

FELLOW TRAVELERS
an opera

Composed by Gregory Spears
Libretto by Greg Pierce
Directed by Kevin Newbury
Based on the novel *Fellow Travelers* by Thomas Mallon
Produced by Cincinnati Opera
Co-commissioned by G. Sterling Zinsmeyer

Characters

Hawkins Fuller, a State Department official
Timothy Laughlin, an aspiring reporter
Potter's Assistant / Bookseller / Party Guest / Technician / French Priest
Tommy McIntyre, a reporter and friend of Senator Potter
Senator Charles Potter / General Airlie / Bartender
Miss Lightfoot, a secretary in Hawkins' office
Mary Johnson, Hawkins' assistant
Estonian Frank / Interrogator / Senator Joseph McCarthy
Lucy

Place: Washington, D.C.

Time: September 1953 – May 1957

Scene 1: Park in Dupont Circle
Scene 2: Senator Potter's Office
Scene 3: Hawkins' Office / Trovers Bookstore
Scene 4: Timothy's Apartment
Scene 5: St. Peter's Church
Scene 6: The Hotel Washington
Scene 7: Interrogation Room M304
Scene 8: Timothy's Apartment
Scene 9: McCarthy's Office
Scene 10: Mary's Kitchen / Timothy's Apartment
Scene 11: Roof of the Old Post Office
Scene 12: Hawkins' Office
Scene 13: Timothy in France / Hawk in Chevy Chase
Scene 14: Brick House
Scene 15: Mary's Kitchen / Brick House / Room M304
Scene 16: Park in Dupont Circle

ACT I

SCENE 1: PARK IN DUPONT CIRCLE

TIMOTHY LAUGHLIN sits on a park bench scribbling in his notepad. Beside him is a half-pint bottle of milk and some loose pages ripped out of the Congressional Directory. HAWKINS FULLER approaches from the shadows.

HAWK
Do you mind?

TIM
Sorry?

HAWK
Is there room?

TIM
Oh, sure...sorry.

HAWK
Don't they give you an office?

TIM
No. It's...just an internship. *(Tim nervously takes a swig from his milk bottle. He slides down a bit, collects the loose pages, and goes back to his scribbling.)*

HAWK
Is that your beverage of choice?

TIM
What? Oh, yes...milk. Always has been.

HAWK
Calcium! Strong bones. Good for a growing boy.

(Tim smiles.)

HAWK
There's no "e" in "Cohn," by the way.

TIM
Sorry?

HAWK *(re: Tim's pad)*
Roy Cohn. No "e."

TIM

Oh. *(Tim is taken aback...this man was reading his notes? He crosses out the "e.")*

HAWK

Making a list of your pals?

TIM

I was just at a wedding...over at St. Matthew's.

HAWK

Joe McCarthy! Lucky devil, who do you know?

TIM

No one. I'm reporting for The Star. *(correcting himself)* It's just an internship.

HAWK

So, who was there? Come on, name names. *(reading off Tim's list)* Vice President Nixon.

TIM

Teddy Roosevelt's daughter Mrs. Longworth, Senator John F. Kennedy...

HAWK

McCarthy, that's efficiency. Married his office girl. She'll crank out his baby and crank out his press release. Who gets married on a Tuesday lunch break? Is that why you came to this town? To be a reporter?

TIM

No. I was an English major at Fordham so...

HAWK *(suggestively)*

What would you rather be doing?

TIM

I'm Timothy Laughlin.

HAWK *(shaking his hand)*

Hawkins Fuller. Friends call me "Hawk." And now you're a friend.

TIM

Ideally, I would like a job on the Hill like everyone else.

HAWK

I'm in the State Department—Bureau of Congressional Relations.

TIM
Ah, lucky devil!

HAWK
If you like endless boring parties. Last night I had to convince the Estonians we love them. Endless boring parties.

TIM
It's muggy...

HAWK
...for September.

TIM
...for September.

(They sit there. What will happen?)

HAWK
All right, back to the salt mines. Thanks for the chat, Skippy. Finish your milk.

(Tim smiles. He watches Hawk go. Tim gets up, still dazed, and walks over to Senator Potter's office.)

SCENE 2: SENATOR POTTER'S OFFICE

(TOMMY MCINTYRE is sitting on a desk, reading a newspaper. A tidy young man, POTTER'S ASSISTANT, is behind another desk.)

ASSISTANT
Can I help you?

TIM
I'm here for an interview with Senator Potter. My name's Timothy Laughlin. Someone phoned me...I work for *The Star*.

ASSISTANT
Oh, yes. Senator Potter's still at the hearings—he should be back soon. If you wouldn't mind... *(having a seat)*

TOMMY
Eh, who's got time to wait for ol' Potter? Might as well give you your tryout now. Tommy McIntyre.

TIM *(shaking his hand)*
Timothy Laughlin.

TOMMY
Fellow Mick. I hear you can write a word or two.

TIM
I was an English major at—

TOMMY
—Hawk Fuller says you're a Hemingway. He's a good egg, Hawk Fuller. How do you know him?

TIM
Hawk Fuller? Parties. I didn't know he'd recommended me.

TOMMY
Says you can write a word or two. Potter needs a speechwriter. Ever done that before?

TIM
No, but I'm told I'm good at capturing voices.

TOMMY
We'll see about that.

(Tommy rifles around, looking for something on the Assistant's desk.)

ASSISTANT *(irritated)*
Can I help you find something?

(Tommy ignores him, finds what he's looking for, thrusts a piece of paper into Tim's hands.)

TOMMY
Here's what Senator Knowland will say on the floor in a couple of hours. I got it from his press man. He's slamming Adlai Stevenson for jumping in bed with the Russians. See if you can whip up something Potter can say in support of it.

(Tim takes out his pen and gets to work. He thinks about Hawk, who appears in the shadows for a moment.)

HAWK
Calcium! Strong bones. Good for a growing boy.

TIM

Calcium! Strong bones.

(Senator Potter enters. He is energetic, walking with two canes.)

POTTER *(to Tommy)*

I hope you washed your grubby hands before touching anything in here.

TOMMY

Senator Potter, this Mick could be your new speech writer.

POTTER

Oh?

TIM

It's a great honor, sir. I've so admired your work throughout these North Korean Atrocity hearings—tireless—your commitment to exposing communism—I believe the fast-growing-tentacles-of-communist-ideology-are-the-most-significant-threat-to-our-great-democracy.

POTTER

Well said, son. Can you write as well as you speak?

TOMMY

Let's see.

(Tommy snatches what Tim's written out of his hands and gives it to Potter, who reads it aloud.)

POTTER

“In my great automobile-making state of Michigan, we're wary of any car or country that stays in neutral.” *(to Tim)* ‘Atta boy!—“Stays in neutral”...“Neutral's what you're in when you roll downhill.” Another Irish wordsmith!

(Potter rapidly blinks the lights on his canes. Tim beams.)

TOMMY

Blinking canes: you got the job.

TIM

Oh boy! *(embarrassed by that outburst)*

POTTER

I hope Monday morning's not too soon to start.

TIM

No, sir.

POTTER

Welcome to the staff. I'm off to shoot a few ducks and then, come Monday, we'll straighten out this damn country.

TOMMY and ASSISTANT

It's time someone did.

(Potter leaves.)

TOMMY

A land mine.

TIM

Sorry?

TOMMY

That's what blew off his legs, since I know that's what you're wondering. Battle of the Bulge in the Colmar Pocket. Potter says he liked France so much he left his feet there.

TIM

Why the lights on his canes?

TOMMY

He blinks when he's happy, or when he's hungry, or angry, or when he needs to hail a cab. We call him "Citizen Canes." Don't we, Matthew?

ASSISTANT

No we don't.

TOMMY

You got a girl, Laughlin?

TIM

No. Why?

TOMMY

She'd probably leave you if you did...this job's round the clock.

TIM

Are you on Senator Potter's staff?

TOMMY

Not officially. Just a friend of the family. Right, Matthew?

ASSISTANT (*annoyed*)
Echk.

TOMMY
I like to keep tabs on things—help Potter when I can. (*grinning*) Better be the first one to know.

TIM (*amazed that he got the job*)
First one to know.

SCENE 3: HAWKINS' OFFICE / TROVERS BOOKSTORE

(As Tim walks to Trovers, lights up on MARY and MISS LIGHTFOOT sitting at desks in Hawk's office. Mary is at her typewriter, trying to get some transcribing done, but Miss Lightfoot keeps chattering away as she fixes her makeup. In the bookstore, a BOOKSELLER is shelving books.)

TIM (*to Bookseller*)
I'm looking for something—it's a thank-you gift. Anything new?

MISS LIGHTFOOT (*to Mary*)
Do you believe that?! A plain old ordinary woman won a four thousand dollar Cadillac just like that (*she snaps*). A Cadillac. We could win "Mystery Voice," Mary! You and me.

MARY
Uh-huh.

MISS LIGHTFOOT
How is it you don't listen to the best program on the radio?

MARY (*with a slight New Orleans drawl*)
I don't know how you find the time.

MISS LIGHTFOOT
Oh, I have the time. Hawkins doesn't whisk me off to every cocktail party in town.

MARY
My mistake.

BOOKSELLER
Tell me somethin' about the receiver.

TIM
It's for a great man... How about a biography of a great man?

MISS LIGHTFOOT

Hey! Did you hear about Jerry Baumeister? They gave him his walking papers.

MARY

You're kidding? He's such a kind man.

MISS LIGHTFOOT

Betcha I know how he'll walk on outta here. *(limp-wristed, swishing away)*

MARY

That's awful.

BOOKSELLER *(to Tim, pulling out a book)*

This one's just in: "Henry Cabot Lodge."

(Tim pays him, takes the book, and scribbles an inscription as he walks over to Hawk's office. The Bookseller watches him go. Tim steps into the office, book in hand.)

MARY

Well hello there. How can I help you?

TIM

I'm looking for Ha-Hawkins Fu-Fuller.

MISS LIGHTFOOT

You're in the right place.

MARY

I'm afraid he's not in at the moment. I believe he's at the Georgetown library—

MISS LIGHTFOOT

—George Washington U., four to five-thirty.

MARY *(to Tim)*

I'm happy to tell him you—

MISS LIGHTFOOT

—Who's asking?

TIM

Ti-Timothy Laughlin. I have a book.

MISS LIGHTFOOT

We have eyes.

TIM

I mean, I have a book for Hawk—Hawkins Fuller.

MARY

It's lovely. My name's Mary. This is Miss Lightfoot. Will he know who it's from?

TIM

It's inscribed on the...well, on the inscription page. It's a thank-you gift.

MARY

Does he know where to find you?

TIM

I don't have a telephone.

MISS LIGHTFOOT

Are you Amish?

MARY

Why don't you leave your address with me?

TIM

I'll write it in here. *(He scribbles his address inside the book and hands it back to Mary.)*
Thank you both. You're very kind. *(He waves and leaves.)*

MARY

Stop in again. Lovely to meet you. Goodbye.

MISS LIGHTFOOT

"Stop in again! Lovely to meet you." Buh-bye! *(snatching the book from Mary)*
Nervous Nelly, that one. Thank you for what, I wonder. Let's find out. *(She flips to the inscription page and reads)* "Thanks to my new friend, Hawk. I got the job! You're wonderful."

MARY

Miss Lightfoot! Back to work.

MISS LIGHTFOOT

"See you soon, hopefully. Thankfully, Tim." Mary, who knew? Our very own Hawkins is "wonderful"?

(Mary smiles, not wanting to participate in this. She knows exactly what's happening: Hawk has snagged another one. Tim walks back to his apartment, all aglow.)

SCENE 4: TIMOTHY'S APARTMENT

(Evening. Chicken soup is on the stove. Tim stirs it. He sits at the small table in the kitchen. It's cluttered with books, papers, and newspapers. He is writing a letter to his sister.)

TIM

Hiya, Francie! Tip-top news from the Hill. You heard me. Your kid brother's got a fancy new job writing speeches for a Senator...Senator Potter. Thanks to a phone call from a wonderful new friend: Hawkins Fuller. His friends call him "Hawk." We met at an endless boring party. He might be my first *actual* friend in this every-man-for-himself town. How are you both, and my incoming niece or nephew? You're naming it Timmy, right? No matter the gender? Drink your milk: you're drinking for two.

(Hawk breezes in. Tim is stunned.)

HAWK

Hiya, Skippy! What's for dinner?

TIM

Chicken soup. There's probly enough for two.

(Hawk stirs the soup. Tim watches him as though he were a hallucination.)

HAWK

No telephone?

TIM

I don't even have a lease.

HAWK

How 'bout I buy you something better than soup? How 'bout a steak? You bought me a book.

TIM

But that was to thank you—

HAWK

—Where will it end?

TIM

Thanks but...I've got some work to do.

HAWK

All right then, we'll stay in.

(He starts rummaging through Tim's place, reading book titles, checking everything out.)

TIM

Make yourself at home.

HAWK *(seeing the letter on the desk, reading the first line)*

“Hiya, Francie! Tip-top news from the Hill...”

(Mortified, Tim snatches it out of his hand.)

HAWK

A girl back home?

TIM

My sister. It's just the two of us, though I've plenty of cousins...

(Hawk kisses Tim. Tim is stunned. Hawk kisses him again. They make their way to Tim's bed.)

HAWK

I should take you to Bermuda. Ever been?

(Tim shakes his head.)

HAWK

Aw, you'd die. It's my favorite place on the planet. I'm your first, aren't I? You know what that means? Now I own you. Who owns you, Skippy? I wanna hear you say it. Be my brave boy.

TIM

You've probably done this before...lots of times?

HAWK

Once or twice. It's a great big world.
Aw, you'd love it down there.
Bronze boys on the beach—
biceps you wouldn't believe.
Nights, a palm tree grove, I'll show you.
You never know what might come your way.
You and me and the boys.
Paradise.
Bermuda.

TIM

As far away as it sounds.
Sand as white as milk.
Miles and miles.
Just you and me and the moon.
And the shells.
My head on your arm at the end
of the day.
Paradise.

TIM and HAWK

As far away as it sounds.
Bermuda.

Under the sheets in a tropical storm, you.
The rain, finding its way through the gaps
in the straw of our roof
onto your chest.
Two little drops.
Paradise.

(Tim gets out of bed, in a daze. He kisses Hawk's forehead, almost as though he's blessing him. He wanders into ST. PETER'S CHURCH.)

SCENE 5: ST. PETER'S CHURCH

TIM

Last night.
How many?
How many kisses?
His hands...
How many hours?
How warm, how strong...
His hands.
I died last night.
How many hours?
Last night.
How many kisses?
I died last night.
How many whispers?
How did he know that I am his?
How many sins did I commit?
Last night?
How many more nights in his arms?
How many more mornings?
How many whispers?
How many sins last night?
How soon can I see him again?
How many more nights? Last night.

Forgive me, Holy Father.
I've been told over and over that
"Mortal sin kills the life of grace in our souls."
Is it true?
I confess that I...that we...last night,
his arms, iron bars across my chest.
So close, so happy.
How many hours?
I confess...

“It’s a great big world,” he said.
But it wasn’t last night.
Thank God, it was only us,
it was only right,
last night.

Father McGuire says one mortal sin
will cause more destruction than
how many earthquakes?

Last night
How many kisses?
How tender?
How many whispers?
I died.
How many earthquakes?
How many kisses?
Thank you Holy Father for sending him.
Last night, I died.
Last night.

SCENE 6: THE HOTEL WASHINGTON

(The gang’s all here. It’s a gossip festival. Secrecy, paranoia, and holiday cheer.)

ALL
All seem to say throw cares away.
Did you hear?
From everywhere.
Did you hear about Bobby?
Throw cares away.
One seems to hear words of good cheer.

MARY *(to Hawk)*: They fired Bobby Parker.

HAWK *(to Mary)*: For what?

MARY *(to Hawk)*: For being in the wrong bar.

HAWK *(to Mary)*: What’s that got to do with me?

MARY *(to Hawk)*: Scott McLeod’s on a rampage—he scares me.

HAWK *(to Mary)*: Lighten up, Mary. Chestnuts roasting, etcetera.

GENERAL AIRLIE *(to Tim)*: The Army's got plenty to offer fellas like you.

TIM *(to General)*: I don't think you'd want me.

GENERAL AIRLIE *(to Tim)*: Nonsense.

TOMMY *(to Tim)*: So, howdayalike playing with the big dogs?

TIM *(to Tommy)*: It's very exciting seeing McCarthy in action.

PARTY GUEST: Did you hear the one about Roy Cohn in church? Ahhh...men.

MISS LIGHTFOOT: I say anyone who doesn't like Christmas is a Commie.

MARY *(to Hawk)*: You're borderline reckless.

HAWK *(to Mary)*: It's part of my charm.

ALL: Young and old. Meek and bold.

TOMMY *(to Potter)*: McCarthy's not gonna like what the Army's got up its sleeve. They've got him by the balls this time.

ESTONIAN FRANK *(to Mary)*: Wanna learn some Estonian?

MARY *(to Estonian Frank)*: I can't even learn your last name.

ESTONIAN FRANK *(to Mary)*: Another vodka?

MARY *(to Estonian Frank)*: I probably shouldn't—okay.

TOMMY *(to Tim)*: Between you and me, Roy Cohn's days are numbered.

MARY *(to Hawk)*: Staying out late, coming in late. I'd call it reckless.

HAWK *(to Mary)*: I'd call it holiday cheer. Can I help it if I'm distracted by an Irish tiger cub?

MARY *(to Hawk)*: Easy. *(re: take it easy)*

MISS LIGHTFOOT: *(calling out)* Someone put on that *Santa Baby* record!

HAWK *(to Tim)*: Let's get outta here, Skippy. Whaddya say? My Irish tiger cub.

(Miss Lightfoot overhears.)

TIM (*to Hawk*): I'd love to. I should probably stay with Senator Potter.

HAWK (*to Tim*): I own you, not "Citizen Canes."

TIM (*to Hawk*): Not so loud.

LUCY (*to Hawk, offering her hand*): Hawkins Fuller, I believe my mother knows your mother.

HAWK (*to Lucy*): Pleasure to meet you, Lucille was it? (*taking her hand*)

LUCY (*to Hawk*): Lucy.

MISS LIGHTFOOT (*to Mary*): What did he mean by "Irish tiger cub?"

MARY: He's had too many brandies—come on let's find you some mistletoe, Miss Lightfoot (*taking her hand*).

MISS LIGHTFOOT: Irish tiger cub?

MARY: Silent night...

MISS LIGHTFOOT: Irish tiger cub?

ALL: Silent night, holy night. All is calm, all is bright.

HAWK (*to Tim*): Let's get outta here, Skippy. Whaddya say?

(Everyone "parties off" leaving Hawk alone. Suddenly it seems so quiet. Where'd they go? Lights change abruptly from festive to clinical.)

SCENE 7: INTERROGATION ROOM M304

INTERROGATOR

Mr. Fuller, my name is Fred Traband. Please step into M304.

HAWK

These rooms always have such catchy names.

INTERROGATOR

Leave your coat here.

HAWK

Quite a surprise, getting your summons.

INTERROGATOR

This shouldn't take long.

(Hawk sees a TECHNICIAN sitting in front of a polygraph.)

INTERROGATOR

We have sufficient reason to questions you. Please *(sit down)*. Let me be frank, Mr. Fuller. Eighty percent of these investigations end with an admission of deviant behavior. As you know, the moral perversion and emotional immaturity of a sexual deviant make him the prime target of blackmail by anyone seeking to undermine the government of the United States.

HAWK

I know, I've heard: "One pansy can pollute an entire government office."

INTERROGATOR

Right. Now Mr. Fuller, please stand up and walk to the wall and back.

HAWK

Walk...how?

INTERROGATOR

Normally. Whatever you would consider normal.

(Hawk does this, slowly. He's hyper-aware of his walk. The Interrogator watches for swishing hips, then scribbles something down on his clipboard. He removes a piece of paper from a folder and thrusts it into Hawk's hands.)

INTERROGATOR

Read this aloud.

HAWK

"President Eisenhower revealed in his State of the Union message last January that he favors some form of home rule for the District."

INTERROGATOR *(listening for a sibilant "S")*

Repeat the word "Disstrict."

HAWK

"District."

INTERROGATOR

Again.

HAWK

"District."

(The Interrogator nods once and scribbles something down.)

INTERROGATOR

Now this. *(He thrusts an open novel into Hawk's hands).*

HAWK

Of Human Bondage? "Philip opened a large cupboard filled with dresses and, stepping in, took as many of them as he could in his arms and buried his face in them." I read good, don't I, teacher?

INTERROGATOR

Keep reading.

HAWK

"They smelt of the scent his mother used. Then he pulled open the drawers filled with his mother's things, and looked at them: there were lavender bags among the lines"—sorry—"bags among the linen, and their scent was fresh and pleasant. The strangeness—"

INTERROGATOR

Enough! I'm going to have to ask you to take a lie detector test. If you refuse, I must warn you—

HAWK

—I'll take it.

TECHNICIAN

These are a little cold.

(The Technician puts sensors on Hawk, who flinches.)

TECHNICIAN

There we go. All set. *(He returns to the machine.)*

INTERROGATOR

Who was the president of the United States when you were born?

HAWK

Calvin Coolidge.

INTERROGATOR

Have you ever given or received presents of a romantic nature to or from another man?

(Lights up on Tim.)

TIM

With thanks to my new friend, Hawk. I got the job! You're wonderful.

HAWK

No.

INTERROGATOR

Have you ever set foot in an establishment called "The Jewel Box" at the corner of L and Sixteenth Streets?

(Lights up on flamboyant BARTENDER polishing a martini glass.)

BARTENDER *(to Hawk)*

Haven't seen you in goon's moon, handsome! You just missed a "Some Enchanted Evening" that gave us some enchanted migraines. Want the usual?

HAWK

No.

TIM

Chicken noodle soup. There's probly enough for two.

INTERROGATOR

Now Mister Fuller, have you ever engaged in sodomy or oral-genital contact with another man?

HAWK

No.

INTERROGATOR

Have you ever considered yourself to be in love with another male?

HAWK *(to Tim)*

No telephone?

INTERROGATOR

Mr. Fuller, answer the question.

HAWK

Of course not.

INTERROGATOR

Yes or no.

HAWK

No. No.

(The Technician removes the sensors. Hawk gets his coat, trying to hide the fact that he's rattled.)

SCENE 8: TIMOTHY'S APARTMENT

(Hawk walks over to Tim's bed, unbuttons his shirt, and lies down next to Tim.)

TIM

Mary asked me to supper next Sunday.

HAWK

You should go. I'm sure she wants to warn you about me. You should probably listen.

TIM

I like her a lot.

HAWK

And she likes you. Who knows, maybe that's what you're missing: a Southern belle, biscuits and gravy.

(Tim punches Hawk playfully. Hawk grabs his wrist and twists him around so Tim is completely restrained.)

HAWK

There! Now I'm Roy Cohn and you're David Schine. *(He mimes thrusting into Tim a few times).*

TIM

They're not!

HAWK

Open your eyes, Skippy. Why does Schine get the red carpet treatment? McCarthy's in on it, too.

TIM

Oh please.

HAWK

I call them "The Jewel Box." Boy, do I love watching Joe self-destruct: "Have you no decency..."

TIM

You sound like a Red. McCarthy's doing the most important work a man can do: rooting out Reds who chew up our values from the inside out.

HAWK

You're a handsome lad but you don't have a clue.

TIM

Well I didn't go to Harvard where Commie professors taught me what's what.

HAWK

Name a single "Commie professor."

TIM

Did you ever go out with girls?

HAWK

Now and again. Too bad DiMaggio took Marilyn. Those lucky soldier boys in Korea get to watch her shake her goods. Those soldier boys in Korea. Don't forget to put this back on, Skippy. *(re: the cross Tim removes when they make love. Tim puts it on.)*

HAWK

If you love God so much, why didn't you become a priest?

TIM

I almost did.

HAWK

Really?

TIM

But I guess I like doing this too much. *(He kisses Hawk, who doesn't seem interested.)*

HAWK

What would "God" say?

TIM

How should I know? Let's go away for the weekend, Hawk! We'll find a motel by the beach, "Memory Lane" or "Bermuda Triangle." We'll stay in bed for two days straight.

HAWK

I've gotta work Saturday, so do you.

TIM

All right, let's go to the pictures Friday night. I'm dying to see *The Robe*.

HAWK

You and your Jesus pictures.

TIM

You could learn a thing or two, Hawk. We'll see whatever you want, I'll cook supper, whadya say?

HAWK

I say "I don't know!" Let's see when we get there.

TIM

Sorry.

(Hawk starts to get dressed.)

HAWK

I can't be your husband.

TIM

I know.

HAWK

That's not how it works.

TIM

You don't have to say that.

HAWK

By the way, they called me in today.

TIM

Who?

HAWK

Scott McLeod and his "Miscellaneous M Unit." What does the "M" stand for anyway?

TIM

What? Why didn't you tell me?

HAWK

I'm telling you now.

TIM

They could be watching. Listening.

HAWK

They probably are.

TIM

What did they ask you?

HAWK

Relax, Skippy, relax. You're my best kept secret. Miss Lightfoot kindly informed them I was a pansy.

TIM

How do you know?

HAWK

She quit the day I got the summons.

TIM

The rat!

HAWK

Hey.

TIM

I never liked her.

HAWK

It's no big deal—they got nothin' on Hawkins Fuller. Ah, almost forgot... *(reaching into his pocket)* Merry belated Christmas. *(He puts a set of cufflinks into Tim's hand.)*

TIM

I can't take your cufflinks. They've got your initials.

HAWK

You're a writer, you can think of other words that starts with "H" and "F." "Holy Father." C'mere, Skippy. Tell Mary I smack you around, see what she says. *(Hawk tosses Tim violently onto the bed.)*

TIM

What if they are watching us?

HAWK

Let 'em enjoy it. I know I will. It's a red hot world. Up in Hell's Kitchen, there's a man who plays the clarinet. He stands at his window and tosses out tunes from the second floor. He does things you wouldn't dream of, Skippy.

TIM

Do you even know his name?

HAWK
What's in a name?

ACT II

SCENE 9: McCARTHY'S OFFICE

(They're all drinking whiskey—Tommy, Potter and McCarthy.)

TIM
It's an honor to meet you, Senator McCarthy.

MCCARTHY *(re: the newspaper)*
This one's my favorite. "He dons his war paint. He dances his war dance. He goes forth to battle and proudly returns with the scalp of a pink army dentist." Senator Flanders—they're all pansies up there in Vermont. Drink up, everyone!

(McCarthy pours another round. He stops at Tim's glass.)

MCCARTHY
Are you old enough, son?

TIM
I'm almost—

MCCARTHY
—I'm only kiddin'. *(He pours Tim some whiskey.)*

POTTER
Joe, we've got a problem.

MCCARTHY *(to Tim)*
You've got a baby face. *(to Potter)* Don't blink your canes at me, Potter. I've got an army of problems.

POTTER
Adams is your biggest problem.

MCCARTHY
Adams?

TOMMY
The Army's introduced the "Adams Chronology."

MCCARTHY
What the hell is that?

TOMMY
It's a list...

MCCARTHY
It's a list!

TOMMY
...of what you and Roy Cohn did.

MCCARTHY
It's a list!

TOMMY
...of what you and Roy did to pressure the Army to get David Schine special treatment.

MCCARTHY
So they say. That prick Nixon's behind this.

TOMMY
It'll drop like an A-bomb.

POTTER
Roy Cohn's gotta go.

MCCARTHY
Roy's not going anywhere! *(to Tim)* Son, did you happen to see Ed Murrow's half-hour dung heap about me?

TIM
I don't have a television. But I heard—

MCCARTHY
—Some Julius Caesar mumbo-jumbo. Practically called me a Nazi.

POTTER *(to Tommy)*
We can get the Army to fire Adams, right? *(Tommy nods)* But it's gotta be a trade. Otherwise they're going to investigate this whole thing, Joe. You know what that means.

ALL
You know what that means.

MCCARTHY
What the hell are you writing down?

TIM

Sorry sir, I—

POTTER

Leave him alone, Joe.

MCCARTHY *(to Potter and Tommy)*

Roy's not going anywhere! Believe it or not, I've got some friends in the press. Men like George Sokolsky, Jews on our side, Jews who actually know what a Communist is. They're not gonna like anyone going after Roy. Go after Roy and they'll go after you. I'll make sure they do. Everyone's money comes from somewhere, Senator. Even yours. They've got files on us? Tell 'em we've got files on them too. *(He drinks up.)*

(Lights down on Potter and McCarthy Tim walks away. Tommy follows him.)

TOMMY

Hey Hemingway, want an inside scoop? Roy Cohn's a goner. Wanna put a fiver on it? *(Tim ignores him.)* Whoa there, friend. Why so icy? I hope you realize I'm a good friend to have. You know your boss "Senator Potter" does whatever I want? It's true. He's got an illegitimate son—I keep his birth certificate on me at all times. *(He produces it.)* You never know when it will come in handy.

TIM

I don't want to know.

TOMMY

Ya heard it here first. See, I'm a good friend to have. I just want the same as you. To play the game. Aw, lighten up, Timmy! Play the game and come out on top. *(Tommy stops as Tim keeps walking.)* Say hello to your special friend, Hawk.

(Tim shudders. He picks up a bottle of wine and brings it over to...)

SCENE 10: MARY'S KITCHEN

MCCARTHY *(on the radio)*

Don't be coy with me, General Zwicker! Anyone with the brains of a five-year-old child can understand it. A general who says "I'll protect another general who protects Communists" is not fit to wear that uniform, General.

(Mary flips off the radio.)

MARY

Ooh, I can't *stand* the sound of that man's voice.

TIM

This was delicious.

MARY

You're a doll. New Orleans-style catfish, just like mama made. I hope there wasn't too much cayenne, I can get carried away.

TIM

No. Thanks for having me over, Mary. I don't have many friends in this town besides Hawk.

MARY

He's a good one to have. Impetuous maybe, but—

TIM

I've never been to New Orleans but I bet there's jazz in the air. Folks lounging on wrought iron balconies...

MARY

I'll take you to Mardi Gras sometime. That'd be a hoot. Timmy? Can you keep a secret?

TIM

Surely.

MARY

The Estonian man I was with at the Christmas party...we had too many vodka tonics after the party and now, apparently I have a tiny Estonian in me.

TIM

Mary!

MARY

Funny how life can change in a heartbeat. Nobody knows. Not even Hawk.

TIM

I won't tell a soul. It might make a nice name...Estonia.

MARY

Estonia. I know a doctor in New Orleans who will take care of it.

TIM

Mary! You're not gonna keep it?

MARY

I can't. Not when I'm all alone. I can't.

TIM

But that's a sin.

MARY

I can't. Timmy, I've known Hawkins a very long time... Everyone loves him. Including me. I just don't want him to...

I worry—that's all—about you, Timmy.
I know him well—and there are times
I wish I didn't know him so well,
if you know what I mean.
He's "wonderful,"
you're right about that.
But he's a certain kind of wonderful, Timmy.
I've seen all the people and patterns.
It would break my heart to see you
become another one of those
people and patterns.

TIM

He's been a good friend. Don't worry, Mary.

MARY

There was a time when I thought
he might be the one for me—
of course, I was wrong.
It would break my heart to see you
become one of those
people and patterns.

(Tim gets up anxiously and walks over to his bed, where Hawk is waiting. He lies down. Mary watches.)

HAWK

Hey, wanna hear some good news? The "Miscellaneous M Unit" says I'm clean as a whistle. God help 'em.

TIM

I'm sure they're still watching.

HAWK

Let 'em watch! Hey, guess how we're gonna celebrate?

(Tim waits for it, uneasily.)

HAWK

New office boy. Lewis. About your age, dirty blond, should we see if he's free tonight?

TIM

What do you mean?

HAWK

C'mon, Skippy, it's a red hot world. Let's let it burn us.

TIM

What do you mean?

HAWK

You're a smart boy. I mean the two of us could become the three of us.

TIM

What are you doing, Hawk?

HAWK

Living. Why don't you try it?

TIM

That's not what I call living.

HAWK

There's more to life than cookies and milk. Open your eyes, Skippy.

TIM

Get out, Hawk. Get out.

MARY

I worry...

HAWK

That's not what you want.

(Hawk disappears into the shadows.)

MARY

Ever since that day you
dropped off the book,
I liked you, Timmy.
It would break my heart...

SCENE 11: ROOF OF THE OLD POST OFFICE

(An American flag. Tim picks up an empty milk bottle. He hasn't slept in days. Hawk arrives, looking disheveled.)

HAWK
Quite a view.

TIM
I come up here to think.

HAWK
I was worried when I got your note: "Meet me on the roof of the Old Post Office"...sounded like you were planning on jumping. If so, I don't wanna be here. That can get messy.

TIM
No more jokes, Hawk—not anymore. Do you want your cufflinks back?

HAWK
They were a gift.

TIM
I enlisted.

HAWK *(shocked)*
You what?

TIM
I have to get over you.

HAWK
There are other ways. Why don't we take some more time—

TIM
—It won't work.

HAWK
I know, Skippy.

TIM
I'm all packed up. I leave for training tomorrow...they told me I'll probably end up in France.

HAWK
Sounds like torture.

TIM

I wasn't enough for you, Hawk. What we had. We weren't enough.

HAWK

Skippy... Hey, look. The smokestacks of St. Elizabeth.

TIM

The insane asylum.

HAWK and TIM

Where Ezra Pound is writing poetry.

TIM

I wasn't enough. I've stopped taking communion. Because I don't mean it. I've been worshiping you, not Him. I have to... *(get over you)* Hold onto my waist...I wanna lean over the edge.

HAWK

Don't do that.

TIM

Just hold on tight. *(Reluctantly Hawk holds Tim as he leans out over the edge. Tim holds out his bottle out as though he'll drop it.)* With the breaking of this bottle I give up drinking milk, and I sever all attachments to Hawkins Fuller.

(Tim tries to drop the milk bottle. He can't.)

TIM

Promise you won't write.

(Hawk walks back to his office, leaving Tim on the roof.)

SCENE 12: HAWKINS' OFFICE

(Mary is packing her things. She thrusts a piece of paper into Hawk's hands.)

HAWK

What's this?

MARY

My letter of resignation.

HAWK

Mary—

MARY

—Scott McLeod’s firing good people left and right while you stand there gloating.

HAWK

Mary, I’m not gloating. I can’t stop him.

MARY

Somebody’s got to. His “Miscellaneous-M Unit” is ripping this place apart. Jerry Baumeister shot himself in the head.

HAWK

Jesus.

MARY

I can’t stay here, Hawk. I can’t be one of those people who sit there and whisper and snigger. I can’t stay. I don’t approve—

HAWK

—You never have—

MARY

—I don’t approve of your breaking his heart.

HAWK

I didn’t make him enlist.

MARY

He’s in agony, Hawk. He called me to say goodbye. Maybe a Russian bullet will put him out of his misery.

HAWK

Where are you going?

MARY

Back to New Orleans. I’ll give you a ring when I’m back in town. I haven’t been feeling well.

HAWK

Everyone’s leaving me. I miss him, Mary. I know you don’t believe me.

MARY

You’ll find a new friend. Probably later this evening.

HAWK

But...he’s different. My Irish tiger.

(She looks up at Hawk. She doesn't know whether to believe him. She leaves. Hawk goes over to his lawn.)

SCENE 13: TIMOTHY IN FRANCE / HAWKINS IN CHEVY CHASE

(Two years have passed. Tim wanders into a Cathedral in France. Hawk is sitting with Lucy on their lawn. Mary is in a hotel room in New Orleans.)

TIM

I'm breaking our promise. It's two year to the day since we said goodbye and I'm writing to ask you for help. Please, Hawk, do what you can to help the Hungarians—the Russians are strangling them.

LUCY

Sweetie pie...

MARY

Soldier boy...

HAWK

Soldier boy, I have to admit "Help Hungary" came as a surprise. You have been on my mind. A lot.

TIM

I'm writing for the Army's paper, *The Com Z Cadence*. No one to talk to. Billy Graham dropped in, I didn't go. I'm eating lots of cheese and baguettes. I miss you.

HAWK

I bought a house in Chevy Chase...lawn and everything. Time to be an adult, I guess. Ike had a heart attack, I'm sure you heard. Your man Nixon's waiting in the wings.

MARY

Getting your letter was the happiest part of my week, Timmy. Loved your doodles. Beetle Baily.

LUCY

Honey, promise we'll look at carpets tomorrow.

MARY

I hope the Army is treating you well. Or as well as the Army treats anyone. Lonely here in New Orleans. I haven't told anyone I'm here. Not even my mother.

LUCY

Sweetheart, I'm seeing a crack.

MARY

I stay in the hotel room, incognito. I'm headed back to D.C. on Sunday. I've no idea what I'll do there. It's not the same city without you.

LUCY

Sweetie, I'm seeing a crack—it might be a leak, maybe it's nothing. It looks like they slapped some paint on, hoping we wouldn't notice. I'll phone the inspector tomorrow. We've got enough roast for tonight, or would you rather go out for a steak? I'm feeling adventurous...

MARY

Dear Timmy, I miss you. Lots of love. Don't let them boss you around.

TIM

You have been on my mind. A lot.

HAWK

You know where to find me.

SCENE 14: BRICK HOUSE

(It's February, 1957. Tim is back in D.C. Hawk has rented a Brick House for them to be together.)

HAWK

I hope you find your new home satisfactory, Corporal Laughlin.

TIM

I'm not a Corporal.

HAWK

Well you're certainly not a Skippy anymore.

TIM

It's wonderful.

HAWK

I thought the dirty bricks might remind you of New York.

TIM

I tried to stay away. I tried. What are we doing, Hawk?

HAWK

God only knows.

TIM

I lay on my cot, and thought of your arms across my chest.

HAWK

I'm married now, you know: "Lucy."

TIM

Mary told me. I remember Lucy from the Christmas party. Dark hair, delicate hands... I don't give a damn as long as we're together.

HAWK

Here we are. Lie down with me, my soldier boy. Tell me about your purple hearts.

TIM

Every morning I'd go to the Cathedral. Those marble columns streaked with blood. I missed you. I bought some religious essays by T.S. Eliot but I couldn't focus. I finally went to confession.

(Lights up on the PRIEST.)

TIM

Bless me father for I have sinned. It's been nineteen months since my last confession. I have returned to God the best gift He ever gave me. But I cannot say I'm sorry for the sin.

PRIEST

What was this gift?

TIM

The man I love.

PRIEST

Did you give this man back to God in order to save yourself?

TIM

Yes.

PRIEST

Can you give him to God in the spirit of a gift?

TIM

No.

PRIEST

May God have mercy on you, my son.

(Lights down on the Priest.)

TIM

I've never felt as close to God as I do in our Brick House.

HAWK

I don't know about all that, Skippy. I just want you to be happy.

TIM

I am. Because no matter what, I love you, Hawkins Fuller.

HAWK

Same here. What are you doing for work?

TIM

I might need a hand. Do you know Leonard Osbourne?

HAWK

Lenny.

TIM

I hear he's looking for someone to head up the Hungarian Refugee Relief.

HAWK

I'll do what I can.

TIM

You're the best. What else did I miss, besides your wedding?

HAWK

Your pal Roy Cohn turned thirty.

TIM

Did David Schine bake him a cake?

HAWK

Nope, Schine was home with his fiancée. Poor Roy. McCarthy had a good line: "The resignation of Roy Cohn must bring great satisfaction to the Communists and fellow travelers." Why do you care so much about Hungary?

TIM

It's horrible, what they're going through. It boggles my mind, the evil that Russians bring into this world every day. Do you know what they do to men like us in Russia?

HAWK

Easy now. Are you eating at all? You've lost so much weight.

TIM

I'm never hungry these days. God, I love our Brick House—the fireplace. It's perfect.

(Tim kisses Hawk. Hawk sits up, suddenly concerned.)

HAWK

Skippy, don't you want a family someday?

TIM

No. This is plenty for me.

HAWK

But don't you want—

TIM

—A “Lucy” of my own? No thanks. What's the point?

HAWK

Lucy and I honeymooned in Bermuda. Perfect weather. Sun for seven days straight. You've got to go someday, Skippy. You'd die. Lucy read novels and swam in the ocean. I went for long walks in the palm groves...

TIM

Why did you tell me that, Hawk? Why? Why did you have to tell me that?

(Hawk doesn't answer. He knows this isn't going to work. Tim gets up and leaves. Hawk watches him go.)

HAWK

Our very own home, Skippy.
Bricks...a fireplace
Matching plates...a bed...a bookshelf
Towels...gray for you, purple for me.

I'm not one of those, Skippy.
Neither are you...we'll never be that.
I'm not one of those.
Squeals and aprons,
dangling spatulas,
I'm not one of those.
Stay. Just stay.
Come over here.
There are things we can have.

And things we can be...for each other, Skippy.
We can't be that.
You're not one of those.
Let me hold you for an hour.
That's what we get.
That's what we're given.
Let me hold you.
Your head on my arm
just for an hour,
you and me and the moon.
Stay here in the shadows.
Matching plates...a bed...a bookshelf,
we're not that.
We'll never be that, Skippy.
We can't be that, Skippy.
Just let me hold you.
That's what we get.
For an hour
Just for an hour.

(Hawk walks over to Mary's kitchen and sits down.)

HAWK
This can't go on. This can't.

SCENE 15: MARY'S KITCHEN / BRICK HOUSE / ROOM M304

(Mary is leaving for good. Back to New Orleans. She's packing kitchenware into a cardboard box.)

MARY
I never know what to keep. Speak now if you and Lucy need kitchenware. Believe it or not, this has been in my family since the Civil War (*re: a cast iron pan*). Want a slice of bread with jam?

HAWK
No.

MARY
It's all I can offer...my neighbor came by and cleaned out the icebox. How about coffee at least? You don't look so good, Hawk.

HAWK
Mary, I need a favor.

MARY

I don't work for you anymore, remember?

HAWK

I need you to...

MARY

What is it?

HAWK

I need you to tell Tim what I've done.

MARY

What have you done?

HAWK

He asked me to put in a word for him, about a new job. I put in a word.

(As Mary watches, Hawk goes over to room M304. The Interrogator looks up from his clipboard.)

HAWK

Hello again, Mr. Traband. Hawkins Fuller. We had the pleasure of chatting a little while back.

INTERROGATOR

I remember you. What can I do?

HAWK

I have some information...someone who's applying for a job with Lenny Osbourne in Hungarian Relief.

TOMMY

Better be the first to know.

HAWK

I think it's unwise, for his own sake, and the Department's...if this young man gets the job, he's liable to be blackmailed...on account of his tendencies.

INTERROGATOR

Your insight is greatly appreciated, Mr. Fuller. Now, if I could just get some specifics.

MARY

You swine! I never thought I'd say it but...you are a swine, Hawkins Fuller. How could you?

HAWK

I need you to tell him.

MARY

He's so young—this is his whole life...you. What have you done?

HAWK

I need you to tell him.

MARY

Tell him yourself.

HAWK

I want it to seem like you found out.

MARY

You hypocrite.

HAWK

I want him to hate me. He's should hate me. It's the only way out. *(to Interrogator)*
Timothy Laughlin. Timothy Laughlin.

(As Hawk watches, Mary goes over to visit Tim in the Brick House.)

TIM

It's chilly in here, sorry. I can turn on the heater.

MARY

Don't bother, Timmy.

TIM

The bricks keep it cold. I know how you New Awlins gals like a little heat.

HAWK

I had to, Mary.

TIM

Are you glad to be moving back home?

MARY

I suppose. I can't take this town any longer. How are you holding up?

TIM

All right. I just don't understand why wouldn't I get the job? Maybe that is cocky of me.

HAWK

I want him to hate me. He should hate me. It's the only way out.

TIM

Do you need a hand with packing? You have the strangest look in your eye.

HAWK

I did it for both of us. It's the only way out. It would only get worse. I was torturing him. Make it hard on him.

MARY

I know why you didn't get the job.

TIM

Why? I'm not qualified, you can say it.

MARY

Hawk told them about you. He was scared for his job. He thought if you both worked in the State Department...someone was sure to find out.

HAWK

I want him to hate me.

TIM

But why didn't he tell me...? I don't understand.

INTERROGATOR

Timothy Laughlin, Timothy Laughlin...

HAWK

Why?

MARY

He's not who you want him to be.

TIM

But he's exactly who I want him to be.

MARY

You should have had better, Tim. You will...I know it. Oh Timmy, I'm sorry.

TIM

Please go, Mary. I'm sorry. Please go, Mary.

(Heartbroken, Mary leaves. Eventually Tim wanders over to the park bench. He sits.)

SCENE 16: PARK IN DUPONT CIRCLE

(Hawk approaches.)

HAWK

Shed any tears over Joe's death? My favorite part of the eulogy: "Joe was never vindictive. He was a warm, human, and exceptionally charming person." I'm sorry, are we talking about Joe McCarthy here?

TIM

The man's dead. He doesn't need any more floggings.

HAWK

You've got a suitcase.

TIM

I'm going back to New York on the three forty-five.

HAWK

You'll stay with your sister? She'll love that. "Uncle Timothy."

TIM

I don't know. I don't know anything anymore. I'm trying to be angry at you. I'm not. I feel like I never existed.

HAWK

You did, Skippy. You did. You and me both.

TIM

We'll never see each other again, will we?

HAWK

No, Skippy. Someone else will have to remind you to say your prayers. And drink your milk.

(Hawk leaves. Tim sits there alone. Eventually he stands, picks up his suitcase, and leaves.)

THE END