

The Last Caper

by  
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## **The Last Caper**

### *Characters:*

*Frankie, a career criminal on the verge of retirement*

*Louie, Frankie's old partner-in-crime*

*Antoine, the new guy, brought in for one last caper*

*Setting: Louie and Antoine sit at a card table while Frankie paces around the room. Antoine calmly plays solitaire for the duration of the play.*

FRANKIE

No.

LOUIE

Frankie, listen to me...

FRANKIE

No, Louie. The answer is no. I'm done. I'm retiring.

LOUIE

But Frankie, just hear me out!  
Wait 'til you hear the details,  
Frankie, this deal is a beauty!  
It's a once in a lifetime chance!  
After this job you'll never need to  
work another day in your life.

FRANKIE

I'm not gonna work another day in  
my life. I'm retiring. You don't  
even know what you're asking.

LOUIE

Sure I do Frankie. I'm asking you  
to be the safe man one last time on  
the biggest diamond job we've ever  
pulled in our lives.

FRANKIE

Exactly! Exactly!

LOUIE

So what's wrong with that?

FRANKIE

Do you hear yourself? You're  
asking me to go on a last caper!

LOUIE

Yeah, that's it Frankie, a last  
caper.

(MORE)

LOUIE (CONT'D)

One last caper before getting out of the game. One last caper so you can retire in style.

FRANKIE

What's the golden rule of crime, Louie? Never...never...go on a last caper after you decide to retire. It's suicide!

LOUIE

Yeah, I know Frankie, but this is different. You haven't heard about this job yet, Frankie. It's going to be a cakewalk, Frankie! It's going to be like taking candy from a baby!

FRANKIE

Jesus, Louie. That's right out of the book! That's what they all say! Remember Johnny One Shoe? He was all set to quit the business and settle down in Indiana to get to know the son he never had time for. In comes Billy the Skunk and talks him into one last heist. What happens?

LOUIE

I don't remember exactly...

FRANKIE

You do! You do remember, Louie! What happens?!

LOUIE

The job goes bad.

FRANKIE

Goes bad?!

LOUIE

The cops show up.

FRANKIE

And?

LOUIE

And Johnny gets shot in the head.

FRANKIE

And?

LOUIE

His son also gets shot in the head.

FRANKIE

Yeah, Louie, the last thing Johnny sees is his son get it while trying to protect him. His son wasn't even a crook, Louie! He was a piano teacher!

LOUIE

Yeah, I know, Frankie. But this is different, Frankie, it really is. That only happened to Johnny because the Skunk got picked up before the heist and sang like a canary to set Johnny up!

FRANKIE

Yeah but Louie, that's exactly the sort of thing that happens on the last caper.

LOUIE

But Frankie, just take a look at the plans!

FRANKIE

And what about poor old Tony Kneecaps? He could have had a comfortable retirement, but no, he had to have more. "One last caper," he says to me. "Then I'll be all set up." "Piece of cake," he says to me. "Can't miss," he says. You remember what happened to Tony, Louie?

LOUIE

Aww, Frankie...

FRANKIE

What happened to him?

LOUIE

Well, it was a pretty good plan...

FRANKIE

What happened to him?!

LOUIE

Shot by the police.

FRANKIE

Shot by the police.

LOUIE

Yeah but that was a freak accident, Frankie. He had a good plan. He had legal access to the shop next to the jewelry store and he was just going to tunnel through in the middle of the night.

FRANKIE

But something went wrong, didn't it Louie.

LOUIE

Yeah...

FRANKIE

The lady who owned the shop next door showed up, didn't she Louie.

LOUIE

Yeah...

FRANKIE

And then what happened?

LOUIE

She got shot.

FRANKIE

She got shot. And a patrolman in the neighborhood heard the noise, and two minutes later, Tony's dead.

LOUIE

Yeah, but that was freaky, Frankie. That was because of the new guy. They brought in a new guy for the job and he lost his nerve.

FRANKIE

Right, Louie, another classic last caper story. New guy! Jesus, Louie! Just like what happened to Five Hats Freddie on his one last bank job! Some podunk town, no security, easy pickin's, right? Brings in a new guy for getaway driver. The guy is supposed to stay in the car, for chrissakes! You remember what happened to him, Louie?

LOUIE  
He came into the bank.

FRANKIE  
Yeah, he came into the bank and  
he...

LOUIE  
Shot some people for no reason.

FRANKIE  
Yeah! Lost his nerve! And the  
list goes on, Louie. Motormouth  
Higgins? One last job, piece of  
cake. Except his fence  
mysteriously pulls out at the last  
minute saying the rocks are too  
hot, and the new fence?

LOUIE  
Undercover cop.

FRANKIE  
Who does what?

LOUIE  
Shoots him twelve times.

FRANKIE  
Charlie Tight Pants. Andy the  
Russian. Spanish Eddie. They all  
went for the one last job before  
retirement, and they were all  
undone by the new guy, and they  
were all shot by the cops.  
Forget about it, Louie, it's not  
going to happen to me. I'm getting  
out while the getting is good. By  
the way, who the hell is this guy?

LOUIE  
Antoine. Antoine, this is Frankie.

Antoine looks up briefly and barely nods before resuming his  
solitaire game.

FRANKIE  
And he is...

LOUIE  
He's new, Frankie, he's a getaway  
driver.

(MORE)

LOUIE (CONT'D)

He knows a good fence, and he can get us another triggerman if we need one.

FRANKIE

Louie...

LOUIE

He's a real nice guy when you get to know him, Frankie.

FRANKIE

I don't want to get to know him, Louie. I want to retire. I promised my daughter, no more crime. From now on it's going to be PTA meetings and soccer games. I'm going to live a normal life. Be a normal father.

Louie pulls out some scraps of paper from his pocket. On the paper are blueprints, scrawled out maps, and scribbled notes.

LOUIE

OK, Frankie, OK, but just look. At least give me the benefit of your advice. You see, there's just a thin retaining wall over here, see, accessible by a back alley away from traffic. Look. We stage a car accident over here, right, and knock out the electricity on these four square blocks by hitting this box over here. The regular patrol guys pass by here at 7:30 every night and don't come back until 9:30, giving us an easy window not even counting the distractions.

FRANKIE

Hm. What about internal security?

LOUIE

That's the beauty part. Security guard detail on Thursdays is a near-sighted seventy year old rent-a-pig with a bad knee. He doesn't get out of his chair for nothing.

FRANKIE

No. No. No. I don't like it. It's all wrong, Louie, it smells bad. And how much you reckon they've got in diamonds?

LOUIE  
Seventy five million easy.

FRANKIE  
Well that ain't small change.

LOUIE  
No it sure ain't.

FRANKIE  
Not that I'm even considering it,  
but what type of safe they got in  
there?

LOUIE  
It's an old Masterson 7000  
combination.

FRANKIE  
No kidding?

LOUIE  
No kidding. Just like the one you  
opened in about fifteen seconds in  
the Detroit job back in '87.

FRANKIE  
That's my favorite safe.

LOUIE  
I know it is, Frankie. Wouldn't  
you like to get your hands on one  
of those babies one last time?

FRANKIE  
No, man, it's wrong, all wrong.

LOUIE  
Can't you just feel that smooth  
cold steel already? Running your  
fingertips over the ridges of that  
dial? Pressing your cheek against  
it, listening to them tumblers,  
just feeling that sweet thing  
respond to your caresses?

FRANKIE  
Nah, Louie, I can't, I...

LOUIE  
Seventy five million, Frankie. We  
can't do it without you, pal.

(MORE)

LOUIE (CONT'D)

Forty million for you, and me and Antoine'll split the rest.

FRANKIE

Sounds like one of those dirty capers where it's really a hundred fifty million and you guys play me for a sucker and I get real mad and I have to get even and everything goes wrong and we get shot by the cops.

LOUIE

Frankie...

FRANKIE

Let me have a look at those blueprints.

Frankie pores over the blueprints while Louie looks on, smiling, and winks at Antoine, who continues to play solitaire in perfect serenity.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

I don't know Louie, I must have a screw loose somewhere but...oh hell I'll do it.

LOUIE

All right! That's the Frankie I know! Come on, let's get moving!

FRANKIE

All right.

LOUIE

Come on Antoine!

Louie and Frankie walk off stage first. Seeing them go, Antoine rises to go after them. No longer serene, suddenly there is a wild look in his eyes. He pulls a gun out of his pocket and twirls it around his finger as he runs offstage yelling his only line.

ANTOINE

Wooooooo hooooooo!