

## ACT I

## Scene 1

AT RISE: The sounds of the ocean become audible as area lighting rise on Resmount DuFree sitting on a rock formation holding a fishing pole.

## RESMOUNT

At the time was, if you know what I say, it was beautiful, beautiful in the most magnificent sense. Homage pay they to this place by the sea. Came they from many places to this hotel to retreat, to reflect, to contemplate. Crashing waves of sensuous lover's hands embrace this place by the sea. What once was noble, fortress, impenetrable, crumbles, like sand castle washing away.

*(Points to the audience.)*

Out there, waves, soldiers each one relentlessly marching to the rhythm of perpetual change.

*(Points to the hotel. Lights begin to rise on the hotel.)*

Sand castle this is. Inside, sand people, inside silence, reaching inward to break themselves on lonely shores of lost humanity. This place is the New SeaView Hotel, rundown, old, forgotten, barnacle-encrusted, shipwrecked vessel corroded and useless.

*(Resmount move upstage to the Café. Characters are frozen in place.)*

Café Café call this place. Two names the same but meaning different. Café a place people meet, talk, eat, feel the warmth of companionship. Café, place people where they hide behind walls of despair and feed on the bread of degradation. Owner of this café, Casey, is. He cooks Casey with oriental fingers, delicate, timeless, tentacles reaching into cloistered silence. Serves he hope to the hopeless, insight to the blind, and comfort for the forlorn. Hungry am I for breakfast time it is. Join me, if you would care to, in this place full of moments unforgettable and transient. This is Café Café, by the sea. I am Resmount DuFree.

*(RESMOUNT packs up his fishing gear and heads to the café. RITA, TIMOTHY, FRANKIE and CASEY who have been frozen in position come to life. The breakfast rush is in full swing. Casey is both the cook and server. He rushes around the café trying to handle everything as best he can. Filipino music plays softly in the background. RITA wears a shabby robe and has a cigarette dangling from her mouth.)*

RITA

What the hell is holding my order up? You got chickens back there laying them damn eggs, Casey?

(CASEY delivers dishes to TIMOTHY.)

CASEY

Will that be it?

TIMOTHY

Yeah. Oh, hey, some more java, Casey.

CASEY

Sure thing. *(To RITA)* They're coming right up, love.

RESMOUNT

Morning good, Casey.

RITA

I've been waiting for about twenty minutes to get them goddamn eggs.

CASEY

Good morning, Resmount.

RITA

I'll be ready for my social security..

CASEY

You still out there on the rocks?

RITA

...or locked up in some nursing home with bed sores on my ass..

CASEY

You should go down to the pier sometime.

RITA

...before I get the goddamn eggs!

CASEY

Rita! I heard you the first, the second and the third time.

RITA

Well, you don't have to get snippy about it!

CASEY

*(Playful)*

Eggs are coming up, my little, delicate sparrow. Frankie...Frankie. You having the usual?

FRANKIE  
 Yes...yes...the usual.

(RESMOUNT pulls out his fishing pole and begins to practice his casting skills.)

RITA  
 What's with the music, Casey? Ching, chow, ping, pong, pow, gong. It's too early in the morning for that Chinaman shit.

CASEY  
 Filipino. It's Filipino music.

RITA  
 I don't give a shit what it is! All I know is that it's getting on my damn nerves. How about playing something a little more American? Last time I looked, we were living in America, right? A little country and western music would be nice.

CASEY  
*(In deep thought)*  
 Oh...ahhh...hummm...like Tammy Wynette?

RITA  
 That's my girl. *(SINGS)* STAND BY YOUR MAN..

CASEY  
 How about some Hank Williams?

RITA  
 Oh yeah, I love me some Hank Williams. You got any of his stuff? Now there's a man that can sing about heartache and sorrow.

CASEY  
 Sorry, only have Filipino music.

(CASEY turns up the volume on the Filipino music. He notices RESMOUNT with his fishing pole.)

CASEY  
 How many times have I told you, no fishing in my café? Fishing, always fishing.

(CASEY mumbles something in Filipino and exits into the kitchen.)

RITA  
 I hate when he talks that oriental shit. *(To TIMOTHY)* You think he's cussing us out?

(RESMOUNT puts his fishing pole away.  
CASEY enters delivers RITA'S and  
FRANKIE'S dishes.)

RITA  
(*Indicating her coffee.*)

Freshen this up, will you?

CASEY

You set Frankie?

FRANKIE

Yes.

CASEY

What are you going to have Resmount?

RESMOUNT

Two eggs with liquid sunshine, wheat whole toast, pale skin white  
potatoes, new, coffee, black.

CASEY

Got You! Two eggs over easy, break the yoke, whole-wheat toast,  
side of new potatoes and black coffee. How did I do?

RESMOUNT

Best you are, Casey.

(RITA stares at her plate in  
disbelieve.)

RITA

Casey, what is this? I said over easy. These...these eggs are as dry  
as my grand mama's titties, and she's been dead for nearly twenty  
years.

(*Timothy chuckles.*)

Am I right, Tim or what? Look at 'em.

(RITA holds the plate up for TIMOTHY  
to see. CASEY grabs the plate out of  
RITA'S hands.)

CASEY

Okay...okay, my little, chortling turtledove, you want fresh egg? No  
problem at Café Café. Be right up.

(CASEY crosses to the kitchen and  
begins to prepare Rita and Resmount's  
orders. EATON enters the café crosses  
to the counter and sits. RITA opens  
up her racing paper checking the  
results.)

RITA

Well, I'll be damned. Will you look at this, Easy Rider in the fifth? Aaaahhh, shit. Shit! Damn! *(Rises and crosses to pay phone up left and dials.)* I knew I should have put money on Easy Rider. *(Notices EATON)* Well, well, well, what do we have here?

EATON

Good morning, Casey.

CASEY

Morning, Eaton.

*(CASEY crosses to RITA and RESMOUNT tables with their orders.)*

CASEY (CONT'D)

Your eggs, Rita.

RITA

Just keep it warm for me, will you?

CASEY

Sure thing, my little songbird.

RITA

*(To CASEY)*

Will you cut the crap? *(Phone)* Hello...what? Yeah, I'll hold.

*(To EATON)*

Hey boy! Yeah, I'm talking to you! I'm not use to seeing the princess' little lap dog down here among the riff-raft. How is the grand dame these days?

CASEY

Lay off, Rita.

RITA

Let him speak for... *(Phone)* Charlie...hey, Charlie...it's me. Rita. Rita Boroughs. Yeah, I know...I know. Cut me some slack, will you? You done made plenty money off me, Charlie. Just put twenty on "Too Good for This Life" will you? I'm going to break-- Charlie...yeah...yeah...I know I haven't paid for the last...I'll have yo' goddamn money by Friday. I said I'd pay you on Friday, okay! *(Slams the phone down.)* Scum sucking dog. *(To CASEY)* Why don't you let twinkle toes stand up for himself? He's supposed to be a man, ain't he?

*(She laughs and crosses back to her seat.)*

EATON

Don't bother, Casey. It's better to ignore people like her.

RITA

What did he say? You say something, boy?

CASEY

Nothing, Rita, nothing! (To EATON) What will it be today?

RITA

You goddamn straight it was nothin'! Don't think 'cause I'm a lady that I won't kick yo' stankin' brown-sugar ass all over this town.

(EATON leans over the counter and whispers to CASEY. RITA and TIMOTHY strains to hear what is being said.)

CASEY

I don't know, Eaton.

EATON

I'll have it by the end of the week.

CASEY

You said that last week.

EATON

I'm sorry. I won't let...

CASEY

Don't be sorry! Just pay on time. Take a seat. I'll get you some coffee.

(CASEY brings EATON coffee and exits. EATON sits at table.)

RITA

You know what a freeloader is, Resmount? A freeloader is a nasty, sap, sucking insect that clings to yo' ass, sucking a little blood out, not enough that you get so angry you swat the damn thing, but just enough for them to get by, keep living, keep on suck, suck, sucking! One day you wake up, and you're all dried up. They, on the other hand, is fat and greasy, grinning in yo' face, asking for more.

RESMOUNT

Rita, cool keep you!

RITA

Hey, don't tell me to keep cool! This little, East Coast snob thinks he and the royal empress upstairs can come out here to San Diego and hold their nose up in the air like they are direct descendants of King Farouk. (To EATON) I work for a living, professor! Hey! What do you do? Lick madam's pussy!? Or, are you one of them Hillcrest funny boys?

(TIMOTHY snickers.)

Am I right, or what?

(CASEY enters with carry out order for EATON.)

CASEY

Here you go, Eaton. End of the week, don't forget, okay?

(TIMOTHY notices something downstage on the beach area.)

TIMOTHY

Hey! Ain't that, that O'Brien woman?

RITA

Where? Where?

(TIMOTHY rises and moves downstage to press against an imaginary window. The rest of the occupants of the café follow him and crowd around. On the second level, REBECCA can be seen looking out of her window.)

TIMOTHY

Yeah, that's her alright.

CASEY

Looks like she's showing some Japanese investors around the property.

RITA

How in the hell does she do that?

CASEY

What?

RITA

Walking in high heels in the sand.

TIMOTHY

Wonder if one them Japs could get me a deal on a 26-inch, Sony, color TV?

(RITA starts to move to the door that leads to the beach.)

RITA

I'm going to ask that bitch, why I ain't got my...?

(CASEY grabs hold of Rita's arm.)

CASEY

No, Rita! Not now! We shouldn't interrupt. We should wait.

RITA

Wait for what? It's about time that I got some goddamn answers.

CASEY

She'll be scheduling individual conference with all of us. You'll have your time with her. Patients, patients my fragile humming bird.

(Black out.)

**Scene 2:** REBECCA'S and EATON'S room, moments later. REBECCA is at her small writing table typing on a manual typewriter. REBECCA is startled by EATON'S abrupt entrance; she takes a moment to compose herself and conceal a whiskey bottle.

REBECCA

My God, Eaton!

EATON

You're up bright and early for once.

REBECCA

A breath of inspiration woke me. *(Beat)* I wish you would learn to knock before you come barging in.

EATON

Yeah, and I wish you would dispense with the morning libations.

REBECCA

God knows what could happen with the way my health has been lately...

EATON

I got him to extend our credit.

REBECCA

I could have a stroke or God knows what.

EATON

I have to get the money to him by Friday.

REBECCA

Why are you bothering me with insignificant details? *(Beat)* I believe I'm really on to something.

EATON

I don't consider paying our bills as an insignificant detail.

REBECCA

He should be grateful for my patronage. Doesn't he realize what an advertising gold mine he has sitting right under his nose? Rebecca Wade, the Pulitzer Prize winning author ate here! I might even agree to give him an autographed photo of myself to post proudly in his front window. *(Looking at herself in the mirror on the wall.)* I need to my hair done this week. What's it called again?

EATON

What's what called?

REBECCA

The little diner for Christ sakes!

EATON

Café Café.

REBECCA

Café Café. It seems the little oriental could have thought up a more imaginative name for his establishment.

EATON

The little oriental is Filipino and his name is Casey.

REBECCA

I see you're making friends with all the local riffraff. (*Beat*) Oh, yeah, and who is that dim-witted fellow always mulling around the lobby, twisting and twirling words like some drunken, New Age poet.

EATON

His name is Resmount DuFree. Casey says he has some kind of speech disorder. You want to sit down and eat before this stuff gets cold?

(EATON pulls out two plates sits one on the bed and the other on the desk.)

REBECCA

Or he could just be schizophrenic. Sometime I feel like I'm living in a mental asylum.

EATON

You've always believed that everyone around you was mentally unstable. It's only fitting that you should finally join them.  
(*Indicates her food*)

There's yours. Mangia! Mangia!

(EATON begins to eat. REBECCA stares at her plate suspiciously)

EATON

The relocation coordinator was here today.

REBECCA

Who? (*Beat*) You know, I don't much like your attitude this morning.

EATON

It's the same cynical mood I'm dressed in every morning; you're just too sauced to notice. The relocation coordinator is Ms. Sheila O'Brien, the woman in charge of finding us a new place to live.

REBECCA

He probably doesn't wash his hands after using the bathroom.

EATON

Who in the hell are you talking about now?

REBECCA

That oriental fellow.

EATON

Jesus, Rebecca! You know what? He probably goes out and steals little old lady's cats at night, lure unsuspecting dogs with milk bone treats and makes his afternoon stew with the catch of the night. *(Beat)* You're a highly educated, Prize-winning author, and sometimes you can act like the most ignorant, arrogant, uninformed, prejudiced person I've ever meet. *(Beat)* Your breakfast is getting cold.

*(REBECCA watches EATON eating his food. EATON realizes that REBECCA is staring at him.)*

EATON

What?

REBECCA

We are a strange pair.

EATON

Strange, that's putting it mildly. *(Beat)* Come on, sit, eat.

*(REBECCA takes a few bits of food and dumps the rest in the trash.)*

EATON (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

REBECCA

You don't really expect me to eat that, do you?

EATON

What the hell is wrong with it?

REBECCA

I believe I ordered 3-minute eggs, and they were almost hard-boiled. The toast...

EATON

Can't you get it through you're thick skull that you're not living at the Ritz Carlton anymore.

REBECCA

I won't lower my standards.

EATON

Well, maybe it's time you start, 'cause we certainly aren't going anywhere.

REBECCA

And whose fault is it that? Whose fault is it we end up in a welfare hotel?

EATON

Don't start!

REBECCA

If you hadn't been such a lousy business manager...

EATON

Wow, I got a promotion! Yesterday I was your administrative assistant.

REBECCA

...I wouldn't have ended up living like this...this nightmare.

EATON

One of these days you're going to push me too far...

REBECCA

Then what, huh? What are you going to do? Cry like a baby. Boo hoo. Boo hoo.

EATON

Rebecca...Rebecca...we just can't continue to ripe at each other like this and expect to survive.

REBECCA

You call this survival? Living like rats in a rat hole...

EATON

Maybe if you tried lying of the booze for a while.

REBECCA

My drinking is not the problem.

EATON

It's only one in a menagerie of problems.

REBECCA

That you have perpetrated.

EATON

As I recall, it was your idea to start this jaunt...

REBECCA

That's a lie!

EATON

You've managed to use and abuse your friends, family and colleagues.

REBECCA

They're parasites. All of them!

EATON

Any yet, it was you that sucked their last drop of blood out.

REBECCA

You think you're so clever...

EATON

I'm probably the last friend you have on Earth, beside Jim Beam and Jack Daniels. Looks like you've just run out off steam, old girl. It happens to some writers, you know they just go sputter...sputter ...kaput and nothing ever worthwhile emerges again. It's nothing to be ashamed of. Most of them end up like you. As Joni Mitchell so brilliantly put it, "...cynical and drunk and boring someone in some dark café."

REBECCA

Well, at least I don't pretend to be something I'm not.

EATON

Careful, you don't want to go there.

REBECCA

You're just a little man with big ideas--big dreams of becoming a literary giant, another James Ballwin, Ernest Hemingway. (*Laughing*) You know the only reason I kept you around all these years is because...

EATON

Shut up, Rebecca!

REBECCA

...I felt sorry for you.

EATON

I told you to shut up!

REBECCA

You're pitiful. You're such a pathetic, inept, little man.

EATON

I don't know why in the hell I just don't get on the first Greyhound bus going anywhere. Just go!

REBECCA

Go on, run. Run! That's just like you to take the easy way out.

EATON

You mean like being in alcohol induce coma most of the day.

REBECCA

Leave me if that's what you want! I'm not afraid to die alone!

EATON

Ohhh...please!

REBECCA

I've been alone most of my life.

EATON

Anyone who has gotten too close, you've managed to destroy.

REBECCA

I'm destined to die alone.

EATON

Sorry, it's me, Eaton Pace, your faithful companion, remember? You forget that I've heard the "Oh, death, where is thy sting?" speech thousands of times before. If you're going to die, die goddamn it! You've milked the goddamn death scene for all it's worth. Get off the fuckin' stage and let the dancing girls come on and do some fan kicks. Let's have the grand finale, shall we? The limos and cabs are double-parked with their meters running.

(On the chest there are numerous bottles of medication. EATON crosses to the chest.)

EATON

This! This is Rebecca Wade. This assortment of magic elixirs! She has been reduced to little pills. Pills she takes for aches and pains. Pills she takes to fall asleep, pills she takes when she's depressed. A pill for whatever ails her. Taken, of course, with a healthy whiskey chaser.

(EATON begins to pick up the bottles examines them and drops them on the floor. The tops come off of some spilling the contents. REBECCA tries to stop him but he manages to keep her at bay.)

EATON (CONT'D)

The pink pills make you tall.

REBECCA

Don't do that! Stop it...

EATON

...the red pills make you small...

REBECCA

Stop it, I said. What are you doing. Stop it!

EATON

...the green ones, well, they don't do nothin' at all...

REBECCA

You're ruining everything...stop it!

EATON

...the yellow drops, hey, this one is new?

REBECCA

Please, stop! I can't afford to refill the prescriptions

EATON

You...you can't afford! You can't afford! It's me! Me, Eaton Pace! I'm the one that pays the bills, hustles for money that keeps us one step above flophouse living.

REBECCA

You don't believe I'm sick, do you!?

EATON

Oh, yeah, I believe you're sick. Just not in the way you want me to believe you're sick.

(REBECCA gets down on her hands and knees to retrieve the pills.)

REBECCA

You've ruined everything! I had them all organized.

EATON

Listen, I've had enough! I'm going out to the beach.

REBECCA

Go ahead! I'm tired of looking at you! Look what you've done! Just look what you've done! You disgust me. Get out of here! I don't want to look at you. Don't worry about getting me any more food. I'll starve. I'll just starve! That's what you want, isn't it!?

EATON

I'm always cast as the villain in your little melodramas.

(EATON crosses onto the balcony and walks down the stairs. REBECCA crosses out to the balcony.)

REBECCA

You don't believe I'm sick. You think I'm faking. Living like an animal all these years has taken its toll. I'll be dead soon enough, and then you and all the other little willis can just dance on my grave.

(REBECCA crosses back into the apartment, slamming the door behind her. Lights fade on the REBECCA and EATON'S room.)