

MILLER'S CROSSING (Tom's Apt. Scene)

(A knock at the door. Tom crosses to door and opens it)

LEO

Hello Tommy, sorry about the hour.

TOM

I'll live. What's the rumpus?

LEO

Can I come in?

TOM

Sure. *(Leo enters apartment)* You want a Drink?

LEO

I wouldn't mind. *(sits in chair)* I tried calling earlier.

TOM

(Making two drinks) I got home late.

LEO

Well, I'm sorry about the hour.

TOM

(Hands Leo a drink and sits in chair facing him) Uh-huh.

LEO

(Drinks the scotch) Not bad.

TOM

Better than the paint we serve at the club.

LEO

That it is, that it is.

TOM

You thought about cutting Bernie loose?

LEO

Can't do it Tommy. Can't do it. That's sort of why I'm.... *(pause)* Tommy, I don't know where Verna is.

TOM

Uh-huh.

LEO

I know what you're thinking, "What else is new?" But, the situation now, I'm worried.

TOM

Verna can take care of herself. Maybe better than you can.

LEO

What does that mean?

TOM

(Gets up, takes Leo's glass to make him another drink) Want another one?

LEO

What does that mean?!!

TOM

How far has she got her hooks in you?

LEO

That's a hell of a question.

TOM

(sits again, hands Leo fresh drink) It's a gift. If she didn't need you to protect her brother from Johnny Caspar, you think she'd still be taking slow carriage rides through the park with you? That's the deal, isn't it? You keep Bernie under wraps till Caspar cools down?

LEO

Jesus, Tommy.....you're a prickly pear. What's wrong with her wanting her brother taken care of?

TOM

Nothing. I don't blame her. She sees the angle, which is you, and she plays it. She's a GRIFTER, just like her brother. Probably had GRIFTER parents and GRIFTER Grandparents, and some day they'll each spawn little GRIFTER kids.

LEO

Stop it Tommy. I don't like to have my friends run down, even by other friends.

TOM

Friendship's got nothing to do with it.

LEO

Yeah, well, you say you'd do anything to help your friend, like you do anything to kick your enemies.

TOM

Wrong Leo. You do things for a reason.

LEO

Ok, Tom.... you know all the angles, Christ better than anybody. But, maybe you're wrong about this one. You don't know what is in Verna's heart.

TOM

Yeah? If she's such an angel, why are you out looking for her at 4 o'clock in the morning?

LEO

(pause) I put a tail on her this afternoon.

TOM

Uh-huh.

LEO

I asked Rug Daniels to follow her around. Just to keep her out of trouble. It wasn't a spy, Tom. I was worried. After my meeting with Caspar, you can't be too careful.

TOM

What did Rug say, that had you scurrying over here?

LEO

That's just it. Nothing. He's disappeared.

TOM

So, you've lost your lady friend, AND the tail you put on her?

LEO

I guess it does sound pretty sorry at that. Help me out, Tom. I wouldn't know where to start looking. You know Rug's crowd, you know the people Verna runs with. It's just that I'm worried now, with the way things are with me and Caspar.

TOM

You shouldn't be confronting Johnny Caspar. That's what I've been trying to tell you. You can't trade body blows with him, he's gotten too strong.

LEO

I reckon I can still trade body blows with any man in this town. *(Smiles)* Except for you Tommy.

TOM

And Verna.

LEO

(Laughs) Ok...give me the needle. *(Gets up, starts to leave)* I am a sap. I deserve it. Thanks for the drink. Let me know if you hear anything. *(Leo Exits)*

END