne reclines at her favorite chair again as she puffs a cigar...and looks unimpressed by the dance routine.

JOHANNNE

Pick it up! Pick it up!

Carrie, Eadwina, and Daisy try to step livelier.

CYNTHIA

Aunt Johanne, is it all right to make a suggestion?

JOHANNNE

NO!

Johanne's daughters stop hoofing.

DAISY

Would've been nice to hear Cynthia's suggestion.

Eadwina and Carrie AD LIB their agreement with Daisy.

CYNTHIA

I've heard Daisy and Carrie and Eadwina play lots of times...and I know that making music is their strong suit.

Johanne bolts out of her seat. She points to Cynthia.

JOHANNNE

Go cut the grass!

CYNTHIA

It's still too moist. It rained yesterday...remember?

JOHANNNE

Cut the damn grass!

A shrugging Cynthia stalks out of the parlor.

DAISY
Ma...Cynthia's right.

JOHNANNE
No, Daisy. I'm right.

CARRIE
Don't you remember, Ma? The three
of us had a ball making music at
the Johnson Agency.

The Woodburys HEAR the back door slam shut.

JOHNANNE
Do you three wanna win that talent
show or not?

CARRIE
Of course we do!

EADWINA
But we're not gonna win it if we
add that dance routine you've been
trying to get us to do.

Eadwina, Daisy, and Carrie gravitate to the piano bench. All
three sit down.

EADWINA (CONT'D)
We're musicians...not dancers.

JOHNANNE
You're what I say you are!

DAISY
We don't have what Cynthia's got!

JOHNANNE
You're gonna get what Cynthia's
got! No ifs, no maybes, no buts!

Johnanne takes a long puff from her stogie...her daughters
eyeball each other.

JOHNANNE (CONT'D)
(zeroes in on Daisy)
And if you ever pick me up again
like a sack of potatoes, I'm gonna
cut off your head and bake it!

Eadwina titters.

EADWINA

Don't forget to cut her hair off,
Ma.

Daisy and Carrie shoot dirty looks toward Eadwina.

INT. HARRISON STREET PUB BARROOM - DAY

Winky pours Cokes behind the bar...a bar Clint, Cynthia,
Elmer, Josiah, Narvin Ray, and Ruth occupy.

Cynthia's face shows grim determination.

WINKY

Cynthia, you look like you're ready
to graduate to bootleg.

CYNTHIA

It's bad, Winky...but not that bad.

Each young bar occupant receives a Coke from Winky.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

I don't care if it's hooch or the
real thing...I don't wanna touch
it.

(taking a sip)

That's what killed my Uncle
Ulysses...Aunt Johnanne's husband.

NARVIN RAY

(nodding)

Yeah. I remember that. He died a
couple of years ago this May.

Clint sips his Coke, then eyeballs Cynthia.

CLINT

You always tell me your Aunt
Johnanne's enough to make anybody
drink.

JOSIAH

Clint...Cynthia's telling the
truth.

CYNTHIA

Uncle Ulysses died four months
before my own ma and pa died in
that freak accident at the axle
plant.

RUTH
 (sipping her Coke)
 Yeah, Winky. Cynthia's uncle died
 on the way home from her high
 school graduation party.

WINKY
 Did he get ahold of some bad hooch?

CYNTHIA
 Not only that...after he and Aunt
 Johnanne got in an argument, he
 drove off and ran into a power
 pole.

Elmer picks up his Coke glass...only to set it back down.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
 And of course, it could never be a
 family get-together without Aunt
 Johnanne arguing with Ma.

NARVIN RAY
 (to Cynthia)
 And that's why Ulysses drove off.

A glum look crosses Elmer's face.

WINKY
 Elmer...is your Coke all right?

ELMER
 Can you give me a glass of water,
 too, please?

WINKY
 You bet.

ELMER
 I can sure use a double.

Winky pours water into a glass, then hands Elmer the glass.

ELMER (CONT'D)
 Thanks, Winky.
 (to Josiah)
 It's not enough that that witch
 wants to bump Cynthia off for
 entering the talent show...that
 witch tried to pick you off.

JOSIAH

Yeah...Cynthia and I wanna graduate from CCD first.

(to Winky)

May I have a glass of water, too, please?

WINKY

Absolutely, Josiah.

Now Winky grabs a glass, pours water into it, and gives Josiah the glass.

JOSIAH

Thanks a bunch, Winky.

CYNTHIA

You know what, everybody?

Her CCD barmates eyeball Cynthia.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

I'm more determined than before to do that talent show.

Clint, Narvin Ray, Ruth, Elmer, and Josiah cheer.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

(taking another sip)

And I don't care if it kills me...I'm gonna get a chance to not only coach my three cousins...but also make music alongside 'em.

RUTH

Cynthia...you've got guts.

NARVIN RAY

More guts than Harry Houdini, I'll tell you that.

ELMER

That does it!

Elmer raises both his glasses...Josiah elevates his two glasses...Ruth, Clint, Cynthia, and Narvin Ray lift their individual glasses.

Winky pours Coke into a glass...then hoists that glass.

ELMER (CONT'D)
 Let's all drink to Cynthia
 Harmon...the most determined young
 performer about to break into show
 business!

Glasses click all across the bar.

ELMER (CONT'D)
 Whether or not she gets a sheepskin
 from the College of the City of
 Detroit!

The six CCD students and Winky click glasses again...then the
 seven at the bar guzzle away.

CLINT
 Hey, everybody...wouldn't it be
 peachy keen if we could find Harry
 Houdini's handcuffs and slip 'em on
 Johnanne Woodbury?

The gang breaks out in laughter.

ELMER
 I'd drink to that...if my two
 glasses weren't empty.

As Elmer's buddies guffaw, Winky fills one of Elmer's glasses
 with Coke and the other with water.

INT. JOHNNANNE'S OFFICE - DAY

That 1910-19 upright piano's back in Johnanne's office...and
 a switchblade-wielding Johnanne uses it as a target!

The Johnson Agency's sole female agent proves lousy with a
 knife, too.

Johnanne HEARS a knock on the door just as she retrieves the
 switchblade from its landing point (not the piano, for sure).

JOHNNANNE
 COME IN!

Purse in her grip, Puni enters Johnanne's office...and does a
 doubletake when she spots the knife in the latter's hands.

PUNI
 Uh, Johnanne...what're you doing?

JOHNNANNE
I'm trying out for the 1928
Olympics.

Puni's mouth hangs open.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)
This year's Olympics already
finished up.

PUNI
Since when did knife throwing
become an Olympic event?

JOHNNANNE
You just never know.

Johanne shoves her knife into a desk drawer.

JOHNNANNE (CONT'D)
Whatcha need, Puni?

PUNI
I need to give you a letter.

Puni opens her purse and pulls out an envelope. Johanne
snatches the document out of Puni's hands.

Johanne reads the upper-left corner of the envelope: "AMY
LOWELL, BROOKLINE, MASS."

Puni watches a gleeful Johanne strut around the office.

PUNI (CONT'D)
Aren't you gonna read the letter?

JOHNNANNE
Are you kidding? Not now!

Johanne kisses the letter!

EXT. WOODBURYS' HOUSE - DAY

A car speeds by on this first Saturday in October.

INT. CYNTHIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Up much earlier than usual, Cynthia finishes dressing
herself. After she dons her shoes, she grabs her banjo case,
tiptoes out of her room, and...

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE CARRIE'S/DAISY'S/EADWINA'S BEDROOM - DAY

...taps on the door to the cousins' bedroom.

The door opens...and Daisy gestures Cynthia in.

INT. CARRIE'S/DAISY'S/EADWINA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Cynthia comes inside...and breathes relief when she finds Daisy, Eadwina, and Carrie already dressed.

The foursome whisper their strategy.

CYNTHIA

Are you ready to do this?

Carrie and Daisy nod...but Eadwina looks perplexed.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

If we don't do this now, we'll never do it. It's do or die.

EADWINA

Cynthia, did you have to say "die?"

DAISY

(to Eadwina)

Well, I'm dying to do this...and I know Cynthia is, too.

EADWINA

We haven't eaten yet!

CARRIE

No problem. We'll eat at school.

CYNTHIA

Yeah, Eadwina. Carrie and I sneaked off and made us some sack lunches to take with us.

DAISY

Only they're sack breakfasts.

CYNTHIA

We'd better get going...before Aunt Johanne catches us.

A few heads nod.

Eadwina grabs her trombone case, Daisy her accordion case, and Carrie her banjo case. The threesome follow their banjo-toting cousin out of the room...in the utmost of quiet.

INT. CENTRAL HIGH/CCD AUDITORIUM - DAY

Carrie, Cynthia, Daisy, and Eadwina stand onstage, their instrument cases on the stagefloor.

Also on the stage, left to right: A reed organ, an 1890s upright piano, an upright piano from the 1900-09 period, an upright out of the 1910s, and...a harpsichord.

The hammers stand exposed on all three pianos.

Clara, Clint, Elmer, Josiah, Louis, Narvin Ray, Rudy, Ruth, and Theda sit in the first row of seats. (Louis and Clara tote notepads.)

CYNTHIA

Mr. Aznavour...Mrs.
Schoolmaster...thank you so much
for letting us use this auditorium
this early in the morning.

LOUIS

The pleasure is ours, Miss Harmon.

EADWINA

And Josiah and...let's see...Clint,
Elmer, Narvin Ray, and Ruth...thank
you all for helping us move these
three old pianos in here.

NARVIN RAY

Glad to do it.

Narvin Ray's CCD buddies AD LIB their agreement or nod.

DAISY

Theda and Rudy...thanks a bunch for
helping me move that pump organ
into the auditorium.

RUDY

(panting)
You're...welcome.

DAISY

See, Theda? You've got muscles
after all.

Theda flexes her muscles...and invites whoever's next to her
to feel those newly-acknowledged muscles.

THEDA

See that, Rudy?

Rudy looks embarrassed.

CARRIE

Anyway, ladies and gentlemen,
Cynthia has offered to help my
sisters and me capture some of her
own musical magic so we don't
embarrass ourselves this Halloween.

EADWINA

Better yet...all of that magic.

Clara and Louis perk up as they pull out pens or pencils.

LATER

Carrie sits at the reed organ, Eadwina rests at the 1900s
piano, Cynthia sits at the 1910s piano, and Daisy leans on
the harpsichord.

CYNTHIA

Carrie, hope you don't mind working
with a reed organ. I couldn't find
a place that had a pipe organ
they'd let us use.

CARRIE

Oh, that's all right. It's still an
organ.

CYNTHIA

By the way...you've told me and
your sisters you don't like
"Sleep," by Fred Waring.

Carrie's nod is slow.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Tell you what: If you three jazzed
it up the way I played it back at
the house, how would you feel?

CARRIE

Well...I could go for that.

Eadwina and Daisy nod their approval.

CYNTHIA

Go ahead and play the intro and the
next thirty-two bars in waltz time,
like on the sheet music.

DAISY

Okay.

CYNTHIA

Then...you come back and play those
thirty-two bars like a fox trot.
And keep the fox trot going the
rest of the way.

EADWINA

Got it!

Eadwina pounds out "Sleep's" six-bar intro in march time.
Daisy and Carrie join her in playing the next thirty-two bars
in waltz time.

After eight bars of waltz time, Clara raises her hand...and
the Sisters Woodbury stop the music.

CYNTHIA

Uh, yes, Mrs. Schoolmaster?

CLARA

You're playing jazz on a
harpsichord?

DAISY

Absolutely. We just wanted to give
"Sleep" a sweeter sound.

The two instructors nod at Daisy...then Louis turns to Clara.

LOUIS

Johann Sebastian Bach would do the
same thing if he were here today,
Clara.

CLARA

Perhaps so.
(to the Woodbury Sisters)
Take it from the top.

EADWINA

Gladly!

Carrie, Daisy, and Eadwina bang out "Sleep" again.

LATER

In "Adagio in Red," Carrie plays the 1890s upright, Daisy
tickles the 1900s upright's keys, and Eadwina pounds the
1910s upright's ivories.

Cynthia watches it all from her seat at the harpsichord. She looks impressed.

So do Josiah, Ruth, Narvin Ray, Clint, and Elmer.

JOSIAH
(to those around him)
Cynthia told me Eadwina wrote this.

CLINT
I could've sworn that was George Gershwin's piece.

ELMER
Huh?

RUTH
Kinda adds up, Elmer. You can't have "Adagio in Red" without "Rhapsody in Blue."

NARVIN RAY
I don't care who wrote this...as long as those three up there make it work. And they do!

Theda and Rudy sit in openmouthed shock.

CLARA
Louis...in a way, I wish Central High didn't have to get its own building.

LOUIS
But...

CLARA
Having Central High and the College of the City of Detroit share the same building does have some advantages.

Cynthia's cousins bring "Adagio in Red" to a powerful end...and trigger thunderous applause from their spectators.

EXT. WOODBURYS' HOUSE - DAY

Halloween 1924 is here!

SOME COSTUMED CHILDREN stroll the street, bags ready to fill.

INT. WOODBURYS' PARLOR - DAY

Cynthia looks after purse-wielding Johnanne (in her business attire) and the Woodbury Sisters (all dressed like flappers).

EADWINA

Ma, you've gotta admit...that time me and Carrie and Daisy spent working with Cynthia at the school helped so doggone much.

JOHNNANNE

I didn't like the four of you sneaking off like that.

DAISY

But it paid off...especially when Mrs. Schoolmaster and Mr. Aznavour gave all four of us extra help in polishing up our acts.

Johnanne puts a hand on Cynthia's shoulder.

JOHNNANNE

Too bad you ain't gonna be able to see all that hard work pay off tonight.

CYNTHIA

(with a slight grin)
I know. I'm grounded.

JOHNNANNE

(to her daughters)
Grab your instruments. We've gotta be at the Cinderella by six. Show starts at--

CARRIE

Seven thirty.

EADWINA

Sharp.

Eadwina, Daisy, and Carrie lift their respective instrument cases off the floor, then follow a slightly-limping Johnanne to the front door.

CYNTHIA

Aunt Johnanne...you've got a bulge in your stocking.

JOHNNANNE

I'll manage!

Johanne holds the front door for Daisy, Carrie, and Eadwina.

CARRIE

Ma, you'd better let me drive.

Cynthia watches Carrie, Daisy, Eadwina, and Johanne head for a 1923 Duesenberg touring car.

When the Four Woodburys take off, Cynthia closes the door...and heads for:

INT. CYNTHIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Cynthia dons a tuxedo and grabs her banjo case.

She stuffs a harmonica into her suit pocket and heads out of her bedroom.

Johanne's niece snaps her fingers, returns to her bedroom, and...grabs a mask.

INT. WOODBURYS' PARLOR - DAY

Before she reaches the door, Cynthia slips her mask on.

EXT. WOODWARD AVENUE - DAY

Banjo case and all, a masked Cynthia boards a streetcar...but slips the mask off before she pays the fare.

EXT. EAST JEFFERSON AVENUE - DAY

Cynthia jumps off the Woodward streetcar and reaches the Jefferson one.

INT. JEFFERSON STREETCAR - DAY

She gets off a sigh of relief when she finds a space to stand in a streetcar teeming with PASSENGERS.

Cynthia hugs her banjo case with all her might.

EXT. CINDERELLA THEATER - DAY

This two-story, white-brick building not only shines...it attracts PEOPLE who file inside.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - DAY

This enormous place is half full of CUSTOMERS...who watch A SILENT MOVIE. And the accompaniment comes not from an organ, but from A SMALL ORCHESTRA in the pit.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER BACKSTAGE - DAY

The organ (a three-manual Mighty Wurlitzer) rests in silence backstage...and Carrie and Daisy squeeze onto its bench.

A shrugging Eadwina finds a bucket to sit on while Emil, Sadie, and Violetta shoot the breeze with JOHNNY OSTERMUELLER (30s). All four adults stand off to the side.

A STAGEHAND (a man in his 30s) teams up with emcee MARTIN SALSNESS (40s) to count heads.

STAGEHAND

Martin, we're supposed to have eight acts tonight. I see seven.

MARTIN

(nods at stagehand)
And two of the acts just signed up.
(looks out at throng)
Where are the Tucker Brothers?

BOOKER TUCKER (23, Black) and brothers FREDERICK (22), LINCOLN (21), and WASHINGTON (20) raise their hands at another place in the room.

BOOKER

Right here.

FREDERICK

Yeah. We just signed up to be in the show a few minutes ago.

MARTIN

Good...who's Desdemona Smith?

Not too far from the organ, DESDEMONA SMITH (13, Black) watches MARIO CELERI (25, White) juggle a trio of balls.

DESDEMONA

(waving at Martin)
Me! I signed up a few minutes ago, too.

MARTIN

Uh huh...I understand you're only thirteen years old.

DESDEMONA
Yes, that's right.

A shocked Mario lets his three balls drop to the floor.

MARTIN
(to Mario)
And you must be the juggler.

MARIO
Uh...yes. Mario Celeri.

Those who retrieve Mario's balls hand them back to him.

MARIO (CONT'D)
(accepts his balls)
And I signed up a month ago today.

Martin nods at Mario, then at the stagehand.

MARTIN
So...Desdemona's here, Mario's
here, Emil the Fire Eater's here,
along with the Tucker Brothers and
the Woodbury Sisters.

STAGEHAND
And Johnny's here to sing. And
Sadie and Violetta.
(checks his watch)
It's a few minutes to six...and if
Cynthia doesn't show up, she can't--

Cynthia (banjo case and all) sprints into the backstage
area...and sets off cheers from all other talent-show
competitors except Eadwina.

EMIL
Finally...some real fireworks!

LINCOLN
Glad you could make it, Cynthia.

CYNTHIA
(catching her breath)
Thanks. Glad you're here, too.

WASHINGTON
(points to Cynthia)
Narvin Ray told us so much about
you.

Violetta, Johnny, and Sadie gravitate toward Cynthia.

SADIE

You're Cynthia Harmon...our agent told me and Violetta about you.

CYNTHIA

You must be a client of my Aunt Johnanne.

Violetta shakes her head "yes."

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

How much cursing did she do?

VIOLETTA

She didn't cuss...she just grabbed a knife and said she was trying out for the 1928 Olympics.

JOHNNY

Can't wait to hear you sing and play.

Johnny and Cynthia shake hands.

Eadwina walks toward her two sisters.

EADWINA

Ma's got a bullet with Cynthia's name on it.

DAISY

Eadwina...don't start that again.

CARRIE

Yeah. Not at a time like this.

Daisy and Carrie try to make room for Eadwina on the bench.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Now that the movie's OVER and the screen's up, THE NOW-PACKED HOUSE looks out at a stage that features, left to right, the theater's Wurlitzer, an upright piano from the 1890s, one from the 1900s, one from the 1910s, and a harpsichord.

The harpsichord and the three upright pianos differ from the ones at the Central High/CCD complex.

The hammers stand exposed on all three Cinderella pianos.

First up: Tap dancers Booker, Frederick, Lincoln, and Washington...who put on a flamboyant show that, at times, includes the hoofers dancing around the onstage instruments.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Left to right, Abe, Clyde, Jerome, Johnanne, and Seth sit in the front row...alongside OTHER AGENTS.

They all enjoy the Tucker Brothers' showmanship.

Clara, Louis, Puni, Rudy, and Theda (all sit in the middle) look captivated by the opening act, too.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

So do Clint, Elmer, Josiah, Narvin Ray, and Ruth. (Narvin Ray's the only member of this quintet not in Halloween garb.)

Narvin Ray's face shows plenty of pride.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Carrie plays the theater organ, Eadwina tums the 1900s upright piano, and Daisy's at the harpsichord on "Sleep."

Eadwina's six-bar, march-timed intro leads to the threesome playing the next thirty-two bars as a waltz.

A second later, the pit orchestra leads the Woodbury Sisters into a fox-trot beat...and Johnanne's progeny add vocals to their own playing:

CARRIE, DAISY, EADWINA
*Sleep, sleep, sleep./How we love to
 sleep/At the close of the day,/When
 the joys of the day fade away and
 the memories sweet/Of the day
 repeat./In our dreams they
 creep/While we sleep, sleep, sleep.*

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Proud, proud Johnanne elbows Seth and Jerome.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

A glissando from Eadwina leads to Daisy's vocal solo:

DAISY
 (deep, basslike voice)
*It seems that daytime was just made
 for laughter and song./Evening
 brings romance to lovers as they
 stroll along.*

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Theda's mouth flies open; Rudy snickers...until Theda elbows him into silence.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Carrie activates the organ's chimes before she takes over as the singer.

CARRIE
*Nighttime brings rest to the
 weary,/Soothes all the hearts that
 are dreary--*

Daisy launches an arpeggio while Eadwina sings:

EADWINA
*Leaves us alone with our
 daydreams,/Brings back sweet,
 golden dreams while we--*

CARRIE, DAISY, EADWINA
*Sleep, sleep, sleep./How we love to
 sleep/At the close of the day,/When
 the joys of the day fade away and
 the memories sweet/Of the day
 repeat.*

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

Ruth tries to rouse a sleepy Elmer while the Woodbury Sisters plow through "Sleep."

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

On "Linger Awhile," Carrie (at the 1910s piano) plays the song's eight-bar intro; Daisy's sixteen-bar accordion solo follows...backed by Eadwina's trombone countermelody.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Jerome and his four agents nod their approval.

ABE
 Just like back at the office.

CLYDE
 Only better.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Now it's "Adagio in Red," where Carrie tickles the 1890s piano's ivories...and Daisy and Eadwina play the 1900s piano and the 1910s one, respectively.

All three siblings pound away as if their lives depend on it.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Clara, Puni, Theda, Louis, and Rudy look ecstatic.

LOUIS
Just like back at the school.

Clara shoots Louis a correcting look.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
I mean the two schools.

CLARA
Only better.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

Narvin Ray looks mesmerized...and Clint grows dizzy as he tries to follow all those piano hammers at work.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Carrie strums her banjo, Daisy pounds the 1890s piano's keys, Eadwina blows her trombone...and the pit orchestra helps the threesome turn "Woodbury Stomp" into a total barnburner.

Eadwina and Carrie strut from one end of the stage to the other while still playing.

Daisy stomps in place while she plays those keys.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Puni turns to Louis and Clara.

PUNI
Just like back at the...no, it
isn't! This is better!

Theda's feet pat to the beat...but Rudy rises from his seat to dance in place!

He arouses the ire of CUSTOMERS BEHIND HIM.

IRATE CUSTOMERS
DOWN IN FRONT!

RUDY
(sits back down)
Sorry. Couldn't help myself.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

Those flanking Josiah catch his megawatt smile as "Woodbury Stomp" barrels toward the end.

JOSIAH
Cynthia's cousins did it...they
made it peppy!

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

The Woodbury Sisters and the pit orchestra bring "Woodbury Stomp" to a rousing end...and bring on crowd applause.

Daisy, Eadwina, and Carrie link arms...then the threesome bow and bow and bow.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Jerome and Johnanne stand as they clap.

JOHNNANNE
If that doesn't net my daughters
the grand prize, then Calvin
Coolidge ain't in the White House!

Seth's mouth hangs open.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Mario's mouth hangs open, too, as he holds a baseball in one hand and a roll of bathroom tissue in the other.

MARIO
Ladies and gentlemen...how do you
follow four tap-dancing brothers
and three energetic, musical-
instrument-playing sisters?

IRATE CUSTOMERS (O.S.)
WE DON'T KNOW!

MARIO
Well, let's see...how about this?

Mario sends the roll of tissue aloft, then tosses the baseball upward.

He continues to juggle the items on the way to a small table...where he spots a celery stalk.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Might as well live up to my name...

While he keeps the baseball and the roll of bath tissue aloft, Mario grabs the celery stalk (and triggers laughs).

The crowd's laughs become applause when Mario keeps all three items in the air.

LATER

Desdemona stands onstage, where she points to each upright.

DESDEMONA

Eeny, meeny, miney, mo...which piano should I play?

Her "eeny-meeny-miney-mo" game ends when she sits down at the 1900-1909 upright.

Desdemona bangs out "Grandpa's Spell" or a similar rag...and energizes the audience.

Sixteen bars or so into the number, the orchestra jumps in...only to fail to keep up with Desdemona.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

THE ORCHESTRA LEADER (a man in his 40s) waves his musicians into silence and leaves the tune's remainder to Desdemona.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Tuxedo-clad Johnny stands front and center at a mike as the orchestra launches "Come to the Fair."

After a sixteen-bar intro, Johnny adds vocals to this waltz-timed number:

JOHNNY

The sun is a-shining to welcome the day./Hi, ho! Come to the fair!/The folks are all singing so merry and gay./Hi, ho! Come to the fair!

Johnny waves his arms toward the orchestra...the music stops.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
Mr. Conductor, we need to get hot!

ORCHESTRA LEADER
Uh...okay!

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

As the orchestra turns "Come to the Fair's" intro into a fox trot, Johnanne turns to Seth.

JOHNNANNE
Johnny and I are going places.

SETH
That was my...you stole my client.

JOHNNANNE
Why didn't you treat him better?

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Sadie (on harpsichord) and Violetta (at the Mighty Wurlitzer) sail through a stomping "Limehouse Blues."

When the two secretaries end the tune with a bang, the audience pours on the applause.

Violetta eyeballs an equally-ecstatic Sadie.

VIOLETTA
Who said we don't like doing "up" tunes?

The crowd explodes in applause.

LATER

Sadie plays the 1890-99 upright piano and Violetta its 1910-19 counterpart on a heartfelt "My Buddy."

SADIE, VIOLETTA
(singing, too)
*Nights are long since you went
away./I think about you all through
the day,/My buddy, my buddy,/No
buddy quite so true.*

SADIE
*Miss your voice, the touch of your
hand--*

VIOLETTA

*Just long to know that you
understand,/My buddy, my
buddy,/Your buddy misses you.*

The twosome look out at the audience...and find some customers dab moist eyes or sit there in tears.

VIOLETTA (CONT'D)

(choking up)

My buddy...

Sadie eyes Violetta...and bursts into tears.

SADIE

My...buddy...

Violetta and Sadie bawl their eyes out as both women run from their pianos and meet at center stage, where they hug.

SADIE (CONT'D)

*Violetta...something told me
we...shouldn't've done this song...*

As a hush falls over the crowd, the two performers continue to hug...and continue to weep.

LATER

Emil brandishes his iron torch and eyeballs the audience.

EMIL

Anybody got a light?

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Many patrons look dumbfounded.

And then...there's Johanne, who's livid.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Iron torch in one hand, Emil pulls a lighter from his shirt pocket with his other hand.

EMIL

Just kidding, ladies and gentlemen!

The crowd cheers as Emil fires up his torch before he launches his act.

LATER

Cynthia sprints to a seat at the 1890s piano, where she bats out her "California, Here I Come" offshoot.

During Cynthia's eight-bar intro...

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

...Seth and Jerome eyeball an incensed Johnanne.

JOHNNANNE

I grounded that little--

JEROME

Johnanne...relax.

SETH

Cynthia might be the best act up there tonight.

Johnanne bristles at Seth.

SETH (CONT'D)

Or the worst.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Cynthia adds a vamp, then:

CYNTHIA

(adding vocals)

*When my mama was a little
girlie,/She had to face, to face
the neighborhood bully./She knocked
Mama down./She knocked Mama down.*

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

Clint and Josiah nod in understanding as they, Elmer, Narvin Ray, and Ruth applaud.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Eadwina tries to sneak a peek while Cynthia jams.

CYNTHIA

*Then one day, she said she'd had
enough./She told her folks: "I've
got to, got to get tough."/My mama
found a way./My mama found a way.*

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Louis and Clara listen with all their might.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Daisy joins Eadwina in attempting to watch Cynthia from backstage.

CYNTHIA

She worked very hard, oh so very hard./She got stronger and looked the part./And she looked in the mirror and said:/"Slowly but surely, in every single way,/I'm getting better each and every day."

Johnny and Carrie replace Eadwina and Daisy as she sneaks from backstage.

LATER

Johnanne's niece keeps it rousing by playing "Charleston" on the theater's 1900s piano...from an erect position and with musical backing from the pit orchestra.

When she reaches the song's chorus, Cynthia tries to do the Charleston while she continues to tickle the keys.

On the second verse, Cynthia leaves the 1900s upright, pulls out her harmonica, and toots away along with the orchestra in addition to hoofing.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Johnanne sneaks into her purse, yanks out her switchblade, opens it, and...fires it toward the stage.

She comes nowhere near hitting Cynthia...but she nails the orchestra leader, who slumps, the knife in his chest, onto the podium.

No more music from the pit...because the musicians tend to their now-bloodied boss.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Cynthia's back at the 1900s upright...but sits at its bench, her back to the keys, while she strums her banjo.

CYNTHIA
 (also singing)
*Edward and Eleanor were
 lovers./They met at the ol' axle
 plant./They made quite a team
 stampin' out the gears./They had
 the biggest love a twosome could
 have.*

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Johanne burns.

She reaches into her purse for a revolver...but Jerome reacts in time to gesture her out of the act.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

At the 1910s piano, Cynthia tickles out "It Had to Be You's" four-bar intro, then looks out at the audience.

CYNTHIA
 Josiah...this one's for you.

She blows Josiah a kiss...

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

...and he stands up to blow Cynthia a smooch of his own.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Now Cynthia adds an arpeggio before she warbles:

CYNTHIA
*Why do I do just as you say? Why
 must I just give you your way?/Why
 do I sigh? Why don't I try to
 forget?/It must've been that
 something lovers call "fate," kept
 on saying I had to wait.*

Eadwina, Daisy, and Carrie try to watch from the wings.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
*I saw them all. Just couldn't fall
 'til we met.*

The Woodbury Sisters' cousin plays another arpeggio, then:

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

*It had to be you./It had to be
you./I wandered around and finally
found the somebody who/Could make
me be true, could make me be
blue,/And even be glad just to be
sad, thinking of you.*

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

Everybody up there looks spellbound...

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

...as do most of the folks down here.

Jerome and Seth grip the hands of a squirming, cringing
Johanne. (Her purse is now underneath her seat.)

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Cynthia's set ends at the Mighty Wurlitzer, where she plays
"The Glass Slipper Rag."

Her stomping feet and flying fingers dazzle Carrie,
Desdemona, Johnny, Sadie, and Violetta...who try to watch
from the wings.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

The man from the Harrison Street Pub looks impressed, along
with most of the customers at the lower level.

MAN

(to those around him)

Didn't I tell you? She's burnin'
this place up!

Rudy moves as if to stand up...but he settles for tapping his
feet to the beat, a la Theda.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

When "The Glass Slipper Rag" ends, strong applause breaks
out...and Ruth, Narvin Ray, Josiah, Elmer, and Clint give
Cynthia a standing ovation.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Cynthia waves to the still-cheering crowd, then bows.

Martin jogs to center stage, where he meets Cynthia.

MARTIN
(into mike)
Let's hear it once more for Cynthia
Harmon!

The applause heats up...and Cynthia bows again.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Stay right there, Miss Harmon.

Cynthia nods.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
(into mike)
Let's bring all the other acts back
out here!

Under audience cheers, Desdemona, Emil, Johnny, Mario, Sadie,
and Violetta come back out to flank Cynthia and Martin.

Booker, Carrie, Daisy, Eadwina, Frederick, Lincoln, and
Washington find their way back onto the stage and round out
the contestant group around Martin.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
(into mike)
If you're just tuning into WCX,
you've just missed a tremendous
Halloween talent show here at the
Cinderella Theater!

The emcee and the contestants soak up the crowd applause.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
To entice more performers to enter
the contest, two new prizes have
been added...so that ten dollars
will no longer be the grand prize.

Contestants eyeball each other...audience members gasp.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Ten dollars is now the third
prize...along with a weekend
engagement here at the Cinderella.

Cynthia and her three cousins look shocked.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Our third-place winner
tonight...Carrie, Daisy, and
Eadwina...the Woodbury Sisters!

While the customers applaud, Eadwina, Carrie, and Daisy stroll toward Martin...who hands Carrie an envelope that houses the third-place money.

CARRIE
(accepting the loot)
Thank you so much, Mr. Salsness.

DAISY
Pleasure to be here.

Daisy, Carrie, and a glum Eadwina shake hands with Martin. As the crowd cheers and the Sisters Woodbury return to their old spot onstage...

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

...Theda, Rudy, Puni, Louis, and Clara clap their hands raw. And Seth and Jerome nod in enthusiasm...while they continue to hold an angry Johnanne down.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Cynthia and a few other performers congratulate Eadwina, Daisy, and Carrie.

MARTIN
Our second-place act will receive twenty dollars...and a five-night engagement here at the Cinderella Theater.

The remaining seven acts look at each other.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Let's congratulate our second-place winner...Booker, Frederick, Lincoln, and Washington...the Tucker Brothers!

Mouths fly open all over the place as applause breaks out again...and Washington, Lincoln, Frederick, and Booker jog toward Martin, who gives Booker an envelope with the second-place money.

BOOKER
(accepts the dough)
WOW! Thanks!

FREDERICK
Mr. Salsness, we didn't expect to be here...

LINCOLN
But we're glad to be here tonight.

WASHINGTON
Thank you for this chance!

The Brothers Tucker shake hands with Martin (and set off gasps from the nonetheless-applauding crowd).

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

Narvin Ray and his CCD cohorts don't gasp.

He and his costumed buddies cheer wildly.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Lincoln, Frederick, Washington, and Booker walk back to their previous spot onstage...and earn kudos from other performers.

MARTIN
(into mike)
And now, ladies and gentlemen...it's time to announce our grand-prize winner...the winner of thirty dollars and a full week here at the Cinderella.

The crowd buzzes...so do the other six acts.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
The winner of the Cinderella Theater's first annual Halloween talent show is...

Sadie and Violetta look at Mario...Mario eyeballs Cynthia...Cynthia turns to Emil, who looks at Johnny.

And Johnny waves at a shrugging Desdemona.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Cynthia Harmon!

The audience goes wild as Cynthia approaches Martin, who hands her an envelope that's got the thirty bucks in it.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Congratulations, Miss Harmon! Great job tonight!

CYNTHIA
(accepts the money)
Well, thank you, Mr. Salsness.
(MORE)

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

It's just a pleasure to be up here
and perform alongside these great
acts.

Daisy, Carrie, Johnny, and Booker nod.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Any one of the other acts could've
won tonight.

The stagehand enters with a silver cup. He hands it to
Martin, who presents the cup to Cynthia while the now-
awestruck stagehand backs his way off the stage.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Seth nods in agreement with Cynthia, who accepts the cup from
the emcee.

Jerome and his male agents watch in pride...but Johnanne
looks fit to be tied.

MARTIN (O.S.)

Miss Harmon, this silver cup is
emblematic of your success in this
year's talent show.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)

Thank you...thank you so very much.

JOHNNANNE

Seth, Jerome, I need to fix my
stockings. Let me go!

Jerome and Seth eyeball each other.

JEROME

All right, Johnanne. Go ahead.

While Martin and Cynthia AD LIB, Johnanne wrestles herself
away from Seth and Jerome, stops in the middle of the aisle,
and...pulls a snubnose from her stocking.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Mario (somehow) watches Johnanne aim her snubnose at the
Cinderella stage.

MARIO

LOOK OUT!!

Johnanne fires at Cynthia...fifteen people scurry.

She continues to fire at (and miss) her niece.

Washington, Sadie, Eadwina, Daisy, Carrie, and Booker barely make it to safety behind the three upright pianos.

Johanne empties her gun...but not before she kills Johnny...and Emil...and Martin.

Cynthia, Desdemona, Frederick, Lincoln, Mario, and Violetta sprint toward the wings.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

When they realize Johanne means business, Seth and Jerome grab her by the arms.

SETH
DROP THE GUN!

Johanne throws her snubnose down.

Customers sprint out of the theater...Clyde and Abe assist Jerome and Seth.

JEROME
(to Abe and Clyde)
Grab her legs!

The stagehand and AN USHER hurry toward the front row as Abe and Clyde grasp the still-angry Johanne's legs. Jerome and Seth continue to hold Cynthia's aunt by the arms.

STAGEHAND
What the hell happened?

USHER
Let's go to the office and find out.

The stagehand picks up Johanne's snubnose and the usher grabs the killer's purse from off the floor.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER OFFICE - NIGHT

Johanne and Seth sit in the only two chairs in this cluttered, almost-cozy space.

Jerome, theater manager HERSCHEL GLOVER (40s), and PHILLIP SPINNER (30s; a police officer) hover over them.

HERSCHEL

(to Johnanne)

You know, we have several other witnesses that saw you shoot down those three performers...I mean two performers and an emcee!

JOHNNANNE

And I wanted to bump off the winner...my stuck-up niece!

(smirking)

Speaking of winners...will I get out in time to see Amy Lowell when she comes to Orchestra Hall next January?

Jerome shakes his head "no."

PHILLIP

She'll have to visit you...at the state penitentiary.

JEROME

And it's all because I fell for the "I need to fix my stockings" trick.

SETH

Well, I did, too, Jerome!

HERSCHEL

This theater's been in business for nine months now...and this had to happen!

Four sets of eyes stare at Johnanne.

HERSCHEL (CONT'D)

Instead of great entertainment, our theater's gonna be known for three people dead...and dead air on WCX!

PHILLIP

Four, Mr. Glover.

Phillip grabs a towel from the desk. He opens the towel and reveals...Johnanne's switchblade.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

Mrs. Woodbury, the stagehand on duty tonight found this switchblade in the orchestra pit.

(shows knife to Johnanne)

(MORE)

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

This is the knife that was found in James Delahanty's chest.

Herschel smacks his own forehead.

JEROME

The orchestra leader.

PHILLIP

(zeroes in on Johnanne)
Know anything about this knife?

JOHNNANNE

Officer Phillip...I was just trying out for the 1928 Olympics.

Nobody cracks a smile...except Johnanne.

Jerome and Phillip trade places as the latter folds the knife back inside the towel.

JEROME

You know what, Johnanne Felton Woodbury? Your blind jealousy brought you here!

Johnanne rises up to slap Jerome...but points to him instead.

JOHNNANNE

DON'T EVER USE THE NAME "FELTON" AGAIN!

SETH

Johnanne, your husband's been dead for two years. What's wrong with using your maiden name?

JOHNNANNE

(sits back down)
It was my sister's maiden name, too!

Seth looks incredulous.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

A few contestants shed tears in an otherwise quiet space.

Markings outline the spots where Martin, Johnny, and Emil passed away.

Mario, Violetta, Cynthia, Desdemona, Frederick, and Lincoln emerge from the wings to join (and embrace) their fellow surviving hopefuls.

CYNTHIA
 (to her cousins)
 I'm glad you're all right.

CARRIE
 Cynthia...I'm so glad you're all
 right, too.

DAISY
 Me, too.

EADWINA
 (nodding)
 Congratulations on your win.

The stagehand returns to the platform...and watches Carrie,
 Cynthia, Daisy, and Eadwina form a group hug.

STAGEHAND
 Contestants...it's now safe for you
 to leave.

Some performers breathe relief.

STAGEHAND (CONT'D)
 The suspect is no longer in the
 building.

MARIO
 Good.

Daisy, Cynthia, Carrie, and Eadwina break their embrace.
 Daisy and Carrie slowly nod.

EADWINA
 (shakes Cynthia's hand)
 I know you've got some celebrating
 to do with your friends.

CYNTHIA
 Well...uh...

DAISY
 We'll be all right.

CYNTHIA
 Eadwina...you and Daisy and Carrie
 have celebrating to do, too.

Cynthia's three cousins eyeball each other.

CARRIE
 Maybe we do...

DAISY
But it doesn't involve hooch.

The foursome break out in laughter.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOBBY - NIGHT

Clint, Elmer, Josiah, Narvin Ray, and Ruth wait near the concession stand.

RUTH
Josiah...just give Cynthia a few more minutes. She'll be here.

JOSIAH
Okay, Ruth.

CLINT
Narvin, you really cleaned up tonight...especially with those Tucker Brothers.

NARVIN RAY
Thanks.

Elmer and Narvin Ray shake hands.

NARVIN RAY (CONT'D)
Yeah...that business class where we were supposed to find some people and mentor them really paid off.

Abe and Clyde enter the lobby...and find the quintet.

ELMER
That Desdemona Smith would be a great solo performer.

ABE
(eyeballing Elmer)
You got that right!

ELMER
Are you sure she's only thirteen?

CLYDE
Narvin Ray McKinley...you're just the young man we wanna see.

Narvin Ray's jaw drops.

CLYDE (CONT'D)
We've now got an opening at the
Johnson Agency.

NARVIN RAY
Well, Mr. Spears...I wasn't looking
to be a janitor, but if--

CLYDE
No, no, no, no, no!

ABE
(pointing to Narvin Ray)
Cynthia told me and Clyde you're
gonna graduate from CCD this June.

Five young sets of eyes light up.

ABE (CONT'D)
We'd like you to join the Johnson
Agency after you come out of CCD.

CLYDE
As an agent, Narvin Ray! An agent!

Narvin Ray looks stunned.

ABE
You'd be making history.

Josiah, Ruth, Clint, and Elmer AD LIB a still-shocked Narvin
Ray into an answer.

NARVIN RAY
Sign me up!

Cheers break out...just as Cynthia arrives in the lobby.

JOSIAH
Cynthia, meet the Johnson Agency's
newest agent...Narvin Ray McKinley!

CYNTHIA
Congratulations!

The cheers grow in intensity.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
(shakes Narvin Ray's hand)
As long as you don't carry a
switchblade like Aunt Johanne,
you'll be all right!

NARVIN RAY
I can't even stand switchblades!

The cheers turn into laughs.

EXT. HARRISON STREET PUB - NIGHT

SOME CUSTOMERS wait outside for the front door to open.

INT. HARRISON STREET PUB BARROOM - NIGHT

THIS PLACE IS PACKED!

At the tables, folks (some in Halloween outfits) drink Cokes or near beer or fake whiskey.

Behind the bar, Winky washes glasses while he gabs with Clint, Cynthia, Elmer, Josiah, Narvin Ray, and Ruth...all on the other side of the bar, where they nurse Cokes.

NARVIN RAY
Ruth, that was really clever of you
and the guys to sneak up to the
balcony in costumes.

RUTH
(beaming)
Well, I figured: "If we're gonna
see Cynthia and her cousins
perform, there's no need to break
up the gang."

Those who flank Ruth pat her on the back.

WINKY
Cynthia, show 'em your silver cup!

Cynthia holds up her silver cup for all to see.

Result: Cheers...applause.

CLINT
(to Cynthia)
You did it...you beat the odds. You
lived to tell about being a
contestant in the Cinderella
Theater talent show.

RUTH
(pointing to Cynthia)
What's more, you won the
thing...hands down!

Johanne's niece is all smiles.

ELMER

You know me...I'll drink to that!

Elmer downs his cola, then turns to Winky.

ELMER (CONT'D)

Uh...can I get a double, please?

WINKY

You sure can!

Winky pulls out a second glass; he fills that and Elmer's first glass with Coke.

ELMER

Thanks again!

Elmer grabs both glasses and sips from each.

JOSIAH

Cynthia...have you thought about what you're gonna do with the money you've just won?

Six expectant sets of eyes gaze at Cynthia.

CYNTHIA

I don't really know...I've never really thought about that.

(takes a sip)

Maybe make a down payment on a set of drums...maybe do something to help my cousins...

Those flanking Cynthia and Josiah lean closer.

INT. CARRIE'S/DAISY'S/EADWINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Daisy lifts barbells as Eadwina and Carrie sit on the bottom bunk bed.

Carrie studies sheet music...Eadwina buries her head in her own hands and tries to lean on the bed.

Daisy sets her barbells down...

DAISY

Winna, are you gonna be okay?

...and kneels next to her little sister.

DAISY (CONT'D)

You look like you fell off a can of Clabber Girl baking powder...and dropped the plate of biscuits, to boot.

Eadwina sits up openmouthed, wipes a tear from her eye, and looks at Daisy.

EADWINA

The three of us went to the theater with a mother...and now, we're back home without a mother.

CARRIE

We had a mother...until Pa died.

EXT. DETROIT POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

A few cars tool down Beaubien Street in front of this already-iconic seven-story structure.

INT. DETROIT POLICE HEADQUARTERS INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Phillip and DPD detective GROVER STREET (30s) hover over a seated Johnanne in this smallish space.

GROVER

Miss Felton--

Johnanne growls.

GROVER (CONT'D)

Mrs. Woodbury...we know you killed four people, none of them the one you wanted to kill.

JOHNNANNE

Yep.

PHILLIP

Detective Street wants to know why.

Grover nods at Phillip.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

And so do I...straight.

JOHNNANNE

Well, it all started back home in Overland Park, Kansas...

PHILLIP

Grover...maybe you better sit down
for this.

GROVER

Uh...okay.

LATER

Grover's, Johnanne's, and Phillip's seats barely fit inside
this office.

JOHNANNE

I hated my sister Eleanor. She'd
always had it better than me.

Grover takes notes while Phillip sips from a coffee cup.

GROVER

Did you try to kill her?

JOHNANNE

Lots of times! Matter of fact, she
had a better name than me.

PHILLIP

Huh?

JOHNANNE

After Eleanor came along, my ma and
pa wanted a son. They were gonna
name him John...but instead of
calling me Jane, they gave me this
name I'm stuck with.

GROVER

I still think your name is
beautiful.

Phillip glowers at Grover.

JOHNANNE

Anyway, we both left the family
farm on the outskirts of Overland
Park in 1901...and we both caught a
train right here to Detroit. And we
fought on the train.

GROVER

Uh huh.

JOHNNANNE

I was looking for a husband...she was looking for a job in the automobile industry...and had the nerve to tell me: "Johanne, I'll look for a husband later!"

Phillip watches Grover slide into a stupor.

PHILLIP

Stay awake!

GROVER

Phil, I'm trying!

Grover's notes are a mess!

JOHNNANNE

Anyway, I had to kill Cynthia because she disobeyed me. I told her not to go to the Cinderella Theater tonight.

GROVER

(to Phillip)

You did tell me she said that.

JOHNNANNE

And I still needed to make Cynthia pay for laying some horsefeathers on my oldest daughter Carrie when they both were little.

Phillip and Grover eyeball each other in victory.

INT. WOODBURYS' PARLOR - NIGHT

Carrie reads today's "Detroit Free Press" while in Johanne's favorite chair, Daisy sits at the piano and lifts dumbbells, and a now-happy Eadwina studies sheet music from the sofa.

Three glasses of lemonade rest on the coffee table.

CARRIE

What do you think we oughta do with the ten bucks we won tonight?

EADWINA

(puts music on table)

How many cigars will ten bucks buy?

DAISY
Eadwina, Carrie means we oughta buy
something all three of us can
really use.

The Woodbury Sisters (Carrie with her paper in tow and Daisy
down to one dumbbell) grab their lemonade glasses and sip.

CARRIE
Anyway, I saw this ad in the "Free
Press" where S.S. Kresge's got
harmonicas on sale.

DAISY
Which one?

CARRIE
I assume--

The front door opens...and Cynthia walks through.
Her three cousins cheer themselves hoarse.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
Cynthia...what do you think we
should do?

CYNTHIA
Well, there's one thing I should
do...

DAISY
Have a seat, Cynthia. I'll grab you
a glass of lemonade.

EADWINA
(gesturing to Cynthia)
Any seat you like.

While Daisy enters the kitchen to pour a glass of lemonade,
Cynthia goes to the sofa.

CYNTHIA
(sitting down)
Carrie, while I was on my way home,
I got to thinking about the time we
were both ten...and each of us sang
a song and played it on the piano
at Ma's and Pa's house.

Carrie's nod is ever-so-slow.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
 And I made fun of you because you
 fluffed a few notes.

CARRIE
 Cynthia...

CYNTHIA
 Ma gave me a good talking-to about
 that...even if Aunt Johnanne went
 to war with Ma about that.

Daisy returns with the glass of lemonade. She hands the glass
 to Cynthia...who places it on the coffee table.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
 Thanks, Daisy.

DAISY
 You're welcome.

CYNTHIA
 (standing up)
 Carrie...I humbly apologize for
 what I put you through.

Carrie and Cynthia saunter toward each other.

CARRIE
 Cynthia, you've already
 apologized...and I still forgive
 you.

Cynthia and Carrie engage in the warmest of hugs.

CYNTHIA
 I don't want anything to come
 between us...all four of us.

Eadwina and Daisy turn the embrace into a group hug.

EADWINA
 I've got an idea for another
 song...

EXT. WOODBURYS' HOUSE - DAY

TWO CHILDREN ride bikes on this nice first November Monday.

INT. WOODBURYS' PARLOR - DAY

Carrie (with her banjo), Cynthia (at the piano), Daisy (holding a two-foot harmonica), and Eadwina (trombone in tow) tune up.

Cynthia's cousins use music stands that house a new composition each.

CYNTHIA

Daisy, I'm glad you're bringing in a mouth harp...especially that two-footer.

DAISY

Thanks. We can always use some extra bottom.

EADWINA

And Cynthia, I'm glad that you insisted all four of us contribute lyrics.

CARRIE

Well, I'm ready to get started on "Nothing Can Tear Us Apart."

Cynthia gives a downbeat before she and Daisy play a bluesy eight-bar intro. A four-bar vamp brings Carrie and Eadwina in with their instruments.

CYNTHIA

(during the vamp)

Eadwina, why don't you sing the first verse?

Eadwina nods at Cynthia.

EADWINA

We fought so hard to get together, / Share our love in any kinda weather. / We--

A KNOCK on the front door ends the foursome's jam session.

CARRIE

(sets her banjo down)

I've got it.

Eadwina, Cynthia, and Daisy abandon their instruments and follow Carrie to the front door.

Carrie opens the door...and reveals CECILIA WILLOUGHBY (40s).

CARRIE (CONT'D)
Come in. What can we do for you?

CECILIA
I'm Mrs. Cecilia Willoughby...from
the state welfare department.

Cynthia gestures Cecilia inside.

DAISY
It's okay, Mrs. Willoughby. Have a
seat.

As Cecilia takes a seat at the sofa, Daisy, Carrie, and
Cynthia slowly nod before they find places to sit.

And Eadwina looks mortified.

DAISY (CONT'D)
Eadwina...make yourself
comfortable.

EADWINA
I can't! She's here to split up the
act!

Four young mouths fly open. Eadwina covers her own mouth.

CYNTHIA
(to Cecilia)
You must've listened to the talent
show they held at the Cinderella
Theater last Friday night.

CECILIA
I did...right down to the dead air
over WCX.

Eadwina sits down at last...at the piano.

CECILIA (CONT'D)
The point is: I came here to inform
you that your maternal grandparents
from Overland Park, Kansas, have
been informed that your mother has
been charged with the murder of
four people at the Cinderella.

CYNTHIA
Aunt Johanne in my case.

CECILIA
And right now, she's in the Wayne
County Jail awaiting trial.

EADWINA
That's for sure.

CECILIA
And your maternal grandparents have
discussed gaining custody of Daisy
and Eadwina.

Dead silence takes over.

CECILIA (CONT'D)
Actually...all four of you.

Carrie shakes her head "no."

CECILIA (CONT'D)
A father figure and a mother
figure...I mean a grandfather
figure and a grandmother figure.

CARRIE
Mrs. Willoughby...would it help to
say that this morning, the
Cinderella Theater offered me a job
as one of its organists? And that I
start tonight?

CYNTHIA
And that I've got one year left to
go as a student at the College of
the City of Detroit?

DAISY
(staring at Cecilia)
You see, Cynthia's a fantastic
student at CCD...and she's already
launched her own vaudeville career.

CARRIE
Eadwina, Daisy, and I have gotten
our own separate vaudeville career
off the ground. We're a trio.

Cecilia nods slowly...Eadwina looks mortified.

DAISY
Anyway...Mrs. Willoughby, I turned
seventeen on September fifteenth.

CARRIE
 Would it help if I mentioned that
 I'll be twenty one on January
 first, 1925?

Carrie studies Cecilia's smirk.

EADWINA
 It's the truth, Mrs. Willoughby!

CYNTHIA
 I'll also turn twenty one next
 year...on April eleventh.

CECILIA
 Carrie...are you certain you can
 handle the responsibilities
 expected from the head of a
 household?

Daisy, Eadwina, and Cynthia point to Carrie while all four
 eyeball Cecilia.

DAISY
 Carrie's proven more responsible
 than Ma, that's for sure.

CARRIE
 For two years, I was a receptionist
 at the Johnson Agency...and I
 learned to put my earnings in a
 savings account.

CYNTHIA
 Aunt Johnanne took Carrie's first
 paycheck and went to Foley's on
 Woodward and spent it on
 cigars...by the box.

CECILIA
 Jumping frogs!

CARRIE
 Well, anyway...Ma never got hold of
 my paychecks again.

Eadwina jumps off the piano bench.

EADWINA
 Mrs. Willoughby...do you realize
 what it'd mean if the four of us
 had to move to Kansas?

CECILIA
A more stable situation.

EADWINA
I'd have to switch from cigars to
pipes!

Cecilia's mouth hangs open...Eadwina covers her own.

CYNTHIA
Both Grandpa Felton and Grandma
Felton smoke pipes.

Cecilia rests her chin on her fists.

EXT. CINDERELLA THEATER - NIGHT

A line of PEOPLE forms in front of the theater.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

CUSTOMERS occupy three out of every four seats.

The crowd enjoys A SILENT FILM ("THE FAMILY SECRET")...and
this time, Carrie (at the organ; it's off to the side
onstage) provides the music.

The remaining members of the small orchestra from the talent
show fidget from the pit as they (try to) watch the movie.

Theda, Rudy, Puni, Louis, and Clara don't fidget...and
neither does Clara's husband SHERMAN SCHOOLMASTER (50s).

CLARA
Sherman, you're in for a
treat...wait 'til the organist's
two sisters come out to perform
alongside her.

SHERMAN
I hope you're right, Clara, dear.

PUNI
(to Sherman)
Take it from me: Clara's right.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

Desdemona and parents MOSES and MIRIAM SMITH (both 40s) watch
the movie...and Carrie.

MOSES

Desdemona...you sure you really
wanna be an organ player?

DESDEMONA

I sure am sure, Daddy.

Sadie and Violetta (in men's suits, hats, and fake beards)
slide into the two empty seats next to the Smiths.

MIRIAM

Are you really sure?

DESDEMONA

Mama, I've got my mind made up.

Desdemona turns to Violetta and Sadie.

DESDEMONA (CONT'D)

Oh, hi! I remember you two from the
talent show!

The two secretaries rip the bogus beards from their faces.

SADIE

(shakes Desdemona's hand)
Glad to see you again...glad you
weren't fooled by our fake beards.

VIOLETTA

It was the only way Sadie and I
could come up here and sit
alongside you.

Violetta shakes Desdemona's hand as Miriam looks amused.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Now the movie ENDS...the audience claps its approval...the
screen disappears.

The same three upright pianos from the talent show stand on
the stage (as does an upright from the 1920-24 period).

And the hammers on all pianos stand exposed.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Carrie sprints from the Mighty Wurlitzer to the 1920s piano
and Daisy emerges from backstage and sits at the 1890s piano.

Eadwina runs from backstage to sit at the 1900s upright.

The Woodbury Sisters eyeball each other before they bang out a fast-paced "Yes! We Have No Bananas."

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Clara's ecstatic...Sherman looks stunned.

CLARA

This is what you missed on
Halloween.

SHERMAN

Why in the world did I have to
become a fireman?

In the front row: Abe, Cecilia, Clint, Clyde, Cynthia, Elmer, Herschel, Jerome, Josiah, Ruth, Seth, and...Narvin Ray.

All twelve look gleeful.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Eadwina (on trombone), Daisy (at the 1910s piano), and Carrie (who strums her banjo) wrap up a rollicking version of "Say It with Music."

The small orchestra backs up the Woodbury Sisters. And this time, the conductor is...none other than...PEGGY-JEAN "BABY PEGGY" MONTGOMERY (6)!

Somehow, all the musicians make it work...

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

...and the audience roars its approval.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

As the applause dies, Carrie moves to a center mike.

CARRIE

(into mike)

Thank you so very much, ladies and
gentlemen!

Eadwina and Daisy stroll to center stage to flank Carrie.

DAISY

(into mike)

And now...we'd like to introduce
tonight's guest conductor...star of
screen...here to promote the
picture you just saw...

EADWINA
 (into mike)
 Baby Peggy!

The customers register shock that morphs into total approval.

EADWINA (CONT'D)
 C'mon up and take a bow, Peggy!

When Baby Peggy saunters onto the stage to bow alongside the Sisters Woodbury, the applause heats up.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Jerome, Narvin Ray, Clyde, and Abe congratulate Seth.

JEROME
 You did it!

SETH
 Well...it was a month later than
 promised...

ABE
 But you did it, you ol' son of a
 gun!

A smiling Seth nods.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Eadwina sits at the 1890s upright, Daisy takes to the 1900s piano, and Carrie addresses the crowd from the center mike.

CARRIE
 Daisy, Eadwina, and I wouldn't be
 up here tonight if it weren't for
 this next performer we'd like to
 bring up here tonight.

Carrie catches the hopeful look of some front-row occupants.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
 Ladies and gentlemen, it's our
 pleasure to introduce...our
 cousin...Cynthia Harmon!

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Applause breaks out again while a shocked Cynthia heads for the Cinderella stage.

JOSIAH
Go get 'em, Cynthia!

The two lovers wave at one another.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Cynthia meets Carrie at the center mike...both hug.

CARRIE
Cynthia...thank you so very much.

CYNTHIA
Thank you, Carrie Jeanne!

CARRIE
I know all four of us are ready to
really kick some splinters...as
long as you call the tune.

Daisy and Eadwina watch Carrie and Cynthia banter.

CYNTHIA
Uh...let's see...how about "That
Old Gang of Mine?"

CARRIE
That's a plan!

Arm in arm, the two twenty-year-olds stroll to the two unoccupied pianos. Carrie gestures Cynthia to a seat at the 1910s upright, then seats herself at the 1920s upright.

The four cousins' "That Old Gang of Mine" opens with a treacly chorus...that leads to a fast-paced first verse.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Clara, Louis, and Sherman snap their fingers to the beat. Theda claps to the cadence...Puni bobs her head to the music...and Rudy dances in his seat.

RUDY
Sorry...I just can't help it.

THEDA
It's okay, Rudy.

LOUIS
That does it!

And Louis dances in his own seat!

EXT. WAYNE COUNTY JAIL - NIGHT

A formidable-looking granite building downtown.

INT. WAYNE COUNTY JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Johanne shares a cell with BRUNHILDE STEINER (30s), a mountain of a woman. Both sit on a bed.

JOHANNANNE

So...Brunhilde...you're here on account of bootlegging.

BRUNHILDE

And I killed someone. With my bare hands.

Johanne's mouth drops open.

BRUNHILDE (CONT'D)

He wanted all the hooch to himself. I don't work that way.

(points to Johanne)

Now you gotta tell me why you're here.

JOHANNANNE

(nods with a grin)

I killed four people at the Cinderella Theater on Halloween.

Brunhilde rises up from the bed.

JOHANNANNE (CONT'D)

I needed to pick off my niece...but she's too damn slippery.

Johanne catches Brunhilde's incredulous look.

JOHANNANNE (CONT'D)

I told her not to go to the theater.

Now Brunhilde chases Johanne around the cell.

JOHANNANNE (CONT'D)

I told Cynthia she wasn't gonna live to tell about entering that talent show.

BRUNHILDE

You'd kill your own flesh and blood over a talent show?

Brunhilde swings for Johnanne's head...only to miss.

Johnanne goes after Brunhilde's head...and misses.

Brunhilde pins the former theatrical agent to the wall.

BRUNHILDE (CONT'D)
 You selfish little...I heard
 Cynthia on the radio on Halloween.
 (strengthens her grip)
 She's got the goods!

Johnanne fights Brunhilde's grip and escapes from it...but not for long.

Brunhilde pins Johnanne to the wall again.

BRUNHILDE (CONT'D)
 AND DON'T YOU FORGET IT!

JOHANNNE
 GET...OFF...ME!

But Brunhilde shakes her head "no."

EXT. CINDERELLA THEATER - NIGHT

Snow marches through Detroit on this mid-December Sunday.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOBBY - NIGHT

Cynthia (back in her tuxedo) and Josiah hold hands not far from the concession stand as CUSTOMERS (bundled up for winter) make their way into the theater.

She clutches her banjo case with her free hand.

JOSIAH
 Cynthia...I hope you don't end up
 dropping out of CCD and...

CYNTHIA
 I hear what you mean, Josiah. And I
 don't know how Eadwina would take
 it...she wouldn't take it if she
 and Daisy and Carrie and I couldn't
 perform together.

Josiah nods with a smile.

JOSIAH

Yeah. Last time we were here, you four cousins had a...you were the berries!

CYNTHIA

And you're the berries, too...and whatever happens to me and my cousins, it's no good if you're not in it with us.

Cynthia puts her banjo case between her legs...then she and Josiah hug and kiss.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

The stage is set up the same way as during the Woodbury Sisters' stand here...except the harpsichord is back.

In fact, Cynthia plays that harpsichord as she turns "You Tell Her- I Stutter" (or a similar novelty) into a rollicking, freewheeling instrumental.

That small orchestra gives Cynthia musical support from the pit...with Clint as tonight's guest conductor.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Seth, Herschel, Jerome, Abe, Narvin Ray, Ruth, Elmer, Clyde, Josiah, and Cecilia watch from the front row.

This time, Violetta, Sadie, Desdemona, Miriam, Moses, Carrie, Daisy, and Eadwina (the last three in tuxedos!) join them.

Behind the eighteen of them, Louis, Mario, Rudy, Theda, Puni, Clara, Sherman, and OTHER PEOPLE fill up half the remaining seats. (And everybody enjoys the show!)

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Cynthia abandons the harpsichord to pick up her banjo...to pluck out the next verse and the ensuing chorus.

She pounds a chorus on the 1910s upright before taking to the theater's Mighty Wurlitzer for a final chorus or two.

Result: Strong, strong applause.

LATER

The orchestra jams in the background as Cynthia becomes a tap dancer...who matches steps with Booker, Frederick, Lincoln, and Washington.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

Mario turns to Louis.

MARIO

That does it...I'm gonna take up
tap dancing. Or something.

LOUIS

I want to join you.

Around them, the lower level breaks into pandemonium.

INT. CINDERELLA THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Cynthia stands front and center.

CYNTHIA

(into mike)

Let's hear it for the Tucker
Brothers! Weren't they great?

She eyeballs all those keyboard instruments behind her as
applause for the Tuckers breaks out.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Let's see: A Mighty
Wurlitzer...four pianos...a
harpsichord.

(walks around stage)

I've got an idea: My cousins...the
Woodbury Sisters...are here. Let's
bring 'em up!

Applause fires up as Daisy, Eadwina, and Carrie strut to the
Cinderella platform and gather around Cynthia.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Last time they were here, they tore
this place up!

The crowd's kudos heat up.

EADWINA

(into mike)

No reason for the four of us to hog
all the fun.

A grinning Cynthia nods.

CARRIE

Winna's right about that.
Desdemona...Sadie...Violetta...come
on up!

Under strong cheering, Violetta, Desdemona, and Sadie come onstage to join their fellow keyboard players.

But Daisy looks worried.

DAISY

Six keyboards for seven keyboard
players...
(heads offstage)
Be right back.

LATER

The stagehand and Daisy muscle a reed organ onto the stage.

When the amazed stagehand exits, Daisy takes a seat at the reed organ, Violetta goes to the harpsichord, Eadwina sits at the 1920s piano, and Sadie takes to the 1910s piano.

It's Carrie at the 1900s upright, Cynthia at the 1890s piano, and...Desdemona at the theater pipe organ.

CYNTHIA

Who'd like to call the tune?

Dead silence...for a few seconds.

DESDEMONA

Hey, everybody! Let's do "Twelfth
Street Rag!"

General agreement reigns onstage.

Desdemona receives a cue from her fellow musicians to start the tune; after her intro, all seven performers take "Twelfth Street Rag" for a rollicking ride.

The front-row occupants go wild!

EXT. WOODBURYS' HOUSE - DAY

Snow cover blankets the Motor City.

INT. WOODBURYS' KITCHEN - DAY

Cynthia, Daisy, Carrie, and Eadwina sit at the breakfast table, where they gobble and gab.

CYNTHIA
Great job last night, everybody!

DAISY
Well, you, too!

The four cousins click their milk glasses.

EADWINA
Cynthia...I want you to know
that...I'm sorry I ever failed you.
(pushes plate aside)
I'm sorry I ever thought of you as
just the help and not our cousin.

CYNTHIA
You're very much forgiven, Eadwina.
(taking a bite)
And I want all three of you to know
that I'm very proud of you, and--

A KNOCK on the front door interrupts Cynthia's message.

EADWINA
(rising from table)
I've got it!

ANOTHER KNOCK leads to A STRONGER KNOCK.

INT. WOODBURYS' PARLOR - DAY

Eadwina opens the door, and...Johanne (in a winter coat over her prison garb) barges in.

Carrie, Cynthia, and Daisy jog into the parlor.

JOHMANNE
(to her daughters)
GET UPSTAIRS!

EADWINA
NO!

JOHMANNE
I SAID FOR YOU TO--

CARRIE
We're not going upstairs!

JOHMANNE
I'm your mother! And you're gonna
do what I say!

Johanne runs to the closet to grab her rifle.

She aims at Cynthia...but the rifle's empty...so Johanne comes at Cynthia and swings the rifle at her.

Cynthia ducks...then grabs Johanne's legs and brings her down while Daisy, Eadwina, and Carrie converge upon Johanne.

CYNTHIA
Somebody grab the rifle!

Daisy snatches the weapon from Johanne and returns it to the closet while Carrie and Eadwina hold Johanne's arms down.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
Aunt Johanne, all of us need to
get something straight! Right now!

Cynthia continues to hold Johanne's legs down; Daisy scurries to join her in pinning Johanne down.

JOHANNNE
LET...ME...GO!

Johanne strains to fight the quadruple hold...but her daughters and niece continue to shackle her.

DAISY
We spent too many years watching
you and Aunt Eleanor constantly
fight and constantly bicker.

EADWINA
And we saw how it drove Pa away
from you!

CARRIE
And Ma, no matter how hard you try,
you're not gonna turn Cynthia,
Daisy, Eadwina, and me against each
other!

CYNTHIA
Another thing, Aunt Johanne: I've
already apologized many times to
Carrie for making fun of her.

POLICE SIRENS blare outside the house.

CARRIE
And I've already forgiven her!

EADWINA

And that's the sober truth!

The five females HEAR several knocks on the front door.

CARRIE

I've got the door, Winna.

Eadwina grabs both of Johnanne's arms as Carrie gets the door. On the other side: TWO POLICE OFFICERS.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Come on in, Officers. We're so glad to see you.

OFFICER #1

An all-points bulletin went out when the warden at the Wayne County Jail found your mother had escaped.

OFFICER #2

Someone tipped us off that Miss Felton...Mrs. Woodbury...might want to come back here.

JOHNNANNE

DAMN IT...LET...ME...

Cynthia and her cousins release Johnanne, who tries to swing at them...but the two officers handcuff the former agent.

EXT. OLD WAYNE COUNTY BUILDING - DAY

This ragtime-era structure features a pink granite base and a tower that makes the place look more like a capitol building.

INT. OLD WAYNE COUNTY BUILDING - COURTROOM - DAY

A heavily-shackled Johnanne sits across from parents ABIGAIL and HOMER FELTON (both 70s) in A PACKED COURTROOM.

Carrie, Cecilia, Cynthia, Daisy, and Eadwina sit between Johnanne and her folks.

No Harmon or Felton or Woodbury cracks a smile.

As he examines his papers, SALMON HALL (60s), the presiding judge, grits his teeth.

SALMON

Miss Felton...

Johnanne glowers.

SALMON (CONT'D)

Mrs. Woodbury...you had everything going for you...only to throw it all away. Your insane jealousy brought you to this point.

In the back of the room, Jerome nods.

SALMON (CONT'D)

A jury of your peers finds you not only guilty of the murders of James Delahanty, Emil Filipski, John Ostermueller, and Martin Salsness...but also of escaping from the Wayne County Jail.

Homer and Abigail shake their heads sideways.

SALMON (CONT'D)

Four consecutive life sentences...plus seven more years.

HOMER

Johanne, how could you do this?

Johanne eyes Homer, exhales, and stares down at the floor.

SALMON

Plus: Effective Thursday, January first, 1925, Carrie Woodbury becomes the legal guardian of Cynthia Harmon, Daisy Woodbury, and Eadwina Woodbury.

Cheers ring out...until Salmon gavels the crowd silent.

SALMON (CONT'D)

I saw Cynthia and the Woodburys perform...they're the berries.

The cheering kicks back in...and Cecilia and Abigail approach the four cousins.

GUARDS lead a glum Johanne out of the courtroom while she looks back at Cynthia, her cousins, and her lover...along with Abigail, Cecilia, and a Homer who rises to join them.

Josiah joins the throng, too. He and Cynthia hug.

JOSIAH

Congratulations on a new beginning.

CYNTHIA
Thanks, Josiah.

It's kissing time for the two lovers.

ABIGAIL
Good luck, you four.

CECILIA
Now that you're a family, what will
the four of you do to celebrate?

EADWINA
Well...we're gonna take turns
cooking...and cleaning...and...

FREEZE FRAME as Eadwina continues to explain.

FADE OUT.

THE END