

"GAYLE STRAWBERRY AND HER SODA  
POP MUSIC MAKERS"

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FADE IN:

EXT. STRAWBERRYS' HOUSE - NIGHT

SUPER: LOS ANGELES, CA, 9-6-1942

This house, in Los Angeles' University Park area, has dull-colored siding and a roof of a contrasting color.

INT. STRAWBERRYS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

This room features eclectic furniture; most of the furnishings look as if they'll never go out of style.

GAYLE STRAWBERRY (16, Black, extroverted; braces on her teeth) turns the living room's lights on, then goes to the family's floor-model radio. She turns the radio ON.

GAYLE

Any Sunday night without some dance music on the radio should be declared illegal.

Gayle waits for the radio to come on. IT DOES AT LAST; she turns the tuning knob until DANCE MUSIC comes on..."Take the 'A' Train," to be exact.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Gooooood.

Gayle heads for the family piano...a 1900-19 upright across from the radio. She dusts off the bench, sits on it, and, in the middle of "Take the 'A' Train," plays to the radio.

Gayle exudes joy playing the piano's well-worn keys...to the point where she oversteps the song's end.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And that, of course, is the Duke. You all know that that's "Take the 'A' Train." Now we have another request that we didn't get to on last Sunday's "Let's Pretend Ballroom." This one is from another hip kitten from Manual Arts High School, Gayle Strawberry.

Gayle looks surprised as she listens to the radio.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Gayle, here is "Woodchoppers' Ball," by Woody Herman.

"Woodchoppers' Ball" BLASTS out of the radio...and Gayle wastes no time as she picks up on the music and transfers it from brain to fingers.

GAYLE  
(eyeballing the radio)  
Woody, listen to this!

Gayle goes in another direction with "Woodchoppers' Ball."

She plays on like this until the tune's over...and adds her own ending!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
"Woodchoppers' Ball," by Woody Herman. Gayle, I hope you enjoyed that one.

GAYLE  
(toward the radio)  
Is Frances Perkins Secretary of Labor?

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
More "Let's Pretend Ballroom" after this important announcement.  
(changing voice)  
Budding bandleaders! Get your band in the first annual National Swing Contest...you might be the next Basie, Goodman, or Ellington!

GAYLE  
Yes!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Win five hundred dollars and a weekend appearance at Roseland in New York...and that's first prize!

GAYLE  
New York!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Second prize: Three hundred dollars and a weekend appearance at Elitch's Gardens in Denver! Third prize: One hundred dollars and a weekend at the Aragon in Chicago!

The radio spot puts a big smile on Gayle's face.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 The National Swing Contest...New  
 Year's Day at New York's famed  
 Radio City Music Hall! Don't waste  
 any time, budding bandleaders! Get  
 your entries in NOW!

Gayle sprints from the piano and locates a pencil and a small notebook on a coffee table. She scribbles on the first clean piece of paper in the notebook while the commercial wraps up.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Enter no later than December 24,  
 1942! That's December 24, 1942!  
 Angelenos may pick up entry blanks  
 here at the KIT studios on Wilshire  
 Boulevard.

Gayle scribbles as much of the information down as she can.

GAYLE  
 I'm gonna see if I can take  
 shorthand next year.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
 Fill 'em out...and send 'em to  
 National Swing Contest, Box 450,  
 New York, New York! That address  
 again: National Swing Contest, Box  
 450, New York, New York!

GAYLE  
 (writing it all down)  
 Got it!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
 Put your town on the map! Get your  
 band in the National Swing  
 Contest...you may be the next  
 Basie, Goodman, or Ellington!  
 (changes to normal voice)  
 Here's another request you sent in  
 on our "Let's Pretend Ballroom:"  
 "And the Angels Sing," by Benny  
 Goodman.

Gayle runs back to the piano to try to play "And the Angels Sing" with the radio.

GAYLE  
 I'm gonna get myself a band and win  
 that contest.

MAIN TITLES APPEAR OVER ACTION.

Gayle manages to keep up with the music on the radio.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
Or at least get myself a band  
that'll play to beat the Devil.

About a third of the way through this song, Gayle improvises.

The front door opens...Gayle's mother, BERNIECE STRAWBERRY (late 30s, headstrong), enters the room while in a food server's uniform. She notices Gayle at the piano.

BERNIECE  
Gayle, stop this nonsense right  
now.

Berniece walks over to the radio...to turn it OFF.

GAYLE  
Mama--

BERNIECE  
You've gotta study for school  
tomorrow.

GAYLE  
Mama, I studied this afternoon.

Berniece gives Gayle a look of disbelief.

INT. STRAWBERRYS' KITCHEN - DAY

Gayle, Berniece, Gayle's brother EARL (18, impressionable), and Gayle's and Earl's father FRED (40s, witty, dressed for work in a barber's uniform) eat up at the breakfast table.

FRED  
(looking at Berniece)  
You look like you swallowed a vat  
of castor oil.

BERNIECE  
You should've seen Gayle putting on  
the dog last night.

EARL  
Must've been a German shepherd.

BERNIECE

(shoots Earl a dirty look)  
Your sister was listening to that  
swing show...and pretending she was  
Duke Ellington.

FRED

It's nice to pretend once in a  
while, dear.  
(gazing at Berniece)  
You pretended when you were  
sixteen, didn't--

BERNIECE

When I was sixteen, I didn't have  
time to pretend.  
(taking a bite)  
My younger brothers and sisters did  
all the pretending.

Gayle tries to hide a grin.

GAYLE

I won't be pretending very long.  
There's this National Swing Contest  
that's taking place in New York on  
New Year's.

Now her grin widens.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

I heard about it on the radio, and  
I'm gonna start me a swing  
band...and we're gonna win that  
contest.

Fred, Berniece, and Earl drop their eating utensils.

EARL

So you think you wanna be...you?  
Famous?

Gayle nods.

EARL (CONT'D)

Well, there's only one Strawberry  
that can be famous.

While Earl grins, Gayle pretends not to listen.

EARL (CONT'D)

You're looking at the 1942 "Herald-  
Examiner" All-City halfback.

GAYLE

First of all, you've gotta learn not to fumble.

(takes a swig of juice)

As long as I can surround myself with some good people, just like the Count, we can do all right.

BERNIECE

Gayle, stop talking that nonsense.

GAYLE

Mama, it's not nonsense--

FRED

Now Gayle, your mama and I like you taking an interest in music, but...being a bandleader...well, that's something else.

GAYLE

What's wrong with my being a bandleader, Daddy?

FRED

Well, look, Gayle...it's just something...it's a lot of hard work and, uh, a lot of traveling and...it'll take you years--

EARL

Gayle, what he's trying to say is--

BERNIECE

Earl, stay in your place!

An embarrassed Earl nods at Berniece, who turns to Gayle.

BERNIECE (CONT'D)

What your daddy's trying to say is it's just not the right job for a young lady.

(taking a bite)

A vocalist is one thing...you've got a good voice...but...

GAYLE

I'll remember what you said when Anna Mae Winborn and the International Sweethearts of Rhythm come to town.

Gayle, Fred, Earl, and Berniece finish breakfast.

EARL

(to Gayle)

If they're so great, how come they ain't made a movie...like "Sun Valley Serenade" with Glenn Miller?

GAYLE

You just wait...

FRED

Gayle, honey, I'm telling you this so you won't be hurt: You ain't gonna find one girl that'll join up with you.

GAYLE

Ever hear of Ina Ray Hutton?

FRED

If it wasn't for her torso, she wouldn't even have a band. I mean, that's the only way she could get any men to audition--

GAYLE

(standing up)

I know you people think I'm crazy, and I know you think I've got my girdle on too tight...

BERNIECE

Watch your tone, Gayle!

GAYLE

I know you do...but when I say I'm gonna start my own swing band, I mean it!

Without finishing her breakfast, Gayle grabs her books from the kitchen counter and leaves the room.

After a few steps, she stares the other Strawberrys down.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

In fact, I'm gonna start right now!

Berniece, Earl, and Fred look surprised at Gayle's outburst as they listen to the O.S. SOUND of Gayle closing the front door behind herself.

FRED

(to Berniece and Earl)

That girl's girdle is on too tight.



Berniece nods as the three of them go back to eating.

EXT. BROADWAY - DAY

Not too many cars tool along Broadway.

SOME HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS walk Broadway, though...and Gayle tries her best to pass them up as she still bristles.

A 1939 Ford passes by Gayle; its occupants (FOUR MORE HIGH SCHOOLERS) gaze at her. ONE OF THEM sticks a head out.

STUDENT #1

Hey, you! You oughta be carryin' a watermelon!

As the Ford speeds out of sight, Gayle grabs a rock with her free hand and gestures as if to throw the rock at the car.

Gayle tosses the rock on the curb.

EXT. BUS STOP ON BROADWAY - DAY

Gayle finds a bus stop complete with a bench. She sits there.

A city transit bus pulls over; its doors open. Gayle gets on.

INT. CITY TRANSIT BUS - DAY

That bus is about half full of PASSENGERS when Gayle pays her fare and finds an empty seat near the back.

It's the seat next to DAGMAR JOHANNSEN (16, a playful ham).

DAGMAR

(looking at Gayle)

Saved it just for you...

(mimics Judy Garland)

C'mon...get happy!

Dagmar studies Gayle's glum profile.

GAYLE

Yeah. Might as well...I heard about this National Swing Contest they're having the first of next year.

(shuffling her books)

I'm gonna try to get up my first swing band and get in the contest with it.

Dagmar looks excited.

DAGMAR  
Hollywood, here we come!

Gayle looks puzzled.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)  
We. You'd be too busy leading a  
band to play an instrument.

Dagmar pretends the top of the seat in front of her and Gayle is a piano.

Gayle herself still looks puzzled.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)  
You've got a piano player right  
here...in little me.

GAYLE  
Who says I'd be too busy leading to  
play?  
(points at Dagmar)  
You mean you don't remember those  
duets we played over at my house?

Gayle now looks excited...Dagmar beams.

DAGMAR  
(no longer "playing")  
I must admit, G.S., you've got a  
point...sometimes, we played so  
loud and long we could've sent out  
a broadcast.

Dagmar's eyes widen.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)  
If you need some help getting  
started, I'm right here.

Gayle pulls the cord to signal the bus to stop.

As soon as the bus stops:

GAYLE  
Dagmar, anything you can do is  
above and beyond with me.

Dagmar and Gayle rise up and walk off the bus.

EXT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

On their way inside, Gayle and Dagmar see SEVERAL GROUPS OF STUDENTS hanging around and having fun at the entrance to this iconic, two-story Depression-era structure.

Gayle steps up her pace.

DAGMAR  
Wait up, Gayyyyle!

GAYLE  
We've got a lot of work to do.

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Seated at a table in this dull, dimly-lighted space, Gayle and Dagmar scribble out an ad each in search of musicians.

Dagmar's ad implies she's after any kind of talent...but Gayle aims her own ad at girls only.

Dagmar looks surprised.

GAYLE  
Have you heard of the...no, you haven't heard of the International Sweethearts of Rhythm.

Dagmar nods in a gesture of defeat.

DAGMAR  
You sure there are other girls in this school besides us who want to play swing?

GAYLE  
As long as we let 'em know they're wanted.

Dagmar's mouth flies open.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
Well, look, it makes sense: We can't get drafted.

Slowly but surely, the expression on Dagmar's face brightens.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

The hallway bursts with MORE STUDENTS as the school day nears its official start.

Dagmar and Gayle stop at a bulletin board; they tote a good many copies of their ad.

GAYLE  
 (putting an ad up)  
 Dagmar, you take one floor and I'll  
 take the next one.

Dagmar nods and leaves the space in a sprightly gait.

With her "Calling All Girls!" ad up, Gayle leaves the space.

As soon as she's gone, A HAND grasps the ad...to rip it down.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Early lunch time...most STUDENTS here have sack lunches.

So do Dagmar and Gayle...both trade sandwiches.

As soon as they take bites, the two inseparables see WILHELMINA "WILLIE" THOMAS (16, Black, hyper) and MARILYN SUZANNE "MARY SUE" CORNISH (16, Black, bashful) stop by Gayle's and Dagmar's table.

DAGMAR  
 (to Mary Sue and Willie)  
 But I already made a trade!

WILLIE  
 We came to talk swing. Black dots.  
 Right, Mary Sue?

MARY SUE  
 Uh...right.

WILLIE  
 (to Gayle)  
 My friend Mary Sue blows a mean  
 washtub. Me, I'm the one with the  
 mean licorice stick.

Gayle looks surprised.

DAGMAR  
 Gayle, I think we've got us a  
 couple of finds.

GAYLE  
 (to Dagmar)  
 You're not telling me a story, are  
 you?

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 (pointing to Willie)  
 Are you, Willie?

MARY SUE  
 She's...we're not kiddin'.

While Gayle nods, Willie eyeballs her and Dagmar.

WILLIE  
 She in this, too, Gayle, baby?

DAGMAR  
 My friends call me "The Judy  
 Garland of the Piano."

Willie grins, nods, then turns to Gayle.

WILLIE  
 When're we gonna jump, baby?

GAYLE  
 Wait a few days...let me get some  
 more bodies.  
 (shrugging)  
 Whoever heard of a big band with  
 just four pieces?

Dagmar and Gayle offer Mary Sue and Willie a seat each.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL ROOM 201 - DAY

Dagmar and THIRTY OTHER STUDENTS take English Grammar here,  
 under MARSHALL BELL (50s), who's at his desk.

MARSHALL  
 Turn in your textbooks to the page  
 about proper use of conjunctions.

Result: A mass page-turning.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)  
 (through the noise)  
 Study it.

While she reads with the class, Dagmar reaches into her  
 stocking and tries to pass a note to the girl across from  
 her, KATHLEEN COYLE (16, gentle).

Kathleen takes the note.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)  
 Would you like to share that note  
 with us, Miss Coyle?

KATHLEEN  
 Haven't read it yet.  
 (reading the note)  
 Dagmar's friend's starting a swing  
 band.  
 (looking at Marshall)  
 And they were looking for a  
 drummer.

Marshall looks lost.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)  
 They wanted to know if I'd be their  
 drummer, Mr. Bell.

Marshall looks caught between laughter and anger.

MARSHALL  
 I know we're short on men these  
 days, but this is...

KATHLEEN  
 You're invited to our first dance.

A sly grin forms on Marshall's face.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Gayle, at her locker, reaches for a book when KELSEY KUIIVANEN (17, witty), MARJORIE "MEG" DEARDOURFF (17, outspoken, aggressive), and NORMA JEANNE TRETIAK (18, studious, energetic, open-minded; the senior class beauty) join her.

Gayle looks as if she expects a mob lynching.

Marjorie puts a hand on Gayle's shoulder.

MARJORIE  
 Relax, uh, Gayle. Nobody's gonna  
 beat you up...I know who I'd like  
 to beat up, though--

KELSEY  
 Don't start that again, Meg.

GAYLE  
 (studying Marjorie)  
 How'd you know my name?

MARJORIE  
 Your locker number's on the ad.

Gayle, Kelsey, and Norma Jeanne nod. Gayle's nod is timid.

NORMA JEANNE

Gayle, we think your starting a swing band's the best thing that's ever happened here at M.A. High. And we wanna be in on the ground floor.

(extends hand to Gayle)

Oh...my name's Norma Jeanne...

A reluctant Gayle extends her hand out to Norma Jeanne, and they both shake. After a bit, Gayle doesn't look so nervous.

NORMA JEANNE (CONT'D)

Marjorie's quite a trombone player. Kelsey plays a pretty good trumpet.

Kelsey blushes at Norma Jeanne's compliment.

KELSEY

(to Gayle)

Norma Jeanne's the one who strolled down the halls last year playing the bagpipes during Homecoming week.

An awed Gayle nods toward Norma Jeanne.

GAYLE

Don't know about a bagpipe player. Do you play anything else?

NORMA JEANNE

Fifteen other instruments: Trumpet, trombone, tenor sax, clarinet, drums, vibes...

Gayle's mouth flies open.

NORMA JEANNE (CONT'D)

Piano, organ, guitar, upright bass, accordion--

GAYLE

Stop! I believe you! You're in! All three of you!

The four of them now congratulate each other. Marjorie eyeballs Gayle while pointing to Norma Jeanne.

MARJORIE

She was gonna tell you she also plays banjo, harmonica, flute, and harp.

An awed Gayle shakes her head "yes."

INT. STRAWBERRYS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Strawberry family finishes eating dinner.

FRED

(looking up at Gayle)

Are you still trying to be the Duke  
Ellington of the block?

Before Gayle can answer, Earl interjects.

EARL

Duke's in too high a class for  
Gayle.

(to Gayle)

You still trying to be the Spike  
Jones of the block?

Berniece eyeballs Gayle.

BERNIECE

Better yet, let's hope you've  
gotten it out of your system.

Gayle looks amused.

GAYLE

Wishful thinking...I'm still gonna  
go through with it.

(taking a bite)

In fact, I'm up to eight people.  
Including myself.

Berniece and Earl look dumbfounded...Fred snickers.

FRED

And they all play the piano.

Earl laughs as the phone RINGS O.S. from the living room.  
Gayle, the closest to it, runs to get the phone.

INT. STRAWBERRYS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gayle runs toward the phone and lifts the receiver.

GAYLE

(into phone)

Hello...Yes, this is Gayle...You're  
interested in joining our  
band?...You're serious?...Yeah. We  
still need a guitar player...



All through the phone conversation, Earl heckles Gayle O.S.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 (still on the phone)  
 You got some friends who wanna  
 play, too?...Great...Our first  
 practice is this Friday, in the  
 music room...See you there...Take  
 care. Bye.

Gayle hangs up the phone, then lets out a yell of delight.

INT. STRAWBERRYS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gayle comes back to finish eating.

EARL  
 Another piano player, huh, Gayle?

GAYLE  
 (sitting down)  
 Mama, Daddy, Earl, brace  
 yourselves.

They pretend to be braced.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 I've got me a guitar player, and  
 two of her friends are gonna be in  
 it, too!

Berniece, Earl, and Fred stare at Gayle.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 You should hear her talk. She  
 sounds so distinguished...

Berniece, Fred, and Earl continue to stare as Gayle talks on.

EXT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

STUDENTS walk toward the building or hang around it.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

M.A. High's cafeteria also serves as a study hall, especially  
 in the morning hours prior to home room.

Gayle and Dagmar (seated at a table in back) study when ANNA  
 STOKOWSKI (15, a worry wart), CARLOTTA CANAVERAL (17,  
 friendly), FINNEGAN GOODENOUGH (16, a confident girl), and  
 JANET FEATHERSTONE (15, Native, a thinker) walk over to them.

All four take seats. (Only Anna and Janet tote any books.)

DAGMAR

(to Anna and Janet)

I see algebra's got you two down,  
too.

ANNA

Yeah, but I'm not gonna worry about  
it right now, Dagmar.

JANET

(to Gayle)

I understand you're the one to see.

Gayle nods.

JANET (CONT'D)

The four of us had to do a lot of  
crying to our folks and a lotta  
persuading, but our folks finally  
broke down and let us join your new  
swing band.

With a grin, Gayle nods again.

CARLOTTA

We told 'em we'd split the rental  
fees for the horns.

(points to Janet)

Janet plays trombone,

(points to Finnegan)

Finnegan's your tenor sax player,

(points to Anna)

Anna can play trumpet, cornet, and  
flugelhorn.

(points to herself)

And I'm Carlotta. I play some  
clarinet.

Finnegan gives Carlotta a surprised look.

FINNEGAN

Some clarinet! You almost made the  
Los Angeles Junior Philharmonic.

ANNA

You in this, too, Dagmar?

DAGMAR

You bet!

(both hands on chest)

DAGMAR (CONT'D)

My friends call me "The Deanna  
Durbin of the Piano."

GAYLE

You mean Judy Garland.

JANET

(to Gayle)

How're you coming with the other  
pieces?

GAYLE

We need another trumpet, another  
trombone, and another clarinet by  
Friday. That's when we'll start  
rehearsing...in the music room.

Anna's mouth flies open.

ANNA

That's too early!

FINNEGAN

It's not too early for me, Anna.

JANET

We'll be there Friday, Gayle.

(to her three pals)

Won't we?

Finnegan, Carlotta, and Anna nod.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Gayle puts up a notice announcing her swing band's first  
rehearsal: Tomorrow.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Over lunch, she and Dagmar (who chomps away at a Dagwood  
sandwich) look over recently-purchased sheet music.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL ROOM 230 - DAY

Before the bell RINGS out the end of US History class, Dagmar  
and Gayle go over band strategy.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

The same HAND is back...to rip Gayle's latest message down.

END MONTAGE

EXT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The grounds are clean of people.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

While most of M.A. High's STUDENTS clear out for the day, Dagmar and Gayle stroll the hallway in great anticipation.

It's Friday.

GAYLE

I might have to fill that third trumpet spot with Norma Jeanne. And I don't want to do that.

DAGMAR

I don't think she wants you to do that, either.

They continue to stroll until they come upon a door labeled "MUSIC ROOM."

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Gayle and Dagmar enter a room that has two 1890s-1920s upright pianos, a tangle of wooden chairs, and a mess of music stands.

The two pals look surprised to find Anna, Carlotta, Finnegan, and Janet already there...straightening up the place so that it looks like a real band room.

Gayle and Dagmar help out when SHIRLEY VAN KEUREN (15, self-reliant, self-conscious), trumpet in hand, walks into the music room.

SHIRLEY

(to Dagmar)  
Hi, Gayle.

DAGMAR

I'm Dagmar.  
(pointing to Gayle)  
She's Gayle.

Shirley (whose last name rhymes with "siren") goes over to Gayle and shakes her hand.

SHIRLEY

Are you...still looking for a third trumpet player?

GAYLE

You've come to the right place.

Now the music room is all straightened up.

SHIRLEY

Gayle, my name's Shirley...please  
don't call me "Elf." Seems like  
everybody else does.

GAYLE

You've got yourself a deal,  
Shirley.

The others file in: Norma Jeanne, Marjorie, and Kelsey  
(loaded down with their own instruments and several more of  
Norma Jeanne's)...Kathleen and her drum set...Willie (and her  
clarinet) and Mary Sue (who lugs that upright bass).

Anna, Janet, Finnegan, and Carlotta take their instruments  
off the top of the first piano while Gayle and Dagmar stand  
next to it. Gayle, too, tries to direct traffic.

JEANNETTE WEINSTOCK (16, bold; she has a trombone with her)  
and APHRODITE "PINEY" PELEKODAS (17, insecure; she totes a  
clarinet) also enter the room.

Kathleen puts her drum set together next to the two old  
pianos; Mary Sue sets up nearby. And the horn players take  
seats at the wooden chairs.

VIVIENNE CAMPBELL-MCDOUGALL (17, snobbish, has a Cockney  
accent; totes an electric guitar and a small amp) and buddies  
CARLA LAGOMARCINO (16, tough-talking; lugs an alto sax) and  
ANTOINETTE "TONEY" BALLANFANT (16, calm; lugs a baritone sax)  
arrive at last.

CARLA

(to Vivienne and Toney)

This is it, huh?

Toney and Vivienne nod.

Vivienne walks over to Dagmar.

VIVIENNE

I must say, you're th' one I talked  
to over th' phone.

DAGMAR

(shaking her head "no")

No, no. I'm Dagmar. You mean Gayle.

Dagmar points Vivienne and her two buddies to Gayle; in disbelief, Toney, Vivienne, and Carla walk over.

GAYLE

Hi, Vivienne. Glad you and your friends could make it.

Carla, Toney, and Vivienne huddle up.

VIVIENNE

I say let's depart. This is rawther unfunny, t' say th' least.

Carla nods, but Toney just stands there a moment. All three leave the room, instruments, amp, and all...and with Carla dragging Toney out of the room.

An angry Marjorie follows the threesome...but she leaves without her trombone.

Gayle just stares at the door.

GAYLE

Where's everybody going?

Mouth open, Gayle continues to gaze toward the two doors.

EXT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Carla, Toney, and Vivienne (instruments and amp still in tow) walk through the parking lot in back of the school; the three cronies laugh as they walk toward a 1939 Cord.

The O.S. SOUND of a loud car engine takes over.

That engine belongs to a 1923 Ford Model T...and the car roars toward Vivienne, Toney, and Carla (who don't see it).

The jalopy just misses Vivienne and her two friends by inches...if not a few feet.

Marjorie (its owner and driver) jumps out.

And she's livid.

VIVIENNE

What's th' matter with you, you...

MARJORIE

You think you're cute, standing that poor girl up after you literally delivered yourself and your two flunkies--

As Vivienne, Carla, and Toney strut toward the Cord (Vivienne goes for the driver's side), Marjorie charges toward them.

VIVIENNE  
That band is inferior!

MARJORIE  
How do you know? You ain't even  
heard us!

VIVIENNE  
Well, it should be obvious t' you.  
It has all th' trappings of  
inferiority.  
(smugly looks at Marjorie)  
However, with your upbringing--

Marjorie grabs Vivienne's shoulders and squeezes them.

MARJORIE  
Get off my upbringing!

Marjorie takes her hands off Vivienne's shoulders.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)  
Since you think you're so great and  
you think we're so "in-fer-i-uh,"  
why don't you get your butt back in  
that building and prove yourself?  
(to Carla and Toney)  
You two, too!

Vivienne sets her equipment down to feel her shoulders.

VIVIENNE  
We don't have to--

CARLA  
Right!

MARJORIE  
Then I'll just have to run you  
three over.

Marjorie moves toward the Model T when Toney eyes Vivienne.

TONY  
Viv, I'm going in.

Vivienne stares at Toney while Marjorie puts her jalopy in  
another parking space.

CARLA

You're crazy, Toney Ballanfant!

TONY

Do you two want to get run over?

Toney starts back toward the school; a reluctant Carla follows. (Both still lug their saxophones.)

Marjorie hurries out of her newly-parked Model T and sprints toward Vivienne, who grabs her amp and guitar.

Marjorie leads Vivienne back inside the school.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

While Gayle and the other members of her new band wait, Marjorie, Vivienne, Carla, and Toney enter the room.

Marjorie's is a big grin.

JEANNETTE

What happened?

MARJORIE

There you are, Gayle. The wayward sheep have returned to the flock.

VIVIENNE

Thanks to th' Bad Shepherd!

Gayle nods at Marjorie, then goes to a table filled with copies of sheet music, stacked so that each girl gets her own set. She passes a set out to each member.

The other girls study their sheet music...and some give varied facial expressions.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)

Music? This is barbarism!

An enthused Norma Jeanne grins and nods.

SHIRLEY

Phil Spitalny would never play this on the air.

Willie looks up from her own copies.

WILLIE

Gayle, baby, you're all reet.



KATHLEEN

I like listening to this, but I'm gonna hate playing it.

Kathleen earns a pat on the shoulder from a girl near her.

GAYLE

We tried to come up with a good cross section of styles. Just wanted to see which style or styles would fit us best.

CARLA

We?

Gayle just nods.

DAGMAR

That's right, Carla. Gayle and me.

Gayle waits before she addresses the gang.

GAYLE

Why don't we start with Number One? Let's see how musical we can be.

A mass shuffling of sheets...a mass tuning of instruments...and then Piney, who folds her hands around her clarinet, looks skyward before closing her eyes.

PINEY

Our Father...who art in Heaven...

Carlotta puts her hand on Piney's shoulder. Result: Piney opens her eyes again and eyeballs Carlotta.

CARLOTTA

Piney...you're gonna do fine. Everything's gonna be all right.

Willie smiles as she watches fellow clarinetists Piney and Carlotta hug each other.

Kathleen stares at her drum set.

KATHLEEN

I'm gonna have a time playing this.

Gayle (playing one piano) and Dagmar (tickling the ivories of the other) start the band off on Andy Kirk's "Until the Real Thing Comes Along."

They give the other musicians an eight-bar intro; during it, Norma Jeanne grabs her accordion and straps it on.

At the end of the intro, the brass/woodwind players, Vivienne, Mary Sue, Norma Jeanne, and Kathleen jump in.

After sixteen bars, among the brass/woodwind players, only Finnegan (on tenor), Willie and Carlotta (both on clarinet), Marjorie (playing trombone), and Shirley (playing trumpet) toot with any intensity.

The rhythm section is tight...and that makes Gayle smile.

INT. STRAWBERRYS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Family Strawberry pitches in with the dishes: Fred washes, Berniece dries the fronts, Gayle dries the backs, and Earl puts the dishes away.

GAYLE

Well, everybody, I got it started:  
My first swing band.

Berniece and Fred stop their activities to look at Gayle while a shocked Earl flips the item he's supposed to put back on the shelf...and lets the dish drop to the floor.

Berniece gives Earl a dirty look.

FRED

That'll cost you, boy.

EARL

Not if I get drafted...

Berniece picks up a piece of the broken dish; she shows the piece to Earl.

EARL (CONT'D)

One less dish you gotta worry  
about, Mama.

EXT. EATON'S EATERY - DAY

SEVERAL GROUPS OF KIDS file in to a space known by the orange-and-white awnings on the outside.

INT. EATON'S EATERY DINING ROOM - DAY

The decor inside is straight out of the 1930s: Linoleum tile floors...wooden booths...fluorescent lighting...you name it.

Gayle and Dagmar listen to the jukebox (THE MUSIC: "One O'Clock Jump") over burgers and fries.

GAYLE

We're gonna have to put that one in our book.

(takes a bite)

Shouldn't've left it out.

The two pianists listen on, and when "One O'Clock Jump" ENDS:

GAYLE (CONT'D)

It's your turn to feed the jukebox, Dag. I'm down to my bus fare.

Dagmar nods, leaves the table, and goes to the jukebox.

DAGMAR

(puts nickel into slot)

Anything in particular?

GAYLE

Whatever you wanna hear.

Dagmar picks out "Over the Rainbow..." the movie version.

As the record STARTS, Dagmar feeds the box more nickels and selects more tunes.

Gayle looks surprised...Dagmar's in seventh heaven.

Dagmar sits back down alongside Gayle while SEVERAL CUSTOMERS gasp about what that tune's doing on the jukebox.

DAGMAR

Just wanted to hear my all-time favorite.

(gazes at ceiling)

Just think, Gayle. With the right touch, we can turn this into a really swingin' number.

Gayle looks even more surprised, then stares at her fries.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)

Aren't you gonna eat your fries?

Gayle picks one up and nods.

EXT. HADDOCK'S OF HOLLYWOOD - DAY

This one's a rather plain-looking building livened up by a colorful display of records in the window.

INT. HADDOCK'S SALESFLOOR - DAY

78s take up the back wall and a series of tables between that wall and the front entrance. Sheet music's on one of those tables, too.

Dagmar and Gayle peek through a table full of records.

Norma Jeanne and SEVERAL OTHER CUSTOMERS crowd the counter. On top of the counter: A small phonograph that GIVES OUT with "In the Mood."

Norma Jeanne listens with care while she takes a seat.

NORMA JEANNE  
Everybody I've heard does "In the  
Mood" the same way. Same key, too.

Some of the other listeners flash looks of indifference.

NORMA JEANNE (CONT'D)  
I'd like to see somebody try it in  
C...

WALLY HENDRICKSON (20s), who's the store's clerk on duty, comes into the room. He heads for the counter.

NORMA JEANNE (CONT'D)  
Wally, I know it's your last copy,  
but...would you please sell it to  
me? I'd like to work on it.

WALLY  
Where were you a coupla years ago?

As Norma Jeanne shrugs, Dagmar and Gayle walk over to her. The three of them trade AD LIBBED greetings.

NORMA JEANNE  
Just listening to the big hits and  
thinking about how I'd arrange 'em.

Gayle and Dagmar nod...Norma Jeanne snaps her fingers.

NORMA JEANNE (CONT'D)  
That's what we need: An arranger!  
We don't have one...and I wouldn't  
mind filling the void.

Behind the counter, a bewildered Wally takes the needle off the record and the record off the phonograph, then puts the platter back in its envelope.

WALLY  
 (to Norma Jeanne)  
 Seventy-nine cents.

Norma Jeanne fishes into her jeans pocket for the money. She finds the seventy-nine cents...right down to the penny.

GAYLE  
 You'd like to be...we'd love for  
 you to be our arranger.

Norma Jeanne hands Wally the change and takes the record.

NORMA JEANNE  
 (to Wally)  
 Thanks a bunch!  
 (to Dagmar and Gayle)  
 I know a bit about arranging, and I  
 think I can come up with some  
 swinging charts.

Gayle's got an ear-to-ear grin.

NORMA JEANNE (CONT'D)  
 I've got an old friend who's taking  
 music at UCLA, and she's showing me  
 all the ropes.

The news makes Dagmar grin.

DAGMAR  
 Just one thing, Norma Jeanne: Don't  
 give us the kind of mush they play  
 on "The Hour of Charm."

Norma Jeanne gestures her agreement.

EXT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

STUDENTS stride their way out of the school.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Gayle and her bandmates ready themselves for rehearsal.

Vivienne plugs her guitar into that small amp, then reaches for a half-empty bottle of Coke...and drinks out of it.

And Norma Jeanne, armed with copies of her arrangement of "In the Mood," passes a copy to each bandmember.

GAYLE

(addressing the others)

I realize this is the first band for a lot of you, and you're out there trying, but some of you are still too tentative...too timid with your instruments.

Norma Jeanne hands Gayle a copy of the song.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Thanks, Norma Jeanne.

While Norma Jeanne nods, Toney and Finnegan look puzzled. Vivienne is shocked...and Carla seethes.

VIVIENNE

(to Carla and Toney)

Cahn't Gayle stay in her place?

Toney doesn't react...Carla gives one sharp nod to Vivienne, then looks at Gayle.

CARLA

Girl, whadda you know about leadin' a band?

Marjorie gives Carla an angry look.

MARJORIE

Shut up and listen!

JEANNETTE

Yeah, Carla. Gayle is the boss. When you get your own band--

CARLA

Stick a sock in it!

MARJORIE

(to Carla)

Would you like me to stuff your face into the bell of your horn?

Jeannette does a slow burn...Carla does a fast one...Gayle looks worried.

GAYLE

Guys--

By now, Norma Jeanne's done making the rounds; she gives Gayle the final copy of that "In the Mood" arrangement.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

You trumpet players and sax  
players'd sound better if you  
didn't slur your notes, for  
example...

Hardly anyone pays attention.

They're reading Norma Jeanne's arrangement.

ANNA

(to Norma Jeanne)

Are you sure this is "In the Mood?"

WILLIE

That's what it says at the top of  
the sheet, Anna, baby.

ANNA

I hope that's what comes out of my  
trumpet, Willie, baby.

The other musicians flash mixed, AD LIBBED reactions.

GAYLE

If you guys wanna blame somebody,  
blame Norma Jeanne...who's doubling  
as our arranger.

Almost everyone looks at Norma Jeanne. Some look pleased,  
some look confused, and others look disillusioned.

Finnegan turns to her boss.

FINNEGAN

Wrong, Gayle. Seventeenfolding.

Some of the girls laugh at Finnegan's crack.

Gayle walks over to one of the two old uprights.

GAYLE

I'm gonna give you a while to look  
it over.

(taking a seat)

And then we'll try it on for size.

Dagmar goes over to the other old piano...Norma Jeanne opens  
up a black leather case and pulls out a tenor sax.

Everyone else gets set up.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Want the brass and the reeds to get us going, just like on the record.

KELSEY

Norma, why'd you write this in C?

NORMA JEANNE

To prove it can be done. Someone's gotta do it.

GAYLE

Are we ready?

General agreement reigns among Gayle's girls.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Okay!

(stamps feet to the beat)

One, two, three, four!

The saxophonists, trumpeters, trombonists, and clarinetists blow out the intro, while Vivienne (on guitar) and Mary Sue (on string bass), as well as Kathleen (on drums), provide musical response.

Gayle and Dagmar jump in as "In the Mood" moves into its basic melody.

Something doesn't sound right to the other girls.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Whoa! Whoa!

That stops the music.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Kate, we can hardly hear you up there on those drums.

Kathleen nods.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Tell you what: Act like you're in a Western, and you're trying to get a message to the enemy tribe.

Kathleen nods again.

KATHLEEN

I'm sorry, Gayle.



Jeannette and Marjorie get a kick out of Gayle's analogy...Janet looks a bit troubled.

JANET

Gayle, couldn't you have used a little bit better analogy?

Gayle rests her chin on her fists.

GAYLE

I'm sorry, Janet.

Gayle looks at her sheet music...and senses that something doesn't look right to her.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Norma Jeanne, you didn't mean to give me two copies of "In the Mood," did you?

Norma Jeanne now looks embarrassed.

NORMA JEANNE

I'm sorry, Gayle.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

The bulletin board now features an ad that reads: "GAYLE STRAWBERRY AND HER BAND- WE SWING FOR ANY OCCASION."

The flyer includes a picture of the band and its members' instruments, too.

EXT. DANCELAND BALLROOM - DAY

After school, Gayle corners THE MANAGER...who receives a copy of her ad. He turns her down on the spot.

EXT. ORPHEUM THEATER - NIGHT

At the ticket booth of this Art Deco landmark, Dagmar hands THE CLERK the same ad on her way to the show. After Dagmar's inside the theater, the clerk rips up the ad.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Gayle's band works some more on "In the Mood." (Things come along much better.)

Gayle and Dagmar give nods of approval.

INT. BALLROOM AT COMMODORE HOTEL - NIGHT

Gayle finds trouble even convincing THE CUSTODIAN to talk up her band.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Yep, that HAND is back...to tear down another copy of the same ad.

END MONTAGE

INT. STRAWBERRYS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

It's Friday...and Fred, Berniece, Earl, and Gayle eat a dinner built around fish.

FRED

Gayle, you just about saved us. Why didn't you tell me you could fish?

GAYLE

Well, I tried to tell you, but--

Earl wolfs down his food as if it were gold.

Berniece watches Earl eat.

BERNIECE

Think of all the points we'll save when Earl goes off to college.

FRED

You're talkin' about saving points?  
(watching Earl eat)  
Think of what we'll gain!

Earl stops eating for a few moments.

EARL

An All-City halfback!

FRED

I'm reading where you're closin' in on the leading rusher in the city...what's his name from--

The phone RINGS O.S.

BERNIECE

Get the phone, Gayle.

Gayle does exactly that.

GAYLE (O.S.)  
Hello?...Well, we're eating right  
now...Oky doky.

All through Gayle's phone conversation, the other Strawberrys  
make AD LIBBED chatter about Earl's football exploits.

GAYLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
You say you've got news about a  
job? At school?...Halloween night?  
The Homecoming dance?...Darn right  
we'll do it!...After the game.

At the table, Berniece, Earl, and Fred have stopped gabbing  
and now listen to Gayle's reactions.

GAYLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Thanks a lot! Bye.

Gayle comes back into the kitchen and takes her seat.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
Mama, Daddy, Earl...brace  
yourselves.

The three pretend to be braced.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
Our band's been invited to play the  
Homecoming dance Halloween  
night...after the ball game!

Both Berniece and Fred look at each other in shock.

Fred stares at Gayle.

FRED  
Gayle, don't ever say "darn" again!

Gayle slumps in her seat.

EXT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Cars pass by...the SOUND of auto horns fills the night.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

Not too many decorations here.

Not too many STUDENTS fill the gym tonight, either. Most  
congregate in clusters; they gab away and drink punch.

About half the students wear Halloween costumes...the remaining kids wear their regular school clothes.

Gayle and most of her bandmates (in their usual school clothes) occupy a makeshift platform set up along the lines of the band's music-room alignment.

Everybody's there except Shirley, Mary Sue, Vivienne, Carla, and Toney.

Gayle tries to get the remaining members ready.

But they're all nervous...scared.

Kelsey looks at the decorations.

KELSEY

They really skimped this year.  
Looks more like Homestaying.

ANNA

They had to, remember, Kelsey? It was the Homecoming Committee's idea.

Kelsey gives Anna a puzzled look.

ANNA (CONT'D)

You know...to win the war.

Kelsey nods as Gayle paces the plank.

GAYLE

I hope they remembered they've got a dance to play.

MARJORIE

Let's start off without 'em. We've got Norma Jeanne.

But Gayle shakes her head sideways as Norma Jeanne tunes her brass-and-woodwind instruments.

Shirley and Mary Sue, who hold each other's hands, make it to the bandstand.

Shirley manages to hold her trumpet with her other hand.

SHIRLEY

Sorry, Gayle...I had to get Mary Sue out of the girls' room.

Mary Sue heads for her double bass.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

She was throwing up so much she  
threatened to flood the place.

Gayle squeezes Shirley's free hand and gives her a warm wink.

Kathleen leaves her drums to stand Mary Sue's bull fiddle up,  
but Mary Sue gestures her out of it.

MARY SUE

It's all right, Kathleen.

While Kathleen goes back to her drum set, Mary Sue leans on  
her upright bass and gives Gayle a warm wink of her own.

At last, Vivienne, Toney, and Carla (instruments and all)  
come up and take their places on the bandstand.

All three drink from their pop bottles as Gayle walks over to  
the threesome.

Marjorie glares at Carla and Vivienne.

MARJORIE

I still say we shoulda started out  
without 'em.

Carla glares back at Marjorie...but Vivienne's too busy  
drinking pop to look dismayed.

GAYLE

Where've you three been? You're a  
minute late.

VIVIENNE

Well, Mum, we just 'ad t' stop 'n'  
say greetings to all our friends--

GAYLE

Never mind.

The same two 1890s-1920s uprights from the music room now  
flank the gym's makeshift bandstand.

Gayle strides over to one of the old pianos and spots Dagmar,  
who works from the other.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

(addressing her bandmates)

Let's do "In the Mood." In C.

Carla and Toney put their bottles down and pick up their alto  
sax and baritone sax, respectively.

FINNEGAN  
 (to Carla and Toney)  
 Didn't you like the punch?

Norma Jeanne holds her tenor sax as she finds a place in the middle of the platform.

Everybody's ready!

The six brass players and seven reed players toot out the intro; Vivienne, Mary Sue, and Kathleen back them up.

Once the intro's out of the way, Dagmar and Gayle play, too. And on they go with that famous melody.

Marshall and ANOTHER TEACHER stride their way onto the gym floor. (They're in their regular clothes.)

After twelve bars, Kathleen's drumming's gotten a bit stronger...and a smile crosses her face.

Not too many people dance; they're too surprised at what they hear from whom.

Back on the bandstand, the saxes dominate the first twenty-four bars (they provide a "call," while the trumpet/trombone section provides a "response"); it's the same way with the bridge (an eight-bar passage done up twice).

Norma Jeanne takes the band's first solo ever; her tenor sax solo ends courtesy of the brasses, whose work leads up to Gayle's piano solo of eight bars.

Dagmar takes the next solo (it's an eight-bar affair, too).

After a two-note, all-band "response," it's that famous repeating riff: Ten bars of saxes "calling" and trumpets and trombones "responding," plus two bars of horns that fade.

It's done three times. In the fourth time, the brasses "call" (with two-note bursts) and the saxes and clarinets react.

At the end, the brasses crescendo for seven bars, then Shirley's lone trumpet (the saxes and the rhythm section give bottom) caps the ending.

A single bass drum beat from Kathleen clinches it all.

A few of the students (as well as the two teachers) clap; most of the other high schoolers in the gym look bewildered.

GAYLE (O.S.)  
 Hi, Toilers! Glad you came tonight!

A few throng members applaud.

Gayle rises from her seat at her piano to walk to a microphone off to the side.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

(into mike)

My name's Gayle Strawberry...and I  
hope...well, if we stick together,  
we'll make this a wild party!

Gayle gestures Norma Jeanne over to the newly-unoccupied upright and faces her sidewomen.

Toney, Finnegan, and Carla blow out a modulating twelve-bar (in 2/2 time) intro...to "Wild Party," as done by Ina Ray Hutton and Her Melodears in 1934.

Kathleen's cymbal cuts the intro; next thing you know, you've got music straight out of a Betty Boop cartoon.

As Gayle directs, Vivienne (on guitar), Dagmar and Norma Jeanne (who put on a four-hand, two-piano show), Mary Sue (on string bass), and trumpeters Anna, Shirley, and Kelsey add to the instrumentation...while Carlotta, Piney, and Willie "respond" with their clarinet work.

Thirty-two bars after the intro, "Wild Party" changes keys...and the trumpets take over as the reeds back them up.

Finnegan takes the tune's first solo (eight bars) before the brasses and reeds challenge each other for eight more.

A few kids (and both teachers) dance; everybody else listens.

Dagmar takes over the next eight bars before giving way to Norma Jeanne for eight.

To the kids out there drinking punch, it's more like a freak show than a dance.

Toney's baritone sax gets the next eight bars; eight more bars of Norma Jeanne and Dagmar pounding the ivories follow.

Now it's Shirley's turn; she plays her heart out for sixteen bars (with help from Toney's baritone and Carla's alto).

A STUDENT taunts Shirley. As soon as Shirley gets a chance, she grits her teeth.

It's Carla's turn for seven; for the next bar, the full band joins her.

Carla looks over at Shirley, who takes the next solo.

Finnegan also plays her heart out for sixteen...but a one-bar riff by the whole act cuts her solo in two.

It's brasses vs. reeds for the next sixteen bars before the tune changes keys again, working that new key for sixteen.

Another change in keys, another sixteen bars...and Kathleen's cymbal ends the song (as if "Wild Party" were a cartoon).

This song earns the same identical response...a lukewarm one.

As a worried Gayle turns to her charges, ANOTHER STUDENT taunts the band.

CARLA  
(to Gayle)  
You're in for a long night, girl.

As Gayle readies her band to swing some more, she doesn't look fazed by Carla's taunt.

But some of the other musicians do look bothered.

EXT. STRAWBERRYS' HOUSE - DAY

A 1937 Plymouth rests on the street next to the house.

INT. STRAWBERRYS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gayle and Dagmar (both sit on a sofa) shoot the breeze.

DAGMAR  
(looking at her hands)  
I guess I do have it in me.

Gayle looks puzzled.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)  
If I can drive that big old  
Plymouth, I can handle anything.

Berniece enters the room. She stops in her tracks when she spots Dagmar and Gayle.

BERNIECE  
How was the dance, Gayle?

GAYLE  
It was...all right...we did pretty  
well...just wish more people'd  
danced to our music.



BERNIECE

You're not mixed up in this band  
along with Gayle, are you, Dagmar?

DAGMAR

Yes, I am, Mrs. Strawberry...I'm  
her right-hand man...er, woman.  
(in her best Judy Garland)  
We really put on a show last night.

Berniece nods.

BERNIECE

Have fun, you two.  
(walking toward stairs)  
I've gotta go balance the books.

Berniece heads up the stairs...and talks to herself.

BERNIECE (CONT'D)

Fred was never, ever good at that.  
One of these days...

Dagmar chuckles a bit.

GAYLE

Remember: Anything you want in the--

DAGMAR

(mimics Shirley Temple)  
--icebox is yours to eat.

Dagmar nods in a bit of worry.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)

(in her normal voice)  
Seemed like something was missing  
last night, and I've been trying to  
put my hands on it all day.

GAYLE

I thought we ran into a hostile  
crowd.

DAGMAR

Maybe so, but...

GAYLE

When they serve you punch spiked  
with antifreeze on your break time,  
that's hostility.

DAGMAR

I thought about this on the way  
over here:

(stands up, walks around)

What would you say about...our  
having a featured  
vocalist...somebody like Sinatra or  
Fitzgerald?

GAYLE

There's nobody like Sinatra or  
Fitzgerald.

Dagmar grins as she continues to walk.

DAGMAR

All the name bands have somebody  
who does nothing but  
sing...somebody to swoon over...

Dagmar's excursion stops at the piano. She takes a seat  
there...and pretends to fall in love with one of those  
featured vocalists.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)

Somebody to get mushy over...that's  
what we need. And we wanna get to  
where we're a name band, don't we?

GAYLE

Well, yeah, but--

DAGMAR

It's no problem! I'll help you find  
a featured singer...I'll help set  
up auditions.

(faces keyboard)

I'll even accompany them on--

GAYLE

Who'd want to sing with us after  
they didn't wanna listen to us?

DAGMAR

Just leave it to me.

Dagmar plays a glissando on the Strawberrys' piano. She turns  
around to eyeball Gayle.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)

They didn't call me "The Ziegfeld  
of Berendo Junior High" for  
nothing.

GAYLE

All right. Okay. You win.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

The two 1890s-1920s upright pianos are back in the music room. Dagmar sits at one of them; Gayle, who holds a notebook and a pencil, stands next to her.

GAYLE

If you don't know the singer's selection, do what the pros do: Fake it.

Dagmar reaches on top of the piano and produces a large volume...a "fake book."

DAGMAR

No problem.

GAYLE

And remember: Don't--

DAGMAR

I know. Don't show up the singers.

Gayle gestures her approval.

GAYLE

Be right back. Gotta bring in the first contestant.

Gayle walks out of the room.

INT. ADJACENT CLASSROOM - DAY

Gayle strides into a classroom where SIX STUDENTS sit in various places.

JIMMY WASHINGTON (Black, 16), GLORIA JEAN MCKINNON (15), RUBY LAKE (17), LILLIAN AVERILL (18), ANDY SALKELD (18, cute-looking), and FRANCES KALLAGHER (16) all stare at Gayle.

GAYLE

(looking around the room)  
We're ready to audition now. Who wants to go first?

Nobody speaks up...they continue to stare at Gayle.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 (points to Jimmy)  
 You go first, Jimmy. You're the tallest.

A reluctant Jimmy gets up and follows Gayle out of the room.

SERIES OF SHOTS - MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

With Dagmar pounding the piano, six Toilers (M.A. High's nickname) vie for the singer's spot in Gayle's band:

Jimmy sings (well, swings) a Count Basie tune.

Gloria Jean warbles a Judy Garland song.

Dagmar sings to her own accompaniment (only to bite her lip when she spots Gloria Jean's scowl).

Andy does quite a swinging job with a Fats Waller number.

Gayle looks surprised (and gleeful).

Ruby croons something by the Andrews Sisters. (But the fire doesn't ignite.)

Gayle just shrugs.

Frances performs a tune by Shirley Temple...and fails to sound little-girlish.

Dagmar grits her teeth.

Lillian finishes up a ballad.

Gayle looks at her notes; satisfied, she leaves the room.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. ADJACENT CLASSROOM - DAY

The six hopefuls are seated again; this time, they give AD LIBBED comments about the whole thing (some pro, some con).

Gayle comes back in. She stops walking once inside the door.

GAYLE  
 Andy, could you please step outside?

A nervous Andy does so.

Gayle and Andy walk out...and yield O.S. COMMENTS from Jimmy, Gloria Jean, Ruby, Frances, and Lillian.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE ADJACENT CLASSROOM - DAY

Gayle and Andy move as far away from the door as possible.

GAYLE

Andy, congratulations. It was a close race between you and Jimmy, but you're our singer.

ANDY

Well, uh, thanks, Gayle.

GAYLE

Come to the music room after school and we'll set you up with our book.

They go their separate ways before Gayle waves at Andy.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

See you this afternoon.

Gayle looks relieved.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

All of Gayle's sidewomen except Vivienne, Toney, and Carla (the absent trio) ready themselves to play.

Andy, more excited than earlier, sprints into the room.

Some of the musicians show surprise.

Gayle gives Andy a copy of the book (the band's repertoire).

ANDY

(leafing through it)  
This is some book! Think I'll get through it?

GAYLE

We'll be right by you, Andy.

Gayle glances toward the double doors.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

I'm thinking about kicking those three out. They must think this is a bank instead of a band.

MARJORIE

I'll be glad to do it. Gotta put my weightlifting to use.

Carla, Toney, and Vivienne walk in at last...with their instruments and a pop bottle each.

GAYLE

Glad to have you...if you three don't stop coming in late, you're through.

Toney, Vivienne, and Carla take their places.

VIVIENNE

I'll tell me mum and daddy on you.

TONEY

They're filming another picture, Viv. Remember?

Carla notices Andy going over the band's material.

CARLA

Get that boy outa here, Gayle!

GAYLE

Wow...I've got a name now!

(gesturing)

Can't, Carla.

(pointing to Andy)

Everybody, I want you to meet our new featured vocalist, Andy Salkeld.

An air of surprise grips several bandmembers.

MARJORIE

(pointing at Gayle)

You pulled a Fibber McGee! You told us this was gonna be an all-girl band!

Marjorie walks out...and this time, she takes her trombone.

CARLA

Put a wig on him and I'll come back!

Carla, with her alto sax and her soda pop, storms out.

INT. EATON'S EATERY DINING ROOM - DAY

The jukebox is silent this time.

But Marjorie, Carla, and Norma Jeanne aren't as they eat lunch and gab away.

NORMA JEANNE  
Funny you hanging out with us,  
Carla.

CARLA  
Well, I've come to my senses. Gayle  
pulled a fast one.

Carla watches Norma Jeanne drink her chocolate malt.

MARJORIE  
If she wanted a singer, it shoulda  
been a girl...like Gloria Jean  
McKinnon.

NORMA JEANNE  
Look, Andy won the contest. He won  
fair and square. I think he'd be  
great for our band.

Gayle and Dagmar enter the Eatery; as they find Marjorie, Carla, and Norma Jeanne, the two inseparables pull chairs from nearby tables and sit next to the trio.

MARJORIE  
You've got a lot to learn about  
principles, Norma Jeanne.  
(takes a bite)  
Fibber McGee gave her word.

Marjorie notices Dagmar and Gayle...who don't look fazed.

CARLA  
It just goes to show you...you  
can't trust 'em.  
(slams fist on table)  
Papa was right! You can't!  
(fist on table again)  
You can't trust 'em.

Marjorie picks up her glass of Coke.

MARJORIE  
(to Carla)  
You slam that table again, I'll  
pour this Coke down your socks.

GAYLE

You really think your dad was right, Carla? Has he met one of us?

CARLA

Listen, girl, I'm talking about West Coast bandleaders.

MARJORIE

(looking at Norma Jeanne)  
Think we oughta let Fibber McGee and Molly sit here with us?

NORMA JEANNE

Marjorie, lay off!

Dagmar looks glum.

DAGMAR

Don't blame Gayle! It was my idea to bring a singer in...and we both thought Andy would be the best choice.

Carla gives a halfhearted nod.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)

Besides, we needed something to make this a better band. You saw how the crowd took us Halloween night...as if we were the Seventh Column...or is it the Fifth Column?

Gayle and Norma Jeanne nod in agreement.

CARLA

He can get drafted!

DAGMAR

No, he can't. He told us he's 4-F.

GAYLE

(to Carla and Marjorie)  
We'd love to have both of you back. All we want you to do is give Andy a chance.

As Norma Jeanne gives Carla and Marjorie a concerned look, the latter two stare in space for a moment.

MARJORIE

All right, Gayle. I'll come back.



The others look at Carla, who nods in agreement.

CARLA

All right. Count me back in.

MARJORIE

But remember: If Andy ain't any good...

Marjorie shows Dagmar, Gayle, and Norma Jeanne her fists. In a second, Carla does the same thing.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

INT. STRAWBERRYS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gayle (tickling the ivories) works with Andy as they go over some material.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Gayle goes into her locker for some books...and dredges up a note as well.

"DEAR FIBBER..." says the note. That's only the beginning.

Earl walks into the vicinity; Gayle wads up the note and throws it at him.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Rehearsal time...Andy works out to everyone's satisfaction.

Marjorie nods her approval; Carla gives Andy a "thumbs up."

END MONTAGE

EXT. BUS STOP ON BROADWAY - DAY

Gayle's dressed snugly on this nipplier-than-usual day.

The bus pulls up; Gayle boards it and pays the fare.

INT. CITY TRANSIT BUS - DAY

When Gayle finds Dagmar, the latter's in a seat toward the back of the bus. Gayle takes the seat next to her.

Dagmar doesn't look too happy.

GAYLE

All set for M.A. High Night at the Danceland Ballroom, Dag?

GAYLE (CONT'D)

(noticing Dagmar)  
Too many lumps in your oatmeal?

DAGMAR

No. It's Mama...I was home,  
practicing some of our material,  
and having fun, and Mama comes into  
the living room and says:

(mimics Ingrid Bergman)  
"Don't ever play that noise in this  
house again, Dagmar Johannssen!"

GAYLE

Doesn't your dad mind you playing  
swing at home?

DAGMAR

He loves it! But Mama would never  
hear of it. Not around her.

(looking at Gayle)  
That's all Mama and Papa fight  
about these days.

Gayle studies her best buddy for a moment.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

For a change, the whole band is here...and on time.

And Gayle's happy about that as she leads the band into "I'm  
Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter," a Fats  
Waller tune from 1935.

GAYLE

Okay, Anna, Shirl, Kelsey! Make  
those trumpets pop!

Anna, Shirley, and Kelsey (they start the song out) come up  
with a trumpet flourish of sorts...Mary Sue's bass work and  
Kathleen's work with brushes (rather than sticks) help.

ANDY

(singing)  
*I'm gonna sit right down and write  
myself a letter,/And make believe  
it came from you.*

Andy sits on top of the old upright piano Dagmar's playing.  
Gayle, who also directs, plays the other old upright.

ANDY (CONT'D)

*I'm gonna write words oh so  
sweet/They're gonna knock me off my  
feet.*

While Mary Sue tugs the strings of her bass fiddle, Vivienne plays lead guitar and Norma Jeanne strums rhythm guitar. (Both guitars share Vivienne's small amp.)

Dagmar cheers up...due to the show Andy puts on above her.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
*I like "kisses" on the bottom.*

After Andy's "*BOTTOM*," the music stops while he sings:

ANDY (CONT'D)  
*I'll be glad I got 'em.*

"*GOT 'EM*" starts the music again.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
*I'm gonna smile and say "I hope you're feeling better."/I'll close with "love" the way you do./I'm gonna sit right down and write myself a letter,/And I'm gonna make believe it came from you.*

Vivienne's guitar chords lead into a riff done up by the twelve brass/reed players (similar to the intro).

ANDY (CONT'D)  
(after six bars)  
*Oh yeah!*

The brasses and reeds riff for another eight bars before they turn the tune into a tango.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
*I'm gonna write words oh so sweet/They're gonna knock me off my feet./I like "kisses" on the bottom./I'll be glad I got 'em.*

The song changes from tango back to fox trot as the reeds and brasses blow again.

Six bars later:

ANDY (CONT'D)  
*Oh yeah!*

It's back to riffing for the reed/brass players for eight bars before the rhythm section takes over.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
*I'm gonna sit right down and write  
 myself a letter, / And I'm gonna make  
 believe it came from youuuuu.*

ALL BUT ANDY  
 (through his "YOUUUUU")  
 OH YEAH!

ANDY  
*Gonna make believe it came from  
 youuu.*

The trumpets blow out a final flourish.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
 OH YEAH!

A pleased Gayle jumps up from her seat at the second piano.

GAYLE  
 That's good. Take a break,  
 everybody.

Gayle waits until her fellow instrumentalists and featured  
 vocalist settle back. (Andy's still atop the first piano.)

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 Just wanted to remind you that  
 Saturday night, Danceland's holding  
 Manual Arts High School Night.

With Dagmar's help, Andy climbs down from the first piano.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 They do this once a week during the  
 school year for all the high  
 schools around here.

CARLA  
 Yeah, Gayle, I know. My sister told  
 me 'bout 'em. They do stupid,  
 boring, silly things--

Marjorie reaches into the sax section and shows Carla a fist.

MARJORIE  
 If you wanna keep playing alto sax,  
 button your lip!

Carla shows Marjorie a fist, too...looks like a fight.

Gayle's shrill whistle puts the quietus to that.

GAYLE

Meg, don't. Joe Louis doesn't play trombone...so why should you go after the heavyweight championship of the world?

Kelsey looks over at Marjorie, then at Gayle, whose remark earns some laughs from Shirley and Anna.

KELSEY

'Cause it'll disqualify her for the featherweight crown.

Most of the bandmembers laugh.

GAYLE

(after the laughter)

No, but what I was thinking was: Stan Williams...the best bandleader in the Los Angeles area...will be playing Saturday night.

Some AD LIBBED reactions come from Gayle's band.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Maybe...we can...get some pointers from him...

That idea has most of the musicians buzzing. Most, mind you.

VIVIENNE

(to Gayle)

Mate, if 'e's so swell, why didn't 'e play th' reception ahfter th' premiere of "Rebecker," in which me mum and daddy were extras?

Vivienne receives dirty looks from those around her.

EXT. DANCELAND BALLROOM - NIGHT

The lights blaze full blast, and the parking lot's full.

INT. DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

LOTS OF HIGH-SCHOOL-AGE COUPLES have filled up the rather spacious dance floor at this popular hangout. Everybody's in their school clothes or something ritzier.

The space is decorated in purple and gray (Manual Arts High's colors)...lots of purple and gray.

All the members of Gayle's band (save Dagmar) are here; they've got THEIR DATES with them.

On the bandstand, STAN WILLIAMS (30s, dapper) leads TWENTY MEN in matching suits and neckties: Stan Williams and His Swing Kings.

The music: Charlie Barnet's "Are You Hurt."

While everybody dances around or in front of Gayle and date Jimmy, she shows worry until a dateless Dagmar enters.

Dagmar and Gayle breathe sighs of relief.

JIMMY

That what's been buggin' you,  
Gayle?

Gayle nods.

"Are You Hurt" ends, and once the crowd applause kicks in, Stan strides over to the center mike to address the crowd.

STAN

Thanks a bunch! Glad you Toilers  
could make it here tonight!

Stan and his bandmembers soak up some more audience applause.

STAN (CONT'D)

There's more where this came  
from...but first, me and the boys  
are gonna take five.

Some of the Swing Kings groan. Stan looks at his musicians. He turns back around to look at the teenagers.

STAN (CONT'D)

Okay...we'll make it ten.

All twenty of Stan's musicians happily troop off the bandstand, followed by Stan himself. (More applause ensues.)

Once the tooters leave, Gayle heads for the bandstand.

JIMMY

While you're at it, Gayle, get me a  
Coke.

GAYLE

I'm not going to the concession  
stand, Jimmy.

Jimmy and Dagmar look surprised before looking at each other.

DAGMAR

About that audition...I hope you're still not angry.

Gayle goes to a grand piano and fiddles around with its keys.

ANNA

I don't think the management wants you up there, Gayle.

GAYLE

It's just 'til the band comes back. Hey, Anna...they left their instruments here. Why don't you grab a trumpet and join me?

A shrugging Anna hops onto the bandstand; in the Williams trumpet section, she finds a trumpet...and blows scales.

Marjorie and Norma Jeanne watch Anna and Gayle...and make their move up there.

BOB BOZICH (17; Marjorie's date) and LARRY SUTHERLAND (17; he's Norma Jeanne's date) watch the exodus to the bandstand.

BOB

You're not thinking about going up there, are--

MARJORIE

(stops in her tracks)

Bob, I'm going up, and if you try to stop me, you'll get one of

(shows Bob her fists)

Marjorie Deardourff's world-famous haymakers.

Marjorie continues up there, with Norma Jeanne two steps behind...and Larry looking perplexed.

LARRY

Norma Jeanne, you're the only girl I know who'd rather make love to a baby grand!

Marjorie finds a trombone and Norma Jeanne locates a marimba. They test those instruments out.

GAYLE

(toward the crowd)

We need more bodies! C'mon up!

Carlotta, Janet, Finnegan, Kelsey, and Shirley take Gayle's advice and go to the bandstand, where they grab the instruments they play in her band.

Dagmar and Jimmy watch the goings-on in amazement.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Dagmar, I'm surprised you weren't  
the first up here with me!

Dagmar strides over to the bandstand...

DAGMAR

Gotta go. My bandleader calls.

...and heads for the piano, only to walk right past it when she finds an accordion.

While Dagmar picks up the accordion and plays scales on it, Andy sprints onto the stage and heads for the center mike, with Carla and Toney following him. On the platform, Toney and Carla grab a baritone sax and an alto sax, respectively.

Kathleen climbs up there, too...and when she does, she marvels at the drum set that's up there.

Willie arrives at the plank; grabbing a clarinet, she looks over her shoulder...only to find Mary Sue still on the floor. Clarinet and all, she makes a return trip to the dance floor and drags her best friend with her.

WILLIE

Mary Sue, you gotta learn to get  
them jitters outa your system!

Mary Sue nods.

Elsewhere on the floor, Piney and Jeannette watch it all.

JEANNETTE

We might as well go up, Piney.  
Couldn't hurt.

PINEY

Couldn't hurt who?

Jeannette and Piney come up to the bandstand, where they grab a trombone and a clarinet, respectively.

Mary Sue stands the Swing Kings' bass fiddle up and tugs the instrument's strings.

Marjorie notices something wrong up there.



MARJORIE  
 (noticing Vivienne)  
 Hey, Little Miss Class, show us  
 some! Get your butt up here!

A peeved Vivienne goes up there; she watches the surprised expression HER DATE wears on his face.

VIVIENNE  
 You understand, don't ya, mate?

As Vivienne's date nods, LEROY WHITE (16, Black, and Mary Sue's date) and PAUL GORDON (16, Black; Willie's date) get on the dance floor...each with two full pop bottles.

LEROY  
 Hey, Paul, you seen Mary Sue?

PAUL  
 You better check the bandstand,  
 Leroy...I've got the feeling Willie  
 took her up there.

On the plank, Vivienne picks up an electric guitar and strokes its strings.

The gang's all there...Gayle watches them all warm up.

GAYLE  
 (to her sidemen)  
 Anybody nervous?

Before anyone can answer, Kathleen pounds out a spirited drum intro prior to settling into a medium beat.

Gayle adds some boogie-woogie piano chords...in fact, they become the music to "Beat Me, Daddy, Eight to the Bar."

Mary Sue, Marjorie, Carlotta, Vivienne, Norma Jeanne, and Dagmar pick up on it and play along; the other players jump in twelve bars later.

Twelve more bars afterwards, Gayle gives Andy a cue to sing.

ANDY  
 (into the center mike)  
*In a dinky honky tonky village in  
 Texas, /There's a guy who plays the  
 best piano by far.*

Frances, Gloria Jean, Lillian, and Ruby stand in front of the bandstand. Lillian and Frances stick their tongues out at Andy while the band plays and Andy warbles.

Gloria Jean blocks Frances' view...Ruby impedes Lillian's.

GLORIA JEAN  
(hands on Frances)  
You both came here with tongues.

RUBY  
(to Lillian and Frances)  
Yeah. Do you two wanna leave here  
with tongues still in your mouths?

Frances and Lillian nod.

FRANCES  
All right, Ruby. Okay.

LILLIAN  
Yeah. You win.

And Lillian and Frances join Ruby and Gloria Jean (both of whom turn back around) in enjoying the show.

Gayle Strawberry and Her Band now really cook.

ANDY  
(still singing)  
*He can play piano any way that you  
like it,/But the style he likes the  
best is eight to the bar;/When he  
plays, it's a ball./He's the daddy  
of them all.*

Stan's band comes into the room; all its members look stunned to find someone else using their instruments.

SAME SCENE - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Some of the teenage couples dance as the music up there changes to "Boogie Woogie," Tommy Dorsey style.

RICK WHITTENTON (20s) holds a KIT microphone as he and some other M.A. High students engage in an AD LIBBED interview.

After he finishes his interview, Rick watches those dancing couples, then watches Marjorie perform the song's final solo...a twelve-bar passage split into thirds by clarinet players Piney, Willie, and Carlotta.

After the solo, all the brasses slide into an ending that culminates in two choppy notes.

While the audience applauds (a surprise to Gayle), Rick climbs onto the bandstand (a shock to all).

Rick seeks out the leader, to whom Dagmar points.

RICK  
Hello! This is Rick Whittenton from  
KIT. May I ask who you are?

GAYLE  
Me? Uh...Gayle Strawberry.

RICK  
That band of yours sounds like  
nobody's business!

Stan and his Swing Kings look at each other and shrug while they await their turn back up there.

RICK (CONT'D)  
This has got to be the first time a  
bunch of...well, I'd never seen  
part of an audience get up on a  
bandstand and try to play before.

GAYLE  
Being on the radio's...quite a  
surprise, too.  
(gazing at Rick)  
You sound like Rick Whittenton. Are  
you really?

RICK  
I sure am. Does your band have a  
name?

GAYLE  
Well, we've been calling ourselves--

As many musicians as possible gather around Gayle and Rick.

NORMA JEANNE  
How about Gayle Strawberry and Her  
Soda Pop Music Makers?

Some of the girls laugh or snicker.

Gayle, though, stares openmouthed at Norma Jeanne.

NORMA JEANNE (CONT'D)  
Don't laugh! Our guitarist, our  
alto player, and our baritone  
player all drink pop as if it was  
water.

Vivienne, Toney, and Carla stare at Norma Jeanne.

NORMA JEANNE (CONT'D)

It's true.

(to Rick)

And our average age is sixteen. And that's too young to legally buy liquor here in California.

Some of the musicians nod in understanding.

GAYLE

It's a deal, then, Norma Jeanne. Gayle Strawberry and Her Soda Pop Music Makers we'll be.

RICK

As you might know, KIT is sponsoring a local swing band and placing it in the National Swing Contest next New Year's Day in New York.

Gayle nods.

RICK (CONT'D)

I think we've found one right here.

Gayle's mouth flies open.

RICK (CONT'D)

With that, then, Gayle, what we're going to do is advance you and your band two hundred dollars so that you can all make it to New York.

Strong applause comes from many of the couples out there...and even from Stan and some of his musicians.

RICK (CONT'D)

And have enough to have some fun, too.

Rick presents Gayle with a check for two hundred bucks.

GAYLE

Rick, I hope this'll be the best two-hundred-dollar investment you've ever made.

RICK

We'll be pulling for you and your band in New York, Gayle.

As the crowd cheering kicks back in, Gayle earns warm hugs from many of the other bandmembers.

Those who don't hug Gayle give Rick embraces.

When he meets her, Andy gives Gayle a surprising...kiss.

INT. STRAWBERRYS' KITCHEN - DAY

Berniece, Earl, Fred, and Gayle, all in robes, eat breakfast.

GAYLE

Earl, you should've been to Danceland last night.

Earl yawns.

FRED

(to Gayle)

I heard you had a great time last night.

GAYLE

I sure did.

BERNIECE

You almost broke curfew.

GAYLE

It was worth it, though.

(takes a sip of juice)

Found an opportunity that wouldn't've come up otherwise.

Fred looks up from his plate and breaks into a smirk.

FRED

If you mean that band--

GAYLE

You know, it's been a while since we last visited New York...New York...our old stomping grounds.

EARL

We can't afford it, Gayle.

BERNIECE

Earl, stay in your place just once!

(looking at Gayle)

We can't afford it, Gayle.

GAYLE

Problem solved. You remember the National Swing Contest they're having New Year's Day in New York?

Berniece groans. Fred nods as if he hears a broken record.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Well, KIT decided to sponsor our swing band. Gave us two hundred dollars...they're putting us in the contest!

Earl, Berniece, and Fred look at Gayle in stunned silence.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

It's not like that top-secret project they've been working on. You're all invited to join us.

BERNIECE

You know your father and I have to work that night.

(lifts her juice glass)

In fact, the restaurant does landslide business every New Year's.

GAYLE

It'll be on the radio. On KIT.

Fred shakes his head "no" and looks to Berniece for sympathy. Sympathy granted.

EARL

The girl doesn't quit!

Berniece takes a sip out of that glass of hers.

EARL (CONT'D)

Mama, it looks like you're stuck with a musician in the family.

Berniece nods at Earl and looks at Gayle.

BERNIECE

He's right. You don't quit.

GAYLE

Well...ever since you and Daddy took me and Earl to the Apollo to see Mary Lou Williams play with Andy Kirk's band the last time we visited New York...

BERNIECE

Oh, my gosh...

GAYLE

Well, ever since then, I've always wanted to be a musician.

(taking a bite)

And you and Daddy always used to tell me: "If you're gonna start something, make sure you finish." That's all I'm doing.

BERNIECE

Well, since you're that determined to be a bandleader, I've got no choice but to quit fighting it.

Gayle gives Berniece a warm, knowing smile.

GAYLE

Thanks, Mama.

BERNIECE

I just wonder what your friends think.

Gayle just grins.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Dagmar, Gayle, and Norma Jeanne are the only three people in the room...and they work on arrangements.

INT. STRAWBERRYS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gayle's on the phone; she writes on a 1942 calendar.

Under December 18, Gayle finds room to write: "APPEARING AT ORPHEUM THEATER- THREE NIGHTS."

Gayle hangs up...and looks ecstatic.

INT. MANUAL ARTS HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Norma Jeanne sets up her disc recorder in order to cut some acetates of the Soda Pop Music Makers.

END MONTAGE

EXT. ORPHEUM THEATER - NIGHT

The leader's first name is misspelled on the marquee: "GALE STRAWBERRY AND HER SODA POP MUSIC MAKERS." (That all appears below the movie's name: "GEORGE WASHINGTON SLEPT HERE.")

INT. ORPHEUM THEATER STAGE - BEHIND THE SCREEN - NIGHT

All set to perform, Gayle and her bandmates await the end of the aforementioned MOVIE projected in front of them.

Gayle and Dagmar stand side by side; like all the other girls in the band, the two pals wear tailored jackets and matching skirts plus red blouses. (With the exception of Mary Sue, who stands with her bass, all the other musicians are seated.)

Andy's seated, too; he's in a suit and a red necktie.

GAYLE

Dagmar, how do you feel about playing the organ?

Dagmar's too excited to talk. Instead, she lets a series of nods suffice as she sprints her way to the left side of the stage...where the console of the theater's three-manual Wurlitzer pipe organ has been moved for the occasion.

The movie ENDS...and Norma Jeanne joins Kathleen in the percussion section: Two drum sets. (Kathleen's already seated at one set; Norma Jeanne sits down at the other.)

INT. ORPHEUM THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

With THE CROWD applauding "George Washington Slept Here," THE SCREEN RISES...and the whole result reveals Gayle's band.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Dagmar turns the organ on and selects her stops; Gayle gives Andy and all the instrumentalists a signal.

GAYLE, BAND

CHOO CHOOOOO!

Gayle leads the band into the melody to "Chattanooga Choo Choo" as she moves over to a grand piano, where she helps provide the rhythm.



Kathleen and Norma Jeanne provide contrasting beats; Kathleen plays at a faster, trainlike clip.

Thirty-two bars after the "CHOO CHOOOOO!" chant, Gayle gives Andy the signal to get up and move to a center mike.

ANDY  
 (singing into center mike)  
*Pardon me, girl...is that the  
 Chattanooga Choo Choo?*

With the touch of a toe piston, Dagmar makes the organ sound like a locomotive.

DAGMAR, GAYLE, KATHLEEN, NORMA JEANNE  
*Track twenty nine!*

ANDY  
*Girl, you can give me a shine.*

Dagmar adds her pedalwork to the music.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
*I can afford to board a Chattanooga  
 Choo Choo./I've got my fare and  
 just a trifle to spare.*

Even Vivienne's guitar sounds like a train.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
*You leave the Pennsylvania station  
 'bout a quarter to four,/Read a  
 magazine and then you're in  
 Baltimore,/Dinner in the diner.  
 Nothing could be finer/Than to have  
 your ham 'n' eggs in Carolina.*

Under Andy's vocal, the saxes and clarinets come up.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
*When you hear the whistle blowin'  
 eight to the bar,/Then you know  
 that Tennessee is not very  
 far./Shovel all the coal in, gotta  
 keep it rollin'. Woo, woo,  
 Chattanooga, there you are.*

Andy dances in place...and the crowd eats it up.

ANDY (CONT'D)

*There's gonna be a certain party at  
the station./Satin and lace, I used  
to call "Funny Face."/She's gonna  
cry until I tell her that I'll  
never roam./So, Chattanooga Choo  
Choo, won't you choo-choo me home.*

As the trumpeters and trombonists grab the next part of the song, Andy hoofs it across the stage.

Gayle's got a big smile.

Marjorie and her trombone solo the first eight bars after Andy's vocal; Shirley and her trumpet get the next seven.

Dagmar takes the bridge. This time, she uses her hands as well as her feet on the organ.

Eighteen bars later, Dagmar plays the same part...only this time, in a different key...and, with eight bars left to go in the bridge, it's this-organ-is-a-train time again.

The other girls join Dagmar as the bridge gets a third run.

They wind the song down and move it into its original key...a cue for Andy to stop dancing and go back to the center mike to sing.

ANDY (CONT'D)

*There's gonna be a certain party at  
the station./Satin and lace, I used  
to call "Funny Face."/She's gonna  
cry until I tell her that I'll  
never roam./So, Chattanooga Choo  
Choo, won't you choo-choo me home.*

On "*HOME*," Kathleen and Norma Jeanne go at it on the skins (no help from their friends) for eighteen bars. This time, Norma Jeanne matches Kathleen beat for beat...and sets the audience to cheering.

Andy and his mouth end the number.

ANDY (CONT'D)

*Oh, Chattanooga Choo Choo, won't  
you choo-choo me home!*

Andy stretches out the final "*HOME*" while the brasses, woodwinds, drums, piano, guitar, and organ all pretend to be a locomotive.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATER BALCONY - NIGHT

Bob, Paul, Ruby, Gloria Jean, Larry, Jimmy, and Leroy sit in the same row...along with Marshall Bell and ULF JOHANNSSSEN (30s; Dagmar's dad).

ULF  
(to Marshall)  
That's my daughter at the organ!

MARSHALL  
She's extremely talented! I've gotta admit...the whole band is!

ULF  
Thank you! I'll tell Dagmar!

They whoop it up...especially Bob, Jimmy, Gloria Jean, Larry, Leroy, Paul, Ruby, Ulf, and...even Marshall.

Gayle gets up from the piano to congratulate Andy.

EXT. JOHANNSSSENS' HOUSE - DAY

This University Park house looks similar to the Strawberrys'...except a fence rings the yard.

INT. JOHANNSSSENS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

A clock someplace in this cozy space says it's past noon.

Dagmar and her mom, MARTA JOHANNSSSEN (30s), relax on the sofa as they read today's "Los Angeles Times."

DAGMAR  
You really should've been at the Orpheum last night. The movie was great, and the band--

Marta shoots Dagmar a tired look.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)  
Well, Mama, I'm gonna go practice.

MARTA  
All right.

Marta adds a smile to her face.

Dagmar goes to the family piano (an upright from the 1880-1929 period), on top of which stand a few stacks of music books and a stack of sheet music.

She scrounges through one of the piles until she finds a book of works by Grieg; setting the book on the music rack, Dagmar turns to the first piece...and, of course, plays it.

Marta looks up from her section of the newspaper and nods her approval as the music plays.

Halfway through the piece, Dagmar finds the going rough, so she improvises...and it sounds like That Ol' Devil Swing.

Marta flips away what she's reading and walks over to the piano, where she gives Dagmar a disapproving look.

MARTA (CONT'D)

You used to play Grieg so beautifully, Dagmar.

Dagmar's out of musical trouble.

DAGMAR

I was just improvising, that's all. Even Mozart improvised once in a while...I just needed a way to get me through this piece. I always seem to have trouble with it.

Dagmar looks at Marta.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)

Remember what you told me when you started giving me lessons:  
"Smoothness counts--"

MARTA

This is Grieg, not...Goodman!  
(sits next to Dagmar)  
Ever since you joined that...that...your best friend's band, your musical standards have fallen off.

In disbelief, Dagmar stops the music.

MARTA (CONT'D)

Considering your choice of friends, it isn't surprising, I suppose.

Dagmar slams the keyboard. She stands up and faces Marta.

DAGMAR

You've run Gayle down for the last time! Just...just...LEAVE HER ALONE!

Dagmar's voice and facial expression feature a chill.

MARTA

Don't raise your voice at me, young lady!

Dagmar leaves the bench to sprint for the front door.

DAGMAR

(along the way)  
Papa and I wouldn't have had this kind of conversation!

MARTA

That's enough, young--

Dagmar opens the door, but stops short of leaving the house.

DAGMAR

I wouldn't even be playing the piano if it hadn't been for you pushing me into it, just 'cause your own career as a concert pianist died before it was ever born!

Dagmar slams the door on her way out.

EXT. WEST 41ST STREET - DAY

Shooting out of the house as if a cannonball, heartbroken Dagmar almost aimlessly sprints up the street.

As she approaches Figueroa Street, Dagmar (eyes almost closed) doesn't see the car coming, and...

EXT. CORNER OF 41ST AND FIGUEROA STREETS - DAY

A 1938 Willys 38 rests in the middle of the intersection. ITS DRIVER (a man in his 30s) gets out of the car.

Next to the car, Dagmar's sprawled out on the pavement.

Her shoes have been smashed to shreds and are as bloody as her legs. Other parts of her body are also bruised.

EXT. WEST 41ST STREET - DAY

Marta leaves the house, door ajar.

MARTA

DAGMAR! WHERE ARE YOU?

She sprints in the same direction as Dagmar.

EXT. CORNER OF 41ST AND FIGUEROA STREETS - DAY

Marta finally makes the intersection. The Willys and its driver are still there; he's shook up over the accident.

As SEVERAL PEOPLE come into the intersection to look after Dagmar, the sight of her daughter on the pavement brings Marta to tears.

She tries to pick Dagmar up...and can't.

She spots the Willys driver through swimming eyes. She grabs him by the lapels and shakes him violently.

MARTA  
WHAT HAPPENED? TELL ME!

WILLYS DRIVER  
(choking up)  
I'm...so...sorry...

The Willys driver and Marta hug each other, both in tears.

EXT. ORPHEUM THEATER - NIGHT

This time, Gayle's first name is correctly spelled on the theater's marquee.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATER STAGE - BEHIND THE SCREEN - NIGHT

Gayle and her instrumentalists wear matching red dresses while her vocalist wears a red suit and a black necktie.

Gayle paces the floor...but abandons the idea after a lap.

GAYLE  
Dag's usually on time...in fact,  
she's usually the first to show up.  
(looking around)  
Anybody know what happened to her?

Several bandmembers shake their heads "no."

Gayle puts her hands on her head.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
Her mom...  
(running off)  
Be right back, everybody.

"George Washington Slept Here" NEARS ITS END. With uneasy eyes, Kelsey watches Gayle leave.

KELSEY

Hurry up, Gayle. Picture's about to end.

Gayle doesn't get too far when...

INT. ORPHEUM THEATER BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

...a crimson-uniformed usher named GEORGE approaches her.

GEORGE

Is there a Gayle Strawberry here?

GAYLE

Yes. I'm Gayle.

George looks dumbfounded.

GEORGE

There's a phone call for you. Just go in that office on the right.

Gayle sprints off in that direction.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATER OFFICE - NIGHT

She picks up the receiver.

GAYLE

(into phone)

Hello...Dag?...Dag, tell me what happened...which hospital are you in...and why?

As she listens on, Gayle looks grim.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATER STAGE - BEHIND THE SCREEN - NIGHT

Glum-looking Gayle comes onto the stage.

CARLOTTA

What happened?

GAYLE

Dagmar called. She got in a car accident...and now she's at L.A. General Hospital...don't know how long...any of you who want to leave...

With the movie OVER (to the strains of O.S. APPLAUSE), THE SCREEN RISES, revealing Gayle and her band.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 Feel free to do so.

Nobody moves.

Instead, several of the performers look at Gayle in surprise.

WILLIE  
 You get hold of some bad reefer,  
 Gayle, baby?

Now Gayle's surprised.

MARJORIE  
 (stands up, eyes Gayle)  
 If Dagmar heard you talking like  
 that, she'd limp out of that  
 hospital and come over here and  
 wring your neck.

Most of the musicians rally behind Marjorie's statement.

Gayle turns to her bandmembers and, going to a grand piano, readies the band to play.

GAYLE  
 Let's do "One O'Clock Jump."

Norma Jeanne gets up, grabs her trombone, and sits back down to join the rest of the band in launching "One O'Clock Jump."

INT. STRAWBERRYS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Not even the HOLIDAY MUSIC from the radio loudspeaker can cheer Gayle up. Seated at first, she gets up and clicks the radio OFF and just stares at the floor once she returns to her seat.

Fred comes into the room with a box of Christmas decorations.

FRED  
 Even after nine years, I still  
 can't get used to these California  
 winters...just like Louis Armstrong  
 wiping his brow with a Kleenex...

Fred looks around the room.



FRED (CONT'D)  
 It'd sure help if we had a  
 tree...even a twig...  
 (notices Gayle)  
 I can sure use some help.

GAYLE  
 No thank you, Daddy.

Fred sets the box down and studies Gayle.

FRED  
 Ever seen a Strawberry mope?

GAYLE  
 Daddy--

FRED  
 Hey, you can tell me.

GAYLE  
 How could my best friend do this to  
 me? To us? How could a tiny, small-  
 fingered, effervescent bundle of  
 joy...want to kill herself?

FRED  
 Who?

GAYLE  
 She loved playing in that band. She  
 just loved playing the piano,  
 period. I don't know what's gonna  
 happen to her...

FRED  
 Who?

GAYLE  
 Daddy, quit the owl routine!

Fred looks surprised.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 I'm...sorry.  
 (hugs Fred)  
 If it weren't for Dag, this band  
 wouldn't've gotten off the ground  
 like it did.

Fred nods.

FRED

Apology accepted.

GAYLE

She helped find us musicians and helped find that singer...at school, she could really cut up, but at home, her mama cut her up...why?

(head in Fred's chest)

I just feel...so...powerless...how could she do this?

FRED

Why don't you ask her? Go see her?

Fred gives Gayle a hug of his own.

Gayle nods as she completes the embrace.

EXT. LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

L.A. General's a monumental, iconic Depression-era structure in the city's downtown area. Matter of fact, the hospital is known for its "eighty-ton facade."

INT. LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL SECOND FLOOR LOBBY - NIGHT

Gayle walks up to a desk staffed by a nurse named ELEANOR BUDKE (50s).

ELEANOR

Yes?

Gayle sets a well-stuffed shopping bag on the floor.

GAYLE

I understand there's a Dagmar Johannssen here. I just...I just wanted to see her.

ELEANOR

You're certainly not next of kin.

GAYLE

No, but I'm her best friend. We go to the same school...Manual Arts High.

Eleanor gives Gayle a look of doubt.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

I really would like to see her.

ELEANOR  
Is she expecting you?

GAYLE  
She called me yesterday. She asked  
me to stop by and see her!

Gayle looks exasperated.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
I just wanna know where she is!

Gayle takes off...as if determined to find Dagmar herself.

ELEANOR  
Wait just a minute, young lady!

Gayle stops in her tracks.

GAYLE  
Do I go directly to jail?

ELEANOR  
Room 267.

A grateful Gayle nods and resumes her odyssey.

INT. LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL ROOM 267 - NIGHT

Gayle, shopping bag in hand, peeks inside to make sure Dagmar really is in this room.

Dagmar's in bed, wide awake...and her spirits are surprisingly high as she listens to MUSIC from a portable radio by her bed.

Gayle runs over to Dagmar, drops the shopping bag next to the bed, and gives her the absolute warmest of hugs.

GAYLE  
Oh, Dag!

DAGMAR  
(impersonating Mae West)  
Get a grip on yourself, sugah.  
There's still some life in this  
girl.

GAYLE  
Why...why...what's the idea?  
(breaks the hug)  
I can't understand--

DAGMAR  
 (mimics Shirley Temple)  
 Please don't worry. I just hate to  
 see those bright eyes cloud--

GAYLE  
 Where is Major Bowes when you need  
 him?

DAGMAR  
 (in her real voice)  
 Gayle, I'll be out of here faster  
 than you can say "Gayle Strawberry  
 and Her Soda Pop Music Makers."  
 (holds Gayle's hands)  
 Everything'll be fine.

GAYLE  
 Except at home.

Gayle straightens up...and Dagmar's face shows mild surprise.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 You told me your dad likes the idea  
 of your playing in a big band, but  
 your mama doesn't. I remember.

All Dagmar can do is nod.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 And I suppose she blames me for  
 your being here in the first  
 place...she may have a point.

Dagmar shakes her head "no."

DAGMAR  
 If that's true, then the Army Air  
 Corps flies Kamikaze planes and  
 Messerschmidts.

Gayle flashes a little smile.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)  
 How'd the band do at the Orpheum  
 last night?

GAYLE  
 We knocked 'em dead. We started out  
 with "One O'Clock Jump" and we  
 never stopped 'til...

Gayle gestures Dagmar into holding on a while longer.

The bandleader dips into that shopping bag.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 Couldn't stop here without doing  
 this.

Gayle produces two get-well cards...the traditional,  
 sentimental type, that is.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 The first card's from the rest of  
 the band.

Dagmar takes a look at both cards.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 And the other card is signed by all  
 the Strawberrys. Made sure of that.  
 (dips into bag again)  
 That's not all, Dagmar...

Gayle pulls out of the bag...a concertina!

DAGMAR  
 G.S., you didn't need to raise the  
 national debt just for me.

GAYLE  
 I wanted to get you an accordion,  
 but I wasn't sure if you'd be  
 comfortable with it in bed like  
 that...I just wanted to make sure  
 you'd be able to hold your own  
 "Hour of Charm" in case the real  
 one went flat.

DAGMAR  
 Well, actually, my show's called  
 "The Hour of Boogie."

Dagmar gladly takes the concertina and gets the feel of its  
 keys, bellows, and all.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)  
 You've been too nice to me.

GAYLE  
 There's no such thing as "too  
 nice," Dagmar.

Dagmar plays something on her new present while Gayle, who  
 sits on the bed, just gazes at her.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

You remember that fight we got in  
back in '36...back in fourth grade?

DAGMAR

Where we tore each other's dresses  
and I got a black eye...and you got  
a broken nose?

GAYLE

I'm sorry I started it...you're the  
best darn friend I've ever had.

Dagmar just smiles.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Will you be able to play the pedals  
again? Are you gonna be able to  
walk again?

Dagmar stops squeezing her concertina and puts a hand on  
Gayle's lap.

DAGMAR

Sure.

Result: A very big smile by Gayle.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)

Just that when I play the organ,  
I'll be pumping the pedals with a  
steel pin in my left leg.

Gayle does a gulp.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)

Before they operate on me, they've  
gotta get my strength up. Should  
take a week or so.

GAYLE

Only a Rockefeller could  
afford...when you see the bill...  
(standing up)  
See you in the poorhouse!

Gayle grabs a purse out of her shopping bag.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

I don't know what it'll take to pay  
for it all, but...I've got to make  
it up to you.

She lifts two hundred dollars from her purse and hands the money to a surprised Dagmar.

DAGMAR  
Gayle, don't--

GAYLE  
This is the money Rick Whittenton gave me at Danceland. It's going toward your surgery.

Gayle looks gravely at Dagmar...whose mouth is wide open.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
It'll mean pulling us out of the National Swing Contest, but a lousy contest means nothing when compared to seeing you get out of that bed--

DAGMAR  
Put that money back!

Gayle thrusts the loot toward her best friend.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)  
You started this band so that you could get it in the contest, and now you're talking about pulling out...over little me, at that!

Dagmar not only shows surprise, but embarrassment, too.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)  
I'm quite flattered, but I'm surprised at you--

GAYLE  
Well, be surprised! Take the money!

Gayle offers Dagmar the stash once more, but Dagmar grabs her by the money-laden arm.

DAGMAR  
If you respect our friendship, you won't do this.

Gayle's face shows disbelief.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)  
Really.

The look of disbelief turns into one of hurt for Gayle.

INT. STRAWBERRYS' KITCHEN - DAY

All four Strawberrys, all of them dressed casually, sit at the breakfast table.

Only Berniece, Fred, and Earl chow down.

BERNIECE

(studying Gayle)

Gayle, you need to eat...especially breakfast. You'll need your strength for the National Swing Contest.

GAYLE

I'm trying to forget about it, Mama. I figured I'd turn the money the radio station gave me over to the Johannssens so they can pay for Dagmar's surgery.

BERNIECE

How is she?

GAYLE

Well, she's pretty happy. But she wasn't happy about my wanting to give her the money.

FRED

I can't blame her, Gayle.

(between bites)

Don't throw away this chance you been dying for. I already told the guys at the barber shop to listen for you on the radio.

GAYLE

Can we drop this whole thing?

They find a KNOCK O.S. on the front door; Gayle uses that to leave the table.

EARL

(between bites)

That Gayle's girdle's on too tight.

Fred gives Earl a quizzical look.

FRED

Earl, how do you know if a girdle's tight?



INT. STRAWBERRYS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gayle opens the front door and sees Marjorie and Norma Jeanne.

GAYLE  
Come in, Meg and Norma.

Norma Jeanne and Marjorie do just that.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
Have a seat, you two.

Norma Jeanne studies Gayle before the former looks around the living room and chooses a seat.

NORMA JEANNE  
You really need a tree, Gayle. It'd cheer you up in a jiffy.  
(to Marjorie)  
Aren't you gonna have a seat, Meg?

MARJORIE  
No. We can't stay too long, anyway.

Gayle looks puzzled.

NORMA JEANNE  
Meg and I wanted to see Dag. You're welcome to come, Gayle.

GAYLE  
Well, I...all right.  
(walks toward the kitchen)  
Just let me ask my parents.

Leaning against the kitchen door, Gayle pops The Question:

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
Mama, Daddy, is it all right to go to the hos--

Fred comes from the kitchen into the living room, causing Gayle to move out of the way.

FRED  
Go ahead, Gayle.

GAYLE  
Thanks, Daddy.

FRED  
 (waving)  
 Hi, Marjorie. Hi, Norma Jeanne.

Earl and Berniece come out of the kitchen and enter the living room; both of them wave at Norma Jeanne and Marjorie (who both wave back).

Berniece looks at Fred.

BERNIECE  
 Couldn't you wait until Gayle finished her question?

FRED  
 Berniece...you didn't expect her to ask if she could go get zonked, now did you, dear?

Berniece, Earl, Gayle, and Norma Jeanne share a goodhearted laugh as Norma Jeanne, Marjorie, and Gayle head out.

INT. LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL SECOND FLOOR LOBBY - DAY

Eleanor's back to staff the desk; she looks at Gayle, Marjorie, and Norma Jeanne.

ELEANOR  
 Yes?

GAYLE  
 We wanted to see Dagmar Johannssen.  
 Is she still in Room 267?

Eleanor nods before she eyeballs Norma Jeanne and Marjorie.

ELEANOR  
 I take it you're both her next of kin.

Marjorie shakes her head sideways.

NORMA JEANNE  
 We're also friends of hers.

Eleanor just nods.

NORMA JEANNE (CONT'D)  
 We also go to Manual Arts High School. And all four of us play in a swing band called Gayle Strawberry and--

Eleanor rests her chin on her fists.

ELEANOR  
This Dagmar's more popular than  
Frankie Sinatra.

Norma Jeanne, Marjorie, and Gayle go down the hall.

INT. LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL ROOM 267 - DAY

Dagmar plays that concertina when Marjorie, Gayle, and Norma Jeanne enter the room. (Dagmar's still in her bed.)

DAGMAR  
If it isn't G.S., M.D., and N.J.T.  
(mimics Claudette Colbert)  
Pull up a bed.

Gayle and Norma Jeanne sit next to each other on the near side of the bed while Marjorie chooses a chair.

Dagmar puts down her concertina.

NORMA JEANNE  
Sure doesn't sound like death in  
here, Dag. Much less sickness.

DAGMAR  
Like my very own papa would say:  
(mimics James Cagney)  
"All sickness ain't death, see?"

Gayle chuckles.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)  
(using her normal voice)  
That's the old Strawberry.

GAYLE  
Dag, I want to apologize for what  
happened a couple of days ago.

DAGMAR  
Oh, that's all right. And I'd like  
to apologize, too, for ever  
questioning our friendship.

Marjorie and Norma Jeanne share blank looks...looks that Dagmar catches.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)

You know what she did? I told her not to, but she offered to put up the money from the radio station to pay for my surgery.

Norma Jeanne and Marjorie look surprised; a few seconds later, the senior class beauty looks chagrined...and the trombone-playing weightlifter becomes redfaced.

NORMA JEANNE

Gayle, is this true?

Marjorie abruptly stands up.

MARJORIE

YEAH! IS IT?

Gayle timidly nods.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

Why you metalmouthed--

Marjorie takes a violent swing at Gayle's mouth...but Gayle ducks the punch.

When Marjorie swings, Norma Jeanne grabs Marjorie at the waist (or higher)...and lifts her up.

Gayle looks at Marjorie in the utmost of shock.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

Put me down, Norma Jeanne Tretiak!

NORMA JEANNE

Not 'til you cool off!

Marjorie strains to fight Norma Jeanne's grip.

MARJORIE

I said for you to--

NORMA JEANNE

If you'd've connected, your brand of oral surgery would've had Gayle eating corn meal mush for the rest of her life!

Marjorie continues to strain as Norma Jeanne keeps her grip.

MARJORIE

Listen here, Miss Beauty 'n'  
Brains: There's only one girl  
around here that lifts  
weights...and it ain't you!

While Gayle goes to another spot in the room, Norma Jeanne  
sits Marjorie down on the bed.

DAGMAR

Watch my leg!  
(tries to move around)  
These legs are the legs that played  
"Chattanooga Choo Choo!"

Norma Jeanne waits for Marjorie to cool off before  
approaching Gayle.

NORMA JEANNE

We really thought you wanted to be  
in that National Swing  
Contest...you still wanna be in it,  
don't you?

GAYLE

Well, yes, but--

MARJORIE

(standing up)  
No buts, Gayle! You got all of us  
in this 'cause you heard a  
goldenthroated announcer on the  
radio say:  
(impersonates announcer)  
"Be the next Basie, Goodman, or  
Miller!" Didn't you?

GAYLE

Ellington, not Miller!

MARJORIE

(moving in on Gayle)  
Didn't you?

DAGMAR

Gayle, don't talk!

Gayle heeds...and nods.

MARJORIE

Look, it's not your fault Dagmar  
got in that accident, so quit  
feeling sorry for yourself!

Gayle nods with a grimace.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)  
 Let her folks figure out how to  
 foot the bill. It's their kettle of  
 fish!

DAGMAR  
 (looking at Gayle)  
 Meg ain't kidding, podner.

Marjorie reaches for Gayle's shoulders...but, as a concerned  
 Norma Jeanne and an even more worried Dagmar watch, Marjorie  
 exhibits a gentle touch.

DAGMAR (CONT'D)  
 Meg, don't hit my best friend.

MARJORIE  
 (to Dagmar)  
 I won't!  
 (to Gayle)  
 Remember when the Reds won the  
 World Series a coupla years ago?

Gayle's got a blank look on her face.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)  
 Their backup catcher killed himself  
 over a bad game. But that didn't  
 stop 'em. They went on and they  
 kept winning!

GAYLE  
 Baseball isn't my kind of game.

MARJORIE  
 Well, anyway, the point is: You  
 can't let tragedy continue to get  
 to you. You gotta go on and live.

Gayle nods.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)  
 Tragedy's a part of life, and if  
 you keep letting it get you down,  
 you're not gonna get anything done.

Marjorie hugs Gayle...who warily completes the embrace.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

Ask my mom. After having me and my six brothers, she was set to have another child, but the kid--

As Gayle and Marjorie break their hug, Norma Jeanne walks toward Gayle.

NORMA JEANNE

Gayle, I've got an idea: Why don't you let me take over for Dag on second piano...

Gayle offers Norma Jeanne a funny look.

GAYLE

I thought you didn't want to be tied down to one instrument.

NORMA JEANNE

It's just until Dagmar recovers...I've memorized all of Dagmar's parts.

Gayle nods.

NORMA JEANNE (CONT'D)

I'll take her place on one condition: That you stop talking crazy and lead us to New York. Deal?

Gayle stares in space a moment, then nods again.

GAYLE

Deal!

Gayle and Norma Jeanne shake hands...and trigger strong applause from Dagmar and Marjorie.

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR, NEW YORK CITY, NY - DAY

Sleet pelts the skyline on this next-to-last day of 1942.

EXT. EAST 51ST STREET - DAY

Unlike the situation Gayle and her musical friends left behind in Los Angeles for the moment, it really does look like the holiday season in New York City.

The sleet makes it so...as do the decorations on both sides of and above the street.

EXT. MAYFAIR ARMS HOTEL - DAY

Outside this stately-looking building here on East 51st Street, a fair amount of traffic passes.

INT. MAYFAIR ARMS HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Gayle Strawberry and Her Soda Pop Music Makers seem to have taken over the lobby, especially around the front desk.

While her featured vocalist and the sidewomen engage in AD LIBBED chatter, Gayle tries to get business straight with MARIAN KAZANSKI (30s), who's the clerk on duty.

GAYLE

This is the official hotel of the National Swing Contest, isn't it?

Marian nods.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

You did get our reservations, didn't you?

Norma Jeanne and Marjorie move toward the desk.

MARIAN

Funny...I don't remember booking a Gayle Strawberry--

NORMA JEANNE

Check your records. We've been booked since the twelfth.

Marian leaves the space and goes into an office behind her.

Gayle takes a sheet of paper out of her purse.

GAYLE

Everybody, I want your attention!

Gayle gains that attention, too.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Here's a list of who's rooming with who. I don't know how well it'll go over, but we'll see what happens.

Vivienne grabs Toney by the arm.

VIVIENNE

Me 'n' Antoinette, of cuss!



GAYLE

Wait a minute, Vivienne...let me go through the list first!

(peeks at sheet of paper)

Vivienne and Antoinette.

While Toney nods, Vivienne gives Gayle a smug look.

But Gayle reads on.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Mary Sue and Willie, Norma Jeanne and Marjorie, Carla and Finnegan...

Carla gives Finnegan a funny look.

FINNEGAN

Well, Carla, we both do play the saxophone.

GAYLE

(continuing with her list)

Piney and Jeannette, Anna and Kelsey, Janet and Carlotta...

Shirley looks up at Kathleen and Carlotta.

SHIRLEY

No surprises so far.

Marian comes into the space...in contrition.

MARIAN

(to Gayle)

Miss...my sincere apologies.

Marian goes after a rack of room keys; she picks out nineteen keys...all of them starting with the number seven.

MARIAN (CONT'D)

Nine doubles and a single. Seventh floor.

Marian the Clerk hands the single-room key to Gayle...who passes it back to Andy.

GAYLE

Andy and Andy.

Andy takes the key and shrugs.

Gayle takes the double-room keys from Marian and passes them out in an orderly way...starting with:

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
 (checking her list)  
 Kathleen and Shirley.

Carlotta, Kathleen, and Shirley can't believe it.

SHIRLEY  
 (taking keys from Gayle)  
 Now--

KATHLEEN, SHIRLEY  
 --that's a surprise.

Shirley hands a key to Kathleen and puts the other key in her own purse.

EXT. LEXINGTON AVENUE - DAY

Vivienne, Carla, and Toney walk along this street. Toney stops when the three reach an intersection.

TONY  
 We'd all save wear and tear if we  
 got a cab.  
 (looking down the street)  
 We've got plenty of money for one.

Vivienne doesn't look convinced.

TONY (CONT'D)  
 (catching Vivienne's look)  
 Wouldn't you agree?

At last, some taxicabs show up...and Toney and Carla wave their arms, hoping to get a cab.

They don't get a cab.

VIVIENNE  
 You gulls haven't 'ad a  
 transportation thrill 'til you've  
 ridden a doubledecker bus like the  
 ones back 'ome in London.

Carla makes a face at Vivienne.

CARLA  
 Just wave your arms, Viv.

All three musicians wave their arms each time a cab approaches...but the cabs are just too full.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

Gayle and Kathleen team up with Willie and Mary Sue on a comparatively saner trip: A shopping tour.

GAYLE

(to her shoppingmates)

When I was little, Mama and Daddy and Earl and I would make a day out of shopping at Macy's. We'd make a once-in-a-while thing out of it.

Piney and Jeannette come out of a Fifth Avenue store with some items in their grip...and jog over to Mary Sue, Kathleen, Gayle, and Willie (the foursome in front of them).

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Had to.

(with a small grin)

Don't get lost there. I did one time...took three days to find me.

PINEY

Where?

GAYLE

Macy's.

PINEY

Which one?

GAYLE

Got a few hours?

Piney nods, and Gayle starts her AD LIBBED story.

EXT. PARK AVENUE - DAY

Marjorie (she reads a map of the Big Apple), Andy, and Norma Jeanne head for Grand Central Station. (Of this threesome, only Norma Jeanne wears a dress or a skirt.)

FOOT TRAFFIC moves along Park; one of the pedestrians bumps into Marjorie...and, unbeknownst to her, removes the trombonist's billfold from her pants pocket.

Andy, Norma Jeanne, and Marjorie continue along Park.

MARJORIE

Either one of you hungry?

ANDY

I could sure use something, Meg.

Norma Jeanne nods.

MARJORIE

We oughta try this restaurant in  
Grand Central Station. On me.

Marjorie stops to grab her billfold...but:

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

Son of a...starve a little longer,  
you two!

Norma Jeanne and Andy still head one way...Marjorie  
backpedals, backtracks, and goes to war as she swerves and  
dodges MORE PEDESTRIANS along the way.

NORMA JEANNE

(to Andy)

She's just like her six brothers.

They watch Marjorie go on the warpath.

EXT. LEXINGTON AVENUE - DAY

Carla, Toney, and Vivienne still haven't found a cab.

CARLA

Hey! Let's go get a subway!

VIVIENNE

Too plebeian...Me mum and daddy do  
this a lot in th' pictures.

They watch a cab go by; Carla gives Vivienne a dirty look.

INT. SKATING RINK AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER - DAY

Shirley, Kelsey, Anna, Janet, Carlotta, and Finnegan skate.

Shirley and Janet make it look too easy; Kelsey and Carlotta  
hold onto one another, manage to hold their own...but Anna  
and Finnegan fall down.

Anna can't quite get back up the way Finnegan does.

Finnegan tries to help Anna up...but needs help from Carlotta  
and Janet.

ANNA

Let's face...let's face it. People  
from Los Angeles can't ice skate.

Janet and Finnegan hold onto Anna; the three of them skate on  
and watch Carlotta, Kelsey, and Shirley.

JANET  
 (to Anna)  
 I guess Shirley's not from Los Angeles, then.

EXT. PARK AVENUE - DAY

Norma Jeanne and Andy chase Marjorie, who's after A FIGURE IN A VERY DULL, UNBECOMING DRESS...set off by a wig and a pair of high-heel shoes (with very high heels!).

Andy gives Norma Jeanne a concerned look.

NORMA JEANNE  
 Just go along with it, Andy.

ANDY  
 Well, she's your friend!

The three of them continue to sprint along Park Avenue.

EXT. LEXINGTON AVENUE - DAY

Success! Vivienne, Carla, and Toney get their cab. Before they crawl in it, they jump for joy.

INT. TAXICAB - DAY

ITS DRIVER (a man in his 50s) looks exasperated.

CAB DRIVER  
 Where to?

Vivienne waves a one-hundred-dollar bill at the driver.

VIVIENNE  
 Everywhere!

EXT. WEST 54TH STREET THEATER - DAY

Loaded down with bags and/or boxes, Gayle, Piney, Kathleen, Mary Sue, Willie, and Jeannette walk inside this small venue.

INT. WEST 54TH STREET THEATER LOWER LEVEL - DAY

The six of them take seats in the back and relax by listening to a good-sounding, tuxedo-clad SWING BAND.

JEANNETTE  
 Girls, that's what we're gonna wear when we take the stage Friday night...tuxedos.

Jeannette receives puzzled looks from everybody but Gayle.

MARY SUE

Gayle...did you have to leave  
Jeannette in charge of...our  
wardrobe?

Gayle just nods and grins.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK SOUTH - DAY

Marjorie leaves Andy and Norma Jeanne in the dust in her  
pursuit of the wallet snatcher.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

The thief hits the park...Marjorie catches up with the thief.

Andy and Norma Jeanne hit the park, too. They watch Marjorie  
at work.

Marjorie wrestles the thief to the ground. She, as stunned  
ONLOOKERS watch, frisks the prone thief and punches her in  
the breasts.

The breasts are too hard to be real...so Marjorie yanks them  
out from under the thief's dress, then knocks the woman's wig  
off her head.

The result reveals the woman's real identity: A MAN (20s).

Marjorie sits on (or sprawls over) him and digs her wallet  
from out of one of the "breasts," which really are two paper  
sacks full of stolen loot and other items.

If needed, one of the onlookers comes to Marjorie's aid to  
hold the thief down.

EXT. RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL - NIGHT

That familiar neon sign dominates the atmosphere while A  
CROWD OF PEOPLE lines up in front of the theater.

INT. RADIO CITY LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

The eighteen from California sit in front; they watch the  
stage show come to an elaborate end.

Some of them still can't get over being inside the place.

Carlotta, Marjorie, and Norma Jeanne whisper to each other.

CARLOTTA

Marjorie, that was really brave of you to take on that thief in Central Park. You really went above and beyond...you gonna be able to play Friday?

MARJORIE

You better believe it, Carlotta.

Marjorie shows her fingers (some of them bandaged up) to Carlotta before she turns to Norma Jeanne.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

Wait 'til your brother over in the Pacific hears about us playing Radio City.

NORMA JEANNE

He's already heard...I just hope that shortwave radio he's working on doesn't conk out Friday night...so he can hear us.

Elsewhere in front, Carla and Finnegan sit next to each other. Finnegan looks all around the space...and an annoyed Carla pokes her in the ribs.

CARLA

Finn, watch the show! We didn't pay peanuts!

Finnegan scowls.

Vivienne, from her seat, does some scouting of her own. With the stage show now finished, she spots two important-looking men: PETE JACKSON (late 20s) and FOSTER J. NIGGELING (70s; say "NIJ a ling") across the aisle from her.

Vivienne waves at Foster and Pete. They don't wave back.

VIVIENNE

(to anyone within earshot)  
They spons'ed me mum's and daddy's last cinema. One owns a radio station and th' otha a motor car firm.

Vivienne, Toney, and Carla saunter over to Pete and Foster as the theater lights go up.

A suspecting Gayle goes over there; the others follow.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)  
 (to Foster and Pete)  
 Good evening.

Pete and Foster don't look aroused.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)  
 I say, you came to savor "Random  
 Harvest." Th' picture you spons'ed.

Pete nods.

PETE  
 Leslie and Sylvia Campbell-  
 McDougall's daughter!

VIVIENNE  
 One and th' same!

Many of the other Soda Pop Music Makers look bored.

PETE  
 What brings ya to Noo Yock?

VIVIENNE  
 I'm in a little swing band. I play  
 the guitar. We're participating in  
 th' National Swing Contest--

FOSTER  
 We're sponsoring it.

Foster and Pete rise.

PETE  
 My name's Pete Jackson of Radio  
 Station WGWW.  
 (pointing to Foster)  
 And this is Foster J. Niggeling of  
 the Willys Motor Car Company. And,  
 as he said, we're both sponsoring  
 the NSC.

As many of the high schoolers as possible shake hands with  
 the two corporate representatives.

FOSTER  
 Interested in the future of  
 America. That's what we are.

GAYLE  
 Uh, sirs, we've been preparing for  
 this contest for over three months.



GAYLE (CONT'D)

Rick Whittenton of KIT in Los Angeles might've told you about us.

Gayle smacks herself on the forehead.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Please excuse me. I'm sorry for being rude.

(offering her hand)

I'm Gayle Strawberry...our band is called the Soda Pop Music Makers.

Somewhat timidly, Pete and Foster shake Gayle's hand.

NORMA JEANNE

Gayle's our leader.

The two men look at each other in bewilderment.

NORMA JEANNE (CONT'D)

It was all her idea, and we think it's just wonderful!

Pete, without looking directly at Gayle, points to her and watches for Foster's reaction.

PETE

I'm sorry, girls...there must be...some mistake.

Several mouths drop.

KATHLEEN

No, Mr. Jackson, I'm afraid not. We were one of the very first entries.

PETE

We don't have your band entered in the contest...I'm sorry, but...you can't be in the contest.

AD LIBBED disbelief brews among a few bandmembers.

GAYLE

Pete, what about the acetates we sent you...the...entry blank

(voice shakes)

...Rick's letter?

Gayle looks at Pete and Foster in trying to convince them of the band's entry in the contest...to no avail.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

What happened? What...what...

PETE  
We're sorry, Miss, but...there's  
nothing we can do about it.

GAYLE  
(broken up)  
BULL!!

Most of the other Soda Pop Music Makers look at the twosome in suspicion as a wet-eyed Gayle runs out of the venue.

A range of reactions (from indifferent to sad to angry) grips the other bandmembers as they size up Foster and Pete.

PETE  
You understand our position, don't  
you?

Andy and some of the sidewomen shake their heads sideways; others use hand gestures.

And then there's Marjorie.

MARJORIE  
Why don't you understand our  
position? That girl worked her tail  
off to get us here!

THE O.S. AD LIBBED SOUND of patrons calling for quiet cuts through. Marjorie shakes those patrons off.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)  
Now you wanna show us the door!  
What're you afraid of?

A COUPLE OF THEATERGOERS go after Marjorie. She sidesteps them (and/or pushes them off if need be).

MARJORIE (CONT'D)  
You afraid that Gayle...or  
Willie...or Mary Sue...or their  
folks are gonna buy one of your  
cars? IS THAT IT?

The two theatergoers give up and sit back down.

CARLOTTA  
Never mind that nobody's building  
any more new cars for the duration.

JANET  
Yeah! And who knows how long the  
duration's gonna last?

Some more O.S. CALLS FOR QUIET emerge as Foster eyeballs Marjorie, Janet, and Carlotta.

FOSTER  
Young ladies, America's  
future...her young people...are  
known for their decorum. Show us  
some.

MARJORIE  
I'll show you some decorum!

Instead of decorum, Marjorie moves toward Pete and Foster...to show them her fists.

KELSEY  
Marjorie--

MARJORIE  
Shut up, Kelsey!  
(to Foster and Pete)  
I'll tell--

FOSTER  
We have a lot of fine Willys  
dealers in the South, and...we  
don't want to alienate them by--

MARJORIE  
Yeah, I know: Bad product  
identification!  
(moves toward the two men)  
Well, that's a bunch of--

Some of the sidewomen pull Marjorie away from Foster and Pete as a red-jacketed usher named GINO moves in...while "Random Harvest" BEGINS.

GINO  
Young lady, you're gonna have to  
keep quiet...or you all will be  
ejected!

Vivienne waves a one-hundred-dollar bill at Gino and stuffs it into his pants pocket.

MARJORIE  
Let me go, you! I'm gonna--

Gino shrugs and leaves the space.

VIVIENNE  
Marjorie, one would think--

MARJORIE

Why don'tcha just shut up,  
poopbrain!

VIVIENNE

Listen, you old bloke, I will not--

Marjorie breaks out of the musicians' hold and pushes Vivienne into the nearest empty seat.

MARJORIE

I said shut up!  
(to the other bandmembers)  
Let's get outa here!

Everybody else walks out but Willie, Mary Sue, and Kathleen.

On the way out, Anna and Kelsey stare at Norma Jeanne.

KELSEY

Thank you for opening up Pandora's  
Box!

NORMA JEANNE

Well, it's true! It was Gayle's  
idea! And I'm glad it was! Or don't  
you remember when you and Marjorie  
and I met Gayle three months ago?

Marjorie comes back to get Kathleen, Willie, and Mary Sue; instead, the four of them study Pete and Foster, who've now taken seats and who try to watch "Random Harvest."

CUSTOMERS' VOICES (O.S.)

DOWN IN FRONT!

MARY SUE

Marjorie, if it's all right, Willie  
and I can drop out of the band.

MARJORIE

And you can take a flying leap,  
Marilyn Suzanne Cornish!

Mary Sue sits down and AD LIBS her rationale to herself.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

Either we're all gonna play  
together or we're not gonna play at  
all! Etch that in your noggin!

Willie sits next to Mary Sue...and glares at her.

WILLIE

Yeah! What's buggin' you, baby?

MARJORIE

Let's get the hell outa here.

Willie and Mary Sue get up and join Kathleen and Marjorie in leaving Radio City.

Four rows from the front, Kathleen stops and goes back to where Foster and Pete sit. She addresses them.

KATHLEEN

I thought you couldn't hear or see  
a person's skin color on the radio!

Pete and Foster now look a bit embarrassed as Kathleen, behind them, leaves the theater.

EXT. ALLEY OFF EAST 51ST STREET - NIGHT

This alley's not too far from the Mayfair Arms; here, a delivery truck gets emptied of cargo by its TWO OCCUPANTS.

Watching them: SAMMY (40s). He's just plain disheveled.

He leans against a building while he holds a paper sack that's got a whiskey bottle in it.

A still-forlorn Gayle walks by the alley. She goes back to...join Sammy.

SAMMY

Want shome?

GAYLE

(squats against building)  
No thanks. Not old enough.

Gayle finds a surprised look from Sammy.

SAMMY

I started drinking when I was  
twelve.

(puts a hand on Gayle)  
You ain't got nothin' to be 'shamed  
of.

GAYLE

It doesn't do any good. All my  
life, I thought it did.

Sammy shows a blank look on his face.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

All my life, people've been telling me: "Be good, be patient, follow the rules, and someday, you'll make a way."

Gayle sits on the ground.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

I had a chance to make good...and now...it's gone. Just like when you catch a big fish, but they tell you to put it back in the water.

SAMMY

(admiring Gayle's clothes)  
Looks like you already made good.

Gayle gives Sammy an anxious look.

GAYLE

You don't understand. They can put us on boxes of pancake mix and Cream of Wheat, but they'll never put us on the radio...unless we wanna play butlers and maids.

Gayle rests her face on her hands.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

We had a chance to be...my swing band...aw, look at you...you'd never understand.

SAMMY

I do, too. I like pancakes as much as anyone else.  
(offers Gayle his bottle)  
Sure ya don't want shome?

Gayle studies Sammy for a moment.

GAYLE

Oh, well...as they say: "'Tis the season to be jolly."

She takes the bottle from Sammy...and takes a small swig!

EXT. MAYFAIR ARMS HOTEL - DAY

Outside the hotel, PEOPLE hurry here and there.

INT. MAYFAIR ARMS ROOM 723 - DAY

Vivienne and Toney pack their belongings when the door opens...and Carla enters (and paces the floor while fuming).

CARLA

I still can't believe they canceled us!

(shrugging wildly)

I bought twenty dollars wortha new reeds just for the contest!

VIVIENNE

It's just as well, me mate.

(stops packing)

As I was tryin' t' tell that addlebrained Marjorie, th' car that struck Dagmar was a Willys.

Carla and Toney give icy stares to Vivienne.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)

Not you, too, Antoinette!

TONY

Yes, me, too!

(stops packing)

I wanted to play on the radio and win that contest. And I'm not going to stand here and listen to you blame the car and not the driver.

VIVIENNE

It was the sponsor's car!

TONY

Vivienne, that's part and parcel of your whole attitude!

VIVIENNE

Me attitude?

TONY

(pointing to Vivienne)

You always address the effect and not the cause. You always look on the outside.

VIVIENNE

Wait a minute, mate!

TONY

(moving in on Vivienne)  
 You've been pampered too long!  
 You've never really learned to  
 figure things out for  
 yourself...and...

Vivienne heads for the door, but Carla blocks it.

CARLA

Listen up! Learn something!

TONY

I thought your coming to Manual  
 Arts High School would show you  
 something about people...something  
 about values. Guess I was wrong.

Vivienne seeks the door handle...but Carla tries to keep it  
 out of the guitarist's reach.

TONY (CONT'D)

It's not the way it is in those  
 Hollywood pictures.

VIVIENNE

I don't 'ave t' take this, you  
 know!

Carla and Toney team up to block the door. Vivienne gives up.

CARLA

And Gayle didn't have to let you in  
 this band...she told me she heard  
 you play in last year's school  
 variety show. She loved your  
 version of "The Very Thought of  
 You."

Vivienne's mouth flies open.

CARLA (CONT'D)

And she told me her eyes lit up  
 when you called her on the phone  
 and told her you wanted to join the  
 band. She thought you were the  
 best.

A stunned Vivienne finally sits on her own bed.



INT. MAYFAIR ARMS SUITE 1902 - DAY

Over brunch, Foster (he sits at a table) and Pete (he's erect, coffee cup in hand) discuss business in a much nicer room than the ones given Gayle and her charges.

FOSTER

I couldn't sleep last night, Pete.  
Those words really rang in my  
ears...all night long.

Foster grabs a plate of pastries on the table and takes a sweet roll.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

And as I got up, I began to see  
how, uh, Marjorie...I think that's  
her name...has a point.

Pete stares blankly at Foster.

PETE

You don't really think she has a  
point, now do ya?

Foster returns the look with a grave nod.

FOSTER

I do a lot of oratory around the  
country about America and her  
youth.

(takes a bite)

And...it seems to me it's time to  
put the money where the mouth is.

Pete sits down and studies Foster even further.

PETE

Foster...what about those fine  
dealers of yours in the South?

FOSTER

Nobody's making any more new cars  
for the duration. And nobody knows  
how long the duration's gonna  
last...remember?

Pete downs his coffee.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Right now, I'm more worried about  
that girl we sent off crying. And  
that girl who wanted to assault me.

PETE

Now she oughta go to jail!

FOSTER

Never mind, Pete.

(standing up)

We listened to all those acetates,  
wire recordings, everything.

Foster walks around the room.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

And before we met Gayle and her  
band, we both agreed they had  
plenty of talent.

(eyeballing Pete)

Correct?

PETE

Wait a minute! Look what ya got! It  
won't go over! A little colored  
girl leading a band like that one?

(walks over to Foster)

And, worst of all, a boy singer?

FOSTER

Plenty of talent.

PETE

A boy singer? It just won't work!  
The country ain't ready for that--

Foster walks back to the table, where he finds a briefcase.  
He opens the briefcase and pulls out a letter and a document  
that turns out to be an entry blank.

He shows the letter and the entry blank to Pete.

FOSTER

Mr. Whittenton's gracious letter.  
The entry blank...one of the first.

Foster closes up the briefcase and goes to a phone on a desk.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

It's not too late, Pete.

Pete's mouth flies open.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

You know, they also said this  
country wasn't ready for the Benny  
Goodman Quartet. Remember?

Pete's face shows a "huh?" look.

FOSTER (CONT'D)  
I'm phoning Gayle and inviting her  
to bring her band to Radio City.

PETE  
(following Foster)  
Are you gonna give in to the  
threats of a--

FOSTER  
(picking up receiver)  
That was pure hurt.  
(dialing)  
You've got a lot to learn about  
people, young man.

A stung Pete watches Foster make the call.

INT. MAYFAIR ARMS ROOM 718 - DAY

Norma Jeanne, seated at the foot of her bed, plays the  
bagpipes while Marjorie, at the foot of her own bed, stews.

MARJORIE  
You wanna stop killing swine a  
minute?

Marjorie paces the floor as Norma Jeanne stops the music.

NORMA JEANNE  
You're gonna keel over from  
exhaustion trying to play Bogey and  
Bette Davis and John Wayne at the  
same time.  
(sets bagpipes down)  
Relax.

MARJORIE  
Relax? RELAX?

The phone RINGS.

NORMA JEANNE  
Yeah. You're making coffee nervous.

Marjorie stops pacing to answer the phone.

MARJORIE

(into the receiver)

Hello...Oh, it's you, Mr.  
Niggeling...A message for Gayle,  
huh?...I don't know where she is,  
but I do know this: She ain't in  
this hotel right now!

Norma Jeanne gets up and paces the floor.

EXT. ALLEY OFF EAST 51ST STREET - DAY

Gayle sleeps on top of Sammy. After a few seconds, they wake  
up...very groggily.

GAYLE

Hello...who are you?

Gayle falls back asleep, inebriated, on top of Sammy.

INT. MAYFAIR ARMS HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Norma Jeanne and Marjorie talk to Marian, who's behind the  
front desk.

MARJORIE

We're looking for a Gayle  
Strawberry. Teenager, this tall.  
(gesturing)  
With braces on her teeth.  
(zeroes in on Marian)  
What happened to her?

MARIAN

Miss, I wish I could tell you.

NORMA JEANNE

Ma'am, we've got a message:  
(hands Marian a note)  
If you find her...or if she finds  
you...tell her Foster J. Niggeling  
called to tell her we're back in  
the contest.

While Marian takes the note, Marjorie heads for the lobby  
doors...only to stop to eyeball Norma Jeanne.

MARJORIE

Since you say I'm good at playing  
Bogey, I'll play Bogey.

A worried Norma Jeanne looks around the lobby as Marjorie opens a door. Marjorie, with her hand on the door, stares at her best buddy.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

You coming, you one-woman band you?

Norma Jeanne makes her move and leaves the lobby with Marjorie as Marian watches them leave.

MARIAN

I'm supposed to say "Ma'am."

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

EXT. EAST 51ST STREET - DAY

As they look up and down both sidewalks, Marjorie and Norma Jeanne find no sign of Gayle.

INT. SKATING RINK AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER - DAY

They can't find her among all those gliding (and/or shivering) BODIES out there.

Norma Jeanne and Marjorie give up and put on skates.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - TICKET BOOTH - DAY

Marjorie (in spite of Norma Jeanne's objections) asks a CLERK if he's seen a sixteen-year-old girl with braces buy tickets.

But the clerk shakes his head "no."

EXT. EAST 51ST STREET - DAY

Exhausted, Marjorie and Norma Jeanne, arm in arm, go back toward the hotel.

END MONTAGE

EXT. ALLEY OFF EAST 51ST STREET - DAY

On the way back to the hotel, Marjorie and Norma Jeanne see two bodies snuggling up to each other.

The two buddies inch closer to the two snuggling bodies. Marjorie touches the smaller body as if it belongs to Gayle.

NORMA JEANNE

Wait, Meg!

The smaller "snuggler" turns around and reveals her face.

It's Gayle Strawberry, all right.

Norma Jeanne and Marjorie pry her from Sammy and lift her up...but Gayle tries to fight the double grip.

GAYLE

Let me go or I'll call the ASPCA!

It hits the two "detectives" that Gayle's drunk.

MARJORIE

Gayle Strawberry, next time you take a drink, make it milk! Or soda pop!

EXT. EAST 51ST STREET - DAY

Marjorie and Norma Jeanne help Gayle back to the hotel.

NORMA JEANNE

Look, Gayle, we've gotta get you all cleaned up and--

MARJORIE

She knows that, Norma Jeanne.

The first trombonist and her arranger-multiinstrumentalist friend find it hard to hold onto Gayle and find warmth.

NORMA JEANNE

Gayle, Mr. Niggeling has a message for you.

GAYLE

Quit calling him that! He's White!

Marjorie shakes her head in exasperation.

NORMA JEANNE

We were gonna tell you at the hotel, but why keep it a secret? We're playing in the National Swing Contest after all!

Openmouthed Gayle wants to laugh...but can't.

NORMA JEANNE (CONT'D)

We'll need to rehearse tonight!

Gayle stops; it forces Norma Jeanne and Marjorie to stop.

GAYLE

And you talk about me being drunk!

Marjorie shakes her head once more as she helps Norma Jeanne get Gayle back to the Mayfair Arms.

EXT. RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL - NIGHT

A LARGE CROWD OF PEOPLE tries to get into the theater this New Year's Day. It's mostly high-school-to-college age.

What's more (and this is unusual for 1943, even in America's most cosmopolitan city), the crowd's made up just about equally of Blacks and Whites.

INT. RADIO CITY DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

To the O.S. STRAINS of an amateur band's version of "You Made Me Love You," Gayle, Kathleen, Piney, Jeannette, and Willie have crammed this little room for the sole purpose of getting dressed...in tuxedos.

The slacks, vests, and coats, like the bow ties, are black.

Jeannette helps Piney with her bow tie.

PINEY

I hope my brother doesn't laugh at me while I'm in this penguin suit.

JEANNETTE

If he didn't laugh at Shirley Temple for wearing a tux, why should he laugh at you, Piney?

Kathleen studies a chipper Gayle.

KATHLEEN

You're gonna be all right tonight, aren't you, Gayle?

Gayle nods slowly.

WILLIE

(to Gayle)

You shoulda decked us out in red, baby.

Kathleen makes a playful face at Willie.

Mary Sue, already in a tux, comes into the room with a sigh of relief. She waves at Willie, who returns the wave.

JEANNETTE

Mary Sue, this is it.

MARY SUE

I know.

JEANNETTE

When they introduce us, we don't  
wanna see you hiding in the ladies'  
room.

MARY SUE

I just got back from there!

Some of the six have a good laugh.

INT. RADIO CITY GREAT STAGE - NIGHT

RUSS CLARK AND HIS ORCHESTRA (fifteen college-age males in blue suits and neckties) play "In the Mood..." in its original key.

They're in the groove, as the AUDIENCE reaction shows.

SAME SCENE - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

A twelve-member novelty band in zoot suits, CONNIE GRISSOM AND HIS SWINGAHOLICS, cuts up (high-school style) "Give My Regards to Broadway."

SAME SCENE - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Another high-school act, the twenty-member JUDY JAYE AND HER ALL-GIRL BAND, made it here...and they're all in gowns.

The song: An excellent version of "My Man."

SAME SCENE - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

An all-Black act swings: ROYAL COUNTS AND HIS REGALS (seventeen guys, all in their teens...and in purple suits and bow ties).

They've got the groove with "Flyin' Home."

INT. RADIO CITY BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Gayle's Soda Pop Music Makers, all in tuxedos by now, get in line. (Each tux now includes a red rose on each left lapel.)

Gayle looks worried; Norma Jeanne walks over to her.

NORMA JEANNE

Don't worry. Dagmar won't know the  
difference.



GAYLE

I'm not worried about that.

The news makes Norma Jeanne smile.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

It's just that every one of the other bands sound very good.

"Flyin' Home" ENDS O.S., and once the SOUND of the Regals packing up is finished, Gayle's band heads for:

INT. RADIO CITY GREAT STAGE - NIGHT

Once in place, and after AN O.S. VOICE introduces the band, Gayle Strawberry's Soda Pop Music Makers start out with..."Tuxedo Junction."

A silent Andy sits at a wooden chair next to the bandstand.

O.S., the audience expresses surprise at the band's personnel and wardrobe.

Sax players Finnegan, Carla, and Toney blow out the first eight bars of the tune as Gayle and Norma Jeanne (both playing grand pianos), Vivienne (on guitar), Mary Sue (on string bass), and Kathleen (playing drums) provide a progressive bottom couched in a nice shuffle beat.

Shirley plays a trumpet stuffed with a plunger. She's on the tune's longest solo: Thirty-two bars.

After the first sixteen bars, Carla (on alto sax) and Toney (playing baritone sax) help Shirley for the next eight before turning it back to Shirley.

Finnegan (tooting her tenor sax) takes over the next eight bars while Jeannette, Janet, and Marjorie (all on trombone) play "responsorial" notes.

Marjorie and Jeannette stuff plungers into the bells of their horns, then join Janet in sliding their slides for the next eight bars. (Here, Norma Jeanne's and Gayle's piano playing stands out.)

Anna gets this final solo, in which she plays while using a mute (and while the sax players and clarinetists Willie, Piney, and Carlotta do the "responses").

Eight bars later, the song slows down and ends on Kathleen's cymbal-and-snare work.

O.S. APPLAUSE erupts as Gayle walks over to Norma Jeanne.

GAYLE

How are you on the organ, Norma Jeanne?

NORMA JEANNE

My folks have a Hammond at home, so...I think I can do just fine.

Gayle nods.

GAYLE

They've got twin consoles here. Use the one under the right arch. Pull the curtain and you'll find it...we're doing "Over the Rainbow."

Norma Jeanne nods, then runs toward said arch.

INT. RADIO CITY RIGHT-SIDE ARCH - ORGAN - NIGHT

Norma Jeanne opens the curtain and finds...a four-manual Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ console.

O.S., when the curtain opens, the other sidemen (especially in the brass/reed group) jump in with "Over the Rainbow," with the introductory twenty-four bars in the same tempo as in the version from "The Wizard of Oz."

After that, they swing it! (In fact, it's a shuffle beat.)

Norma Jeanne takes a seat at the organ, then turns it on.

NORMA JEANNE

This is no Hammond, I'll tell you that.

During a tune now dominated by Marjorie's trombone work and, later, by the tandem of Shirley and Anna, Norma Jeanne searches for an effective stop combination.

At the end of a fourteen-bar bridge (where the solo goes to Carla), Norma Jeanne finds the appropriate set of stops.

Also, O.S., the instrumentation thins down to bass, guitar, drums, and piano while Gayle (with a mike at her piano) makes an introduction:

GAYLE (O.S.)

And now, ladies and gentlemen, at the Radio City Music Hall organ...the lovely Norma Jeanne.

Getting her bearings under O.S. APPLAUSE, Norma Jeanne launches into a sixteen-bar solo that catches the crowd by surprise: It swings so much it almost jumps (or even rocks).

INT. LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL ROOM 267 - NIGHT

The NSC broadcast BLASTS out of Dagmar's bedside radio...and she shakes to the beat (and snaps her fingers).

A few seconds later, Dagmar pulls out her concertina...

DAGMAR  
Aw, what the heck?

...and plays to the radio!

INT. RADIO CITY GREAT STAGE - NIGHT

Like Dagmar, the band she helped Gayle put together has a ball playing that ham's favorite tune...especially Norma Jeanne, who goes wild at that Mighty Wurlitzer.

SAME SCENE - TEN MINUTES LATER

With Norma Jeanne still seated at the organ and Gayle still seated at one of the pianos, Gayle stands up and heads for a mike at center stage.

GAYLE  
Let's see if we can get our singer  
and our guitar player to come down  
center.

Vivienne and Andy do just that.

GAYLE (CONT'D)  
Andy, I understand you and Vivienne  
have worked something out.

ANDY  
That's right.

Vivienne grabs her guitar, now hooked up to a longer cord than usual, and rejoins the confab.

VIVIENNE  
(to Gayle)  
And we thought we'd let all th'  
people here know about it.  
(straps her guitar on)  
Right, Andy?

While Vivienne waits for Andy's answer, Gayle goes back to her piano to start the rest of the band on the next song.

ANDY

Right!

On "RIGHT!" the brasses and reeds fire up under the bottom laid down by Gayle and her rhythm section.

Result: A progressive version of "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off." It's a bit faster and more swinging than what George and Ira Gershwin intended.

Vivienne and Andy share center mike.

ANDY (CONT'D)

(singing)

*I say eether and you say eyether, / I  
say neether and you say  
nyther. / Eether--*

VIVIENNE

(singing, too)

*--eyether--*

ANDY

*--neether--*

VIVIENNE

*--nyther--*

ANDY, VIVIENNE

*Let's call the whole thing off.*

VIVIENNE

*You like potato and I like  
potahto, / You like tomato and I like  
tomahto.*

ANDY

*Potato--*

VIVIENNE

*--potahto--*

ANDY

*--tomato--*

VIVIENNE

*--tomahto--*

ANDY, VIVIENNE

*Let's call the whole thing off!*

ANDY

*But oh, if we call the whole thing  
off, then we must part.*

VIVIENNE

*And oh, if we evuh part, then that  
might break my heart./So, if you  
like pajamas and I like  
pajahmas,/I'll wear pajamas and  
give up pajahmas.*

The brasses' and reeds' parts become more dominant.

ANDY, VIVIENNE

*For we know we/Need each other, so  
we/Better call the whole thing  
off./Let's call the whole thing  
off!*

"Let's Call the Whole Thing Off" moves into a bridge led off by Norma Jeanne's spirited organ playing.

INT. RADIO CITY BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

With the O.S. STRAINS of "St. Louis Blues" by another contestant band in the b.g., Gayle, as her colleagues look on, has found a pay phone (if not a regular one).

GAYLE

*It's gonna be a while before we  
find out what happened, so...feel  
free to make any calls you like.*

No one volunteers.

Gayle stuffs nickels into the phone (if it's a pay one).

GAYLE (CONT'D)

*(into the receiver)  
Operator, would you please connect  
me with Los Angeles General  
Hospital in Los Angeles,  
California?*

Once the connection's made...

INT. LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL ROOM 267 - NIGHT

When she hears the phone RING, Dagmar picks it up and shoves the receiver to her ear.

DAGMAR

Well, hello, Gayle! I was gonna call you!

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

GAYLE

Are you kidding? It'd cost you a fortune.

DAGMAR

Sounds like you're doing fine. That band of yours sounds like nobody's business.

GAYLE

They all did...how're you doing at the hospital?

DAGMAR

Getting better...let's talk about you. Had a ball listening to you guys...even played along to the radio on my little squeeze box.

GAYLE

Glad you love that squeeze box. And I'm also glad you talked me out of blowing the money.

DAGMAR

See what I mean? Things do work out for the best. In this case, Mama checked with the insurance company and they said they'll pay for the operation. Every cent of it.

GAYLE

Fan...fantastic!

DAGMAR

And Mama...well, she apologized for the whole thing and putting all that pressure on me not to play swing and...let her tell you.

Dagmar hands the phone to Marta...who hands it off to a surprised Ulf.

ULF

(into phone)

Hello, Gayle, hello!

GAYLE

Hello...Mr. Johannssen! Nice to hear from you!

ULF

You and your Soda Pop Music Makers sound like a million dollars.

GAYLE

Well, thanks.

ULF

And I know Dagmar's looking forward to coming back and helping to make the band sound like two million dollars. After all, the two of you go together like...spaghetti and meatballs. Made for each other.

GAYLE

Oh, my gosh...thanks.

ULF

(mimics Humphrey Bogart)

Here's looking at you, sweetheart.

(back in his normal voice)

Speaking of sweetheart...here's another who'd like to talk to you.

Ulf hands the receiver back to Marta, who slowly nods as she takes the receiver and puts it to her ear.

MARTA

Hello, Gayle.

GAYLE

Hello...Mrs. Johannssen.

MARTA

Dagmar is right about the insurance company paying for the operation. And she's right about my apology to her. In addition, when her rehabilitation ends this April, she's looking forward to rejoining your band.

Dagmar thrusts a fist into the air in jubilation. It becomes an open hand when Ulf offers his in congratulations.

MARTA (CONT'D)

And from now on, if she wants to play swing at home, she's got my blessing.

(looking at Dagmar)

I was wrong to force my musical tastes on her, and I applaud her for developing her own.

GAYLE

Glad you've patched things up.

MARTA

And there's something else, Gayle: I'd like to apologize for questioning your friendship with Dagmar. I hope you two stay friends until...until the square root of nine is...six.

GAYLE

That's...very nice. Thanks...can you hang on, Mrs. Johannssen? I wanna tell the rest of the band.

MARTA

You bet, Gayle.

Gayle cups the receiver and turns to her bandmates.

GAYLE

Guess what? Dagmar's coming back this coming April!

Some mouths drop, some Soda Poppers yell in delight, some just hug Gayle...who gets caught up in the excitement.

INT. RADIO CITY BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Gayle Strawberry and Her Soda Pop Music Makers wait with various emotions as AN O.S. VOICE gives the results.

EMCEE (O.S.)

Winner of our third prize...a hundred dollars and a weekend engagement at the Aragon in Chicago...from New York, Royal Counts and His Regals!

Very loud, very partisan O.S. APPLAUSE erupts...and it makes Marjorie pace the floor.



EMCEE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 And now, winning our second  
 prize...plus a weekend appearance  
 at Denver's Elitch's  
 Gardens...Raleigh, North Carolina's  
 Connie Grissom and His  
 Swingaholics!

MORE O.S. APPLAUSE, but it's not as heavy as the kind given  
 the Regals.

Carla joins Marjorie in pacing the floor.

KELSEY  
 One left...I don't know.

Andy, Finnegan, Norma Jeanne, Shirley, and Willie stare a now-  
 sheepish Kelsey down.

EMCEE (O.S.)  
 And finally, the winner of five  
 hundred dollars and a weekend  
 engagement at the famed Roseland  
 Ballroom right here in New York...

Some of Gayle's bandmates hold each other's hands.

EMCEE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 The winner of the first annual  
 National Swing Contest...the 1943  
 champions...from sunny Los  
 Angeles...Gayle Strawberry and Her  
 Soda Pop Music Makers!

THE O.S. APPLAUSE PICKS UP.

Everybody backstage is surprised by the announcement.

Marjorie stops pacing the floor and seeks out Vivienne.

When they find each other:

MARJORIE  
 Vivienne...I'm sorry I pushed you.  
 I'm sorry for being so mean.

VIVIENNE  
 I apologize for bein' so snobbish.

Marjorie nods...and offers Vivienne her hand. The twosome  
 shake hands, then lock up in a warm, friendly hug.

INT. RADIO CITY GREAT STAGE - NIGHT

Vivienne and Marjorie break their hug to join the other Soda Poppers in the happy stampede to the Great Stage.

Gayle and Co. meet Pete (he holds the winner's trophy) and Foster (with the grand-prize check) at center mike.

THE EMCEE (a man in his 20s) goes to center mike, too.

Pete looks somewhat uncomfortable with the trophy in his hands...so he trades items with Foster.

It works out better!

Pete and Foster approach Gayle.

PETE

On behalf of Radio Station WGWW and the Willys Motor Car Company, sponsors of the 1943 National Swing Contest...it's our pleasure to present you with this check for five hundred dollars.

Gayle accepts the loot from Pete...

FOSTER

And the WGWW Trophy, commemorative of swing success.

...and the trophy, too.

Immediately, the emcee moves in to talk to Gayle.

EMCEE

Congratulations, Gayle! Great job by you and your band!

GAYLE

Well...thank you!

EMCEE

Gayle, have you got any words for our listeners?

Gayle hesitates for a moment.

GAYLE

Well, uh, we went through a lot to get here...but it was worth it.

Gayle looks at her bandmates.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

A lot of...we've got a lot of people to thank back home in Los Angeles...including a bandmember who couldn't be here tonight because of an auto accident.

Gayle's speech turns into an emotional experience for Gayle herself and some of her colleagues.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

She kept after us, and it...it all paid off. We wanted to win...we didn't expect to win...we just wanted to be here...

Gayle looks at Foster and Pete.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

And we almost lost that...but...  
(eyeing the crowd)  
Thank you for everything!

Gayle tries to lift the check and the trophy. Marjorie comes over to help with the lifting if needed.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Dagmar, this is for you!

INT. LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL ROOM 267 - NIGHT

When she hears the news, Dagmar gets out of bed, stands up, and hugs Ulf and Marta. All three cheer themselves hoarse.

INT. RADIO CITY GREAT STAGE - NIGHT

Gayle gives the trophy to Marjorie, who tries to lift it above her head.

Gayle keeps the check and hugs some other bandmembers while Marjorie hands the WGWW Trophy to another Soda Popper.

Marjorie approaches Gayle and hugs, then lifts, her.

Gino the Usher comes over; he flashes a huge smile.

GINO

There's a phone call for Gayle Strawberry.

Marjorie lets go of Gayle, who runs off the stage.

INT. RADIO CITY OFFSTAGE OFFICE - NIGHT

Gino escorts Gayle into an office next to the Radio City dressing rooms. Once she finds the phone, she picks up its receiver and jumps into the conversation.

GINO  
(on the way out)  
Congratulations, Miss Strawberry!

Gayle waves at Gino with one hand and uses her other hand to put the receiver to her ear.

GAYLE  
Hello?

INT. DINING ROOM AT CHUCKIE'S RESTAURANT, LOS ANGELES, CA - NIGHT

Crowded around a wall phone in this 1930s-tinged eatery in Tinseltown's Watts area: Berniece (in her work uniform), Fred (in a suit and necktie), and Earl (in a suit without a tie).

Berniece's place of employment is full of CUSTOMERS...happy people who listen to A RADIO that plays the NSC on KIT.

Berniece is on the phone...and it's NOISY.

BERNIECE  
Hello, winner.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

GAYLE  
Well, hello, Mama...who are all those people?

BERNIECE  
I'm...we're here at the restaurant. Me, your father, and Earl...and, of course, the customers. We heard you playing on the radio.

Berniece catches her breath and puts a big smile on her face.

BERNIECE (CONT'D)  
I've never heard your band before, but you all sounded hungry. And like winners.

GAYLE  
Thanks. Can you put Daddy on?

Berniece gives the receiver to Fred.

FRED  
 (into receiver)  
 Hey, congratulations, you ol' Queen  
 of Swing.

GAYLE  
 Thanks, Daddy.

FRED  
 Just wanted to let you know that  
 we're proud of you. Doggone proud.  
 Be careful out there...and keep  
 fighting. Lotta bands out there.

GAYLE  
 Right.

FRED  
 Keep wearing that tight girdle.  
 It's getting you what you want.

GAYLE  
 Oh, Daddy.

Earl taps Fred on the shoulder.

FRED  
 I see Earl clawing me for the  
 phone. I'm gonna let you have him.

Fred hands Earl the receiver.

EARL  
 Hey, you Queen of Swing, 'member  
 when I said only one Strawberry  
 could be famous?

GAYLE  
 I sure do.

EARL  
 I'm glad you're the one.

GAYLE  
 Well, uh, thanks...maybe there'll  
 be two. Keep gaining those yards  
 and you'll do it. I hope you do  
 make it to UCLA.

EARL

Actually...I'm gonna go to USC. But  
no, like Daddy said, keep on  
wearing that tight girdle. Don't  
forget now.

Gayle grins at Fred's and Earl's favorite line.

GAYLE

I won't forget.

As she listens to Earl, a big smile forms on Gayle's face.

FREEZE FRAME

FADE OUT.

THE END