

DEUCE'S WILD

A modern-day Noir, set in Chicago

Written by

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BLACK SCREEN. SILENCE.

ACOUSTIC "DANCING QUEEN" BEGINS—soft, eerie, distant, like a memory unraveling.

FAINT LIGHT FLICKERS... OUT OF FOCUS.

**" Friday night and the lights are low..."**

BLACK HOLDS A LITTLE LONGER.

EXT. DRONE OVER CHICAGO

The sound of a DRONE ACTIVATING. A subtle whirring, like something waking up.

Slowly, a blurry glow appears—deep neon green and gold.

The lights pulse, unfocused. It's dreamlike, almost hypnotic.

WE FADE INTO A BLURRED, OUT-OF-FOCUS IMAGE.

**" Looking out for a place to go..."**

WHERE ARE WE?

A distorted, impressionistic view of the Chicago River—green, glowing, still.

It's unclear at first—like a memory forming, like the city itself is waking up.

Then, SLOWLY, IT SHARPENS.

THE DRONE TAKES OFF - NOW WE SEE THE CITY IN FULL.

**" You can dance... you can jive..."**

The drone camera RISES, revealing Chicago in full neon glow.

Traffic crawls below, headlights streaking. The city moves, unaware of what's about to unfold.

The skyline stretches—half dream, half nightmare.

Chicago hums, alive and waiting.

**" Having the time of your life..."**

DEUCE (V.O.)

CUTS IN-

Chicago. You know the city. But do  
you know this story? My story?

The drone sweeps over the skyline—skyscrapers blinking,  
shadows stretching long. On the streets below, neon signs  
flicker in and out of existence.

A slow glide down to the streets—people moving, hustling,  
whispering in the cold night air. The city hums like a  
restless beast, waiting to strike.

NOW THE V.O.S KICK IN—BUILDING THE CITY, LAYERING THE MOOD.

KING (V.O.)

(cool, dangerous, like he  
owns the place)

The Windy City. Built on power and  
legends.

The camera glides past old-money estates, back alley deals,  
and whispered transactions. Power shifting hands in real  
time.

QUEEN (V.O.)

(sharp, smooth, poetic)

Resurrection Mary. The City of Big  
Shoulders. My Chicago... that flows  
backwards.

**" See that girl... watch that scene..."**

A dimly lit alley. A hand slips a wad of cash into another. A  
blade flashes in the dark. Shadows shift.

JACK (V.O.)

(grinning, street-wise,  
full of love and war)

Urbs in horto... city in a garden.  
Deep dish pizza. Jazz. Blues. Love.  
Hate. In Chicago, we shoot first.

**" Diggin' the dancing queen..."**

INT. A HIGH-STAKES POKER TABLE.

Chips clattering. Eyes calculating. Someone is about to lose  
more than just money.

ACE (V.O.)  
(smooth, deadly, the final  
warning)  
Beware of jealousy, the green-eyed  
monster.

**"Dancing Queen..."**

THEN—A GUNSHOT.

CUTS TO BLACK. DEAD SILENCE.

FADE IN: CHAPTER ONE.

FAINT SOUND OF A DOOR CREAKING OPEN.

Not visually revealed yet, just the sound.

EXT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

A private speakeasy tucked in the underbelly of Chicago. No sign. No address. No rules. A place where power is exchanged over whiskey, cigars, and calculated whispers.

The door creaks open. The camera lingers on a man stepping inside—

"THE CHAIN" & INTRODUCTIONS

FAINT CREAK OF A DOOR.

BLACK SCREEN HOLDS... THEN—

THE DOOR OPENS.

A pair of cowboy boots step inside. Slow. Measured.

The camera and eyes adjust to the dark bar.

CUT TO:

THE DUO STARTS "THE CHAIN"

**"Listen to the wind blow..."** (soft, raw, acoustic—THE DUO, barely visible in the smoky haze.)

A haze of smoke lingers in the air, thick and heavy as the bar light flickers. Our eyes adjust. The world comes into focus.

**"Watch the sun rise.."**

Music is now played and heard and seen as we introduce the characters

DEUCE. 35.

A man with a past, but he wears it light. His movements are casual, but his eyes betray him—always scanning, always reading the room before it reads him.

The bassline hums like a war drum, a slow, steady pulse as DEUCE moves deeper inside.

AT THE BAR—ACE WATCHES.

ACE. 30. Cool. Smooth. Black. He runs the bar, but the truth is—he runs the city. Deals go down, alliances are made, and ACE is at the center of all of it. He leans back, unreadable.

**"Running in the shadows."**

IN THE SHADOWS, JACK SMIRKS.

JACK, 37. Slick. Subtle. A watcher. He and Deuce team up for a ride of passion, danger, and power plays. A man's man. Think Jake Gyllenhaal, but sharper. A man who sees all the angles. Tonight, he's already watching Deuce, waiting for the next move.

BEYOND THE VELVET CURTAIN—KING IS WAITING.

KING. 58. Old money. Old power. Ruthless as hell. Think Colin Farrell gone rogue. He has his eye on Deuce—for power, for play, for whatever he fucking wants. He's patient. He's watching.

**"Damn your love, damn your lies."**

DEUCE LIGHTS A CIGARETTE.

The first move in a long game.

**"And if you don't love me now..."** (the vocals are barely there, almost a ghost in the air.)

THE GAME IS IN MOTION. CHICAGO IS WATCHING.

-Jack is watching.

-Queen is upstairs, playing her own game.

-Ace nods, knowing.

Deuce looks around. Everyone looks at Deuce.

**"You'll never love me again...**

**I can still hear you saying**

**You would never break the chain (never break the chain)"**

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

Deuce steps out for air. The rain is coming. He lifts a cigarette to his lips, but before he can light-

A shadow moves.

**"And if you don't love me now (you don't love me now)**

**You will never love me again**

**I can still hear you saying (still hear you saying)**

**You would never break the chain (never break the chain)"**

The guitar instrumental, the vocals hum the tune.

From another shadow, a cigarette ember glows in the dark. Jack steps barely from the shadows. Roberto and Deuce are not aware of his presence in the alley.

ROBERTO. Late 20s. Hispanic. Thick build. Bartender. Hustler. Knows more than he lets on. ROBERTO is the bartender who serves up more than drinks to women, men, hustlers, hoods, cons and politicians

He steps in close. Too close.

ROBERTO  
(low, teasing)  
You walk like you don't know whose  
city this is.

Deuce doesn't flinch. He exhales slow, unreadable.

Another man steps out of the shadows. Jack. Deuce and Roberto don't see him.

DEUCE  
(cool, measured)  
That supposed to scare me?

Roberto pins him against the wall. Deuce's cigarette should be in his mouth when Roberto pins him—the ember glowing, a tiny flicker of control he refuses to let go of. We don't see the struggle. We don't hear the words. We just feel it.

Deuce's jaw tightens. His fingers curl into fists.

Is this a fight? A game? Something else?

Deuce may want this—but on his terms.

A CLICK. A GUN COCKS IN THE DARKNESS.

Roberto Freezes, just a beat.

BANG. A warning shot splits the night.

Roberto stiffens. Lets go.

ROBERTO  
(low, sexy, growl)  
We're not done her. We both know  
what I want.

Roberto leans in closer. He pulls Deuce in. Their breath mingles. The heat between them is unbearable.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)  
*Everybody pays.*

From the shadows, JACK steps forward.

Deuce doesn't move away, but he doesn't lean in either. A pause—thick, heavy. A moment where a choice could be made.

JACK  
(calm, claiming Deuce)  
Not tonight.

Beat. Cold stare from Jack to Roberto. Then Roberto steps back, smirking. Walks away. He heads back into the bar.

Deuce straightens his collar. A cold stare to Jack.

A slow grin from Jack. A claim has been made.

And Deuce knows it.

Angle on Roberto. He licks his lips. He'll be back for more.

BOOM—THUNDER CRACKS.

COLOR FADES TO BLACK & WHITE.

A HARD MARCH RAIN FALLS.

"FIRE" (ACOUSTIC TO ELECTRIC EXPLOSION)

🎸 A slow, raw, stripped-down version of "Fire" begins—just The Duo, low and intimate.

THE SONG BEGINS - LIVE FROM THE DUO

**"I'm riding in your car, you turn on the radio..."**

BLACK & WHITE. HARD RAIN. OPENING CREDITS ROLL.

The neon lights of Chicago flicker, reflecting in the puddles. The Wild Card's entrance looms—a door to another world. A car door slams. A shadow moves. Deuce is already in motion.

INT. INSIDE THE WILD CARD - SOAKED IN SHADOW & LIGHT.

The camera moves through the space, eyes adjusting. The Duo is on stage, just two voices and an acoustic guitar. The room is quiet, low murmurs, the city waiting.

**"You're pulling me close, I just say no..."**

DEUCE STEPS INSIDE.

A slow walk through the bar. Eyes flick to him, measuring, reading. He plays it cool, but he knows—he's already in the game.

CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS - THE SONG BUILDS

**"I say I don't like it, but you know I'm a liar..."**



AT THE BAR - ACE WATCHES.

Ace doesn't run just this bar—he runs the whole damn city. He leans back, unreadable, whiskey in hand. A nod, just enough to acknowledge Deuce.

**"'Cause when we kiss..."**

IN THE SHADOWS - JACK SMIRKS.

Slick, dangerous, already seeing all the angles. He watches Deuce, takes a slow sip of his drink. A knowing look. A claim unspoken.

**"Oooooooh... FIRE."**

BEHIND THE VELVET CURTAIN - KING WAITS.

Old money. Old power. Eyes sharp, fingers tapping the table. A slow smirk curls on his lips. He knows what's coming. He's playing a longer game than anyone else in the room.

THE SONG SHIFTS - ACOUSTIC TO ELECTRIC

THE GUITAR KICKS IN. THE BEAT DROPS. THE ROOM COMES ALIVE.

THE WILD CARD LIGHTS UP. THE GAME IS ON.

Bartenders move faster. Glasses clink harder. Deals get made. Everything shifts—tension rising, bodies moving, the city breathing.

DEUCE TAKES A SEAT AT THE BAR.

He exhales, takes his time. No rush. No tells. Just a man in the storm.

**"Late at night, you're takin' me home..."**

Opening credits should fade out with the HARD STOP on "Your kisses like fire."

FINAL MOMENT - THE SONG STOPS. DEAD SILENCE.

**"Your kisses like fire."**

COLD. HARD. STOP.

KING LOOKS UP FROM HIS GLASS.

A slow grin. A flicker of danger. He nods, just enough for Ace to see.

BEAT.

THE CITY HAS CHOSEN ITS PLAYERS.

THE GAME IS IN MOTION.

INT. KING'S PRIVATE BOOTH - THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

The booth is dimly lit, whiskey glasses sweating. A TV in the background flashes the St. Patrick's Parade coverage. Darts thud against the back wall. A waitress slides a drink onto the table.

A slow, deliberate slide into the underbelly of the Wild Card. Deuce sits. Waitress comes right over to take the drink order. Deuce orders a Black Manhattan—dark, smooth, deceptively strong

DEUCE  
(calm, measured)  
Black Manhattan.

King watches. A slow grin, eyes full of calculation.

KING  
(watching him, slow grin)  
Kid, where you from?

Deuce lights a cigarette, slow exhale.

DEUCE  
Vegas. That town's too small for me.

KING  
(leans forward, voice like gravel)  
Too small, huh? Funny. Most men who leave Vegas do it because they lost big.

Deuce smirks, but King doesn't blink. The tension tightens.

DEUCE

I don't lose. Not when the stakes  
are real.

King watches him. Then—

KING

And you think Chicago is your  
table? That I'm just another dealer  
handing out cards?

Deuce leans in, confident.

DEUCE

I see money. Sex. Power. I want in,  
and you need me in.

KING

(dead stare, cold smirk)  
I need you in?

Beat. The room tightens.

Then—

A shadow at the booth. QUEEN. She slides into the seat next  
to Deuce, placing her hand on his glass.

Roberto appears, carrying a Black Manhattan.

As he sets it down, Queen reaches first. Deuce's hands flex  
for a moment like he's going to grab the drink or punch  
Queen. He relaxes. Cool. She takes the glass, lifts it to  
her lips, and takes a slow, deliberate sip.

QUEEN

(silk and steel)  
Careful, darling. Some men don't  
like to be told what they need.

Deuce's eyes don't leave hers. He gestures toward Roberto.

DEUCE

(even, controlled) )  
Let the lady have that drink. Bring  
me a fresh one.

Roberto nods, but his gaze lingers—half challenge, half  
curiosity.

Deuce turns back to Queen, tilting his head.

DEUCE (CONT'D)

Where I come from, it's polite to ask.

QUEEN

(leaning in, voice  
dripping with amusement)

Where I come from, I take what I want.

Smoldering silence. The air heats between them.

King grins, shaking his head.

KING

(exasperated, flicking an  
ash from his cigar)

You two wanna get a room for Christ's sake...?

Voices heard from the bar, it grows to an argument. Queen looks over and gives a slight nod. Two thugs grab the man and they scuffle and shove all the way over until they are in front of Queen.

MAN

I'm telling you, Queen, the bet was rigged. Double-or-nothing. You know I got it.

Queen doesn't flinch. She watches, letting the silence stretch. Then, a slow, deliberate sip from her glass. Beat (count to 3)

A single SNAP of her fingers.

MAN (CONT'D)

C'mon, I/

A hand clamps his shoulder. No more words. He's yanked off and escorted out.

A muffled scream. The door swings slowly shut. Then, nothing.

The door swings shut. A muffled SCREAM. Then, nothing.

Deuce's eyes flick to Jack—who doesn't even pause, just aims another dart. Jack takes his time lining up the dart, it feels casual and inevitable.

Queen gets up exits out side where the scream took place.

A soft THUNK as it lands dead center.

Deuce's eyes flick to King, who doesn't even glance up

KING SWIRLING THE ICE IN HIS GLASS. THE SOUND MAGNIFIES. THE CAMERA FOCUSED INTO THE GLASS.

THWACK a dart hits.

CUT TO: JACK AT THE DARTBOARD - NIGHT

Jack leans back, arms crossed, watching the game unfold from across the room. His crew—three guys who know how to handle themselves—linger close.

JACK  
(low, amused)  
New meat in town.

One of his guys, TONY, snorts, lining up a shot.

TONY  
Thinks he's got a seat at the table  
already.

Jack takes a drink, smirking.

JACK  
He's got charm, I'll give him that.  
But charm won't keep him alive in  
this town.

The camera lingers on Jack's knowing expression. He watches Deuce like a man watching a slow-moving train wreck.

THWACK. Another dart hits the board. This time—just outside the bullseye.

JACK (CONT'D)  
(soft, to himself)  
Let's see how long he lasts.

JACK MAKES HIS MOVE.

A figure steps into the booth's space.

Jack. Casual. Loose. Dangerous. A cat who enjoys playing with mice.

JACK  
(grinning) )  
King, I see you've already got your  
hooks in the kid here.

Deuce scoffs, turns.

DEUCE  
 (cool, sharp) )  
 Kid? Who the fuck made you my  
 daddy? I'm older than you. Piss  
 off.

Jack's grin doesn't waver. If anything, it grows.

Queen returns, sitting next to King and opposite Deuce.

JACK  
 (low, amused) )  
 Age's got nothin' to do with it,  
 boy. It's a state of mind. And I  
 think you need me to show you the  
 ropes.

Beat. Deuce leans in just enough.

King lets out a loud bark of laughter, shaking his head.

KING  
 Jesus, you two—get a room!

Queen laughs, flicking the rim of her glass.

QUEEN  
 (mocking, teasing) )  
 Jackie, shouldn't you be out  
 stealing hubcaps or something?

Deuce smirks, exhales smoke.

Jack, still grinning, suddenly pulls Deuce into a loose,  
 playful headlock.

JACK  
 You're funny, new guy. I like  
 funny.

Deuce shaking his head, half-smiling but wary.

KING  
 (waving them off)  
 Alright now, let the kid and I have  
 a conversation.

Jack lifts his hands in mock surrender.

JACK  
 Sure, sure. Play nice.

Roberto returns, setting down the second Black Manhattan.

Deuce lifts the glass. Takes a slow, deliberate sip.

Jack slides away, moving back toward the dartboard. But he doesn't leave.

He watches.

INT. AN HOUR PASSES.

The city moves. The bar churns. The game deepens.

Jack? Still watching.

INT. KING'S PRIVATE BOOTH - THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

Deuce and King. A high-stakes cat and mouse game unfolds.

The air settles. The teasing, the posturing—it's all been a warm-up. Now? It's business.

King takes a slow drag from his cigar, eyes sharp, weighing Deuce like a man appraising a racehorse.

KING

Alright, kid. Enough dancing. You want in, let's see what you're made of.

Deuce leans back, unfazed. He knew this moment was coming.

KING (CONT'D)

There's a dry cleaner on 17th—Shannon's. Been in business forever. Mike Shannon runs it. Irish, stubborn, likes to think he's outside the game. But he ain't. He owes me five hundred. I want it.

Deuce nods, waiting.

KING (CONT'D)

You're gonna go pick it up. And he's gonna try and push back. Say business is slow. Say he needs time. I don't care what he says, I want my money.

King's stare hardens.

Deuce flicks ash from his cigarette, and exhales slow.

DEUCE  
I go it alone.

King smirks, shaking his head.

KING  
Not yet. I don't trust you that  
much.

From the bar, Roberto looks over.

King signals him. He approaches. No love between Deuce and Roberto.

KING (CONT'D)  
You and Roberto.

Deuce hides his irritation. He'd rather handle this himself. Roberto? That's baggage. But he doesn't argue.

KING (CONT'D)  
Roberto will show you the way. But  
I wanna see how you handle  
yourself. You don't get money,  
don't come back. You fuck with me,  
don't come back, I will find you,  
kid.

Deuce nods once, rising. King watches. Smirks.

KING (CONT'D)  
Let's see if you got the stones for  
this town.

EXT. SHANNON DRY CLEANERS - NIGHT

The neon flickers. The street is quiet, the hum of a nearby train cutting through the city.

Deuce and Roberto step out of the car. Roberto adjusts his cuffs, sneering.

ROBERTO  
(low, amused) )  
Hope you can handle this, Vegas.  
Collecting dues ain't just about  
talkin' pretty.

Deuce doesn't respond. Just pushes inside. Deuce enters first taking the lead.



INT. SHANNON DRY CLEANERS - NIGHT

Old-school. Fluorescent lights buzz. A fan hums in the corner. The air smells of starch and heat.

Behind the counter, MIKE SHANNON, 50s, hard-faced, built like a steel beam, watches them.

MIKE  
Store's closed. Come back tomorrow.

Deuce smiles. Easy.

DEUCE  
Yeah, I bet it is. But we're not here for starch and steam. We're here for King's money.

Mike leans on the counter, shaking his head. Talking like he is in charge. He hasn't met Deuce yet.

MIKE  
Business is slow. Thought King would understand that. Give me another week.

Deuce tilts his head, chuckling.

DEUCE  
See, that's funny. Because King said you'd say that. And he told me something else, too.

Mike's eyes narrow.

DEUCE (CONT'D)  
The price just doubled.

Beat.

MIKE  
What?

DEUCE  
Five hundred just became a thousand. Late fees. You understand.

Mike stiffens. His jaw flexes. Roberto's eyebrow goes up.

MIKE  
That ain't how we do things.

Deuce steps closer, lowering his voice.

DEUCE

Then you must not be keeping up.  
King runs this town. When he says  
jump, you don't ask how high—you  
just start jumping. So pay now...  
or we have a problem.

Mike hesitates.

A click. Roberto locks the front door.

ROBERTO

(low, dark)  
No interruptions.

Mike's hand tightens around the counter.

Deuce grins, but his eyes? Dead cold.

DEUCE

Clock's ticking, Mike. What's it  
gonna be?

No more talk. Just action.

Mike hesitates. Deuce sees it in his eyes—a man weighing his options, thinking maybe he can get out of this. Deuce doesn't let him.

WHAM.

A hard right cross. Mike staggers, catches himself on the counter.

Beat.

DEUCE

Time's up, Mikey. You pay, or I  
make an example outta you.

Mike knows it's over. His face tightens. Slowly, he reaches into the register, pulls out a wad of bills.

He counts out a thousand. Hands it over.

Deuce takes the cash, smooths it, pockets it.

DEUCE (CONT'D)

Smart man. King'll appreciate your  
generosity.

Then—on the way out.

Deuce pauses. His eyes land on a black dress shirt hanging on a rack.

He plucks it off the hanger. Holds it up.

DEUCE (CONT'D)  
That's my size.

Mike glares through a swelling eye.

Deuce smirks, slings the shirt over his shoulder.

DEUCE (CONT'D)  
Mikey, thanks for the grand. I'll  
let King know you said 'hi.'

Deuce and Roberto step out.

EXT. SHANNON DRY CLEANERS - NIGHT

A cold wind rolls through.

Deuce and Roberto head for the car. Roberto still looks pissed. They slide in.

Roberto grips the wheel, staring ahead.

Deuce leans in. Low. Threatening.

DEUCE  
(voice like a blade)  
Not a word. You say one thing to  
King about the extra five  
hundred... you're a dead man.

Roberto stares ahead, jaw tight.

Deuce holds the silence. Lets it sink in. No power struggle. No doubt. Just fact.

DEUCE (CONT'D)  
Now drive on.

Roberto starts the car. Pulls out.

FADE TO BLACK

ACT I - CHICAGO DEALS IN BLOOD

ON-SCREEN: MARCH 16 - EVENING

EXT. SIDETRACKS - BOYSTOWN, CHICAGO - NIGHT

Deuce steps into a different kind of jungle.

Sidetracks is packed. The neon glow spills onto the street, the thump of bass-heavy music pulsing through the walls. Laughter, movement, bodies close—the energy is alive.

INT. SIDETRACKS - BOYSTOWN, CHICAGO - NIGHT

Deuce walks in.

The black dress shirt from last night clings to him just right, black jeans snug, black cowboy boots tapping against the floorboards. A five o'clock stubble shadows his face.

He's the new meat in town. And everyone knows it.

A SERIES OF INTERACTIONS.

Man in leather stops Deuce.

A TALL, WIRY MAN IN LEATHER  
Damn, cowboy. You lost? Or looking  
to be found? You're Daddy is right  
here.

Deuce smiles and winks and moves on.

Stocky man approaches.

A STOCKY, BEARDED MAN  
Hey, new guy, I'm a great tour  
guide... especially after hours.

Deuce smiles and nods, lingers for a moment. He moves on.

Two drag queens rush over.

TWO DRAG QUEENS  
Honey, if you don't let us buy you  
a drink, it's a crime against  
fashion.

Two female fag hags step over to Deuce. They pull him toward the dance floor.

ONE WHISPERS IN HIS EAR  
You are exactly the kind of trouble  
my ex warned me about.

Deuce takes it in.

Not cocky. Not rude. Just feeling the energy. He lets hands brush against him, the glances linger. He's being sized up—but he's not resisting it. He's learning the room. The music plays on.

INT. SIDETRACKS - AT THE BAR

Deuce nudges up to the bar. A Black Manhattan doesn't belong here.

He orders a beer.

DEUCE  
I'll take beer.

FRANCIS, 26. A very well-built Asian bartender. Shirtless. Confidence in every movement. Francis sees the game immediately.

FRANCIS  
(grinning, setting the  
beer down)  
You're new here.

DEUCE  
(taking a sip, smirking)  
That obvious?

Francis leans in.

FRANCIS  
Oh yeah. And I like new.

The seduction is casual. Unspoken.

Francis rests his elbows on the bar, all muscle and charm. His eyes don't leave Deuce.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)  
So, you just looking? Or you  
planning on making someone's night?

Deuce tilts his beer back, unreadable.

He doesn't answer. Doesn't have to.

Francis likes that.

He slides closer. A subtle, confident move.

Then—A PRESENCE. Someone watching from the shadows of the bar.

Jack. He's been here. Observing. Letting it play out. But now? He moves in.

Jack eases into the space between them.

Smooth. Unapologetic.

Francis pulls back slightly, recognizing the shift.

Jack doesn't even have to look at him.

JACK

(to Deuce, amused)

Damn. I leave you alone for five minutes, and you're already the main attraction.

Deuce turns, slow. Meets Jack's eyes.

Francis lingers—waiting to see if he's been dismissed.

Jack finally looks at him. Just once. That's all it takes.

Francis grins, backs off. Slides down the bar.

Jack just took over. Effortless.

JACK (CONT'D)

(smirking, low)

Tell me, cowboy. You just testing the waters, or you actually here to swim?

Beat. The game between them just shifted.

Deuce tilts his beer, takes another slow sip.

Jack watches. Waiting. Smirking.

The air between them is thick.

The city keeps moving. The music keeps pulsing.

But at this moment? It's just the two of them.

JACK (CONT'D)  
(grinning, easy)  
You want instant gratification, go  
with that hand. You want the  
JACKpot-

Deuce catches the wordplay. Smirks. Eyes drop to Jack's crotch, just for a beat.

Jack doesn't blink. Jack snaps his finger to break the spell he already has on Deuce. Cool and confident.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Hey, cowboy. Eyes up here. We'll  
get to that if you're ready...

A wink.

Deuce just met his match.

Francis slides back in. Drops a card in front of Deuce.

FRANCIS  
Here's my WhatsApp.

The business card sits on the bar.

Jack stares at it. Then at Deuce. Then back to the card.

Francis lingers.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)  
Jackie, you want another or-

Jack cuts him off, cool and smooth with a waive of his hand. Jack's eyes never leave Deuce's eyes.

JACK  
I'll be sure to let you know when  
I'm ready. Thanks.

The stare down continues.

Francis moves to another patron. The card screams to be picked up.

Jack leans in. We can't hear what he whispers.

Francis watches from across the bar.

Fifteen seconds pass. Jack pulls back, eyes locked on Deuce.

DEUCE  
 (slow, in control) )  
 I'll go all in for the JACKpot.

Jack picks up the business card.

JACK  
 (smirking, flipping the  
 card between his fingers)  
 So, no need for this.

Jack drops a \$5 bill on the card. Leaves it on the bar.  
 Turns. Walks out.

Deuce follows.

EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - NIGHT

They step into the crisp night air.

They walk. Toward the subway. Toward the Loop.

Neither speaks.

INT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

The stage glows under a haze of smoke and neon. The DUO steps  
 into the light. One strums a few chords—playful, teasing.

DUO SINGER MALE  
 You ever try to be someone you're  
 not?

They smirk at each other. Then—

DUO SINGER FEMALE  
 Let's give 'em Grace.

THE DUO VAMPS

Cue: "GRACE KELLY" by MIKA.

DUO FEMALE  
 I wanna talk to you  
 The last time we talked, Mr. Smith,  
 you reduced me to tears  
 I promise you it won't happen again

The crowd perks up. A sexy chaos brews.



INT. TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

JACK and DEUCE move through the crowd. Tension cloaked in cool. They board the train, the muffled chords of the song seem to follow.

INT. TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS

They sit across from each other. Jack taps a finger to the rhythm. Deuce's boot matches.

MALE DUO V.O.

(singing)

*Do I attract you? Do I repulse you  
with my queasy smile? Am I too  
dirty, am I too flirty? Do I like  
what you like?*

JACK

(dry, ironic) They're  
playing our song.

DEUCE

Funny. Sounds more like a warning.

Then—Jack smirks.

FEMALE DUO V.O.

(singing)

*I could be wholesome, I could be  
loathsome, I guess I'm a little bit  
shy Why don't you like me, why  
don't you like me, without making  
me try?*

JACK

(truth, not cocky)  
Cowboy, you know the house always  
wins.

Deuce stares ahead. Unmoved.

DEUCE

I'll take my chances.

Jack's grin widens. He leans in, voice low, vibrating with intent.

Back to—

INT. THE WILD CARD -CONTINUOUS

The DUO hits the chorus. The crowd claps, stomps. Lights swirl. The song's pulse becomes urgent

THE DUO & THE CROWD

(singing)

*I tried to be like Grace Kelly, mmh  
But all her looks were too sad, aah  
So I tried a little Freddie, mmh  
I've gone identity mad!  
I could be brown, I could be blue,  
I could be violet sky  
I could be hurtful, I could be  
purple, I could be anything you  
like  
Gotta be green, gotta be mean,  
gotta be everything more  
Why don't you like me, why don't  
you like me?  
Why don't you walk out the door?*

INT. TRAIN CAR -CONTINUOUS

MALE DUO V.O.

Getting angry doesn't solve anything.

JACK

Like you think that chance is yours to give or take. Baby, you're already in the game. My game. Like I said, the house—

Deuce turns and leans in inches away, face-to-face. Quick. Power shift. A single finger to Jack's lips.

MALE DUO V.O.

*How can I help it, how can I help it? How can I help what you think?..*

DEUCE

Shhh.

Then—a kiss. Quick, precise—over before Jack can react, but not before he feels it.

Deuce pulls back.

Jack gives just a slow exhale, like a man who's just been checkmated.

He licks his lips slightly, like he's processing the taste of Deuce. He savors the taste of the kiss. All the while eyes locked on Deuce.

Back to—

INT. THE WILD CARD - CONTINUOUS

The crowd's wild now. A full fever pitch

Back to—

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jack and Deuce slam into the room. Hands on clothes, mouths on skin. Frenzied. Wordless.

They fall onto the bed—half-laughing, fully desperate.

MATCH CUT INT. THE WILD CARD - CONTINUOUS

DUO & CROWD

(singing)

*I could be brown, I could be blue,  
I could be violet sky  
I could be hurtful, I could be  
purple, I could be anything you  
like...*

MATCH CUT INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack and Deuce have shirts off, rolling in bed.

JACK

(groans, high intensity)

Wait...(he reaches from the bed)  
Light.

He turns off the light. Screen is black. Sound of heavy breathing.

Then—

DUO (V.O.)

Humphrey... we're leaving..

DUO & CROWD (V.O.)

KA-CHING!

INT. BALCONY - NIGHT

The skyline glows. Deuce and Jack stand outside. Cool AF boxer shorts. Nothing else. Hair tousled, skin dewy with aftermath.

Deuce taps his foot. Not looking at Jack.

Jack watches him. A slow grin curls.

They give a side glance—then together, half-mocking, half-honest:

JACK & DEUCE  
(singing)  
I tried to be like Grace  
Kelly...mmmm

They both BURST out laughing. They fall back into bed. A mess of limbs and leftover laughter.

INT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

Late May. ZOOM into the calendar behind the bar, flyers for upcoming Memorial day. The bar is full, business booming. Deuce brings out a rack of glasses to the bar for Roberto. Still no love between them.

Queen calls Deuce over and she whispers in his ear, slips a business card in his very tight, well fitting jeans.

QUEEN  
I need a man who knows how to  
finish what he starts.

Deuce's black cowboy boots shine like black gold. He pulls back, considering the option, keeps it cool.

The DUO starts singing "I get along without You very Well" easy, sultry.

CHORD.

MALE DUO  
**"I get along with out you very  
well, of course I do"**

Jack stops him.

JACK  
What's up with Queen?

DEUCE

Nothing. She wants...some work done.

JACK

Be careful with that one, her "work" always has a price.

A female patron pulls Deuce to the floor to dance. He winks a Jack.

FEMALE DUO

**"Except when soft rains fall and drip from leaves then I recall"**

Deuce spins the woman around and he looks at Jack deep all the while.

Jack has a sly grin.

DUO

(in harmony)

**"The thrill of being sheltered in your arms, of course I do. But I get along without you very well."**

MONTAGE AS THE SONG PLAYS ON

No voices heard just storytelling on-screen.

**"I've forgotten you just like I should. Of course I have"**

-Deuce visits Mike Shannon to get paid. Mike gives him \$500, Deuce looks at him and hand motions more. He lifts his right arm like a loaded gun and smiles. Mike Shannon reluctantly pays up—then something flickers in his face. A tell. A hesitation. Mike winces and counts out another \$500.

-Deuce and Jack getting a Chicago hot dog on the street, sunny afternoon. Laughing, looking.

**-"Except to hear your name"**

-Jack takes call and then motions he has to leave."

**-"Or someone's laugh that is the same. But I've forgotten you just like I should."**

-Another night, Deuce and King at the bar. A patron gets out of hand and King nods to Deuce.

**-"What a guy. What a fool am I"**

-Deuce drags the patron outside. Angle on feet. Deuce throws a punch and we see the guy fall on the ground at Deuce's feet. Deuce reaches down and pulls money and drugs out of the guy's pockets.

-Jack at his apartment looking out at the night sky, full moon.

**-“To think my breaking heart could kid the moon.”**

-He takes out his cell phone and we see him queue up Deuce. Deuce's cell phone rings but Deuce ignores it. Jack downs a shot of whiskey and slowly exhales. He rubs the phone like it is a magic lamp wishing for Deuce to pick up.

**-“What's in store, should I call once more?”**

-Deuce at the bar stops out side he goes to call Jack.

**-“no I guess it's best that I”**

-Deuce is about to call, he thinks. He presses the call button, the call rings once, then Deuce cancels the call.

DEUCE

Fuck.

HARD CUT TO JACK

Alone in his apartment. The moonlight on his face. He picks up his phone. Rubs it. Starts typing.

JACK (TEXTING)

“Hey Cowboy. It's your Jackpot.”

He pauses. Stares at it.

Backs up. Erases “It's your Jackpot.” Thinks. Erases “Cowboy.” Now it's just.. “Hey.”

Jack stares at the one word. A long, painful beat.

He inhales slow. Exhales even slower. Then—he hits SEND.

CUT TO DEUCE'S  
PHONE—VIBRATING  
ON A BAR TABLE.

Deuce sees the text. His face? Fucking unreadable. He doesn't move. Doesn't reply.

Just downs the rest of his drink

**-“No it’s best that I stick to my tune”**

HARD CUT

EXT. QUEEN’S APARTMENT BUILDING

Fireworks in the night sky for the 4th of July.

-Deuce is at the entrance to Queen’s penthouse on Miracle Mile. The song fades and real sounds come back.

-A gust of wind ruffles his jacket—something unsettling. He glances up at the penthouse windows. Dark.

-The BOOM BOOM of fireworks makes him flinch just slightly.

SILENCE.

Deuce takes the business card out of his pocket. He studies it. He rubs his thumb over the business card. Thinks. Beat. He breathes out slowly.

-The BOOM of the fireworks should cut to silence just as he hits the buzzer

THEN he rings.

QUEEN V.O.

Do you know what you’re walking  
into?

DEUCE

(low and sultry)  
You tell me, Queen.

INT. THE LOBBY OF QUEEN’S APARTMENT BUILDING

Buzzer sound and he opens the door. He heads to the elevator. He gets on the doors close

INT. QUEEN’S PENTHOUSE

Deuce steps into the elevator. The doors start to close. A reflection of himself in the mirror—shaking it off, regaining control. Then— the DUO’s last haunting lyric starts. BAM. The TRAIN KISS HITS HIM.

Fast cut to Deuce’s face—masking it, but his jaw tenses.

The elevator doors close.

MALE DUO V.O.

"I get along without very well  
Except perhaps in Spring."

THE DUO

(in harmony)

"But I should never think of Spring  
for that would surely break my  
heart in two."

QUEEN'S "OPPORTUNITIES" SCENE - DEUCE CONTROLS THE GAME

INT. QUEEN'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Fireworks rain in the sky through floor-to-ceiling windows. A half-drunk martini glass rests on a sleek, black marble bar. Queen, effortlessly poised, watches from her perch as Deuce peels off his black cowboy boots.

Deuce doesn't rush. This isn't submission. This is control.

He unbuttons his shirt. Slow. Calculated. Letting her see everything—but on his terms.

QUEEN

(amused, sipping her  
martini)

Delicious.

Deuce tilts his head, watching her right back. A slow smirk. Then—he pauses. His jeans drop to floor and we see the perfect sculpted body of a Greek God.

DEUCE

(low, controlled, deadly)

You have no idea.

Pause. Queen looks with great anticipation. Deuce looks down at his manhood and smiles. Queen smiles and sips her martini. Then, he pulls them back up. The air thickens.

DEUCE (CONT'D)

But you will.

Queen's eyes flicker, a slow grin curling at the edges. She likes this. She raises her glass in a toast.



QUEEN

Oh... keep me waiting, cowboy.

She sips. The camera lingers on the ice swirling in the glass. The tension remains—unbroken.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. OUTSIDE JACK'S APARTMENT - AN HOUR LATER

The sound of fireworks in the sky.

Deuce lifts his fist to knock—then stops. A slow exhale. He shifts his weight.

His thumb brushes the edge of his phone—like he's debating just walking away.

Then—he knocks.

MALE DUO V.O.

"I get along without you very well"

A moment the door opens. Sees Deuce.

His fingers grip the edge of the doorframe—just a flicker of tension.

Then, like a mask slipping into place—he smirks.

JACK

Cowboy.

DEUCE

Jackpot.

Jack pulls Deuce in by the shirt, rough and sexy. Deuce eases the door closed with his boot.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

Laughter and the sound of boots coming off, groans of delight, glasses of whiskey clinking."

Jack's hand pressing flat against Deuce's bare back— Deuce's fingers curling into Jack's wrist—tight, desperate.

A slow, sharp inhale.

The song fades.

FADE OUT.

THE 30-DAY POWER ASCENT - BUT NO KILL YET

RADIO

(V.O.)

The Labor Day Weekend is heating up. Parade and fireworks will be on lawn at Grant Park. Get the Bean. Get to the music. Summer is almost gone. It's gonna be a hot day in the park.

MONTAGE - DEUCE RISING IN KING'S WORLD A hard montage plays under a low jazz score mixed with street noise. No dialogue. Just images.

- Deuce collecting payments from backroom poker games.
- A store owner hesitates before paying. Deuce slams him against a counter.
- A gambling den. Deuce stands at King's right hand, learning, absorbing.
- A gun in Deuce's hand. He weighs it, heavy.
- In an alley, Deuce presses the barrel to a man's head. Deuce presses the barrel to a man's head. A flicker of hesitation. The man squeezes his eyes shut. A breath-waiting.

CUT AWAY.

No shot. No sound.

HARD CUT

- Deuce making a call. A dump truck rolling in. A dumpster emptied.

A final image: Deuce at a high-rise window, looking over the city. His reflection blurs into the skyline.

MONTAGE ENDS

INT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

Smoky. Slow-moving. A hush over the bar. The Male Duo starts singing-low, rich, almost painful.

DUO MALE  
"Strumming my pain with his  
fingers..."

CUT TO  
SIDETRACKS.

INT. SIDETRACKS

The neon hums low. Jukebox crackles. The song follows us.

Deuce, nursing a whiskey. Jack slides in next to him.

As Jack exhales—THE FEMALE DUO'S VOICE JOINS IN.

DUO FEMALE V.O.  
"Singing my life with his words..."

Deuce sits at the bar, nursing a whiskey. His face unreadable. Francis polishing a glass at the other end.

A flicker of movement. Deuce doesn't need to turn. He knows it's Jack.

DEUCE  
(calm, unreadable)  
Are you checking up on me?

Deuce exhales through his nose. Doesn't look at him. Jack nods to Francis for a beer.

Jack sits down. A long pause. He exhales slow, tapping his fingers against his glass.

Deuce doesn't look up. Jack studies him. Finally—Jack smirks.

JACK  
(low, even)  
Something like that, kid.

Their eyes lock. The tension is fucking unbearable. Jack exhales slow—like he already knows the answer.

DUO MALE V.O.  
"AND THEN HE LOOKED RIGHT THROUGH  
ME AS IF I WASN'T THERE..."

JACK  
 (soft, almost teasing)  
 You don't have to play the tough  
 guy, cowboy. We should both say  
 what is going on.

A beat-thick, heavy, charged. Deuce doesn't move. Neither  
 does Jack. The song swells.

SPLIT SCREEN: SIDETRACKS & THE WILD CARD.

On one side: Jack & Deuce, caught in a moment that will never  
 be enough.

On the other: The Male Duo, bathed in blue light, singing the  
 final line.

The split screen lingers. Deuce & Jack, trapped in something  
 unspeakable.

The Male Duo sings the final line.

DUO MALE  
**"And he just kept on singing...  
 singing my life with his words..."**

The Wild Card fades out first—leaving only Sidetracks.

Only Jack & Deuce. No escape. They're still looking at each  
 other. Still not moving.

FADE TO BLACK.

In the darkness.

JACK  
 (SOUND ONLY)  
 Slow exhale.

Then—so faint, almost imagined—one last, haunting whisper of  
 the song.

DUO MALE V.O.  
**"Strummin my pain with his  
 fingers..."**

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BACKROOM - THE WILD CARD SPEAKEASY - NIGHT

A slow, acoustic version of "The Gambler" plays live.

DUO FEMALE

**"On a warm summer evening, on a  
train bound for nowhere."**

The singer's voice is barely above a whisper, just adding to the ambiance.

A haze of cigar smoke. Whiskey sweating in glasses.

SIX flips over her final card—wins. The dealer barely reacts—like he's seen her pull this shit before.

She collects her winnings slow, letting every man in the room feel the loss.

Then she leans back, cool as ice, sipping whiskey like she's been doing this forever.

Across the room, King watches.

When King nods at Deuce:

DUO FEMALE (CONT'D)

**" Know when to hold 'em, know when  
to fold 'em.."**

KING exhales slow, watching the table, eyes unreadable. Then, without looking, he slides a single poker chip across the table toward Deuce. It spins once. Lands dead center.

Deuce sees it. Knows exactly what that means.

King doesn't say a word. Just watches.

He moves in, smooth and controlled, places a hand on Six's shoulder.

DEUCE

(low, firm)

Game's over. Let's go.

Jack steps closer, Six sees him.

SIX

(glances at her cards,  
unfazed)

I don't know what you mean.

DEUCE  
 (gritted teeth, low growl)  
 Look, kid-

Six looks at Jack and smiles.

SIX  
 (quick, teasing, dagger-  
 sharp)  
 Hey, doesn't Jack call you 'kid'?  
 You tense up every time he calls  
 you that. You don't even know it,  
 do you?

Deuce tenses. Six smirks. She knew that would land.

Six, leaning in, voice like silk.

SIX (CONT'D)  
 You sure he's not the one in  
 charge?

Deuce pulls her from the table, dragging her out into the  
 warm, humid night.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

An Indian summer evening. The air thick with the last breath  
 of September.

Deuce shoves Six back against the brick wall-gently, but  
 firm.

DEUCE  
 (low, dangerous)  
 Why the hell are you playing the  
 house?

SIX  
 (soft, wicked smirk)  
 Maybe I like the odds. I haven't  
 figured you out, yet.

Deuce exhales sharp. This kid. Too damn bold.

DEUCE  
 Are you tailing me?

She shrugs, flicking something off his collar, way too close

SIX  
 Well, you are easy on the eyes.

SIX (CONT'D)  
 (grinning, teasing)  
 You ever notice we kinda look  
 alike?

DEUCE  
 (smirks, sips his drink)  
 Guess Chicago breeds 'em pretty.

Beat. Deuce thinks and then smirks.

SIX  
 (mock-gagging, playful but  
 sharp)  
 Jesus, don't make it weird.

DEUCE  
 (laughing, knocks back his  
 whiskey)  
 Trust me, it ain't that deep.

SIX  
 (leaning in, breathy, a  
 dare, a tease)  
 You sure Jack's not the one in  
 charge?

A fingertip traces his jaw, slow, testing. Deuce doesn't pull  
 away, but—there's something there. Something off. Not  
 hesitation. Something deeper.

Just a flicker in his eyes—like something in his gut just  
 turned over. Like he knows something but doesn't have the  
 words yet.

Jack. Watching. Amused. But his claim is clear.

Then—Jack steps in. Presence. Control. The moment shatters.

Jack places a firm hand on Deuce's shoulder—calm, but final.

JACK  
 (smooth, deadly, to Six)  
 Not tonight.

Then, nodding toward the door.

JACK (CONT'D)  
 King wants to talk to you.

Six studies Jack for a beat. Then flicks her gaze back to  
 Deuce.

SIX

Well, Deuce, guess you're not the  
Boss Man.

She turns, sauntering inside. Deuce simmers—but not sure why.

As the Door Opens from Outside (When Six Return):

Now, "Queen of Hearts" is playing by the live duo. As the door shuts the music cuts.

DEUCE

(gritted, muttered)  
Cockblocker.

JACK

(easy tone, measured  
smirk)  
I've been watching all your moves,  
kid. I like what I see. But Six?  
She's not for you.

DEUCE

(snaps back, pissed, half-  
spitting the words)  
Fuck you. You think you know my  
type? What I need? What I—

Jack doesn't let him finish. He pulls Deuce in for a heavy, full-on kiss. A claiming. A battle. A fucking war.

Then, Jack steps back. Eyes locked.

JACK

(low, unwavering)  
I know what you need. I *know what I*  
*need*. You. And me.

Deuce breathes hard. Jack just upended everything.

DEUCE

(cocky, hiding the shake  
in his voice)  
Yeah, right. Piss off.

Jack yanks Deuce in. Tight. Their chests press. Deuce breath hitches—just for a second.

JACK

(low, venomous, certain)  
You don't know it yet, but you  
will.  
(brushing Deuce's five o'clock  
shadow, whispering in his ear)

(MORE)



JACK (CONT'D)

You want to be King? I can make that happen. But you don't get there alone.

Music softly starts inside—just the bassline of “Queen of Hearts.”

Jack grins, stepping back, voice silk and steel.

MALE DUO V.O.

(faint in the background)

**“Midnight. And I'm waitin on the 12:05”**

JACK

Your jackpot is right here.

Deuce scoffs—but his fingers twitch. No, not just twitch. Curl into a fist. Tight.

A tell. A fucking tell.

His breathing shifts—sharper now. Not loud. But Jack catches it.

MALE DUO V.O.

**“Hopin it will bring me just a little farther down the line.”**

JACK

Get inside. King's got a plan for you and Six.

MALE DUO V.O.

**“The moonlight is just a heartache in disguise.”**

Deuce smirks, but it's a cover. This just got real.

DEUCE

(grinning, but unreadable)

Jackpot... we'll see.

As the Door Opens from Outside.

CUT TO:

INT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

As the door creaks open—“Queen of Hearts” fully kicks in, full-bodied, sultry, and smooth.

The door swings open. Deuce steps inside.

The door swings shut—HARD.

BOOM. The band SLAMS INTO IT.

THE DUO  
**"Playing with the queen of hearts."**

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WILD CARD

Jack exhales, watching the door shut behind Deuce. Smirks. Runs his tongue across his teeth—satisfied. Like he just devoured something.

He rubs his jaw—where Deuce's breath just was. Just for a second.

JACK  
 (low, to himself, amused  
 as hell)  
 Jackpot...

He exhales slow, turns up his collar. Walks off into the dark.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BACKROOM - THE WILD CARD SPEAKEASY - NIGHT

The last chords of "Queen of Hearts" fade out.

BAND  
 Alright folks, we're gonna take  
 fifteen. This is Chicago, so go  
 make some action.

A few laughs. A few clinks of glasses. But at King's table? The game is just starting.

Deuce approaches as Six leans in, full of confidence.

SIX  
 (easy, slick)  
 Okay, King, I got it. Easy mark. I  
 work solo, so no problem.

Deuce watches. King listens. King glances toward the alley door—Jack steps inside. Silent, watching. He nods and Jack comes over.

KING

(calm, absolute)

Well, I'm pairing you up with  
Deuce. Jackie, you'll be joining  
these two tomorrow.

SIX

(head back groaning)

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. First I  
gotta work with the Kid, now I get  
the other one too?

(gestures at Jack,  
exasperated)

You two better not be the needy  
type.

King smiles, flicks his cigar.

JACK

(slick, unreadable)

Hey, that makes us newlyweds,  
darling. Hope you don't mind  
sharing a bed.  
(leans in, voice dropping just  
enough to make it sharp as a knife)  
...Or losing one.

SIX

(groaning, throwing up her  
hands)

Oh, for the love of God.  
I got Tweddle Dee and Tweddle Dum  
slowing me down?

SIX (CONT'D)

(leaning back, arms  
crossed, defiant)

King, seriously. I can do this  
myself. I don't need these gym rats  
hanging around.

Silence. A long, slow silence.

King watches her. No expression. No reaction. Nothing.

Then—he exhales. A single, slow drag of his cigar.

The camera pulls back, slow. They're all in.

But is it all for one? Or is it everyone for themselves?

King—cool, watching, unmoving.

Six—arms crossed, but her knee bounces under the table.

Jack—stirring his drink, unreadable, but always watching Deuce.

Deuce—leaning back, but his fingers curl, just slightly.

INT. THE WILD CARD - 30 MINUTES LATER

The camera comes back to the table. The Duo is talking to Roberto at the bar. Voices come back up on the King conversation.

KING  
(smooth but final)  
Settle down, the two of you. This  
is how it's going down.

Silence. The weight of the moment settles in.

KING (CONT'D)  
(leaning forward, voice  
dropping low)  
It's a high-stakes poker game.  
Carmine Tortorelli's. Tomorrow  
night. (to Six) You're at the table.  
Your husband, Jack, right beside  
you.

SIX  
(laughs, shaking her head,  
looking at Jack)  
King, come on. Jack's a lousy  
player.

KING  
(grinning, savoring it)  
That's right. He's there to set you  
up.

Six exhales through her nose. She doesn't like this.

KING (CONT'D)  
You clean up. Take all the money.  
You three split ten percent.

JACK  
(deadpan, relaxed)  
Right, boss. Got it. Guess that  
makes us newlyweds. Hope you don't  
snore, darling.

Deuce shifts in his seat, eyes flicking toward Jack. Something unreadable crosses his face—but he keeps his mouth shut

SIX  
(mock offense, laughing  
but sharp)  
Ten percent? Then what do they get?

JACK  
(smirks, slow as hell)  
Do the math. Three-way split.

DEUCE  
Six, let's not forget that I had to  
drag your ass out of here for  
trying to steal from the house.

Six, looks then disregards that comment.

SIX  
(leaning back, arms  
crossed)  
King, seriously. I can do this  
myself. I don't need these gym rats  
hanging around.

Silence.

A long, slow silence.

King watches her. No expression. No reaction. Nothing.

Then—he exhales. A single, slow drag of his cigar.

The smoke curls. Spreads. Thick. Heavy.

The camera lingers.

No one speaks. No one breathes.

Then—King simply flicks the ash.

King watches her. No expression. No reaction. The power in  
the room shifts.

Everyone feels it.

DEUCE  
So King... what's my angle?

KING  
(calm, unreadable, but  
absolute)  
Driver and muscle. If things go  
south, you take over. Get these two  
out—alive, with all the money.

SIX

(exhales, but covers it  
with a cocky grin)  
Alright, alright. I get it. You're  
the boss, King.

(leans in, flicking a  
glance at Deuce)  
Doesn't mean I gotta like my new  
buddies.

(then, smirking, glancing  
between Deuce and  
Jack—digging in the knife  
just a little deeper)  
...Or who's leading and who's just  
following.

Deuce leans back. Unbothered. Cool. But—his fingers twitch.  
Then curl. Just slightly. A tell. A move so small, no one  
sees it. Except Jack.

Jack leans back, slow smirk, watching Deuce—then, lower,  
deadlier.

JACK

Careful, Cowboy.

Beat. Just a whisper. Just a breath grazing Deuce's  
jawline—deadly, certain.

JACK (CONT'D)

You're already in my game.

Jack taps Deuce's hand on the table—just once, light,  
precise. Claiming. Final.

JACK (CONT'D)

And I don't lose.

Deuce exhales slow. His jaw shifts—like he's biting something  
back. Then, unseen beneath the table—his other hand curls  
into a fist. Tight. Unyielding. Jack doesn't see it. But we  
do.

The game is on.

The camera pulls back.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THE WILD CARD SPEAKEASY - MOMENTS LATER

The bar hums with energy. Glasses clink. Cigarette smoke curls in the dim light. At a table near the back, Queen stirs her martini with a slow, deliberate hand.

Deuce drops into the seat across from her.

QUEEN  
(smirking, studying him)  
Took you long enough.

DEUCE  
(dry, unreadable)  
You waiting for me?

QUEEN  
(silk and steel)  
I knew you'd come. I know men like you.

Deuce exhales, taps his fingers against the table.

From across the room, Jack and Six approach.

JACK  
(casual, teasing)  
Hey, cowboy. We're going out for pizza. You wanna come?

DEUCE  
(leaning back, smirking)  
If you think you need it.

Six laughs, nudging Jack. Queen smirks.

SIX  
(grinning)  
No, you didn't.

Jack shakes his head, throwing a playful headlock on Deuce.

JACK  
(laughing, but controlled)  
You got jokes now, huh?

QUEEN  
(leaning back, amused but sharp)  
When you boys are finished..

Jack raises his hands in surrender.

JACK  
(mocking)  
Yes, Queen. Backing away.

He winks. Queen sips her martini.

Jack and Six head toward the exit, disappearing into the night.

QUEEN  
There will be a price to pay for my help.

DEUCE  
The house always wins, right?

Queen nods.

DEUCE (CONT'D)  
What's the going rate?

Queen swirls her martini. They lock eyes. Deuce swirls his whisky. The ice clinks. Tension locked.

Deuce downs the whiskey. In a smoldering voice. He exhales slow. SILENCE.

DEUCE (CONT'D)  
Then let the fucking house win.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCAL PIZZA JOINT - NIGHT HOUR LATER

A dimly lit booth, red vinyl seats, a pitcher of beer sweating on the table. Jack and Six sit across from each other. The pizza hasn't arrived yet. The energy is easy, but beneath it, there's tension.

Jack scoffs, pouring himself a glass. He echoes Deuce's words.

JACK  
(muttering, amused)  
If you think you need it.

Six grins, swirling her drink. Then, she drops it.

SIX  
(casual, but cutting)  
You like him.



JACK  
(blinking, playing dumb)  
Who?

SIX  
(leaning in,  
conspiratorial, teasing)  
Come on. I'm cool. Deuce. You like  
Deuce.

Jack laughs, but it's forced. He reaches for his beer, takes a slow sip.

JACK  
(deflecting, smirking)  
Yeah, right. Me? Like Deuce? I'm  
not gay.

Jack doesn't react. Just takes a sip of his beer. Doesn't look up. Doesn't blink.

SIX  
(slow smirk, watching him)  
I mean— We're all friends here,  
right?

Jack finally looks at her. Steady. Controlled. A fortress.

JACK  
(easy, smooth, cold as a  
razor blade)  
That what we are?

SIX  
(grinning, slicing another  
piece of pizza)  
Friends? Enemies? Hmm. Dunno yet.

Beat.

Six tilts her head, studying him. Like she's peeling him open.

Six leaning in, voice low, teasing, pushing the knife in just a little bit deeper.

SIX (CONT'D)  
But Jackie... I saw you.

Jack keeps drinking. Doesn't flinch. But his fingers tighten on the glass.

Six knows and Jack knows she knows.

SIX (CONT'D)  
 (soft, deliberate, just  
 between them)  
 I saw why you stopped us. And it  
 wasn't about you playing the game.  
 It was about him.

Jack sets his drink down.

JACK  
 ( (low, smooth, absolute)  
 Careful, Six. I don't play games I  
 can't win.

She reaches across the table, squeezes his hand. A pause.  
 Silence. Jack studies her, weighing if he's being played.

JACK (CONT'D)  
 (chuckles, shaking his  
 head)  
 Yeah, okay. Me and cowboy.  
 Brokeback Mountain part two.

Six lets the moment sit, then Jack shifts gears.

JACK (CONT'D)  
 (grinning, biting into his  
 pizza, shaking it off)  
 You really wanna know what I think  
 about Deuce? He's a cocky,  
 reckless, stubborn-as-hell pain in  
 my ass. But yeah, he's good. Maybe  
 even better than you.

SIX  
 (smirking, teasing, deadly  
 soft)  
 Careful, Jackie. You sound like you  
 actually give a damn.

Jack just grins. Plays the game.

JACK (SMOOTH, SLOW, WARNING)  
 Don't mistake me for sentimental,  
 darling.

Jack wipes his mouth with a napkin. Casual. Slow.

Then—he flips the table.

JACK (CONT'D)  
 (sudden, cold, cutting  
 through the bullshit)  
 So. What if you lose?

Six brushes this off, too fast.

SIX  
I won't.

JACK  
(dead serious now)  
You won't. *But if you do?*

SIX  
(grinning, confident)  
I got insurance.

Jack raises an eyebrow.

SIX (CONT'D)  
(leaning in, voice  
dropping)  
The dealer tomorrow? Ronnie. Old  
friend. We ran a grift in St.  
Louis. If things go south, he'll  
make sure they swing north for me.

Jack exhales, shaking his head.

JACK  
(grinning, impressed)  
Son of a bitch. You're good.

SIX  
(raising her glass)  
Yep.

JACK  
(leaning back,  
considering)  
And what does Ronnie cost us?

SIX  
(beat, smirk)  
Two grand and...

JACK  
(eyeing her, suspicious)  
And?

SIX  
(deadpan, holding it just  
long enough)  
He wants a date with you.

Jack freezes. Panic. Six starts laughing.

SIX (CONT'D)  
 (grinning, teasing)  
 Got you!

Jack glares, unamused.

JACK  
 (muttering, annoyed)  
 You're an asshole.

SIX  
 (grinning, leaning in)  
 What? You're not his type anyway.

JACK  
 (scoffs, faux offense)  
 What do you mean, I'm not his type?  
 Who doesn't want all of this?

SIX  
 (raising an eyebrow, sly  
 as hell)  
 Hmm. The question is, Jackie... who  
 does?

Jack narrows his eyes.

JACK  
 (grabbing a slice,  
 deadpan)  
 Have another slice.

They both smirk. In unison-

JACK & SIX  
 If you think you need it.

FADE TO BLACK.

SOUND BRIDGE - A FAINT MATCH STRIKE IN THE DARK.

A cigarette glows in the night.

The faint scratch of a lighter flicking closed.

INT. PRIVATE BACKROOM - THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

Low light. Thick smoke. King sits at a small table, sipping  
 whiskey, cigar smoldering. Across from him-Ace. Quiet.  
 Controlled. A man who never wastes words.

KING  
 (leaning forward,  
 measured)  
 Nothing goes sideways tomorrow. Got  
 it?

ACE  
 (nods, simple, absolute)  
 I got it.

King watches him. Smirks, exhaling smoke.

KING  
 That's why I like you, Ace. You  
 don't talk too much.

ACE  
 (low, unreadable)  
 Talking don't win games.

They hold the silence. A final nod.

ROBERTO GATHERS THE INTEL - FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

A cigarette ember glows in the dark. The faint scrape of a lighter flicking closed. Roberto leans against the brick wall, unseen, unheard. He listens. He watches.

FLASHBACK 1 - QUEEN & DEUCE (from earlier scene):

QUEEN  
 (smirking, swirling her  
 martini)  
 There will be a price to pay for my  
 help.

DEUCE  
 (leaning in, voice low,  
 smoldering)  
 Then let the fucking house win.

FLASHBACK 2 - JACK & SIX (pizza scene, earlier):

Roberto in another booth, unseen by Jack and Six. Close enough to hear. Invisible enough to ignore.

SIX  
 (grinning, cutting)  
 Come on. I'm cool. Deuce. You like  
 Deuce.

JACK  
 (smirking, wiping his  
 mouth)  
 Yeah, right. Me and cowboy.  
 Brokeback Mountain part two.

MATCH CUT - ROBERTO'S LIP CURLS. HE KNOWS.

The cigarette ember flares. He exhales smoke. Listening.  
 Absorbing. Filing it away.

FLASHBACK 3 - KING & ACE (seconds ago):

Robert at the bar wiping things down. Silent. Inconspicuous.  
 But there.

KING  
 (leaning forward, voice  
 iron)  
 Nothing goes sideways tomorrow.

ACE  
 (low, absolute)  
 I got it.

MATCH CUT - ROBERTO'S FINGERS TAP ASH OFF HIS CIGARETTE.  
 Back to present.

The alley is quiet. Just the hum of the city in the distance.

Roberto smirks, taking a slow drag. Pause (hold 4 seconds)

SOUND BRIDGE—LAST DRAG.

ROBERTO  
 (murmuring to himself,  
 amused)  
 Everybody pays.

The cigarette ember burns out. He flicks the cigarette away.  
 Turns. Disappears into the dark. Hold on Roberto walking  
 away.

FADE TO BLACK.

SOUND BRIDGE—LAST DRAG.

MATCH CUT—ROBERTO EXHALES SMOKE → DEUCE EXHALES IN THE COLD  
 NIGHT AIR.

DUO MALE V.O  
 (whisper)  
**"Are you some one that I can give  
 my heart to?"**

The sound of his boots queuing up the song "Training Season"  
 Roberto's feet walking morph into Deuce's feet walking  
 THE FIRST LYRIC BEGINS—SOFT, ALMOST A WHISPER.

MATCH CUT - BOOTS MOVING.

DEUCE'S MARCH - SONG IGNITES

EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - NIGHT

Deuce walks. Controlled. Boots against pavement.

DUO MALE V.O (CONT'D)  
 (speaks low and sultry)  
 Think I found someone to play the  
 game...

Car headlights flicker past—like eyes tracking him. A doorman  
 flicks a cigarette—mirror of Roberto's movement.

A cop watches him pass—but doesn't stop him.

Reflections in the shop windows shift—like shadows move as he  
 moves.

CITY CUTS - INTERCUTTING SHADOWS & NEON LIGHTS:

Passing headlights cut across his face—like interrogation  
 lights.

A woman steps out of a bar, eyes him, then lets him pass. (No  
 words. Just a choice not to interfere.)

Deuce glances in a shop window—his reflection distorts under  
 the neon. (He's still here. But who is he now?)

THE SHOP WINDOW REFLECTION MATCH CUTS INTO QUEEN'S PENTHOUSE  
 GLASS.

MATCH CUT - DEUCE ARRIVES.

DUO MALE V.O

**"Are you someone I can give my  
heart to?"**

INT. QUEEN'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

The skyline blazes below.

DUO MALE V.O

**"Are you the poison that I'm drawn  
to"**

The song fades out... but not fully. A soft echo remains in the air, threading through the tension.

Queen stands near the bar, swirling her martini.

Deuce stands by the window, watching the lights.

DEUCE & QUEEN - THE PENTHOUSE SCENE THAT EVENING

INT. QUEEN'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

The skyline blazes below. High above Chicago, the city hums, alive. Inside? Silence. The weight of power.

QUEEN

A lady shouldn't be kept waiting.

DUO MALE V.O

**"I need someone to hold me close"**

DEUCE

(slow smirk, unreadable)  
Didn't realize I was on the clock.

DUO MALE V.O

**"Deeper than I've ever known"**

QUEEN

(drinking, smirking)  
There's always a price to pay for my help. We will figure this out for us.



DEUCE  
 (leaning back, considering  
 her)  
 Figure this out for me, right?

QUEEN  
 (low, teasing, calculated)  
 Me? You? Us? Is there really any  
 difference?

DUO MALE V.O  
**" 'Cause training season's over"**

Beat. Deuce watches her. Then—he moves.

In the background echoes repeat "Training season's  
 over...over"

MATCH CUT - ICE CLINKS IN HER GLASS.

Deuce peels off his shirt—slow, practiced, effortless. We see his sculptured reflection in the window, the city lights catch the angles of his body. Deuce watches himself in the glass. His hand runs down his muscled chest. He smirks. Self - Obsession.

Queen watches Deuce watching himself. She takes a slow, seductive sip of her martini.

He turns and the camera catches the full on version. Deuce locks eyes. Beat. Queen watches, heat flickering behind her cool gaze.

She lifts her martini glass. He walks towards the penthouse door that is still open. When he gets there he turns to face Queen. Eyes locked. Sex and tension suffocate the room.

QUEEN  
 (smirking, voice like  
 velvet)  
 Delicious.

DEUCE  
 (low, steady, a challenge)  
 I know. You have no idea.

Silence. Tension. The air thickens. Then—Deuce PAUSES.

He doesn't move forward.

Queen raises an eyebrow, intrigued.

QUEEN  
 (leaning back, sipping,  
 amused)  
 Oh... keeping me waiting?

Deuce exhales slow. A flicker of something in his eyes.

DEUCE  
 (low, unreadable, but  
 certain)  
 Just making sure I know the rules.

QUEEN  
 (sipping, smiling, eyes  
 sharp as a blade)  
 The House always wins.

DUO MALE V.O  
 (a low seductive whisper)  
**"Training Season's over."**

Deuce smirks. The tension lingers.

INT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

Big ending the crowd roars.

THE DUO  
**"Training Season's over."**

Cheers for 5 seconds.

INT. QUEEN'S PENTHOUSE

Silence.

ONE. LAST. BEAT.

The door clicks shut. (One sound. Final.)

THE LOCK TURNS—SLOW. LOUD. LIKE A FUCKING GAVEL.

Deuce breathes in. Deep. Final. Like he's standing in gasoline with a match.

THE LAST LINE—HOLDS IT. DRAGS IT. LIKE A DEATH SENTENCE.

DEUCE  
 (exhaling slow, voice like  
 a lit fuse.)  
 Then let's burn it all down.

HOLD ON DEUCE. One final beat.

FAINT AMBIENT CITY NOISES (muffled car horns, distant sirens, the shuffle of footsteps). Then—A HORN SCREECHES.

BAM. JAZZ EXPLODES. LIKE A GUNSHOT IN THE NIGHT.

CUT INTO THE CITY BREATHING DANGER.

EXT. CHICAGO SKYLINE - NIGHT (DRONE SWIRL, A CITY BREATHING DANGER)

-Aerial shot—sweeping over the black river, the city drenched in neon & sin.

-Streetlights flicker.

-A train rattles overhead.

-Cars slink through rain-slicked streets.

SOUND BRIDGE - THE GAME BEGINS BEFORE WE SEE IT.

-Cards shuffling.

-Poker chips falling.

-Glasses clinking.

-A roulette wheel spinning somewhere in the city.

-“PLACE YOUR BETS.” (DISEMBODIED. CALLING THEM IN.)

QUICK FLASH CUTS - NIGHT MOVES INTO PLACE

ON-SCREEN—QUEEN.

-Seated. Watching. Waiting. We don't know where yet.

-KING & ACE. Walking. Purposeful. Silent.

-Jack exhales smoke. Six adjusts her cufflinks. A car stops. Doors open.

Jack and Deuce, they take a deep breath, in sync. Both check their revolvers. Tucked in the back. Gangster style.

ANGLE ON DEUCE—OPENING THE DOOR TO TORTORELLI'S.

JAZZ MUSIC CUTS—SHARP. SILENCE

INT. CARMINE TORTORELLI'S BACKROOM - NIGHT

THE DUO (off-screen) is playing some chords and vocalizing. No hint of the song, "Goodbye to love."

Smoke hangs in the air like a lingering ghost. Whiskey glasses sweat under dim, flickering light. The room is a pressure cooker, and every man sitting at the table knows it.

INT. THE WILD CARD

The duo plays in the corner—low, almost an afterthought. A haunting, slowed-down "Goodbye to Love" hums beneath the action. No singing yet, just some vamping. We should not know the song yet.

INT. CARMINE TORTORELLI'S BACKROOM - NIGHT

Jack, Deuce and Six walk in ready take the room. Carmine greets them.

CARMINE TORTORELLI

Ah, what do they call you young people now, "Z, X, Y?"

SIX

Millennials

CARMINE TORTORELLI

Ah yes, our future is in your hands. Lovely.

Jack sees Queen at the table. He pulls Deuce aside. In a low stern voice.

JACK

Deuce, what the hell? Did you know she was gonna be here?

Deuce responds quickly, too quickly.

DEUCE

No, man. No.

Jack looks. Six catches on and looks at Queen. Six smiles and says to Jack on the side.

SIX  
What the hell is going on?

Now with big dramatic flair.

SIX (CONT'D)  
Queen, I didn't know you played cards.

QUEEN  
Six I've played more than you'll ever forget. I'm a Vegas girl from way back. Didn't you know? I was a showgirl, turned Vegas dealer. I know all the angles.

Six looks at Jack.

CARMINE TORTORELLI  
Oh we are going to have an excellent game tonight.

Jack and Six take seats at the table, leaving a space open between Queen.

King and Ace enter.

CARMINE TORTORELLI (CONT'D)  
Ah King with his Ace! Royalty is in the house. Well We have Jack, Queen, King and Ace!

King spies Queen. He looks at Deuce for an answer.

QUEEN  
Oh, King you look surprised to see me?

KING  
Funny you didn't mention at our lunch today that you would be here.

QUEEN  
Oh, King I never assumed we traveled in the same circles.

King smiles pleasantly. King moves and sits at the chair next to Queen. Queen taps his hand.

QUEEN (CONT'D)  
Keep your friends close.

King chuckles slightly.

KING  
And your enemies, closer.

QUEEN  
Oh, King, you and I at separate  
ends of the table? What a tragedy.

The room looks.

KING  
You want to sit next to me so bad?  
You should be careful, Queen

QUEEN  
NEVER! I would kill myself if that  
happened.

KING  
(cold as ice)  
Then why haven't you?

She smiles.

CARMINE TORTORELLI  
Let's all get our drink, we are  
waiting for one more guest.

Camera pulls back as the conversation is muted to low.  
Drinks are served.

On screen we hear THE DUO vocalizing and playing some  
underscored guitar strings. NO MENTION OR RECOGNITION of the  
upcoming song.

Ronnie the dealer takes his place.

Sal enters. Hands shaken. Smiles. Sal is seated on the  
other side of Queen. The Table of Six is set. Ronnie the  
dealer, Six, Jack, Sal, Queen, King and Carmine.

Deuce and Ace stand to the back, sipping whiskey on the  
rocks.

Roberto unseen from the kitchen, watches.

CARMINE TORTORELLI (CONT'D)  
Well let us get started. You have  
all squared up with Ronnie our  
dealer for your \$25,000 entry to  
the game. Betting is limited to  
cash, deeded property, authentic  
watches, jewelry and cars with  
titles. There will be no advances  
or I.O.U. May the best man win.

He glances to Queen and Six.

CARMINE TORTORELLI (CONT'D)  
Or the best lady as well.

The camera pulls back an hour passes.

At the center of it all—the table. Cards scattered, stacks of cash thick enough to break a jaw. Carmine puts a pinky gold ring in. Sal takes off a watch. Tosses it on the table.

Six leans back, all confidence, winning too easily.

Jack lounges, but his eyes never stop moving—watching everyone, reading the game like scripture. Setting up Six with every hand.

Deuce sits cool, calculating, wondering how the hell he gets out of this alive.

Queen is observing.

King swirls his drink—he's waiting, watching. No expression. Just smoke and control.

Volume comes back up.

INT. CARMINE TORTORELLI'S BACKROOM - NIGHT

Carmine has been loosing. He folds. Then he sees it—Ronnie slipping a card to Six.

Carmine exhales slow, taps the felt.

CARMINE TORTORELLI  
(flat, unreadable)  
Something ain't right.

SILENCE.

A long, slow pull in on Sal. He's watching. Calculating.

Six doesn't flinch. But her tell is there—small, imperceptible, unless you're looking.

MATCH CUT TO RONNIE'S HAND. A card slipping where it shouldn't.

SLOW BLINK FROM SAL. THE EYES SAY IT ALL.

THEN—GUN UP.

A creak. The door opens.

TEN steps in—dirty but honest, a cop who knows how the game is played. He adjusts his coat, leans on the back wall.

TEN  
 (gravel, easy)  
 Well, well, well. This a private  
 game, or do I get a seat?

Tension climbs. Queen starts to rise.

QUEEN  
 I'm leaving.

KING  
 (cool, absolute)  
 Stay.

The moment locks—a power shift.

Then—SAL SEES IT. Ronnie slipping another card. Gun UP. FAST.

BANG. A SHOT SPLITS THE ROOM.

SILENT ON THE SCREEN. FREEZE—4 SECONDS.

Then—COLD START to "I'll Say Goodbye to Love" from THE DUO. This song underscores the on-screen actions.

**"I'll say goodbye to love."**

Movement starts again but in slow motion—Guy Ritchie style.

BANG.

MATCH CUT: BLOOD SPLASH ON QUEEN'S FACE. DEUCE BLINKS.

DEUCE MOVES.

He grabs Jack and Six without a word. Like a loaded gun just fired itself.

**"No one ever cared if I should live or die..."**

Sal drops back the chair smashing, blood spurts on Queen's face.

**"Time and time again the chance for love has passed me by..."**

Mayhem.

Deuce looks at Jack, King, Queen. He must decided.

Deuce grabs Jack and Six, shoving them toward the exit.



King locks eyes with Carmine. They have been had by Ronnie the dealer.

**"And all I know of love is how to live without it."**

Queen takes a slow sip of her drink—calculating. Blood is dripping down the side of her glass and her face. Ronnie's blood splattered on her face and clothes. She is unfeeling by this.

SOUND OF ICE CLICKING.

**"I just can't seem to find it."**

Roberto watches from the shadows—he sees EVERYTHING.

TEN doesn't even blink. Just nods, like he expected it.

TEN slaps cuffs on people, pocketing some money from the table.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - NIGHT

Camera back to normal time song continues to underscore.

Jack, Six, and Deuce hit the car. Windshield wipers swipe in the rain.

SIX  
(flat, shaken)  
Ronnie is dead.

DEUCE  
(shaking his head, still  
processing)  
Ronnie? What do you mean? What's  
going on?

Jack watches Deuce in the rearview. Deuce breathing hard. Rain streaks the windshield. Deuce's hands shake—just barely. Jack finally exhales. Turns. Locks in.

JACK (LOW, MEASURED, RAZOR-SHARP)  
"Deuce... why the fuck was Queen  
there?"

JACK (CONT'D)  
(turning to him, eyes  
sharp)  
Why the hell was Queen there?

**"So I made my mind up I must live my life alone..."**

CUT TO: INT. KING'S CAR - NIGHT

King and Ace drive in silence.

KING  
( (low, deadly)  
I thought you knew what was going  
on. Why the hell was Queen there?

**"There are no tomorrows for this heart of mine..."**

Rain pelts the windshield. Streetlights streak through the glass.

**"Surely time will lose these bitter memories..."**

CUT TO: INT. CARMINE'S BACKROOM - NIGHT

Blood on the cards. Smoke lingers. The bodies still warm.

**"And I'll find that there is someone to believe in..."**

FLASH CUTS:

Jack's hand gripping the steering wheel—jaw clenched.

Six staring out the window, lost in thought.

King's cigarette ember flaring in the dark.

Roberto stepping out of the shadows—expression unreadable.

**"And to live for something I could live for..."**

A hard FLASH CUT to each face—then to the bloodied table, the overturned chair, the single bullet hole in the wall—

**"All the years of useless search..."**

MATCH CUT FROM BLOODY CARDS → TO CLEAN CARDS BEING SHUFFLED.  
NEW PLAYERS SITTING DOWN. NEW GAME. THE DUO SINGS THE FINAL  
LINES.

ZOOM OUT SLOW—THE CITY MOVES ON.

HARD CUT TO: INT. THE WILD CARD SPEAKEASY - NIGHT

The duo is back onstage—singing like nothing ever happened.  
Just another night in Chicago.

**"But for now this is my song. I'll say goodbye to love."**

As the song ends—no final "Ahh Ahh"—

INT. WILD CARD BAR

DUO  
We'll be back in fifteen.

Let the camera hang just a second too long.

A drunk man stumbles past. A bartender wipes down a bloody glass.

A cigarette smolders in an ashtray.

Someone in the background laughs—like they didn't just witness carnage.

ROBERTO  
Last Call.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT LATER

lam. The DUO "Runaway Train" vamps on guitar. A slow, pulsing tension. Bar empty just the staff cleaning up.

Jack and Deuce burst into the bar. The blood still on Jack and Deuce's hands.

They push inside, breathing heavy. Jack's jaw is locked tight. Deuce's fingers twitch at his side.

The DUO sees them. Doesn't miss a beat.

DUO MALE SINGER  
Hey boys, it's obvious you got something going on.

DUO FEMALE SINGER  
Yeah, we see it. You guys should own up to it.

Jack snorts, shaking his head. Deuce looks anywhere but at Jack. The weight of everything settles between them.

DUO MALE SINGER  
 (strums)  
 From where we stand, you're  
 stronger together.

Jack slams his hands down on the bar. The sound cuts through the room.

JACK  
 You don't know a damn thing about  
 us.

The DUO just grins. Keeps playing.

The song builds. The tension simmers.

CUT TO:

KING & QUEEN - THE FINAL HAND

INT. QUEEN'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

The DUO strumming. A slow, moody vamp. "Runaway Train" starting soft. Underscoring this scene.

QUEEN, pacing, robe tied loose, martini in hand.

QUEEN  
 Did I back the wrong horse?

Knock on the door. 1:30 AM.

QUEEN (CONT'D)  
 Who in the hell is at my door at  
 1:30 AM?

INT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

The Duo vamps the chords to "Runaway Train."

Jack grabs a drink. Downs it in one go.

Deuce watches him. The silence is unbearable.

DEUCE  
 Jack, talk to me.

Jack turns, eyes burning.

JACK  
 Talk? You wanna talk, Cowboy? About  
 what? How you got me in that mess?  
 How you dragged Queen into it?

INT. QUEEN'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

KNOCK, 2nd time.

She smirks, sips her drink, opens it.

QUEEN  
 (silk & steel, teasing)  
 King.

KING  
 Queen.

ACE is there too. Silent. Heavy. They step inside. King looks  
 out at the skyline.

KING (CONT'D)  
 (soft, remembering)  
 I always loved this view. Happy I  
 got it for you.

QUEEN  
 (amused, circling him)  
 Connections, King. That's how you  
 play the game, isn't it?

King turns slow, studying her. The moment stretches.

KING  
 (easy, deliberate)  
 I feel like... (he flicks a speck of  
 ash from his cigar, exhales  
 slow)...like I've been played.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

The DUO starts to vamp up and the music gets louder  
 underscoring this moment.

Jack & Deuce, slamming into Jack's apartment, clothes flying.  
 Bodies colliding against the wall. Then the bed. Frenetic,  
 reckless, raw.

CUT TO:

INT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

DUO FEMALE  
(sings)  
"I'm worried about you."

CUT BACK:

INT. QUEEN'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Queen turns to the bar, slipping a tiny revolver into her robe. She turns back, easy. Smiles.

QUEEN  
(playing dumb, smooth as silk)  
Played? By who, darling? Who would be that stupid?

INT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

DUO FEMALE  
(sings)  
"I'm worried about me."

CUT TO:

INT. SIX'S APARTMENT

Six, alone, staring at a photo of Ronnie. Silent tears. A drink untouched on the table.

INT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

DUO MALE  
(sings)  
"The curves around midnight aren't easy to see."

CUT BACK:

INT. QUEEN'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

King studies Queen.

KING (SHAKING HIS HEAD, LOW, DARK)  
You.

The DUO sings under this scene.

DUO  
(in harmony)  
"Flashing red warnings  
Unseen in the rain"

Queen's fingers flex. The gun is there. Waiting.

QUEEN  
(stalling, buying time)  
King, I have no idea what you're  
talking about.

KING  
I saw you. Flashing glances with  
Deuce.

Queen's expression flickers.

DUO  
(harmony)  
"This thing has turned into"

KING  
Now I have to deal with him too.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

Jack & Deuce, tangled in the dark. Breathing hard. Then—

WHISPER IN THE DARK:  
"I love you."

FREEZE. THE MUSIC VAMP BUILDS.

INT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

The DUO vamps, into the music.

DUO  
(harmony)  
"This thing has turned into"

CUT BACK:

INT. QUEEN'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Queen slides her hand into her robe pocket. Eyes cold now.

QUEEN

"Also?" (beat, playing dumb, a  
glint of danger) Oh, I love a  
mystery. How can I help?

King just tilts his head. No smile. No warmth.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

Jack & Deuce, tangled in the dark. Breathing hard. Reaching a  
climax.

CUT BACK:

INT. QUEEN'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Queen's fingers close around the tiny pistol.

KING

You can't. (a beat—soft, deadly)  
"Sometimes... you just gotta clean  
house.

QUEEN

(cool, controlled)  
You think I don't have insurance?  
There's a key. A copy. A banker  
who's very well-paid to hate you.  
(beat)  
I could bury you in your own  
empire.

KING

(smiles, cold)  
Good. Then we'll go down together.  
(raises the gun)  
But I'll enjoy the silence first.

QUEEN

(smirks)  
You sure you can pull that trigger,  
old friend? Without me... who's the  
real King?



QUEEN'S FINGERS TWITCH. HER EYES FLASH. SHE GETS IT-

QUEEN (CONT'D)  
Oh... you son of a-

ANGLE ON JUST HER EYES. JUST KING'S BREATH.

Just the weight of it all.

Then BANG. Hold the freeze frame—only the blood moves.

SPREADING THROUGH THE BEIGE NIGHTGOWN. HOLD ONE BEAT

The DUO off set with the image on-screen

DUO  
(sing in harmony)  
"A runaway train."

UNFREEZE. Queen collapses. The glass slips from her hand. Shatters. King adjusts his cuff, casual as hell.

KING  
And you just move on.

The DUO off set with the image on-screen

DUO  
(sing in harmony)  
"A runaway train."

THE AFTERMATH - NO DIALOGUE, JUST MOVEMENT & MUSIC

THE DUO STRUMS—THE MUSIC BEGINS TO SHIFT.

The DUO continues to sing underscoring the actions on screen.

-Ace calls Roberto.

-Six writes in her diary, staring at the untouched drink.

-Jack & Deuce, in bed, shirtless, Deuce's head on Jack's chest. No words. Just silence.

-Roberto arrives. King & Ace exit.

-Roberto knocks over a few lamps, breaks the coffee table. A robbery gone bad.

-Roberto slips Queen's pearls off her neck. Finishes her martini. Takes off her rings and pockets them all. He flicks Queen's lipstick-stained cigarette to the floor.

ROBERTO  
(smirking, lifting the  
glass)  
House always wins, right? (sips)  
Unless you bet wrong.

-Roberto calls TEN.

-Roberto calls both Jack and Deuce.

-SILENCE

-Jack & Deuce's phones buzz. They don't answer.

-When Deuce doesn't answer his phone because he's wrapped in Jack's arms

JACK  
(low, deadly whisper)  
No more running, Cowboy. We're in  
this.

SILENCE. One heartbeat. Two. Three

Deuce doesn't answer. But his fingers tighten against Jack's skin.

Music comes back in. **"Runaway Train. Like a runaway train."**

-TEN arrives. Then more cops. Crime scene chaos. Queen's body bagged.

-ACE & KING share a drink

KING  
TO the Queen (beat) Long may she  
reign. (beat) Oh wait.

King and Ace cheer and clink their glasses.

INT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

A new poker game is already starting. The DUO plays on. The bartender wipes down a glass—another bloodstain that doesn't matter.

Someone in the background laughs.

The city moves the fuck on.

DUO  
(In harmony singing)  
"A runaway train. A runaway train.  
I'll say goodbye to love."

The duo kisses. Clink their glasses. The scene fades.

FADE IN: EXT. CHICAGO SKYLINE - EARLY DECEMBER

The city breathes cold.

A fresh dusting of snow coats the rooftops, glistening under streetlights.

Michigan Avenue glows—Christmas lights strung across the Magnificent Mile, flickering in the haze.

A salty gust of wind cuts through the streets, whipping past:

Ice skaters at Millennium Park.

A saxophonist playing a lonely blues tune under the L tracks.

A street vendor selling roasted chestnuts, steam curling into the night air.

WE PUSH IN TOWARD THE WILD CARD.

EXT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

The neon Wild Card sign glows red against the night—

A wreath now hangs from the door, a single red ribbon fluttering in the wind.

The camera tilts down—a light dusting of snow on the pavement.

INT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

Warmth. Holiday lights. A deceptive sense of peace.

The Duo is softly strumming a torch-lit, jazz version of "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree."

Bartenders wear Santa hats as they sling whiskey and holiday cocktails.

A half-dressed Santa (probably drunk) is getting ready to hand out Christmas Cheer.

And then... the camera lands on it.

THE QUEEN'S CHAIR.

It sits in the corner, untouched.

A brass plaque above it reads:

"The Queen Sits Here."

People take pictures in the chair. It's become an Instagram favorite.

But it doesn't belong to them. It never will.

MOVEMENT THROUGH  
THE ROOM:

Six runs a roulette wheel—not for cash, just bar tabs.  
(Keeping her honest? Maybe.)

Deuce gets "Fast Money" greased across his palm.

Jack watches. He always watches.

King & Ace sit at their usual table. Drinking. Silent.  
Watching.

A moment. The kind you don't realize is important until it's  
already gone.

DEUCE  
(low, honest)  
Jack... I'm glad you found me.

JACK  
Cowboy, you'd be lost without me.

Deuce scoffs, smirks—they KISS. A slow, easy, tender kiss. No  
power plays. Just them.

The DUO keeps playing. The world spins around them.

Then—SIX SHOVES BETWEEN THEM. Grinning waiving pizza slices.

SIX  
PIZZA!

They all look at her, deadpan. Then—

IN PERFECT UNISON, THEY SAY:

SIX, DEUCE AND JACK  
If you think you need it!

They LAUGH. Full, easy, genuine. A rare moment of joy.

Across the room—ROBERTO catches Deuce's eye. Motions to the alley. Deuce nods. Looks at Jack. Soft and playful with some weight behind it. Deuce has never felt more alive and connected.

DEUCE  
Hey, Jackpot... I'll be right back.

Jack watches him go. A flicker of something—concern? Jealousy? Just knowing too much?

Six notices Jack watching. Notices everything.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

Cold air. Steam from a street grate. The muffled hum of the bar inside. Deuce steps out. Roberto is waiting.

ROBERTO  
(low, smooth, dangerous as  
always)  
Took you long enough.

Deuce exhales, leans against the brick wall.

DEUCE  
(measured, direct)  
You got something to say, say it.

Roberto steps in closer. Too close.

ROBERTO  
(low)  
I know things, Cowboy. You think  
this city is your playground?

Deuce stiffens. This isn't just flirting.

Roberto leans in, breath warm against Deuce's ear.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)  
(deadly grin)  
Everybody pays.

And then—BAM. Roberto SHOVES Deuce HARD against the brick wall. It's dominance. A test. A dare. A deal? Deuce's jaw tightens. He doesn't move—not yet.

Roberto kisses Deuce out of power and control and not out of passion. Deuce is pinned against the wall.

JACK. BURSTING INTO THE ALLEY. SINGING LOUD AS HELL, HALF-DRUNK, MOCKING:

JACK  
"ROCKIN' AROUND THE CHRISTMAS  
TREE..."

But then— JACK SEES.

—Sees Roberto pressed up against Deuce.

—Sees Deuce—still against the wall.

—Jack's expression CHANGES.

—He doesn't see a threat. He sees an affair.

AND JACK EXPLODES.

—FISTS FLY.

—JACK CLOCKS ROBERTO, DROPPING HIM HARD.

—DEUCE SHOVES JACK BACK—BUT JACK SWINGS AGAIN.

DEUCE  
"Fucking STOP—"

Jack is swinging at anyone. Roberto clocks Jack.

—JACK HITS DEUCE.

—DEUCE STUMBLES BACK, SPITTING BLOOD.

Roberto LAUGHS, wiping blood from his lip. This is the best night of his life.

Jack isn't done. He is wild and furious past the point of no return.

JACK  
Cowboy, don't come near me right  
now—I'll fucking kill you.

Deuce FREEZES. Roberto smiles.

Jack backs up, chest heaving, eyes burning. His entire body is saying walk away before he does something worse. Jack storms back inside the bar.

Roberto watches it all. Smirks. Licks blood off his lips.

ROBERTO  
 (he hums sarcastic,  
 teasingly taunting)  
 "Rocking around the Christmas  
 tree..." Round two...cowboy?

-Deuce snaps.

-A fist to Roberto's gut.

-Roberto doubles over.

-Deuce walks back inside.

INT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT

The air inside is thick—heat, tension, whiskey, regret. THE DUO is strumming, slow and sorrowful, easing into "Blue Christmas."

THE DUO

**"I'll have a blue Christmas without  
 you..."**

Deuce steps in from the alley. Roberto lingers behind him. His lip's split. His knuckles tight. His heart heavier than ever.

DEUCE  
 (muttering under his  
 breath, shaking his head)  
 Fuck me.

Jack is at the bar. Back turned. Shoulder stiff. Face is already bruised. Jack holding an iced glass of vodka to his right eye.

Deuce moves to him—calm, steady. This isn't over.

JACK  
 Not now, piss off.

Jack doesn't turn. Doesn't react. His fingers clench around his glass. He's still burning.

DEUCE  
 No.

Jack turns, eyes blazing.

A FIST HALF-RAISES—A GHOST OF A THREAT.

Deuce doesn't flinch.

DEUCE

"Go ahead. Hit me. It's okay.

(beat, softer)

I'm not leaving. I'm lost without  
you.

Jack's chest rises, falls. Eyes searching. Warring with himself. The song plays on. The camera pulls back. The world slows.

THE DUO

**"Decorations of red on a green  
Christmas tree..."**

They talk, low. No one hears the words, just the weight of them. Jack exhales. Hands still tight, but no longer fists.

Then—A MOTION TO THE BARTENDER.

Three shots are poured.

Jack grabs them, holds one out to Deuce.

Deuce takes it.

Jack's eyes cut across the room. Find Roberto. A nod.

Roberto hesitates. Then, slowly, approaches.

Jack hands him the last shot.

THE THREE STAND TOGETHER. A STALEMATE. A MOMENT OF CHOICE.

Then, as one—THEY DRINK. A pause. A breath. Then—JACK EXTENDS HIS HAND TO ROBERTO.

A beat. Roberto hesitates. Then, finally—HE TAKES IT. A HANDSHAKE. AN UNDERSTANDING.

No one smiles. No one pretends this fixes anything. But it's something.

Roberto walks off, back into the night.

Jack and Deuce—STILL STANDING.

Then—A BURST OF ENERGY.



SIX DROPS A PIZZA BOX ON THE BAR.

She grins easy, cutting through the tension like a blade

SIX  
PIZZA!

Jack and Deuce look at each other. A pause. Then, in perfect unison, deadpan as hell—

JACK & DEUCE  
(mocking, half-smirking,  
together)  
If you think you need it.

From across the room, KING and ACE watch. King takes a slow sip of his drink.

THE DUO

**"I'll have a blue Christmas, that's  
certain..."**

EXT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT - A MOMENT LATER

The tension lingers. The Duo is vamping, stretching out the last few notes of the Christmas song.

Jack exhales sharply, rubbing his jaw. Deuce watches him, like he's memorizing the way Jack carries his anger.

Then—a flicker. An unspoken "We need air." A glance. A hesitation. A deep inhale. Then Jack tilts his head toward the door.

JACK  
(low, voice tight)  
"You coming?"

DEUCE  
(nods, quiet, loaded)  
"Yeah."

They move in sync—out the door, into the night.

MATCH CUT → EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - NIGHT [Cue "Lose Control"]

Boots on pavement. Cold air. The city hums. HARD, COLD START to THE DUO singing "Lose Control" by Teddy Swims.

THE DUO  
**"I don't know why I do this..."**

MONTAGE - ONE MINUTE OF PURE VISUAL STORYTELLING

Jack lights a cigarette. Hands shaking. Deuce exhales slow, watching Jack's every move.

**"...The way I know that I shouldn't be..."**

Jack's hand clenches. Like he wants to hit something. Deuce takes a step closer. Jack doesn't move away.

**"...I can't even explain it..."**

A passing cab throws neon light across their faces. Their shadows blur together on the wet pavement.

**"...Why it feels like you're the air I need..."**

Jack exhales smoke. Deuce watches the way it drifts between them. For a second, it looks like Deuce might lean in.

**"...I just wish I could control it..."**

But Jack turns. Walks off. Deuce follows. Always.

**"...Why I always lose control..."**

MATCH CUT—Jack & Deuce's reflections in a store window. They look together, but they're fractured, distorted.

**"...With you..."**

Jack stops walking. A long, tense pause. Deuce waits. Doesn't push. Then, suddenly—Jack YANKS Deuce into an alley.

IN THE ALLEY - HEAVY BREATHING. RAW EMOTION.

Jack SLAMS Deuce against the brick wall. Not in anger. Not in hate. In need. In desperation.

Jack grips Deuce's collar. Their faces inches apart. Deuce just breathes. Lets Jack take what he needs. Neither one pulls away.

**"...No matter how I try... I just can't quit you..."**

Jack KISSES him. Hard. Messy. Violent.

Deuce fists Jack's jacket, holding him in place. Jack's breath shudders, like he's falling apart. Deuce leans his forehead against Jack's.

"...I lose control..."

They break apart. Jack's hand lingers on Deuce's face.

Then, just as fast—Jack pushes off. Runs a hand through his hair. He can't deal with this. Deuce watches. Says nothing. But his eyes say everything.

" I lose control..."

Then Deuce takes a firm hold of Jack's hand and pulls him in. They are in a dead stare of anger, lust, love and control.

BACK TO THE WILD CARD - SONG ENDING

The Duo plays the last note.

SOUND BRIDGE: Jack and Deuce heavy breathing. Lust.

The Wild Card hums with life. The crowd Roars.

ROBERTO  
Merry Christmas!

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. PRIVATE POKER ROOM - NIGHT

Dim light. Thick cigar smoke. The air feels heavy, like secrets have been lost in this room for decades.

A round table—velvet-lined, gold-trimmed. Several men in suits play cards, but the game is slow, deliberate. Carmine TORTORELLI watches from his chair, smoking a fat cigar. He's seen everything, and nothing impresses him.

JACK leans against the bar, hands in his pockets—casual but calculating. He watches Carmine like a predator sizing up another predator.

CARMINE  
(without looking up from  
his cards)  
(MORE)

CARMINE (CONT'D)  
Kid, I don't trust gut feelings. I  
trust money. What's this about?

JACK  
(leans in, voice low)  
It's about King.

A beat. Carmine exhales smoke. Still doesn't look up.

CARMINE  
Lot of people wanna talk about  
King. None of 'em smart.

JACK  
You wanna keep playing or you wanna  
make this interesting?

Carmine finally looks up—amused, maybe. He flicks ash onto a  
tray. He studies Jack, trying to read him.

CARMINE  
(slow, testing him)  
Let's say I'm interested. You got  
anything better than a hunch?

JACK  
(leans in, voice cold)  
How about a name?

A longer beat. Carmine's fingers tap the side of his whiskey  
glass. Then—he gives a slight nod.

CARMINE  
You got guts, kid. I'll give you  
that.  
(leans forward, voice  
lowering to a near  
whisper)  
Yeah, King's got blood ties. Not  
just to the city, To Deuce. To Six.

JACK  
(frozen, breath slows)  
You're saying—

CARMINE  
I'm saying King has been playing  
his own damn son this whole time.

The room feels smaller. Jack sits with the weight of the  
truth. He blinks once, then twice. His mind races, connecting  
dots that were always there.

CARMINE (CONT'D)  
 And that pretty little girl? King  
 killed her mother to keep it quiet.

Jack's fingers tighten around his drink. His face hardens—just for a second. Then he lets out a breath, masking it all behind his usual poker face.

JACK  
 (nods, stands up, smooths  
 his suit)  
 Appreciate the insight, Carmine.  
 Next hand's on me.

Carmine chuckles, watching Jack like a man watching a dog he respects, but would still shoot if it bit him. He takes another drag of his cigar.

CARMINE  
 Yeah, yeah. Just don't do anything  
 stupid, kid.

JACK  
 (walking away, over his  
 shoulder)  
 Not my style.

Jack exits, a storm brewing in his head.

FADE TO BLACK.

SPLIT SCREEN - INT. JACK'S APARTMENT / INT. DIAMOND'S ROOM - NIGHT

JACK'S SIDE - Dimly lit. A single desk lamp casts long shadows. JACK sits on the edge of his bed, phone in hand. He stares at the screen for a long beat, exhaling. The weight of everything is pressing on him. Then—he dials. The phone rings. Once. Twice.

DIAMOND'S SIDE - A different world. Old Vegas glitz faded to memory. Maybe a dimly lit hotel room, smoky air, an untouched glass of bourbon on the side table. DIAMOND STARR, late 50s, still carries the remnants of a showgirl's beauty, but the years have sharpened her. She lifts a cigarette, inhales slow, answers the call.

SPLIT SCREEN BEGINS.

DIAMOND  
 (low, sultry, with an edge  
 that time hasn't dulled)  
 Hello?

JACK  
 Is this Diamond? Diamond Starr?

DIAMOND  
 (pauses, tone sharpens)  
 What is this about? Who is this?

JACK  
 Let's say you and I both have an  
 interest in the future of Deuce  
 Starr.

Diamond freezes, cigarette halting near her lips. A long  
 inhale, processing the name, the weight of it. When she  
 speaks again, her voice is lower, protective.

DIAMOND  
 He never uses that last name. Who  
 are you? What have you done with my  
 Deuce?

JACK  
 Diamond, calm down. We both want  
 what's best for Deuce. As for King—

DIAMOND  
 (sharp inhale. Her voice  
 drops an octave.)  
 King? He's around Deuce? Does Deuce  
 know? That King is his—

JACK  
 That's why you're coming to  
 Chicago.

DIAMOND  
 Oh my God

Jack let's the moment hang in the air.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)  
 Does King still have The Wild Card?

JACK  
 Oh, that place is alive and well.

DIAMOND

Oh no, no... Is the girl there? Tell me no.

JACK

Six?

Diamond silence. Then—a laugh, more heartbreak than humor.

DIAMOND

Oh, she goes by that name now?  
Jesus, what a mess. Her name is Sapphire.

Jack's eyebrow goes up. Thinking.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)

(staring off, voice distant now)

She never liked that name. Her mother and I... oh, poor Em. (BEAT) She got messed up with King after I kicked him out. Then he had her killed after Sapphire was born. Em tried to get support for the baby. King killed her. The baby went to foster care.

A deep breath. Then, with bitter humor

DIAMOND (CONT'D)

Oh, this is like a Shakespeare drama—the past coming back to haunt. Like Lady Macbeth.

JACK

(rubs his jaw, his mind spinning.)

I need you here. Deuce needs you.

DIAMOND

(a pause, then:)

Yes... yes. When?

JACK

Valentine's Day. 8PM. At The Wild Card.

A long silence. A flick of her lighter. The sound of an inhale.

DIAMOND

Okay. That'll give me a few weeks to sort through things. I own that bar, you know.

JACK

(blinks, confused)  
What?

DIAMOND

Yeah. Back when King was a nobody—well, he still is—I bought that place outright. Free and clear. My name is on the deed. Alone.

Jack has a slow, dawning realization. He leans forward.

JACK

Wait—so you own The Wild Card?

DIAMOND

Yes. I will be there on Valentine's day.

Diamond hangs up.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

A pause. Then—Jack leans back, exhales, smirks to himself.

JACK

Fuck me...

EXT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT (ONE MONTH BEFORE VALENTINE'S)

A slow zoom on the club's neon sign, glowing against the winter sky.

THE DUO BEGINS PLAYING "IF YOU COULD READ MY MIND"

**"If you could read my mind, love..."**

The melody drifts through the cold air, haunting and raw.

TIME-LAPSE BEGINS.

-JANUARY: A lone dealer shuffles a fresh deck at an empty poker table. The Queen's chair remains untouched.



-A bartender wipes down a glass. Another bloodstain that no one asks about.

-Snow falls, then melts. The city moves forward. The game never stops.

-NEWSPAPERS cycle through headlines.

- UNDERGROUND CHICAGO POKER RING UNDER INVESTIGATION."

- KING STARR EXPANDS HIS REACH—WHO CAN STOP HIM?"

A woman's lipstick smudge on a rocks glass. A shadowed hand wipes it away.

THE DUO CONTINUES SINGING.

**"If you could read my mind, love,  
what a tale my thoughts could  
tell..."**

-FEBRUARY: The Wild Card's neon flickers—like it's waiting. Like it knows.

-A poker chip flips through the air—lands in a hand we don't see.


-Cigarette embers glow in the dark. Figures in the shadows. Power shifting.

THE SONG SWELLS.

**"Just like an old-time movie...  
'bout a ghost from a wishin'  
well..."**

FADE TO VALENTINE'S NIGHT.

The sign flickers once, then—FULL POWER. The club is alive. The music hums under the surface, almost hypnotic.

 CUE THE  
ACTION:

-A poker chip spins.

-A glass tilts back.

-A woman in red laughs, but there's no warmth in it.

-A knife glints—just for a second.

THE DUO'S MUSIC FADES INTO THE CROWD NOISE.

-A slow exhale of smoke.

-Someone watches from the shadows.

INT. THE WILD CARD - NIGHT (NOW FULLY ALIVE—THE NIGHT BEGINS.)

INT. THE WILD CARD - VALENTINE'S DAY - NIGHT

A packed house. Neon glow. The Duo strums the opening chords to something slow, something haunting. A charged atmosphere—whispers of deals made, bets placed, futures decided. Tonight, everything changes.

At the center of the chaos:

DEUCE, JACK, SIX, ROBERTO, KING, ACE.

And then... DIAMOND.

She walks in slow, controlled, owning the room. A ghost of the past stepping into the future. Silence creeps over the bar like a cold wind.\*

DIAMOND

Well... look at all of you. My, my,  
my.

King stiffens. Deuce stares. Jack already knew. Six holds her breath.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)

You were a lousy father to Deuce.  
Even though he has your bloodline—

King's eyes flash.

KING

What?

Diamond turns to Deuce.

DIAMOND

The bar. Everything here. It's  
yours, baby. Always was.

Gasps. Deuce's face is stone. Jack glances at King—watching his rage build like a thunderhead.

KING

No. No, no, no. This is my kingdom.

CAMERA DOES THIS SEQUENCE IN SLOW MOTION.

THE DUO

**"I'd walk away like a movie star  
who gets burned in a 3-way script."**

King pulls a gun. Fast. Too fast. Six lunges, blocking the shot.

BOOM!

ACE FIRES.

SLOW MOTION KICKS IN.

-Diamond's body recoils. Her eyes lock with Deuce's—just for a second. Recognition. Pain. Regret.

-Deuce reaches for her—but too late.

- Her fingers grip his jacket. Blood spreads through white silk.

- Her lips move—one last breath. (No sound. Just the shape of words: "Baby...")

- Her fingers slip from his jacket.

SOUND RUSHES BACK IN.

Diamond collapses.

Blood pools.

Deuce is frozen.

Jack and Six are moving—but Deuce? He's stuck in that last moment.

Then—Jack grabs him. Yanks him back to reality.

JACK

(gritted teeth, urgent)

Deuce—MOVE.

Sirens howl. Chaos explodes. Deuce blinks. Breathes. And finally lets go.

JACK SPINS. FIRES.

BANG. ACE DROPS. DEAD.

Jack breathes heavy. Ace's blood pools, staining the floor black.

CAMERA back to real time action as Deuce catches Diamond.

Deuce catches Diamond, lowering her slow. Her breath is shallow, her fingers weak against his jacket.

DIAMOND

I never wanted you... to be a part of  
this life.

She dies in his arms. A storm behind Deuce's eyes. The room falls silent.

NEW BLOOD VS. OLD BLOOD

Deuce stands, gun drawn. Across from him—King.

Father and son. Past and future. The same blood.

King laughs—low, knowing.

KING

Oh, the irony... New blood versus old  
blood. Funny, ain't it? It's all  
the same blood.

THE DOUBLE CROSS—AND THE CLEANUP

Roberto steps forward, casual. Too casual. He speaks to King.

ROBERTO

You know, King... I was always on  
your side. Always. Made it look  
like I was with them, but you know  
me. I'm a company man. The House  
Always Wins. That's what I say.

Jack, Deuce, and Six—their faces shift. Sold out. Just like that.

King steps toward Roberto. Pulls him in for a slow, knowing hug. A moment of gratitude. Almost tender. Speaking tenderly like a father in his ear.

KING

I know. Thank you.

BOOM.

Gunshot. King executes Roberto point-blank.

Roberto drops. Blood spreading slow, slow... like a stain that can't be cleaned.

King tosses the gun. Shrugs.

KING (CONT'D)  
Sometimes you just gotta clean  
house.

THE FINAL SHOWDOWN - DEUCE VS. KING

Sirens howl outside. Cops closing in.

King turns back to Deuce. Their guns still drawn.

KING  
So, Son-

DEUCE  
(cold, sharp)  
Don't call me that. You are not my  
father.

KING  
Oh, but I am. I most fucking am.  
Look at you. Just like me.

DEUCE  
(firm)  
No. You and I are not the same.

King laughs shaking his head.

KING  
I'll teach you. More than that  
bitch Diamond ever-

DEUCE  
You do not get to use her name.

King grins and steps closer.

KING  
Well, kid, you got my name. STARR.  
Deuce Starr.

DEUCE  
Shut up. We are not related.

King smirks, then in a growl/whisper.

KING

Then why the hell are we both  
standing here... pointing guns at  
each other?

BANG.

Deuce shoots first. King stumbles back, gasping. Drops to his knees. Blood blooming on his chest. He lifts his head one last time—grinning through the pain.

King laughs. SILENCE

KING

Wait till you meet the rest of your  
family.

He collapses. Dead. HOLD 5 seconds.

THE COPS ARRIVE

TEN and a squad of Chicago cops flood the bar. Guns drawn.

TEN

(commanding)

Everybody freeze. Everybody. Don't  
move.

He walks slow. Takes in the wreckage. Bodies. Blood. Deuce, Jack, Six—standing in the center of it all.

He moves to Jack first. Mocking and looking for answers.

TEN (CONT'D)

So we got The Ace. The King.  
And(looks over at Diamond's body,  
smirks coldly) Well, well... The  
Queen is back in town. But I see  
she can't speak on her own behalf.

He moves through the carnage, taking it all in like a game board now played out.

Stops in front of The Duo.

TEN (CONT'D)

What do you two know?

The male Duo shrugs.

MALE DUO

Hey, man, we just play the music.  
(Beat) Hit It!

The DUO and group play the song "The Night Chicago Died" as the film ends and the credits roll.

THE FINAL SEQUENCE - CLOSING OUT THE GAME

Camera on Deuce. Blood on his hands. King's body cooling on the floor.

Jack and Six—watching him, watching the weight settle on his shoulders.

The bar is a wreck. Bodies down. The cops are securing the scene.

Ten shakes his head, mutters

TEN

Fucking Wild Card.

THE DEED - PASSING THE TORCH

Amidst the chaos, a man steps in—Diamond's lawyer. Pulls a folder from his briefcase. Drops it in front of Deuce. Deuce blinks, picks it up. The paper? The Deed to The Wild Card.

Diamond had it signed, sealed, ready to transfer before she died.

Deuce stares at it. His name. His bar. His legacy.

Jack smirks.

JACK

Congratulations, Cowboy. You own  
Chicago's favorite mistake.

Six lifts a shot of whiskey.

SIX

To Diamond.

Jack and Deuce raise theirs, too. They drink.

CREDITS BEGIN TO ROLL ON-SCREEN

The song plays. The bar staff starts cleaning up.

Blood gets mopped up.

Tables get flipped back.

The Duo packs up their instruments.

Life moves on.

This isn't the first time blood has spilled in The Wild Card...  
and it won't be the last.

Deuce's cell phone goes off.

DEUCE

This city doesn't want men like us  
to love, Jack. So we fight. We  
bluff. We burn it down. But I want  
something after the fire.

(beat)

Do you?

Cell phone continues to ring.

THE PHONE CALL FROM DUKE - FIRST INTERRUPTION

Credits fade to black. Silence.

Then—a phone rings.

Deuce, alone in his office.

He answers.

DEUCE

(gruff, tired)

Yeah?

DUKE (V.O.)

Deuce. This is your uncle.

Deuce holds the phone and looks, frowning. Jack looks over.

DEUCE

What uncle?

Uncle Duke laughs slow and dangerous.

DUKE (V.O.)

I'm King's younger brother, Duke.  
And unlike King, I don't let  
traitors live.

A pause. Then the final gut punch:



DUKE (V.O.)  
You and your faggot boyfriend,  
Jackie, have nowhere safe to hide.

Click. Line goes dead.

Deuce exhales. Smolders.

JACK  
Cowboy, you good?

Deuce sets the phone down, flexes his jaw.

DEUCE  
Deuce's Wild.

JACK  
All bets are off

They shake hands. Six places her hand on top. They lock eyes.

JACK (CONT'D)  
What's our rule?

SIX  
The house always wins.

DEUCE  
The house always... fucking wins.

"THE NIGHT CHICAGO DIED" PICKS UP AGAIN.

CREDITS ROLL AGAIN - THEN THE SECOND INTERRUPTION

THE FINAL REVEAL - SIX LEARNS THE TRUTH

Fade back in.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT.

Six stands alone. The city is louder now, but she's quiet.

Jack steps out of the shadows. Lights a cigarette.

JACK  
(low)  
You ready for your inheritance?

SIX

What the hell are you talking  
about?

Jack takes a drag. Exhales slow. Looks her dead in the eye.

JACK

You and Deuce? Same blood, kid.

Six's face changes. Something shifts. The weight of it  
finally lands. She doesn't speak. Just breathes.

CREDITS ROLL

3RD FLASHBACK - 1997 - MIAMI "MORE GOING DOWN"

INT. EL IMPERIO DE LA NOCHE - NIGHT

The air is thick with cigar smoke and sin. Red lighting.  
Velvet booths. The kind of place where deals are whispered  
and lives are bought.

CARLOS DIAZ stands at the bar—cool AF, shirt unbuttoned just  
enough to flex dominance. Every eye in the club is on him.  
They either want to be him or fear him.

KING STARR walks in—young, sharp, hungry. He doesn't  
hesitate. He moves straight toward Carlos.

Carlos doesn't even look at him at first.

CARLOS

Hey, stranger. You're in the wrong  
place. Adios.

King doesn't flinch.

KING

You're Carlos Diaz. You're  
legendary. The boys in Chicago talk  
about you. A lot.

Now Carlos turns. He sizes King up—slow, calculated. He  
circles around him like a hunter measuring prey.

CARLOS

Now, what the fuck does Chicago  
care about—

Carlos steps closer. Breathes him in. A smirk.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

Not bad.

King doesn't move. The power shift is real.

Carlos leans in, low, dangerous whisper

CARLOS (CONT'D)

Tell me, Chicago.

KING

(steady, unwavering)

King. The name is King Starr.

Carlos steps back. Tilts his head, studying him. Then, he grins. Intrigued.

CARLOS

And why, Mr. Starr, would I want to get in bed with you?

Beat. Eyes locked. Heavy. The room disappears. Cool, lethal, knowing exactly what he's doing

KING

Connections.

Carlos leans in. Smirks. Stares right into King's eyes.

CARLOS

Connections, huh?

He turns to the bartender. Snaps his fingers. A bottle appears.

Carlos pours two drinks—but doesn't hand one to King. He just stares, waiting.

The message is clear: You take it. Or you don't belong here. No words. Just a challenge.

King picks up the glass. He holds it for a beat—reading Carlos just as hard as Carlos is reading him.

Then, he drinks.

A slow nod from Carlos. A slow smirk from King.

SILENCE.

INT. DEUCE'S PENTHOUSE EARLY EVENING

Deuce looks out at the Chicago early evening sky.

Black cowboy boots on, black jeans. Shirtless. WE see his reflection in the window.

DEUCE

(unapologetic)

Blood's got memory. Doesn't mean I have to repeat it.

THE DUO

"The night Chicago died. Nah nah nah nah nah nah nah nah naah. Brother what s night the people saw...Glory Be.."

CREDITS ROLL

TO BE CONTINUED.