

Robbers

Who

Rob Things

BY: Mason

## **CHARACTERS**

Frankie  
Buster  
Dinah  
Cop

## **SETTING**

New York City, 1970s

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## **SCENE 1**

*A rundown bar, aged and dirty. Tables and chairs are knocked over, moths tap into the lights hung from the ceiling, and smooth jazz plays on a machine in the corner. The bar is empty except for FRANKIE, who is cleaning a mug with a washcloth behind the bar top. Suddenly, BUSTER walks in through the door, wearing a zoot suit. He's flipping a coin in hand with a toothpick in his mouth—the epitome of a gangster.*

FRANKIE: Oh shit...

*BUSTER wanders in and takes a seat at the bar.*

BUSTER: Hey Frankie! It's been some time, huh? Did you get a haircut? New shirt? No, I got it, new nose! That's got to be a new nose. There's no way you ever smelled as good as you do now.

FRANKIE: Look, Busty, if you're here for spare change, you're out of luck. Cash register is running dry these days. Besides, your IOUs are only good for keeping my coffee table from wobbling.

BUSTER: Oh, come on, Frankie. Can't an old friend just waltz in his finest slacks with a pep in his step and song in his heart to see how his childhood chum is doing?

FRANKIE: It's BECAUSE we're old friends that I know you'd never come in here just to "chat".

*FRANKIE sets down the mug and starts to clean a plate.*

BUSTER: Well, I am insulted! I've never heard such an insulting, degrading, hurtful, ridiculing, insolent...

FRANKIE: Oh, knock it off Buster! You're just saying synonyms of the same thing!

BUSTER: Now that's not true...

*BUSTER pulls a thesaurus out of his coat pocket.*

BUSTER: According to Merriam Webster, insolent is regarded as a stronger synonym of bold over insulted except in cases of personal regard towards another dependant on the cause of action if it refers to a matter of intimacy.

*BUSTER puts the thesaurus away and the pair stare at each other silently for a moment*

FRANKIE: Do you just always carry a thesaurus around with you?

BUSTER: Well, I just get the feeling insecure people being desperate to always prove themselves right will catch on someday, so I'm just getting a head start.

*FRANKIE set down the plate and starts cleaning a baking sheet*

FRANKIE: Fair enough...well as my one and only customer, can I get you anything?

BUSTER: Kitchen still open?

FRANKIE: Depends. What did you have in mind?

BUSTER: Could you do a seared rack of lamb with a mint and balsamic reduction, cooked to mid-rare, with a mushroom crust, slightly sweetened with a red wine and shallot sauce?

*FRANKIE pulls up a plate of exactly what BUSTER asked for and hands it to him.*

*FRANKIE then puts down the baking sheet, pulls up a toilet and starts cleaning that.*

FRANKIE: How's the job going, Busty? Still breaking thumbs? Snapping arms? Locking lips?

BUSTER: Eh, it's been a little slow these days. People just aren't paying back their loans. We had to kill sixteen guys this last week. That just sends a bad message that we don't prefer to have the money. And do you know how hard it is to dispose of sixteen bodies? We had to start shoving them in baskets and putting them on the doorsteps of morgues to take care of them.

FRANKIE: Wait, do you have enough money to pay for that food?

*The pair stare at each other awkwardly for a moment.*

BUSTER: You know they say friendship is the only compensation a man ever really needs...

*FRANKIE takes the plate of food and dumps it behind the bar.*

BUSTER: Oh, c'mon Frankie, I'm starving! I'm barely making ends meet.

FRANKIE: Then how did you afford that suit?

BUSTER: ...my mom made it for me...look, don't you have anything you'd be willing to pass over out of the goodness of your heart? Oh buddy, oh pal, oh friend o' mine?

FRANKIE: On your budget and mine, the best I can do is give you ten saltine crackers.

BUSTER: Really? After all the years we've spent together and growing up in the same neighborhood that you...hell, give me the crackers.

*FRANKIE reaches under the bar and picks up ten saltine crackers. BUSTER immediately shoves them in his mouth. A letter is dropped in through the mail slot on the door. FRANKIE walks over and picks it up.*

FRANKIE: Damn, those vultures at the bank are relentless. But people just aren't drinking all that much anymore. Something to do with a will to want to live longer. Until that changes, I'm running dry.

*BUSTER mumbles something with crackers in his mouth; inaudible*

FRANKIE: I already tried burning the place down. And spent the next two months paying for damages. Cause fuck if my insurance company actually paid for something. I've been sleeping in the bar ever since.

*BUSTER mumbles something with crackers in his mouth; inaudible*

FRANKIE: Yeah, you always had such a way with words, Busty. I got to figure something out and get these debts settled. This bar is all I have left.

*BUSTER mumbles something with crackers in his mouth; inaudible*

FRANKIE: Okay, now you just need to swallow already.

*BUSTER finally swallows the crackers*

BUSTER: I was just saying that things aren't so bad. Try and look on the bright side of things. At least you still got your mom.

FRANKIE: She died of a heart attack six years ago.

BUSTER: Oh...well what about your dad?

FRANKIE: He choked on a frozen hot dog six weeks ago.

BUSTER: Your brother?

FRANKIE: Guillotine

BUSTER: Your aunt?

FRANKIE: Eaten by a shark

BUSTER: Your goldfish?

FRANKIE: Died of a broken heart

BUSTER: Damn you really don't have very much...well, at least you still got me.

FRANKIE: So basically, all your saying is I have my bar and nothing else of value?

BUSTER: Okay I see how it is. I was going to let you in on my certified money-making scheme, but I guess I'll just have to share it with someone else.

*FRANKIE continues wiping the top of his bar, not indulging BUSTER*

BUSTER: That's right. Going to have to take this easy track to tons of money and let one of my other close friends in on it.

*FRANKIE remains unphased*

BUSTER: ALLLLL THAT MONEY...

FRANKIE: Hey Busty, do you by any chance have a money-making scheme?

BUSTER: Well, I'm glad you asked! Listen, I got a hot tip earlier today that there's this new bank up near Doyers Street. Has some odd name. Like the "Currency Centre" or something. But people can't get enough of this place. Fellas line up every day for it. I don't know what's so special, but it seems to be just the break working class guys were looking for.

FRANKIE: New bank huh? That's not a bad idea. I'll can go there tomorrow and talk about getting a loan. Maybe I can get enough for a down depos...

BUSTER: I say we rob it!

*The two stare at each other in silence for a moment.*

FRANKIE: I'm not robbing a bank, Buster.

BUSTER: Why not? You said it yourself; you need some money, and you need it quickly to keep your place open. This is money that we can get quick. It's a simple in and out job. Then you pay off your bar and I can eat something that doesn't feel like cardboard. What's the issue?

FRANKIE: I won't go back to that life. I've had a second chance here to go straight and I can't risk that by getting my hands dirty again.

BUSTER: But Frankie, sometimes you have to get dirty to become clean.

FRANKIE: Yeah, but just because you can wash your hands doesn't mean you go around sticking them in every mud puddle you find.

BUSTER: Ah, but the water is always there to wash away the mud if you find a sink in time.

FRANKIE: Yeah, but sometimes mud can get caught under your fingernails. That's hard to wash away and can stick with you for several days. Then you start chewing your nails and a bit of mud flies into your mouth. And in that moment, you never wished you put your hand in that mud puddle.

BUSTER: Yeah well...I'm confused. Why did we get on mud?

FRANKIE: I'm sorry Busty, but I'm not robbing a bank. It's just too risky and dangerous at this stage in my life to be thrown in jail again.

BUSTER: Okay then. Answer me this. Where are you going to get the money to pay off your place? Last, I heard you only had about ten days left. Cutting it close, huh?

FRANKIE: That's not your business. I'll figure something out.

BUSTER: Fine, suit yourself.

*BUSTER starts eating cracker crumbs off the bar while FRANKIE cleans a washcloth with another washcloth. He pauses looking around his bar solemnly. He thinks in deep thought before sighing in defeated acceptance.*

FRANKIE: Hypothetically speaking...

BUSTER: Oh well since you asked!

*BUSTER pulls out a layout of the bank from his jacket and lays it on the bar top.*

BUSTER: Here's what I was thinking. I disguise myself as a baker. We put you in a giant cake and roll you in like a Trojan Horse. Once you're inside, sneak out of the cake and disable the alarm system. Meanwhile I'll grapple hook to the roof. I'll light a small fire that will cause the firefighters to come and evacuate the building. I'll suction cup myself to the window parallel to the vault where I'll create a hole in the window. You open the vault and wheel out the cash and toss it out the window. You hop through the hole, and I release from the wall and we fall directly on some motorcycles. The police are sure to notice by this time, so we take out our bazooka and shoot the police cars. They'll never know what hit them! What do you think?

FRANKIE: Can I throw out a counter suggestion?

BUSTER: Please

FRANKIE: What if we go through the front door, ask for the money, and walk back out the front door with it?

BUSTER: Well, that's not very exciting. Which is exactly why it's so genius! It's so overdone and generic that they'll assume we'll do something more exciting. They won't believe it when we do the generic thing. I love it. Now then, I'm putting you in charge of getting the guns...

FRANKIE: No guns.

BUSTER: What? What do you mean no guns? What kind of robbery doesn't have a gun?

FRANKIE: I'm interested in getting the money, but I'm not going to put blood on my hands for it. If we do this, there can't be any casualties.

BUSTER: Well, we still got to have some kind of weapon. That's our intimidation factor. What about knives?

FRANKIE: Nope.

BUSTER: Grenades?

FRANKIE: Out of the question.

BUSTER: Swords?

FRANKIE: Too barbaric.

BUSTER: Laser guns?

FRANKIE: Too futuristic.

BUSTER: Psychological manipulation?

FRANKIE: Too theoretical.

BUSTER: Ooo, Mr. High Road, too good to use a weapon. Fine, what do you suggest?

FRANKIE: Bare minimum. We go to central park and pick out a few sticks that we can poke people. Nobody wants to get shot, but I'm sure nobody wants to get smacked with a stick either. I think that's our best bet.

BUSTER: A stick? I once covered an entire horse in concrete and now I've been resorted to using a stick. How humiliating.

FRANKIE: That's your tradeoff for me. Accept it or you don't get me. Deal?

*FRANKIE reaches out for a handshake. BUSTER thinks for a moment before taking it.*

BUSTER: Deal.

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## SCENE 2

*A clean, white waiting room. Several chairs along a table with explicit magazines laid on it. A cat poster hung on the wall saying, "you can do it!". A receptionist desk in the middle where DINAH is working and with business cards and small containers of pale liquid sat atop. A pair of glass doors on the right leading to the outside, a door behind DINAH, and a ladder to the left leading to the roof. BUSTER and FRANKIE arrive suddenly and try to kick open the outside door, but nothing happens. They try again, still nothing. They rigorously push on the doors trying to open them.*

DINAH: No, you have to pull. It's not a push door.

*FRANKIE tries to pull one of the doors open, still nothing.*

DINAH: That one sometimes gets stuck. Try the other one.

*BUSTER tries to pull open the other door, still nothing.*

DINAH: Oh! I have to buzz you in. Wait for the buzz and then pull.

*DINAH buzzes and BUSTER tries to pull the door on the buzz, still nothing.*

DINAH: No pull after the buzz. Wait until it's done and then pull on the door.

*DINAH buzzes and BUSTER tries to pull the door on the buzz again. It still doesn't open.*

DINAH: No! Wait AFTER! Stop pulling on the buzz!

*DINAH buzzes and BUSTER tries to pull the door on the buzz again. Once more, it still doesn't open. DINAH stands up and walks to the door and opens it for them. FRANKIE and BUSTER walk in.*

FRANKIE: Thank you.

DINAH: No problem.

FRANKIE: Now then...This is a robbery! Do as we ask, and no one gets hurt!

DINAH: Oh god! Please don't hurt me, I'm just...wait is that a stick? That doesn't seem particularly threatening.

BUSTER: Told you.

FRANKIE: Oh yeah?

*FRANKIE hits DINAH in the arm with his stick.*

DINAH: Ow! Fuck! That's going to end up a minor bruise in a few hours.

FRANKIE: And there's plenty more where that came from unless you open the vault and give us what we want!

DINAH: If you think I'm going to give up just because you wave around some sticks, you're sorely mistak...

*FRANKIE hits DINAH again with his stick.*

DINAH: Ah shit! Fine! We just have someone in there doing their business. Just give him a chance to finish and I'll take you to our vault.

FRANKIE: Ah. Someone in there depositing a nice big load just for us?

DINAH: Well...not quite the terminology I would use. But in a sense, yes.

BUSTER: Hey Frankie, check this out.

*FRANKIE wanders over to BUSTER who is looking at the magazines on the table.*

FRANKIE: Are those playboys?

BUSTER: Yeah. This is some loose bank. I love it. I might have to move my business here after we're done.

FRANKIE: Yeah, not bad. And hey, check this out.

*FRANKIE wanders to the receptionist desk.*

FRANKIE: They got small cups of milk to sip on while you're waiting. Not sure why they offer so little, but hey, I'm not one to say no to free milk.

*FRANKIE grabs one and opens it*

DINAH: Oh, I wouldn't do that if I were you.

FRANKIE: Oh, come off it. I'm the one holding the stick here. I think I'm entitled to call the shots. And I'm aiming for a little milk to go with my robbing.

*FRANKIE slurps the entire container. His eyes widen. Some seriously off milk or...?  
FRANKIE turns back to DINAH, still holding the "milk" in his mouth.*

DINAH: I'm sorry I couldn't hold a stick while you were doing that. Maybe then you would've taken my advice.

*FRANKIE swallows the "milk" in one big gulp, shivering in disgust. He goes over to BUSTER who is reading through one of the nude magazines.*

FRANKIE: Busty?

BUSTER: Yeah, just a minute. I'm getting acquainted with the future Mrs. Brown.

FRANKIE: Busty?

BUSTER: I mean...I guess she is a little, but that doesn't matter to me. See, I prefer a woman with a lot of personali...

FRANKIE: BUSTER BROWN!

*BUSTER drops the magazine*

BUSTER: Jesus, what?! Is there a problem getting the cash? And God, why does your breath smell like pennies?

FRANKIE: Busty, what did you say the name of this bank was again?

BUSTER: Something like "Currency Centre". Why?

*FRANKIE goes to the receptionist counter, grabs one of their business cards and brings it over to Buster.*

FRANKIE: What does that say on the card?

BUSTER: "Current Seed Centre". Huh, that's a strange name for a bank. Do you think they only take farmers as clients?

FRANKIE: No Buster. I do not. If I had to take a wild shot in the dark, I would say it has something to do with the fact that this place is actually a sperm bank.

*BUSTER looks around at the dirty magazines, at the samples on the counter, and then at the business card.*

BUSTER: Are you sure?

FRANKIE: Yes, you idiot! How can you be so goddamn stupid?!

BUSTER: Okay look, it was an innocent mistake. Letters close together like that. It's easy to assume some words could be others.

FRANKIE: Did you not do ANY research on this place before you narrowed in on it?! Because I'd call that a big goddamn oversight to make!

BUSTER: Okay so maybe we won't get the money like we thought, but that doesn't mean we can't look a gift horse in the mouth.

*BUSTER wanders over to DINAH*

BUSTER: Hello madame, I'm sorry for the hostilities. Do you happen to have any money in this establishment?

DINAH: Not especially. Just lots of cum.

BUSTER: I see. And is this "cum" worth anything?

DINAH: Well, it gives couples unable to conceive a chance to have children. So, it has a lot of emotional value.

BUSTER: Yeah hilarious, but like pricewise. What you think? Like \$40 a vial or...?

DINAH: Oh no, it has almost no resale. Pretty easy to get your hands on the stuff. And in New York? Especially.

BUSTER: I see...Do by chance you pay for samples? If so, me and my companion wish to make donations.

DINAH: Normally we would. But for idiots dumb enough to bring sticks to a robbery, no one is going to jump at the chance to have that be their baby's father.

BUSTER: Oh, sure sure. Okay, well thank you for your time.

*BUSTER wanders back to FRANKIE*

BUSTER: Frankie, I'm going to level with you. This may have been a mistake.

FRANKIE: Oh yeah?! What tipped you off! I can't believe I let you talk me into wasting what little time and money I have to pull this off. I have half a mind to shove this stick up your ass.

BUSTER: So maybe my eyes were bigger than my stomach...

FRANKIE: That metaphor doesn't work here.

BUSTER: My point is we're not going to get anywhere by standing here arguing. So, let's just go back to your bar and we'll figure something else out.

FRANKIE: Christ...Fine.

*BUSTER and FRANKIE start to leave*

BUSTER: Hey, it could be worse. The police could've caught on to us.

*Sirens and flashing lights suddenly appear from outside. The police are here.*

BUSTER/FRANKIE/DINAH: Shit!

BUSTER: I can't go back to jail Frankie! I'm too soft! They'll go through me like wet toilet paper.

FRANKIE: Dinah! Is there another way out of here?

DINAH: Well, there's the door behind me...

FRANKIE: Great!

DINAH:...but you have to go through a hall of snakes to get to the exit.

*BUSTER and FRANKIE sit in a moment of confusion*

BUSTER: The what?

DINAH: A hall of snakes.

BUSTER: What, is that like a euphemism for something?

DINAH: No, it's just a literal hall of live snakes.

FRANKIE: Oh, for fuck's sakes...

*FRANKIE hops over the desk and heads for the door.*

BUSTER: Frankie, are you sure you want to do that?

FRANKIE: C'mon Busty, a hall of snakes? She's fucking with us. There's no way a business could legally have something like that. She's just trying to stall us. If you want to stay, fine. But I'm getting out of here as far and as fast as I can.

*FRANKIE goes through the door. Silence for a moment before snake hissing and screaming are heard from the other side. FRANKIE enters back in with a snake hanging from his arm. He promptly rips it off and throws it to the side.*

FRANKIE: Okay Plan B. You got like a ladder to the roof or something?

DINAH: Yes, just right over there.

FRANKIE: Beautiful.

DINAH: But...

FRANKIE: But?

DINAH: You have to go through the ring of fire.

FRANKIE: Right. Because of course you do.

*FRANKIE goes to the ladder.*

BUSTER: Uh Frankie?

FRANKIE: Okay so I was wrong about the snakes. Business safety and animal right laws are fucked to high hell. But every building has to have access the roof. Nobody would be so ruthless and dumb enough to put something like that on a ladder.

*FRANKIE starts climbing until he is out of view. The sounds of flames erupt and FRANKIE screams. He slowly climbs back down, now with burnt hair and smoke rising from his body until he is back on the ground.*

FRANKIE: What the hell kind of sperm bank is this?

DINAH: We at "Current Seed" take protection of our assets very seriously.

BUSTER: Yeah, no shit.

FRANKIE: Well, that's in then. There's no way out of here. This is where it all ends. And if only there was someone to blame for this...

*FRANKIE punches BUSTER, knocking him to the floor.*

BUSTER: Ow! Frankie, what the hell?

FRANKIE: You Buster! All of this is because of you!

BUSTER: Hey, I wasn't the one who called the police!

FRANKIE: You may as well have! If you had one brain cell in your head and had some iota of what we would be getting into, none of this would have happened.

BUSTER: Okay look, I hear what you're saying and fully understand how this is our fault...

FRANKIE: OUR fault?! No Buster! No! I'm going to jail tonight. I'm going to get charged for attempted robbery. And I'm going to lose my bar, the only thing that mattered to me most in this world. The thing I wanted to fight to keep open with all the spirit I have left. But now I can't. And why? Because of you! I have nothing left!

BUSTER: Well, what if we...

FRANKIE: Just shut up Buster! I don't want to hear one other word from you. I want to stand here in silence until the police erupt in and spray us down with tear gas. And my only solace is knowing that you will rot from this too.

*BUSTER and FRANKIE are both silent, neither knowing what to say after that. BUSTER reaches into his back pocket, pulls out an envelope and hands it to FRANKIE.*

FRANKIE: What the hell is this?

*FRANKIE opens the envelope to find a wad of cash inside.*

FRANKIE: Wha...Buster...I don't understand. There's got to be like \$7500 here. Where the hell did you get this?

BUSTER: I figured...in case things didn't go right, I would still make sure you could pay off your debts. Before we got here, I sold off my car, rented out my place, and called in a few favors. That should be enough to keep your bar open. Call it insurance for you doing this.

FRANKIE: You got rid of all that? Buster you must not have anything to your name anymore.

BUSTER: Well...you needed the money more than me. Maybe I'm not a good friend. But I'm a damn good customer. And you can buy yourself a better table. Now you don't have to use my IOUs to keep it still.

FRANKIE: Buster...you are without a doubt one of the dumbest most reckless people I've ever known in my life...

*FRANKIE reaches in and gives BUSTER a hug*

BUSTER: Thank you, my friend.

*The two hold their hug for a moment*

DINAH: (*whispering*) Kiss, Kiss, Kiss

FRANKIE/BUSTER: Shut Up Dinah!

FRANKIE: You thinking what I'm thinking, Busty?

BUSTER: I think so, but I don't know if there is a tailor that will make suit to fit a gorilla.

FRANKIE: The fu-...no. I was suggesting that we may as well turn ourselves in and make this less painful.

BUSTER: Oh! Yeah, that's probably not a bad idea either.

*The pair place their hands and walk towards the front entrance.*

FRANKIE: Okay, hold your fire. We're coming out.

*BUSTER and FRANKIE share a moment of confused silence.*

FRANKIE: What do you mean you're not here for us?

BUSTER: You're here for Dinah?

*The pair turn and look back at DINAH*

DINAH: Dammit.

*DINAH reaches under her desk and pulls up a machine gun.*

BUSTER: Holy shit! Dinah's packing!

DINAH: Yeah yeah. I thought if you sold yourselves out, then they wouldn't come in after me.

FRANKIE: What? Why are they here for you?

DINAH: We've been taking out half the semen containers and replacing the missing halves with milk so we could sell double the samples. I knew the police were onto us, but I thought we'd have more time. Will you boys excuse me for a second?

*DINAH goes outside. Gun firing, screams, and explosions are heard from outside with FRANKIE and BUSTER reacting to it all. Things like limbs and car parts make their way into the bank. At one point, a grenade is thrown inside. BUSTER throws it back outside, leading to another explosion that the pair drop to the ground for. Things go quiet with only the sounds of flames being heard. DINAH enters back in covered in blood and with a*

*skull on her head. She sits back behind the receptionist desk, unphased and goes back to work.*

BUSTER: Hey Frankie?

FRANKIE: Yeah?

BUSTER: I feel like there's a lesson in all this, but hell if I can put my finger on what it is.

FRANKIE: I got one. Don't fuck with Dinah.

DINAH: Damn straight.

*The pair stand back up.*

BUSTER: Well, I'd better get back to my mom's place. She's letting me stay there for a while, but my curfew is at five.

*BUSTER starts to head out*

FRANKIE: Hey Buster?

BUSTER: Yeah?

FRANKIE: Why don't you come back with me to the bar? You can use the shower and I'll fix us up some stew. You can even stay on the couch for a few nights if you'd like.

BUSTER: That sounds like the life to me, Frankie.

FRANKIE: You said it, Buster.

*The pair leave the sperm bank, conversing with each other which slowly gets quieter the further away they get.*

END