

RING OF SLEAZE

by  
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## SETTING

The action takes place in a basement. In the background are boxes, crates, bags, stuff, much of it draped in sheets. There are a few boxes in the foreground. In one corner of the room is a living area. The furniture consists of a cot, folding bed, or boxes used as a bed; a small chest of drawers or boxes used as such; the chest also serving as a night stand and writing table, almost impossible to work on. A crate serves as a kitchen cupboard and supports a single burner hotplate. A footlocker at the foot of the bed is covered in books and rumpled clothing. A full-length mirror stands in the shadows, draped in a sheet. There are a toilet and sink, out of sight, behind the background clutter. Opposite the living area, there rises from the floor, a long, railed, meandering staircase, taking far longer than it needs to reach a door centered above the stage. The entire set has the appearance of a huge cone, its apex somewhere beyond the theater ceiling.

CAST, in order of appearance:

FRANCO MUX

MENDAL POMMIT

BLAINE SELKIRK

JONQUIN CLAIBORNE

SABRA QUANTRILL

TIME: The present.

(At rise, FRANCO is on the bed, covered in a mixture of bedding, clothing, and notepaper. He sleeps soundly. From somewhere in the clutter of the room, we hear a wind-up alarm clock go off. FRANCO does not move. The clock runs down and stops. FRANCO slowly emerges from the bed, naked. He approaches the full-length mirror and removes the sheet. He studies himself in the mirror.)

FRANCO

I stand before this mirror everyday, contemplating just what this is, this man, this body. Of what is it capable?

More fascinating and frightening, of what is its most complex organ, the brain, capable? Every morning I look at myself and write down what I see. I look for changes and write down what has changed. Each day I write the same thing: No change. From day to day I can see no change.

(He stares intently at his reflection, then slaps himself in two different places.)

Damn it! More fleas. Can't get rid of the damn things!

(He slaps himself again and catches a flea.)

Ha! Caught the little bloodsucker. How does it feel to be trapped, little flea? How does it feel to be ground to mulch between my fingers?

(He peers at the flea between his fingers. Suddenly, the flea leaps to freedom and FRANCO smacks himself in the face trying to catch it again.)

Aaakkk! Die! All of you die!

(FRANCO hurls himself onto the bed, pounding and flailing at numerous fleas. Aroused by this activity, he moans and stops flailing. He rises and exits to the bathroom. After a moment, we hear a muffled cry. Suddenly, the door at the top of the stairs opens wide, emitting extremely bright light and a cacophony of sound; party noise. In the doorway stand MENDAL POMMIT and BLAINE SELKIRK, each in tuxedo and dark glasses. They step onto the landing.)

MENDAL

Franco! Franco Mux! Where are you!

BLAINE

Where the hell are you, Franco! The Guest of Honor has arrived and you are nowhere to be found!

(FRANCO hurries out of the bathroom and grabs a pair of boxer shorts, which he struggles to put on.)

MENDAL

We are waiting for you, damn your over-searching eyes. You're a pain in my throat, you cat-gaited boil on my--

BLAINE

Franco!! Come out where I can see you! Now!

(His boxers on, FRANCO slinks to a hiding place where he can see the intruders at the top of the stairs.)

MENDAL

He won't come out! People are waiting, have been waiting, will be waiting! You'd think he doesn't care! You'd think he doesn't give a damn!

FRANCO

Stop shouting!

BLAINE

What? What did he--

(Closes door, cutting off bright light and noise.)

What!

MENDAL

Stop shouting!

BLAINE

Ah.

BLAINE & MENDAL

Earplugs!

(Each removes the other's earplugs.)

BLAINE

Forgot I had them in. They're so comfortable, you know. I... I'm sorry, Franco. I'm... Did you see him?

MENDAL

Heard him.

BLAINE

Ah.

BLAINE & MENDAL

Glasses!

(Each removes the other's glasses.)

Ha!  
MENDAL

Yes!  
BLAINE

We see you, Franco!  
MENDAL

Come up and visit us, why don't you?  
BLAINE

Do you realize what time it is?  
FRANCO

Reckoning time.  
MENDAL

I just woke up, just got out of bed.  
FRANCO

This is no time for a nap. The reception started an hour ago.  
BLAINE

You missed the ceremony, but we won't let you miss the reception.  
MENDAL

I wasn't napping, I was sleeping.  
FRANCO

Sleeping.  
MENDAL

(BLAINE and MENDAL start down the stairs.)

You should be getting dressed.  
BLAINE

So you've gone through with it, have you?  
FRANCO

This shiny band of gold speaks for itself.  
BLAINE

Promise me you won't have any children.  
FRANCO

BLAINE

Oh, but I intend to have children. Lots of them. Little images of my wife and me running around the planet, breathing in all the oxygen and spitting it out again in noise and confusion. What do you think, Mendal?

MENDAL

Sounds like a plan.

FRANCO

I believe you would, just to spite me.

MENDAL

You think you are so much better than us, Franco. Where do you get your information?

FRANCO

I listen to the radio.

MENDAL

And you believe everything it tells you.

FRANCO

That depends on the source.

MENDAL

How do you know which source you can trust?

FRANCO

Anyone who feels the need to drink diet soda shouldn't be drinking soda in the first place.

MENDAL

Just what do you mean by that?

BLAINE

Don't think about it too long, Mendal.

FRANCO

Leave me alone.

(FRANCO finds an undershirt and puts it on.)

BLAINE

Franco, as your best friend--

FRANCO

Former best friend.

BLAINE

As your best friend in this world, I once again request your presence at my, at our reception. Sabra would like to meet you. Jonquin wants you to join us.

FRANCO

You all want me to join your crowd in its glittering, gluttonous, gathering of terror.

BLAINE

You promised you'd come.

FRANCO

I know. I didn't think you... I didn't think it would actually happen.

MENDAL

Well, it has. And I for one am going to drink all the God damned diet soda I want! Coming, Blaine?

BLAINE

In a minute. You go ahead.

MENDAL

(ascending stairs)

He's a waste of time. That's my opinion.

FRANCO

I look at my wrist, there is no watch. I see I have plenty of time.

MENDAL

Deviate.

FRANCO

Have a drink for me, Mendal.

MENDAL

I'll have what I damn well please, thank you.

BLAINE

Please get dressed, Franco.

FRANCO

For you, former friend, I shall don a pair of socks.

(FRANCO digs into the clutter for socks.  
At the landing, MENDAL puts on his  
sunglasses and ear plugs.

As he does so, the door opens to reveal JONQUIN, in evening gown and dark glasses.)

MENDAL

Well, look who's here!

(FRANCO scurries into the shadows. JONQUIN nods to MENDAL and enters, removing her plugs and shades.)

MENDAL (CONT'D)

You look lovely!

JONQUIN

Thank you, Mendal.

(MENDAL exits, closing the door behind him.)

BLAINE

Hello, Jonquin.

JONQUIN

Where is he?

BLAINE

Hiding.

JONQUIN

Franco! Please come out from there. You cannot hide from me.

FRANCO

Can you see me? Nooo. Hiding pretty damn well, I'd say.

JONQUIN

(descending stairs)

You cannot hide from me. Not for long.

FRANCO

Go away!

BLAINE

He seems reluctant to see you.

JONQUIN

He's afraid, don't you think?



BLAINE

To fear you is to love you, my dear lady.

JONQUIN

Thank you. Franco? Franco, may I speak with you, please?

FRANCO

No.

BLAINE

I'm trying to get him dressed.

JONQUIN

Is he naked?

BLAINE

Not quite.

JONQUIN

Oh.

FRANCO

Both of you go away.

JONQUIN

Should we leave, Master Blaine?

BLAINE

Not without him, Mistress Jonquin.

JONQUIN

There, Franco, you'll just have to come out. We're not leaving here without you.

(FRANCO emerges from the shadows, now wearing pants and suspenders. He munches CornNuts from a small bag.)

FRANCO

Then make yourself at home. You will be here for some time. Care for some CornNuts?

JONQUIN

No, thank you.

FRANCO

You know, I used to hate these things. But ever since I tried one, I'm eating them all the time.

JONQUIN

Is that what smells?

FRANCO

Yeah. I guess it's like cigarettes and cologne. You don't know how awful is the stench until someone points it out to you. Even then...

JONQUIN

And you still eat them?

FRANCO

Yes, I do. I just have to keep upwind of myself.

BLAINE

Would the two of you like some time alone?

FRANCO

No.

JONQUIN

Yes.

JONQUIN

I think you should go, dear. Madame Ivy may need your assistance.

BLAINE

Madame Ivy!

FRANCO

It's come to that, has it?

JONQUIN

It may.

BLAINE

I'll be upstairs.

(BLAINE ascends the stairs.)

FRANCO

Don't leave on my account.

BLAINE

Put your clothes on.

JONQUIN

This shirt looks clean.

FRANCO  
Give me that.

(He takes the shirt and puts it on.  
BLAINE dons his plugs and shades at the  
top of the stairs.)

JONQUIN  
Studs and cuff links?

FRANCO  
Give me those.

(BLAINE smiles and exits.)

FRANCO (CONT'D  
Please. Please do not fondle my things.

JONQUIN  
It's a little more cluttered than I remember.

FRANCO  
I've lived a little longer.

JONQUIN  
Have you? What a waste.

FRANCO  
Hey. I am not wasting life, I am observing it. Making  
notes, seeing it in my hands.

JONQUIN  
Watching it go by. Why don't you come and join us upstairs  
where there is light and conversation. People, Franco, so  
many people. All dancing, singing, playing, telling jokes--

FRANCO  
Arguing, lying, cheating, fighting, hating, hurting, burning,  
raping, killing, torturing...

JONQUIN  
Don't generalize.

FRANCO  
That's what I do best. Mostly.

JONQUIN  
You are being far too unfair to most of us. We're having a  
party, not a riot.

FRANCO

I don't see it that way.

JONQUIN

So you choose to hide down here and grumble about it. You think that will make a difference.

FRANCO

I'm not hiding.

JONQUIN

I thought you were doing it "pretty damn well."

FRANCO

I'm waiting.

JONQUIN

Waiting. Where does it get you? What do you accomplish? What have you changed?

FRANCO

I think of solutions.

JONQUIN

But you never act on them.

FRANCO

They are good solutions.

JONQUIN

How would you like to apply them? Madame Ivy can arrange that, you know.

FRANCO

Yes, but at what price?

JONQUIN

Not much.

FRANCO

Only my integrity. Principles.

JONQUIN

Ego.

FRANCO

Honor.

JONQUIN

Pride.

FRANCO

You. Again.

JONQUIN

You miss me. That's nice to know.

FRANCO

I miss the breeze in the trees, the sun on the leaves, having a window. I miss birds. To miss you is not so special. Did you know I masturbate incessantly? I do. I only stop when I'm tired. Or sore. Then I think about it a lot. I think about how much energy I put into this activity, how much time I spend, how much life force I exhaust from my body. Then when I get bored thinking about this, I masturbate.

JONQUIN

I never knew that.

FRANCO

It was worse after being with you. Thinking of what we had just done with one another's bodies would only make me want it more. And you would be off again, always on the move. So naturally, I would turn to myself.

JONQUIN

I never had that reaction.

FRANCO

Never?

JONQUIN

Hm. Now and then, perhaps.

FRANCO

Do you miss me?

JONQUIN

I don't miss you.

FRANCO

Madame Ivy?

JONQUIN

Yes. Do you miss her?

FRANCO  
 (A beat.)  
 So what if I do?

JONQUIN  
 Join us.

FRANCO  
 No.

JONQUIN  
 Why not?

FRANCO  
 God damn it, I said no! No means no.

JONQUIN  
 (Starting up the stairs.)  
 If Franco won't come to the party, we'll bring the party to Franco.

FRANCO  
 I'm afraid to go up there.

JONQUIN  
 I know.

FRANCO  
 I'm afraid of what I might do.

JONQUIN  
 Don't be afraid, we'll be there with you.

FRANCO  
 Never give power to an idealist.

JONQUIN  
 My dear Franco.

(FRANCO reaches out to her.)

FRANCO  
 Touch me.

JONQUIN  
 Come upstairs.

FRANCO  
 Touch me.

I shouldn't JONQUIN

Touch me. FRANCO

Like this? JONQUIN

Yes. FRANCO

Franco. JONQUIN

Yes. FRANCO

(FRANCO leads JONQUIN to the bottom of the stairs. He takes her in his arms and carries her to the bed. He lays her down. They gaze at one another. FRANCO leans in to JONQUIN, peering at her. Suddenly, he smacks her on the head.)

Ouch! JONQUIN

(She smacks FRANCO.)

Ouch! Did you get it? FRANCO

Get what? JONQUIN

The flea! FRANCO

Fleas? (JONQUIN)

FRANCO  
(Smacking her.)  
My bed is infested with fleas!

(As she and FRANCO indulge in a flea smackfest.)

Fleas!  
JONQUIN

Thousands of them!  
FRANCO

Get off me!  
JONQUIN

I can't possibly kill every single flea!  
FRANCO

Let me up! Let me up!  
JONQUIN

(FRANCO and JONQUIN manage to fall off the bed and crawl away in opposite directions. They prop themselves up, panting. The fleas return to the comfort of the bedclothes.)

Damn them! Damn them all!  
FRANCO

Christ! How do you sleep?  
JONQUIN

I sleep when I'm exhausted. I don't notice them as much then. I'm covered with bites.  
FRANCO

Do you sleep well?  
JONQUIN

No. I clench my teeth, I clench them night and day. I sit and I feel them clench, I stand and feel them clench, I lie down and I clench.  
FRANCO

That isn't good.  
JONQUIN

My teeth are rotting in my head.  
FRANCO

Are you falling apart, Franco?  
JONQUIN



FRANCO

Not so you'd notice. Are you happy up there?

JONQUIN

It's not such a bad place. It's full of my friends; your friends.

FRANCO

Are you happy?

JONQUIN

Yes.

FRANCO

Completely?

JONQUIN

Yes.

(She rises from the floor and brushes herself off, then starts up the stairs. FRANCO scrambles after her, but doesn't touch the steps.)

FRANCO

You're lying! You're miserable up there. You miss me. You miss me. You miss being at peace with what you believe. You miss me.

JONQUIN

A little. Perhaps.

FRANCO

A lot. Certainly.

JONQUIN

Perhaps.

FRANCO

Where are you going?

JONQUIN

I've been down here too long.

FRANCO

You don't belong with them. At this moment, there are human beings out there doing unspeakable things to other human beings. There are people who will beat a man into senselessness. There are people who will shoot children.

There are people who will rape a woman to death. There are people like that!

JONQUIN

Yes, but we are not those people.

(FRANCO stares at JONQUIN as she dons her shades and plugs and makes her exit. FRANCO puts on his shoes. He finds his cummerbund and catches himself in the mirror.)

FRANCO

Did God create this? Did God create this wonderful organism just to have it covered up? Risk Assessment!! All right. You say this much radioactivity is harmful. Then you find that 80% of the nuclear facilities in this country exceed that level daily and it would cost billions of dollars and cause a lot of inconvenience to bring them up to snuff. So, you do a new study and, gee whiz, the revised findings show that radioactivity can be absorbed in larger doses than originally thought and still no harm would come to you. After all, we're being very conservative here and even the acceptable levels are a little low. Just to be safe. So heck, go ahead and absorb a little more, it's okay. Well, my friend. If I hold a knife in one hand and your arm in another, there is no risk. But if I start moving the hand in which the knife is held, things change slightly. There is no risk unless something goes wrong and the knife makes contact with your arm. A little nick, a twinge of discomfort, a drop or two of blood. An acceptable risk? My knife-wielding hand is getting tired, a little sloppy, less controlled. It slips again and cuts a little deeper. A little pain this time, a small cut, beads of blood. My knife is performing a vital function, cutting veal for tonight's fund-raising banquet. Can't shut it down. Let's up the acceptable risk. The knife hand is definitely feeling the stress of constant use, poor construction, neglect. Can't shut it down. It slips again. A nasty gash this time. Definite pain. Blood streaming into the dirt. I suppose you'll wait until you lose your arm before you'll say enough is enough. You psychotic donkey.

(He puts on his cummerbund. The door opens. MENDAL escorts SABRA in her wedding dress. Both remove their shades and earplugs. FRANCO stares at SABRA.)

SABRA

Hello.

FRANCO

Hello. You must be Sabra.

MENDAL

Go on, he won't bite. He's too busy considering the consequences.

(SABRA descends with MENDAL following. FRANCO makes a halfhearted attempt to straighten a few things.)

SABRA

So this is where you live. Where Blaine lived.

FRANCO

It's home.

SABRA

You don't have any windows down here.

FRANCO

We had one. It's been sealed.

SABRA

You can't see a thing from down here.

FRANCO

I see enough.

MENDAL

Baaaloney.

SABRA

You can't see Mrs. Fagundo's little ones jumping through the grass next door.

FRANCO

There isn't any grass next door, it's a filthy parking lot.

SABRA

There is grass now. I saw it this morning.

MENDAL

Things change without your help, you see. One day a littered parking lot, the next day a grassy playground.

SABRA

It was Blaine's idea.

MENDAL

We all helped him.

FRANCO

I'll believe it when I see it.

SABRA

Come. I'll show you.

FRANCO

You're quite a team, you two. I'll stay where I am.

MENDAL

You're too quick for us, old Franco, old boy.

FRANCO

(To Sabra.)

Would you like to sit down?

SABRA

Where?

(FRANCO uncovers a crate.)

FRANCO

Here. Presto! Clean as a scrubbed carrot.

SABRA

Thank you.

MENDAL

We can't stay long. We have our lives to get back to.

FRANCO

You know the way out, Mendal. Leave Sabra with me.

MENDAL

Ha ha, that's funny. Don't know when I've heard anything that funny. Unless it was when my doctor told me he was going to yank out my lymph glands with a pair of pliers.

FRANCO

Funny doctor.

MENDAL

No, boy, I came in here with Sabra, I'm supposed to go out again with both of you. I'm damned if I leave without either of you. But I'll tell you what.

FRANCO  
What?

MENDAL  
We'll compromise.

FRANCO  
You want to compromise?

MENDAL  
Yeah.

FRANCO  
You'd better look it up in the dictionary first.

MENDAL  
Listen, boy, I wanted to break your legs, carry you out and be done with it. But no, it has to be your choice. Where's the bathroom? I gotta take a leak.

FRANCO  
It's back there.

MENDAL  
(picking up a book)  
I'll take my time and you two can talk. See. Compromise isn't so bad, is it?

(MENDAL exits to the bathroom.)

SABRA  
He has his moments.

FRANCO  
Would you like some coffee?

SABRA  
No, thank you.

FRANCO  
So you're the reason Blaine sold out.

SABRA  
He's a happier man for it.

FRANCO  
Up there?

SABRA

There is nothing and no one up there of which to be frightened for any reason. People take things so seriously sometimes when there is nothing serious to be taken. If they would only give up and enjoy themselves, the world would be such a nice place! I can barely control myself just thinking about it. Franco, do give it up.

FRANCO

Give what up? My integrity? Shall I compromise my honor and judgement?

SABRA

Is it so important that you judge?

FRANCO

If I am to tell right from wrong, good from bad, just from unjust.

SABRA

Does everything have to be one or the other?

FRANCO

For me? Yes.

SABRA

How can you be so certain?

FRANCO

I'm willing to be wrong.

SABRA

You're willing to try things?

FRANCO

Within reason.

SABRA

Go on.

FRANCO

Sometimes I just know something is ridiculous.

SABRA

"Anyone who feels the need to drink diet soda shouldn't be drinking soda in the first place?"

FRANCO

Exactly.

SABRA  
And coming upstairs to join us?

FRANCO  
Ridiculous.

SABRA  
Are you certain?

FRANCO  
I'm certain

SABRA  
But, you could be wrong.

FRANCO  
Yes, I know that.

SABRA  
Then your certainty has limitations.

FRANCO  
Care for some CornNuts?

SABRA  
No, thank you. They leave my mouth tasting of dried blood.

FRANCO  
Mine too.

SABRA  
But still you eat them.

FRANCO  
They taste good at first.

SABRA  
Then the aftermath is of no consequence to you?

FRANCO  
I didn't say that.

SABRA  
Then the aftermath is worth the initial event.

FRANCO  
I didn't say that, either.

SABRA

Then, what did you say?

FRANCO

I don't remember, exactly.

SABRA

It must have been of little importance.

FRANCO

I'm not sure.

(FRANCO approaches the sealed window. He touches the barricade, lifts away a small piece of it. From the small opening shines a thin ray of bright light.)

FRANCO (CONT'D)

It's so bright. I thought it was night time.

SABRA

Night is not so dark as you think.

FRANCO

Is there really grass next door? Where there was a parking lot?

SABRA

Yes. You should feel it between your toes.

FRANCO

I'm sorry I put on my shoes. May I touch you?

SABRA

Yes.

(He touches her.)

FRANCO

You're not a mirage.

SABRA

Not a mirage.

FRANCO

Can all the world be like you?



Yes.

SABRA

(She allows him to kiss her.)

Here is your tie. You should put it on.

SABRA (CONT'D)

Will you?

FRANCO

My pleasure.

SABRA

(SABRA fastens the tie around his neck.)

Your jacket?

SABRA (CONT'D)

On my bed.

FRANCO

(FRANCO picks up his jacket. SABRA, with one hand outstretched, starts to back up the stairs. FRANCO starts to follow, then slaps viciously at a flea.)

Gak! Damn fleas!

FRANCO (CONT'D)

Shit!

SABRA

(SABRA claps a hand over her mouth. FRANCO shakes out his jacket and tosses it into the shadows.)

What the hell am I doing!

FRANCO

MENDAL  
(Appearing from shadows with the jacket.)  
Walking your ass up those stairs.

SABRA

We almost made it too.

(The door bursts open. BLAINE rushes in and down the stairs, ripping off his shades and earplugs.)

BLAINE

There you are! Sabra, what are you doing down here? With him?

SABRA

I was speaking with him. Reasoning with him.

FRANCO

Oh yes! She just about reasoned me right up those stairs, old friend. I came within a flea's bite of joining you in Paradise.

(The lights flicker and fade as the party sounds grind to a halt.)

FRANCO

What the hell?

SABRA

It's Madame Ivy.

MENDAL

She's tired of waiting for you, Franco.

(A single spotlight illuminates the doorway which is rapidly filling with fog. JONQUIN, in her persona of Madame IVY, slides into view. She is dressed in top hat and tails, head bowed, feet apart, hands resting on the head of a walking stick in front of her. The cold spotlight illuminates her glittering frame. As she slowly raises her head, MENDAL starts to whistle the tune, "Fever," and snap his fingers. IVY's face is sharp, bluish-white in the spot, her lips dark red. A look of stomach-churning terror flies across her face and is gone.)

As MENDAL whistles the tune, IVY moves down the stairs in a slow, sensuous dance, causing each step to light up as she touches it. When MENDAL's whistling comes around to the chorus, IVY sings.)

IVY/JONQUIN

You're scared of Failure,  
in the morning  
Failure all through the  
night,  
Failure - in the evening  
Afraid you just can't get  
it right.

(She ends her number. MENDAL stops whistling and snapping.)

IVY/JONQUIN

What is it you want, Franco? What can I do for you? You want money, Franco? It's no fun not having any money. When you don't have any money, the people who have it treat you like shit. They don't think you're worth the spit that dribbles down their chins when dessert comes. How much do you need?

FRANCO

I require nothing of you.

IVY/JONQUIN

Like hell, you don't.

FRANCO

I didn't ask for this. I didn't ask for anything! It's all of you who want me, remember?

IVY/JONQUIN

What is it you want, Franco? Pleasure? I can give you pleasure, Franco. I have created myself for your pleasure, Franco. What you see is how you have always wanted me.

MENDAL

Decadent.

BLAINE

Glittering.

SABRA

Cold as blue flame.

IVY/JONQUIN

What is it you want, Franco?

FRANCO

I don't know. I don't know.

IVY/JONQUIN

Come up, Franco. You can make a difference.

(SABRA and BLAINE start ascending the stairs.)

FRANCO

The rain here is filthy. It's full of acid and soot.

(MENDAL helps FRANCO on with his jacket.)

IVY/JONQUIN

If you work hard enough, you can change things. We'll help you, boy. Together we can do it. Just say , "Yes, we can!"

FRANCO

I don't know.

(MENDAL starts up the stairs.)

IVY/JONQUIN

You could be great, Franco. Some men are born to greatness.

FRANCO

Others have it shoved down their throats.

IVY/JONQUIN

(Ascending stairs after MENDAL.)

There is still time. All you have to do is get up, go out there, and do something. What do you want, Franco?

(FRANCO looks in the mirror. He is now dressed in a full tuxedo that fits him all too well. He covers the mirror with a sheet.)

FRANCO

I want to gather my friends around me.

IVY/JONQUIN

It isn't too late yet. You still have time. I suggest you use it.

(IVY waits alone at the top of the stairs. FRANCO walks up to join her. As he climbs, each illuminated step he touches blacks out. At the top, he faces IVY.)

FRANCO

I don't want to join you.

IVY/JONQUIN

If you don't want it, then why are you wearing that foolish looking suit?

FRANCO

Is it because the foolish thing fits?

(IVY smiles, teeth bared. FRANCO looks at her, adjusts his tie, and exits. IVY turns her face to the audience. She turns down the corners of her mouth and a long stream of blood-red spittle runs down her chin. She backs through the door and closes it. Her spot fades. From the barricaded window, comes the faint sound of traffic. The thin ray of light flickers and dies.)

THE END