



FROM THE RUINS

“From the ruins, lonely and inexplicable as the sphinx, rose the Empire State Building.

And just as it had been tradition of mine to climb to the Plaza roof to take leave of the beautiful city extending as far as the eyes could see, so now I went to the roof of that last and most magnificent of towers. Then I understood. Everything was explained. I had discovered the crowning error of the city. Its Pandora’s box.

Full of vaunting pride, the New Yorker had climbed here, and seen with dismay what he had never suspected. That the city was not the endless succession of canyons that he had supposed, but that it had limits, fading out into the country on all sides into an expanse of green and blue. That alone was limitless.

And with the awful realization that New York was a city after all and not a universe, the whole shining edifice that he had reared in his mind came crashing down.”

— F. Scott Fitzgerald, *My Lost City: Personal Essays 1920-40*

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EXT. NYC WEST 25TH STREET - MAY 1 1947 - EARLY MORNING

Grey skies, clouds pressing down. Colors of a dated postcard are all that pop through the day's dim light. Azures, roses, buttercream yellows.

A steer has escaped from a slaughterhouse. Its hooves roar thunderously down 11th avenue in Manhattan.

THE SNORTING FACE OF THE STEER.

The steer is enraged, it smashes against a parked car.

STAMPING HOOVES AS IT SPINS IN FEAR AND ANGER.

THE SWEATING HIDE BUCKLING FROM STRAIN AND HEAT.

It bucks and jumps. Feathered tranquilizer darts stick out of the hide.

LABORED BREATHING, STEAM EXHAUSTS FROM ITS NOSTRILS

INT. APARTMENT STAIRWELL - MORNING

A YOUNG WOMAN'S OPEN MOUTH. SHE BREATHES HEAVILY AS SHE FLEES. THE DEAFENING CLANG OF HER HEELS ECHOES.

EXT. NYC WEST 25TH STREET - CONTINUOUS

Then policemen, rushing, struggling. Sirens. The cops yell and run, trying to wrangle the beast. They've cornered it.

THE STEER BACKS UP, ITS HEAD WAVING SIDE TO SIDE, TRAPPED.

INT. TRAIN STATION - LATER

THE WOMAN FROM THE STAIRCASE. HER EYES SEARCH LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT.

Her silhouetted figure looks up at a departure board listing trains for Detroit, Boston, Philadelphia, New York.

This is EVELYN MCHALE, a red-haired beauty of 23. She wears a rose-colored outfit, pearls, scarf and low heels. She scans the board, all the other paths her life could take.

EXT. NYC WEST 25TH STREET - CONTINUOUS

A POLICEMAN, red-faced, WHISTLES for help. The sound becomes:

INT. TRAIN CAR - MORNING

A blaring train WHISTLE. A call of 'all aboard' from afar.

Evelyn wipes sweat from her lip and takes a deep breath, settling into her seat. She sees:

A SMALL HOLE IN THE SEAM OF THE SEAT IN FRONT OF HER. A BIT OF LOOSE THREAD AND STUFFING.

Evelyn eyes it with curiosity as the train lurches forward.

EXT. NYC WEST 25TH STREET - CONTINUOUS

THE TAUGHT HIDE TWITCHES IN AGITATION.

STEER'S HOOVES DIGGING INTO CEMENT.

EXT. PENN STATION - NYC - MORNING

EVELYN'S SHOES SPEED ACROSS A TRAIN PLATFORM.

EXT. NYC WEST 25TH STREET - CONTINUOUS

SHINY BLACK POLICE SHOES.

Whining sirens as more police cars arrive and squeal to a stop. Quick, frantic images. Shouting to one another.

STEER'S FRANTIC EYE AND THE MEN REFLECTED IN IT.

EXT. PENN STATION - NYC 34TH STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Shouts blend with the chaos of the street. Evelyn comes out of the train station and moves with the crowd along the sidewalk in a daze but with purpose. A SUITED MAN puts his arm out to halt her from crossing just as two police cars fly past, nearly hitting her.

SUITED MAN
Careful, Miss.

She gives him an embarrassed smile.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - LATER

Evelyn enters the hotel and walks to the front desk.

EVELYN
Do you have a room available?

CONCIERGE
How many beds?

EVELYN
It doesn't matter.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY/ HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Evelyn inserts the key into the lock and opens the door.

Small, simple. One bed, desk, dresser. Evelyn sits at the desk. She searches for a pen and a piece of hotel stationary. She finds them and readies herself to write.

Evelyn looks out the window but sees only a solid brick wall.

Evelyn regards the paper.

SHE WRITES AS SHE THINKS:

Dear Ted--

She crumples the paper and throws it aside. She writes:

Ted--

She crumples the paper. She writes:

Dearest Ted--

She crumples the paper. She is growing agitated. The tip of her pen worries the paper. A large dark ink blot. She crumples the paper. She thinks. She writes:

Dearest Rita--

EXT. HOTEL - LATER

Evelyn comes out of the hotel and turns East down the street.

EXT. 34TH STREET - NYC - MORNING

EUGENE, a traffic cop in his mid-fifties, waves on cars and pedestrians halfheartedly, whistle in his mouth, not paying attention to his surroundings. He waves on crossing pedestrians and we spy Evelyn amidst the throng.

We follow her as she continues past Eugene, and on down the street. She passes the large picture window of a diner.

INT. MANHATTAN DINER - MORNING

Evelyn walks by the window, determined. She looks both ways then crosses to the large double doors of the Empire State.

At a table, BOBBY, 20, wide eyes and a mop of dark curls, trains his camera on HAL, a professional student in his mid-20s, as he lights a cigarette. He presses the shutter. CLICK. Joining them at the table are: Neil, 21, sweet and simple, and BETH, also 21, a lively, highly-opinionated art student.

BOBBY

Whaddya mean you haven't seen it?

POV CAMERA. HAL READING A WELL-THUMBED COPY OF "AN ENQUIRY." CLICK. BETH'S FINGERS, FLECKED WITH PAINT, FLICKING THROUGH TEST PRINTS SCATTERED ON THE FORMICA TABLE. CLICK.

BETH

It's code for: I haven't seen it.

BOBBY

You didn't take your girl?

HAL

We didn't get around to it.

BETH

Maybe if he could tear himself away from Mr. Hume for a night.

POV CAMERA. BETH GRABS HIS BOOK, HAL FIGHTS HER OFF. CLICK.

BETH (CONT'D)
Honest? I'm not too hot on
Hitchcock.

HAL
(mocking)
Yeah, what a maroon!

BETH
You're a maroon.

POV CAMERA. HAL AND BETH LEAN IN FOR A KISS. CLICK.

INT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Evelyn at the ticket window.

EVELYN
One, please.

INT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - MORNING

Evelyn hurries onto an elevator. She turns forward and we see she carries a folded note clutched in her hands with "Rita" written on the front.

We track backwards out of the elevator as the operator pushes a button and the doors close.

INT. MANHATTAN DINER - CONTINUOUS

Coffee pouring. The din of voices and cheap metal forks on ceramic plates. Bobby has his camera in front of his face.

NEIL
(chirping in)
I liked It's A Wonderful Life.

Hal groans and puts a napkin on his face.

NEIL (CONT'D)
What? It was beautiful.

Bobby snaps his picture of Hal before lamenting:

BOBBY

Neil...It wasn't beautiful. How many times I gotta tell ya. It wasn't beautiful, it was sappy.

HAL

That was sap.

BOBBY

Sticky disgusting sap.

HAL

Not worth the price of admittance.

EXT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - OBSERVATION DECK

Wind.

Evelyn steps out onto the deck. Oh the view! Even through fog it is breathtaking. Seeing the forest for the trees. She takes it in. Tears in her eyes. Is it the wind or something else? She is the only guest on deck.

Her hair dances in the gusts blowing across the city.

EVELYN STEPS OUT OF HER SHOES. STOCKINGED FEET ON CEMENT.

She neatly puts her shoes aside, then her purse next to them.

She slips the note beneath the shoes, safely where it won't blow away. The corner flutters in the breeze.

BETH (O.S.)

(challenging him)

I liked it too.

BOBBY (O.S.)

It's a Christmas movie, Beth!

BETH (O.S.)

No it isn't.

INT. MANHATTAN DINER - CONTINUOUS

HAL

It is! It's a Christmas movie!

BETH

It takes place during Christmas but it's not a Christmas movie.

BOBBY
There's a tree, snow, bells--

HAL
Angels!

BOBBY
(a conclusion)
Christmas movie.

BETH
I dunno...I thought it was about
choices. Making choices. And how we
never truly know the outcome. Good
or bad.

Bobby pretends to throw up. Beth mocks taking his picture.

EXT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - OBSERVATION DECK - MORNING

Evelyn teeters on the building's edge.

The wind catches her scarf and blows it away. She reaches for it instinctively, almost falls but catches herself, has a moment of panic, then realizes: "Oh how silly."

EXT. CITY STREET/INT. MANHATTAN DINER - MORNING

A break in the traffic, and the clouds above make space for a sliver of what could pass for sunlight. Eugene looks up.

POV EUGENE. THE SCARF FLUTTERING IN THE AIR.

Eugene watches it, hypnotized. It lands on his face like a funeral shroud. He slips it off in one swipe of his palm.

Eugene, distracted, scarf hanging from his hand, gazes up into the clouds. "Where did it come from?"

The camera retreats back and back, between two parked cars and through the picture window, passes by a man looking out while eating his breakfast on a stool, passes over Bobby's table, and then rests there as if taking a vacant seat.

BOBBY
Alright, choices, great -
Hitchcock. Now there's a filmmaker.
Take the girl to see the picture.

HAL
Eh.

BOBBY

Hal. Take the girl to see the damn picture!

HAL

You take her if it means that much.

BOBBY

That, sir, is a fabulous idea.

BETH

Ooo, nice try, but I can't. I have class.

BOBBY

You're playing hooky, come on.

BETH

How about *you* come with *me*, instead?

BOBBY

Aren't you tired of asking?

BETH

I think you could really benefit.

BOBBY

I'm a man of the streets! Besides, the only ancient, bald man I want to learn from today is Hitch, baby.

Bobby stands and takes Beth's hand.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, enjoy your Capra, enjoy your Stewart. You and me, Girl, are going to a real picture.

As if exploded by a bomb, a black car parked in the middle ground of frame collapses in on itself with a deafening CRASH, people inside the diner rise in panic, screams, a cup of coffee knocks over and drips drips drips.

EXT. NYC STREET - CONTINUOUS

The crash echoes and broken glass clinks as Eugene stands in shock before the wreckage, scarf in his hand, immobilized. A crowd quickly forms.

Bobby dashes out of the restaurant, pressing his way through. Sirens in the distance. Commotion.

He pushes to the front, his view obstructed by hats and tall men. He presses through and the scene is revealed: a smashed black car, as if stamped by a large beast. Bobby stops short. He's taken aback.

Policemen are trying to control the crowd and keep an open circle. Barely visible is a figure laying on the car, a pair of stockinged feet in the air, panty hose gathered at the ankles. Bobby raises his camera. Snaps a few shots but he's not close enough. The police are distracted by other bystanders. He slips in quickly. He raises the camera. CLICK.

POLICE MAN

Hey! Get back!

The policeman grabs Bobby and pulls him back into the crowd.

BETH

What happened?

BOBBY

I gotta go.

BETH

Go where? Bobby?

He's already running.

EXT. NYC STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Bobby runs down the street, police cars whiz by in the opposite direction.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Running feverishly up the steps to his apartment, he stumbles in his mindless excitement, gets up and continues on.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM/DARK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bobby flips on a light. A makeshift darkroom assembled in his tiny bathroom. Trays of chemicals placed precariously on the sink and toilet. A clothesline with images clipped is strung haphazardly about. A blackout curtain is fixed over the door.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM/DARK ROOM - LATER

Bathed in a darkroom's red light:

Bobby rinses the canister.

INT. TED'S APARTMENT - MORNING

TED, a beautiful All-American man, 24, sleeps. The other side is vacant, but rumpled by a recent sleeper.

He rolls over to find his bed empty. He looks up, confused.

Stumbling out of bed, fearful, he nearly trips on a charred wastebasket that rolls over the hardwood, ashy blackened items spilling out as he checks every corner of his apartment feverishly. No one is there.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM/DARK ROOM

Bobby unrolls the film, holds it to the light, he finds the frame.

WYN'S MOTHER (O.S.)
(like a creaking door)
Wyyyn!

INT. WYN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

WYN, a sad-looking man in his forties, wakes up to her call. His hair, matted, looks like he cuts it himself. He is the superintendent for this old Brooklyn building, and occupies the dank basement flat. An elevated train rattles past.

Wyn gets up.

Wyn snaps on suspenders.

Wyn wets a comb in his mouth and slicks back his hair.

WYN'S MOTHER (O.S.)
Wyyyyyn!

INT. WYN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MORNING

PLATE ON THE TABLE. A MESS OF MUSH PLOPS ONTO THE DISH.

It's the same thing he eats every morning. WYN'S MOTHER, a fragile old crone, stands over him as he picks up the spoon.

CUT TO:

Wyn grabs his toolbox and heads to the door. On his way out he nabs the new *Life* magazine from the pile of mail by the door. He stuffs it into a compartment of his toolbox.

INT. WYN'S BUILDING STAIRWELL/APARTMENT - MORNING

Wyn climbs the stairs with his toolbox.

Wyn plunges a toilet.

Wyn goes down the stairs with his toolbox.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM/DARK ROOM

Bobby puts the negative into the enlarger and flicks on the light. He counts the seconds, timing the exposure.

JERRY (O.S.)

Rita!

INT. MCHALE HOUSE - FRONT ROOM/BEDROOM - BALDWIN, NY - MORNING

RITA

It's under the bed!

JERRY MCHALE, a quiet businessman, 28, sails from the hallway towards his wife, RITA, a June Cleaver-type woman of 27, waiting for him at the front door. He holds up his hat, grinning. She gives him a kiss, plops the hat on his head, and closes the door behind him. She turns, hands clasped at her chest, prepared for her day.

CUT TO:

Rita aggressively vacuums the sheer curtains.

CUT TO:

Rita tidies up a bedroom in disarray, her face scrunched as if it's a biohazard scene, shaking her head at the injustice of it. She picks a sweater off the vanity and rights a photograph, we see it is a photograph of Evelyn.

INT. MCHALE HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Rita is on her hands and knees scrubbing the kitchen floor. The CHIME of the doorbell breaks her concentration.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM/DARK ROOM

Bobby slips the white photo paper into the developer. He watches the image appear.

Bobby puts the photo paper into the stop bath. Then rinses it. He hangs the image on the line to dry.

BOBBY'S FACE. HIS HEART BEATING RAPIDLY, AS IF HE'S JUST RUN A MARATHON.

EXT. 34TH STREET - NYC - DAY

Eugene sits on the curb, police dispersing the crowd, a tow truck is preparing the now-clear car to be hauled away. He threads the scarf through his hand like a rosary.

INT. TED'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Ted sits on the bed, trying to calm himself to think. He notices a diamond ring on the empty pillow. He picks it up.

INT. MCHALE HOUSE - KITCHEN/ENTRY - AFTERNOON

Rita, still wearing her rubber gloves opens the front door to reveal two POLICE OFFICERS. Somber, they remove their hats.

Rita realizes something is horribly wrong.

INT. WYN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - BOILER ROOM - DAY

On his lunch break eating a bologna sandwich on white bread, Wyn leafs through *Life* magazine, dated May 12 1947, the cover image of a grizzled Eastern European man, title reading: *Communist Boss of Bulgaria*. He takes a bite while turning the page and stops, mid-chew, his focus caught. He falls in love.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM/DARK ROOM

Bobby looks at the image. Reverent. Finally, we glimpse:

EVELYN MCHALE PHOTOGRAPH.

Sammy Kaye's 'Harbor Lights' rises.

INT. DANCEHALL - NEW YEAR'S EVE - 1946/1947

The last stragglers of a glorious party. The floor is strewn with confetti, balloons, hats, streamers, food. A paper banner strung up on a wall reads: Happy New Year 1947!

A few people rest at tables, a few sleep in their chairs, people put their coats on and lumber toward the door. The last remaining couples dance zombie-like on the floor. Everyone is drunk. Or was drunk hours ago.

Evelyn and Ted sway in the middle of the floor. Long ago she kicked off her shoes and he flung away his jacket and loosened his bow tie.

She is melted into his arms, head on his shoulder, his chin on her head. They stay melded this way. Her eyes are open but she is somewhere else.

TED

Evelyn.

She doesn't respond.

TED (CONT'D)

Hey, Evelyn?

He bounces her.

EVELYN

Hm.

TED

Where'd you go?

EVELYN

Did you feel that?

TED

Feel what?

EVELYN

The wind.

Ted laughs a bit.

TED

What?

EVELYN

The wind off the sea. It feels so nice.

He laughs again, lovingly.

TED

Evelyn--

EVELYN

Shhh. Come on. Don't you feel it?

THEIR FEET SHUFFLE ON THE WORN FLOORBOARDS SWEEPING CONFETTI AND BALLOONS.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
The salty breeze. Sand under our feet.

Ted decides to play along. Smiling.

TED
Yeah, Evie. I do. I feel it.

EVELYN
What do you feel?

TED
I feel the sand.

EVELYN
What else?

TED
...I don't know.

EVELYN
Sure you do.

A moment on Ted as he considers. Then his hair flutters as if from a breeze.

TED
The breeze.

EVELYN
What else?

THEIR FEET SHUFFLE ON THE FLOORBOARDS. A GENTLE WAVE GLIDES IN, THE LAST BREATH OF A WAVE AS IT PETERS OUT. WATER MIXES WITH THE CONFETTI AND LAPS AT THEIR FEET.

TED (O.S.)
The waves. Waves at our feet.

EVELYN
And there's the moon. Big. Low.
Dancing with us.

The lights rise and flicker, then dim, hued like firelight.

TED
A crackling fire.

EVELYN
Drinks in coconuts with umbrellas.

TED
Shooting stars.

EVELYN
Jasmine in the air, not a person
for miles.

TED
And bloodthirsty cannibals coming
out of the jungle!

EVELYN
(laughs)
No!

They share a laugh.

TED
I love it here. Don't you?

Evelyn nods.

EVELYN
Mm.

They stop dancing. The song's coda swells as Ted lifts Evelyn's chin from his shoulder, brings it to his face, meeting her eye.

TED
I love you.
I fell in love with you the first
time we met. And for the rest of my
life, wherever you go - body and
soul - I will go too.

Ted takes a little box out of his pocket. He gets onto one knee. He opens the box: a ring.

TED (CONT'D)
Evelyn McHale, I want to spend the
rest of my life with you.

He slips the ring on her finger. She is speechless. Staring down at him.

TED (CONT'D)
What do you say?

From a table in the corner: a rabble of drunken cheers and hoots. A girl shrieks with joy, waking Evelyn from her daze, whipping her head around to look at them.

GUY

Kiss her!

Ted takes this as a "yes". He stands, grabs Evelyn, and kisses her deeply. She relents.

TED

I'm going to make you so happy.

Evelyn doesn't break his gaze, gives a little, guilty laugh/smile and touches his face. She doesn't know what to say so she kisses him again. The song is done. The whoosh, whoosh, whoosh of waves turns to the whoosh, whoosh of the spinning record.

INT. MORGUE - DAY

POV EVELYN LAYING ON A SLAB. RITA AND JERRY STAND OVER HER. THEY ARE HERE TO ID THE BODY. SHOCK. RITA WITH HANDKERCHIEF AT HER MOUTH, JERRY STOIC AGAINST HIS GRIEF, ARM WRAPPED AROUND HIS WIFE'S SHOULDER. RITA'S EYES TRAVEL DOWN.

POV RITA. EVEYLN'S ARM. HER NEATLY MANICURED NAILS.

POV EVELYN. RITA'S EYES RETURN TO EVEYLN'S FACE.

OFFICER (O.S.)

Well?

Is it her?

EXT. AUTOMOBILE - DUSK

Jerry and Rita are driving home. Rita looks out the passenger window, passing scenery reflected on the glass. In her lap she holds a paper bag of Evelyn's possessions.

INT. MCHALE HOME - FRONT ROOM/KITCHEN- EARLY EVENING

Jerry and Rita enter as the phone RINGS from within. Rita marches to the kitchen while Jerry loiters in the front room.

Rita puts Evelyn's things down on the kitchen table like a bag of groceries and picks up the phone.

RITA

Hello? No. No comment.

She slams down the phone. Unnerved. She flings open the cabinets, they are lined with cans and boxes of pre-made or easy-make goods.

FROM WITHIN THE CABINET, RITA SCANNING.

RITA (CONT'D)

What would you like for dinner,
Dear?

She takes down a can of TREET canned meat product.

JERRY

I'm going to lay down.

And he goes off down the hallway leaving Rita alone.

INT. MCHALE HOME - BEDROOM - A MINUTE LATER

Jerry rests on the bed, still fully clothed, shoes and all.

INT. MCHALE HOME - KITCHEN - LATER

At the kitchen table, Rita goes through Evelyn's things. She unrolls the top of the paper bag and dumps the contents onto the table. Evelyn's dress and underclothes. Her purse. Her shoes. Gloves. A note. Rita neatly folds the dress and other garments in an orderly pile, placing her pearls on top.

She picks up the note. Her name is scrawled in Evelyn's careless script. Stunned, she stares it down before deciding in an instant to hide it away amongst her things.

She opens Evelyn's handbag. A tiny address book. She leafs through, reading Evelyn's meagre collection of names and numbers. One page is marked with a small photograph of Evelyn and Ted in uniform. Rita looks closer. "Who is this man?"

EVELYN WRAPPED IN TED'S ARMS, JOYFUL, HIS FACE AT HER EAR, COULD BE A WHISPER OR A KISS.

On the facing page is the name: Ted Vassallo, his phone number, his address. She goes to the phone and dials.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

Operator.

RITA
Hello, could you connect me,
please, to Mr. Ted Vassallo in
Easton, Pennsylvania?

OPERATOR (O.S.)
One moment.

Rita waits. And waits.

OPERATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
There's no answer. Would you like
me to try again?

Rita ponders.

OPERATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Ma'am?

But here is Evelyn in her hands, frozen in laughter with a
wonderful man. A sight Rita never expected. How could a woman
so joyful do such a thing? How could she be so selfish?

OPERATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Ma'am?

JERRY (O.S.)
Who's that?

Rita, caught unaware, spins to find Jerry at the hallway. She
hangs up the phone and hides Evelyn's address book behind her
back. Busted. She searches for an answer.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Who was on the phone?

RITA
Oh. Another reporter.

He takes the phone off its hook, it swings from the cord.

JERRY
Leave it off the hook.

Beat.

RITA
Do you want any of these things? If
not I'm getting rid of them.

Jerry is at the table, inspecting the objects. He pets the
pearls like a sacred thing.

RITA (CONT'D)

There's no point in keeping them,
Jerry. Even if I wore such things I
couldn't bring myself to...

JERRY

I think these were our mother's.

RITA

Oh. Well do you want to keep them?

He ponders it, then shakes his head.

RITA (CONT'D)

Alright then.

She goes to the table, throws the items, including the
address book, back in the paper bag, and stashes them below
the sink.

INT. EUGENE APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Eugene alone in bed. He holds Evelyn's scarf. He watches the
way the light filters through. He threads it through his
fingers and worries the fabric. It is a relic.

INT. EUGENE APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A woman's hand cracks eggs into a mixing bowl.

INT. EUGENE APARTMENT - HALLWAY/FRONT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A WALL-HANGING CLOCK TICKS. IT IS NINE-O-FIVE.

VARIOUS FRAMED PICTURES. A FAMILY PLAYING ON VACATION.
YOUNGER EUGENE AND MONA WITH THEIR BROOD.

ON A SHELF, A FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH OF A YOUNG SMILING SOLDIER
NEXT TO A TRIANGULAR FOLDED FLAG. A ROSARY HANGS ON THE
FRAME'S CORNER.

Eugene lumbers past frame, crossing the front room into the
kitchen, still wearing his pajamas.

INT. EUGENE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN MORNING - CONTINUOUS

MONA (50s), Eugene's no-nonsense wife, is violently scrambling eggs. She wears a quilted housecoat and sky blue curlers. She hears Eugene enter but doesn't turn.

MONA

Well good morning, Your Highness.

EUGENE

Hm.

He sits at the table and opens the paper. Evelyn's picture and a subsequent headline are on the front page. Mona turns.

MONA

What is this? What are you doing?
You're not dressed?

EUGENE

What?

MONA

What? Huh? Are you deaf? I said
you're not dressed.

EUGENE

I think maybe I'm not gonna go in
today.

MONA

What do you mean you're not gonna
go?

EUGENE

I mean I'm not gonna go. Maybe take
a day off.

MONA

A day off?

EUGENE

Yeah. The both of us. Maybe you and
me could do something together.
Like we used to.

MONA

(sarcastic)
Ooooooh, okay. Like we used to.

EUGENE

Let's live a little.

MONA

You see this apartment? I don't get to take a day off, Gene. I don't. Not ever. Day off, he says. Well you're not gonna sit around here all day, I'll tell you that. I got business.

EUGENE

Hm.

MONA

You take a day off you get under that sink and fix the leak. Dripping day and night. Get that good-for-nothing super up here.

EUGENE

Maybe.

MONA

Maybe. I wish we all could live with maybes, never committing to anything. Maybe. Humph. What's maybe? Nothing. That's what. Maybe's nothing.

INT. HALLWAY - SHORTLY AFTER

Mona stands at the door with a mixing bowl in her arms, and shouts down the hall to Eugene.

MONA

Don't you forget, we're having dinner with the McDougals tonight, so home and cleaned up by five. I mean it, Gene! Five o'clock! And get a shave!

EXT. FRONT OF THE APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

'Everyday' by Buddy Holly plays.

Eugene exits and stands on the stoop. He looks at his watch.

WATCH FACE. TEN O'CLOCK.

Eugene looks left. Eugene looks right. He goes left.

EXT. ENTRANCE OF BARBER SHOPPE - LATER

Eugene exits, the bell rings. He feels his freshly shaven face. He checks his watch.

WATCH FACE. TEN THIRTY.

Eugene looks left. Eugene looks right. He goes left.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Eugene squeezes onto a train just as the doors roll shut. Whew! He takes a seat across from a HASSIDIC MAN (60s).

He looks down. There is a shiny dime on the floor. He picks it up.

HASSIDIC MAN

Looks like it's your lucky day.

Eugene, pleased, slips the coin into his coat pocket.

INT. DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Eugene sits at the counter eating a doughnut and coffee. WAITRESS approaches.

WAITRESS

I'm not supposed to do this, but here's one on the house for you, Officer Queely.

She slips him another doughnut. He smiles his contentment.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Eugene sees a pair of young lovers kiss beneath the arch.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Eugene watches a crazy Evangelist preach on the corner.

He looks at his watch.

WATCH FACE. ELEVEN - THIRTY.

INT. LOUNGE - PHONE BOOTH - LATER

Eugene is stuffed into the phone booth, holding that dime. He takes the phone off the hook and puts the coin into the slot.

INT. AUTO SHOP - DAY

Whirring of drills and clangs of tools ring out. GUY (40s), pops his head out of the small office and yells:

GUY
Queely!
Hey, Queely!

LIAM (30s), rugged, grease-stained, and with a nose that's been broken more than once, rises from under a car's hood.

LIAM
What?

GUY
Phone call!

INT. AUTO SHOP OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Liam enters the office, wiping grease from his hands, and Guy passes him the phone.

GUY
No personal calls, buddy.

LIAM
Yeah yeah.

Liam waits for Guy's exit, then:

LIAM (CONT'D)
Yeah hello.

INT. PHONE BOOTH/OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

EUGENE
Hey.

LIAM
Hey who's this?

EUGENE
It's your brother.

LIAM
Patrick?

EUGENE
No. Gene.

LIAM
Oh. What?

EUGENE
How you doing?

LIAM
Dandy. What do you want?

EUGENE
Nothing, nothing.

LIAM
Look, Gene, I'm at work so cough it
up or let me go.

EUGENE
Wanna get some lunch?

LIAM
(as if a foreign word)
Lunch?

EUGENE
I took the day off, I wanna see ya.

LIAM
I can't get lunch, Gene.

EUGENE
Right.

LIAM
I'm sorry. I can't. I--

EUGENE
No, right, right, I get it.

LIAM
I'm sorry.

EUGENE
Sure. Yeah. Guess I'll see you at
Christmas.

Eugene starts to hang up.

LIAM

Gene!...

He puts the receiver back at his ear.

EUGENE

Yeah.

Liam brings the phone to his forehead for a beat. Then:

LIAM

Look, me and some boys from the service are cutting out a bit early. Why don't you meet us at McSorley's around three?

EUGENE

You sure?

LIAM

Sure.

EUGENE

That's great. Fantastic. Thanks, kid. I'll see ya then.

LIAM

Yeah yeah, don't call me kid.

Liam hangs up.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

"Laughing on the Outside" by Andy Russell plays.

It's a not-too-fancy restaurant, the best that Wyn can afford. He's tried to make himself presentable. He takes a sip of his water and checks his reflection in a spoon, but it's upside down.

DOROTHY (O.S.)

Hello.

Wyn, caught unaware, looks up. It's his date, DOROTHY. Homely but pleasant looking. Sweet with a soft voice. Big glasses. Hair done up.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Quinn?

WYN

What?

DOROTHY
Are you Quinn? It's me. Dorothy.

WYN
Oh. Hello. Hi. Hello.

He stands to greet her and helps her into her seat.

DOROTHY
It's lovely to meet you finally.

Wyn scurries to his seat. He stuffs his napkin in his shirt like a bib.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Did you have trouble finding it?

WYN
No.

DOROTHY
Good. That's good.

Awkward silence.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)
Have you been here before?

WYN
No.

DOROTHY
Good. Okay.

Beat.

WYN
It's Wyn.

DOROTHY
Sorry?

WYN
Wyn. Not Quinn.

DOROTHY
Oh. Dear.

WYN
It's okay.

DOROTHY
Wyn?

WYN
 Yes.

DOROTHY
 W-I-N?

WYN
 Y.

DOROTHY
 Why what?

WYN
 With a Y. W-Y-N.

DOROTHY
 Oh, of course.

WYN
 It's okay.

DOROTHY
 Mother said Quinn.

WYN
 It's Wyn.

She nods and goes to her menu. He drains his entire glass of water then gives her a pathetic smile. Her eyes dart for the waiter. This is not going well.

INT. WYN'S APARTMENT - LATER

An eerie program like "The Whistler" or "The Shadow" plays from the radio, a ghost story. An elevated train rumbles past, giving the place a good shake. Wyn's Mother sits in her easy chair, alone, blanket around her. Knick-knacks abound. Knitted blankets and lace doilies furnish every surface and cranny. The basement space gets very little light.

The sound of a key in the door, the deadbolt turns.

WYN'S MOTHER
 Wyn?

No answer. She stands in preparedness. Fear in her eyes. Who could it be?!

WYN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
 Wyn, darling?...

Wyn opens the door off screen and enters the living room.

WYN
Evening, Ma.

WYN'S MOTHER
You startled me.

WYN
You shouldn't listen to that stuff.
You can't sleep at night.

WYN'S MOTHER
I don't like the quiet.

WYN
You know they play music on these
things?

WYN'S MOTHER
So many advertisements.

WYN
Did you eat?

WYN'S MOTHER
Of course I ate, I'm not an
invalid.

WYN
Alright, well. Goodnight, then.

He turns to go.

WYN'S MOTHER
Wyn?...

He turns back to her. Expectant. She wants to ask "How did it go?", but he is always scolding her for prying.

WYN
Goodnight, Ma.

He goes to his room leaving her alone. Another failed date.

INT. WYN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Wyn flips on his desk lamp, shedding light on his pathetic room. Small bed with iron frame. Small desk with a lamp. Hard floors. Immaculately organized. Wyn, excited, takes a folded magazine page from his coat and sits on the edge of the bed. He stares down adoringly.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Artists don't provide answers.

BETH (O.S.)
What then?

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BOBBY
We ask questions.

A party. Small but raucous. Bobby's apartment is a tiny, cheap, disheveled Village apartment. Young people sit around the living area waxing philosophically, taking themselves way too seriously. Booze and barbiturates pass hands.

NEIL
(Exhaling a hit. He is
very stoned)
Exactly.

Bobby takes the joint off Neil and takes a hit.

BETH
But to what end?

BOBBY
To NO end! We ask questions, that's
it.

Hal, cigarette in mouth, starts clapping. Neil nods.

BETH
And you owe nothing beyond that?

BOBBY
You got an answer for every photo
you've taken?

HAL
I'm suuuure she does.

BETH
It's called having a point of view.

Bobby slumps and groans in his seat, feigning boredom.

BETH (CONT'D)
What's so terrible about that?

BOBBY
Really don't want a lecture
tonight.

BETH
You might learn something.

HAL
Can't we just get high?

BOBBY
I do learn, out there, with my pal.

He holds up his camera.

BETH
Yeah, but that's just doing. It's
not thinking.

BOBBY
I prefer it that way.

BETH
Isn't it our job to step back and
make sense of the world? Find order
in the chaos?

NEIL
(terrified)
Chaos...

BOBBY
You want that responsibility?

BETH
Then don't be an artist.

Bobby starts laughing. Neil echoes him, might as well.

BOBBY
Oh no! She found me out! I'm a
fraud!

BETH
That's not what I'm saying.

HAL
(dripping with irony)
Oh aren't we all frauds in the end?

BOBBY
Say, maybe I can sell shoes?

HAL
Or smut.

BOBBY
Or smack!

BETH
Fine.

Beth, irritated, goes to the bathroom.

HAL
Gulp. The lady's upset.

They crack up. NEIGHBOR, another kid, enters.

NEIGHBOR
Bobby, phone call for you.

Bobby raises his eyebrows at Hal, then rises and exits. His friends pass the joint.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Bobby comes down the hallway and picks up the phone.

BOBBY
Hello?
Speaking.
That's me.
What?
WHO is this?
Wait, what?

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Bobby walks into his apartment in a daze, stunned, stoned. He lingers in the doorway. It's a moment before they notice him.

HAL
What's wrong?

Beth comes out of the bathroom. Still upset.

BETH
I think I'm going to go.

BOBBY
I'm going to be published.

HAL
What?

BOBBY
That was *Life* magazine--

BETH
Bobby--

BOBBY
They are going to publish my photo.

NEIL
Holy shit.

HAL
Are you serious?

BOBBY
Full page.

NEIL
Holy shit.

BOBBY
I know.

HAL
What photo?

NEIL
Holy shit.

BOBBY
I know.

HAL
What photo?

INT. WYN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

BOBBY (O.S.)
The woman. The suicide woman. From
the Empire State Building.

We see Bobby's picture of Evelyn from *Life*, and pull back to reveal Wyn, his finger playing about her face.

PHOTO CREDIT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PICTURE: "PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT WILES".

INT. MCSORLEY'S BAR - LATER

Liam carries beers through the crowded bar to the guys in the corner. FRANKY (30s) lumbering, muscled, and quiet. BOYD (30s) fancies himself a business man. TINY (20s) small but tries to make up for stature with a big mouth, often failing. Eugene is huddled among them, out of place but trying to have a good time. Liam passes around pints.

TINY
You never told us you had a lawman
in the family.

LIAM

This guy? He tells little schoolgirls when to cross the street.

EUGENE

It's more than that.

LIAM

What? You're out there running down crooks?

EUGENE

No, but--

LIAM

Course not, you big lump. You couldn't run two city blocks. And I'm talking short ones.

They all laugh, Eugene pretends to laugh along.

BOYD

Still, always good to have a copper on your side. Ya know? For when you're in a bind.

Eugene nods a little uncomfortably and says:

EUGENE

Yeah. Yeah, I guess it is.

Tiny throws his arm around Eugene.

TINY

Say, Gene-y, how's about another round? On me.

Tiny fishes in his pocket for cash.

INT. MCSORLEY'S BAR - MOMENTS LATER

A hand slaps five tickets onto the bar. The guys are drunk.

BOYD

Come on, Gene!

TINY

Yeah, ya gotta come.

FRANKY

That broad ditched me, you can have her seat.

BOYD
Quite the date you got yourself
there. Real looker!

Laughing.

EUGENE
Oh, I don't know fellas.

LIAM
Come on, Gene. Ya gotta.

MEN
(chanting)
Gene! Gene! Gene!

CUT TO:

INT. ARENA - BOXING MATCH

THWACKED! FIGHTER 1, the larger of the two, connects a punch
with the jaw of FIGHTER 2!

Lights blazing! Smoke and booze! Whistles and cheers! Sweat
flies! On its feet, the crowd waves betting tickets. The bell
DINGS! End of round. The fighters return to their corners.

In the stands, our friends cheer and wave their slips in the
air. Eugene clutches Evelyn's scarf.

LIAM
I can't believe you put it all on
that lousy kid!

TINY
Look at 'im! He's going down in the
third, sure thing.

Eugene kisses the scarf.

EUGENE
I got a feeling, boys! I just got a
feeling!

LIAM
That's doom, Gene. That feeling is
doom!

We spin around and suddenly we are with a beautiful girl:

CIGAR GIRL
Cigars! Cigarettes! Cigars! Ciga--

We spin again through the madness to a corner of the ring where a hand is slapping the face of Fighter 1 to keep him alert. The bell DINGS! He charges out of this corner.

We spin and zoom onto Fighter 2, charging in, fists drawn.

Zoom! Sweat flies. Pow! Blood pours from Fighter 1's mouth. Fighter 2 is hammering away. He's done for sure!

CUT TO:

INT. EUGENE APARTMENT - EVENING

Mona and her two guests at the table eating in tense silence.

MRS. MCDOUGAL

The pork chops are delicious, Mona.

She smiles through a mouthful.

MONA

Hm.

They all saw at the meat on their plate. DING!

INT. ARENA - MOMENTS LATER

Fighter 2 is on the mat out cold. Fighter 1 dances around him full of adrenaline as the REF counts, slapping the mat.

REF

6! 7! 8! 9! 10!

Ref stands and holds the winner's hand in the air. The crowd is going crazy, delirious with surprise.

High and wide over the lit arena and waving hands, we quickly fly in. Down through the screaming fans, through the ropes and over the fighters, through tickets fluttering in the smoky air, we land square on Eugene who is waving the scarf like a flag. His gleaming, screaming, joyful face. Closer and closer until his wide mouth fills the frame.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARENA ALLEY - LATER

Eugene vomits violently, braced against the wall, the men surround. He finishes, spits, and recovers while bent over.

FROM BELOW, WE SEE EUGENE'S FACE, RED FROM EXERTION, AND SMILING. THE GUYS, OUT OF FRAME, ARE LAUGHING AND WHOOPING.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - LATER

Eugene, a celebratory stogie in his mouth, shirt open and jacket draped over his shoulder, stumble-walks towards his door, singing his rendition of My Wild Irish Rose. He reaches his door, finds his key and jams it into the lock.

INT. EUGENE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

A swath of light coming from the hallway wipes across the room and falls over Mona, sat in a chair facing the door.

MONA

You smell like a circus tent.

EUGENE

...I got that shave.

MONA

I don't give a SHIT about the shave!

He stands, guilty.

MONA (CONT'D)

Well you're alive. I'm going to bed.

She goes to bed. Eugene is left standing in the entryway.

INT. EUGENE APARTMENT - LATER

Eugene sits down on the sofa, pulls a pathetic afghan over him and lays down. He clutches Evelyn's scarf, running it through his fingers. He is happy.

EXT. CHRISTOPHER STREET - LATER THAT NIGHT

Bobby stands on the sidewalk watching the door of a seedy bar across the street. He's smoking heavily, drunk from the party earlier. He's been standing here a while. Weighing desire against shame. Two men come out of the bar together. They aren't holding hands but they might as well be. They turn and head down the sidewalk together.

SMOKING MAN comes out. He spots Bobby, stops, stares. He lights a cigarette. Still staring. Bobby feels his pull.

He's going to do it. He's going to move, go in. Yes he will. He gathers his courage. Five, four, three, two--

A group of 20-somethings come around the corner laughing and talking cheerfully. Two guys with their gals tucked under their arms. They saunter across the street as one of the girls plants a kiss on her boyfriend's cheek and he wraps his arm around her middle. Bobby watches them go, jealous of them. And also horrified that they might have seen...

He glances once more to the man, the couple's laughter still reverberates. Bobby tosses down his cigarette, stamps it out, and disappears around the corner.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MCHALE HOME - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

The room is still blue in the early dawn, and Rita sleeps curled in her bed. A sound inside the house stirs her. She wakes. Jerry's side of the bed is neat as a pin. Confused, she rises, hair in pink rollers, and pulls on her robe.

INT. MCHALE HOME - CONTINUOUS

Entering the living room, Rita stops quick to find Jerry suiting up for work, tie and jacket on the back of a chair.

JERRY

I didn't want to wake you.

RITA

Would you like some breakfast?

JERRY

I'll get a roll on the way over.

RITA

I'll drive you.

JERRY

I want to walk.

He flips up his collar and starts with his tie. He fidgets with it. Rita suppresses her desire to fix it for him.

RITA

Did you talk to your father?

JERRY

(a sore topic)

I called him last night.

RITA

And?

JERRY

He's not coming.

RITA

What did he say?

JERRY

He said he's not coming.

He picks up the jacket and slings it over his arm, kisses her quickly on the head and goes to the door.

EXT. MCHALE HOME - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

She stands in the doorway waving as he walks away. JIMMY, the paperboy, zooms by on his bike and throws their newspaper.

The glare pierces Rita's eyes as she traipses in her bathrobe to collect it. She unrolls the newspaper. Evelyn stares back at her, smiling in an old school photo. Rita freezes. Then she looks along the street where sleepy, well-gardened homes flank her left and right. Every drive has the same rolled newspaper waiting at its mouth.

Rita walks with determination to her neighbor's drive and picks up their paper. Then the next house. And another, and another. She is huffing from the exertion, her arms loaded with papers, single-minded in her purpose. She bends low to pick up another when MR. PARKINSON, 50s, comes out of his door in his undershirt, shorts, and black sock garters. He yells for her attention. Rita is up and quickly retreats.

MR. PARKINSON

Hey! I see you! I see you!

Rita scurries back to her house.

INT. MCHALE HOME - KITCHEN/BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rita stands over the sink, inspecting the article.

NEWS ARTICLE PRINT: "SHE ATTENDED HER FIANCEE'S BIRTHDAY PARTY IN EASTON THE NIGHT BEFORE.."

Rita snaps the paper shut.

A sound emanates from within the house. Water rushing? Feet scuffling? Curious, she follows the sound.

She reaches the bathroom and the door is closed, orange light seeps out the cracks. Rita slowly pushes the door open.

Inside, steam rises from the faucet, fogging the mirror. A dark-haired woman in a bathrobe sits on the closed toilet seat cradling a wet bundle that drips water onto the floor.

She is lost in grief--lost to herself. Her hair clings in strands to her sweaty forehead, and she breathes heavy from exertion, tears. It is very late--or very early.

She feels she is being watched and looks up. It is Rita.

RITA

What do you want?

We reverse. It is Evelyn standing in the doorway now. She is in full dress having just gotten in. She's a little tipsy.

EVELYN

Nothing.
I have to pee.

Beat.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

RITA

It's ruined.

She holds up the dripping bundle. It is a long silk slip. A dark splotch of blood stains the front. Sudsy water slopes off from where Rita has been trying to scrub it clean.

Evelyn laughs a bit.

EVELYN

Oh, that? It happens.

Rita shakes her head, holding back a sob. "You don't understand."

Evelyn enters the bathroom and quietly closes the door. She turns off the water and goes to Rita.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

What is it?

Rita wipes a tear.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

Because of the slip?

Beat.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
Let me see.

Evelyn takes the garment from Rita. She examines the spot.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
Have you tried lemon? Sometimes
that works.

Beat.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
Here.

Evelyn puts the slip on the counter then goes out the door.
Rita, alone... The spot taunts her from its perch.

After more than a moment, Evelyn comes back carrying a glass
bottle of pre-squeezed lemon juice.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
Let's see.

She opens the bottle and pours some of the juice onto the
spot. She lets it seep in and rubs it gently. A little more
juice, then she turns on the water and scrubs.

Rita watches her work.

RITA
Where were you?

EVELYN
Hm?

RITA
You're always out so late. I worry.

Evelyn scrubs.

EVELYN
I think it's working.

RITA
I asked you a question.

EVELYN
And I heard it.

Evelyn holds up the slip. The spot is coming out.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
Look. Nothing to be upset about.

A long beat.

RITA
It's on the bed, too.

EVELYN
You want to try the sheets?

RITA
No! I don't want to wake him.

Beat.

EVELYN
Alright.

Evelyn slowly returns to scrubbing.

Rita uses her fingertips to make small circles at her hairline. After a moment, she rests her hands on her thighs.

RITA
I thought it was a miracle.
I thought the Lord finally heard my
prayers.
We've been trying and trying,
but...

EVELYN
It will happen. Give it time.

RITA
That's not what the doctor said.

Evelyn looks over.

EVELYN
Oh.

RITA
He makes no sense, what He gives
and takes away -- It's like I've
been built for this one thing but I
can't have it. No sense at all.

EVELYN
You did nothing wrong.

Rita isn't so sure.

RITA

Don't tell Jerry? Please? He doesn't know...anything--The doctor, this, any of it. He'll be so disappointed.

EVELYN

He loves you.

RITA

Even so.

EVELYN

We'll wash the sheets in the morning after Jerry goes off to work. He'll never even notice.

Rita nods.

RITA

Secrets breed secrets, you know. It happened to my mother and father and now I see it happening to us. I sleep next to him, kiss him off in the morning--all-the-while ...--How long can it last?

A long beat.

EVELYN

I was out dancing.
In the city.
There was a band.

She returns to work on the slip.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

At first, I didn't want to go in. I was thinking up ways to get out of there. But - I felt drums. Practically beating into my chest. The other girls just stood there, primping and staring, waiting for an invitation. But -- I marched out onto that floor and I started moving... Moving all over the place. It didn't matter. My hair coming down, blisters on my feet, the smoke and the sweat. And there were men. I lost track of time--No. I knew what time it was, but I didn't care. And we danced all night. Until the lights came on.

They are both lost in it. Evelyn laughs airily at herself.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

And you know what else? That drummer, making all that noise. He wasn't any higher than a fourth grader. This big at most.

She holds up her hand to show.

RITA

It was a child?

Evelyn laughs.

EVELYN

No, no. Just a small man.

Rita looks off. Somewhere in her mind, she sees the man. Evelyn dancing. It looks nice in her mind. She smiles.

The sound of scrubbing brings her back to the room.

RITA

Don't become one of those women, Evelyn.

EVELYN

What kind of woman?

RITA

You know what kind. People talk.

EVELYN

The scandal! What will they say?

RITA

I'm serious.

Evelyn shuts off the water.

EVELYN

This is why I never tell you anything.

RITA

I'm only looking out for you.

Evelyn aggressively wrings out the slip and hands it to Rita.

EVELYN

There. Like it never happened. I'm going to bed.

Evelyn exits. Rita sees the spot is very nearly gone.

We return to the present. Rita, at the doorway in her bathrobe, surveys the empty room. She retreats to the kitchen and grabs that paper bag of Evelyn's things beneath the sink, rummages to find her note and rips open the envelope.

INT. EUGENE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Eugene wakes on the sofa, very hungover. Mona is in the kitchen making breakfast louder than normal. Every clang and bang pierces Eugene's skull. He still clutches the scarf.

INT. EUGENE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Mona throws a plate of eggs and toast onto the table. Eugene eyes the food and fights back vomit. He meets Mona's eyes and silently she says: "You ARE going to eat that." With a tentative hand he picks up the fork.

The phone RINGS. It's like electricity in Eugene's skull. Mona answers it.

MONA

Queely residence.

Oh, hello.

Well yes he's here. Maybe you can talk some sense into him.

She extends the phone to Eugene.

MONA (CONT'D)

It's Liam.

Eugene is up, grabbing the phone.

EUGENE

Hey, kid!

Yeah.

Sure sure, I'll be there.

He hangs up, goes back to the table and scarfs down his meal.

MONA

What was that about?

EUGENE

Nothing.

MONA

Didn't sound like nothing.

EUGENE
It doesn't really concern you,
Mona.

MONA
What's gotten into you?

No answer.

MONA (CONT'D)
Are you going to work today?

EUGENE
I got something going with Liam.

Eugene wipes his mouth then heads back to the bedroom.

MONA
"Something going"?

She follows but he ignores her.

MONA (CONT'D)
Eugene!

He closes the door on her. She humphs.

INT. WYN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Wyn gets up.

Wyn gets dressed.

He delicately folds Evelyn and slips her into his pocket.

INT. WYN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER

Wyn's Mother slaps mush onto his plate. Wyn is despondent.

INT. WYN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Wyn climbs the stairs with his toolbox.

Wyn knocks on an apartment door.

Wyn goes down the stairs with his toolbox.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING ENTRY - LATER

Wyn is just finishing mopping the floor. Through the front door we can see heavy rain falling. A WOMAN, trailed by two CHILDREN, comes through the door. They shake off the water and stamp off their muddy boots and proceed past him as if invisible. He looks at the muddy mess. Hopeless.

INT. BASEMENT BOILER ROOM - LATER

Wyn sits alone on a stack of old newspapers eating a bologna sandwich on white bread. Evelyn is unfolded and propped against his tin lunch box. He chews, staring at her. Hypnotized...

A gloved female hand sensually caresses his cheek. Both hands now, a gentle massage to his labored shoulders. Wyn closes his eyes and grins. The woman bends down and we see her stunning red lips next to his ear. She opens them to speak and - BOOM! The furnace kicks on jolting Wyn out of his daze.

He looks around to see if somebody saw him, shakes off the illusion, wipes his mouth and stands to brush off the crumbs.

INT. PARTY CENTER - PENNSYLVANIA - DAY

'Paper Doll' by The Mills brothers.

A DELICATE FEMALE MOUTH OPENS AND A CHUNK OF WHITE FROSTED CAKE IS SHOVELED IN. SHE CHEWS.

CHOCOLATE CAKE INTO A MAN'S MOUTH.

PINK FROSTED WHITE CAKE IN ANOTHER WOMAN'S MOUTH.

YELLOW FROSTED CHOCOLATE CAKE INTO THE SAME MAN'S MOUTH.

AND OVER AND OVER. FORKS OF BRIGHTLY COLORED CAKES GO INTO A ROTATING DOOR OF MOUTHS.

TABITHA, 26, cute yet husky, wears a polka-dotted dress and a white bow in her hair. She is six months pregnant. Gleefully, she chews a piece of cake and swallows with exaggeration. Ted, in a sport jacket, dives a fork into the last piece of cake. His brother, ANTHONY, 26, sits next to Tabitha, his bride. Evelyn is the fourth.

TED

I can't decide - I guess we'll have to try them all again!

TABITHA

Isn't this fun?

Evelyn smiles, hands in her lap, mimicking Tabitha's stance and carriage.

EVELYN

Oh yes, very.

TABITHA

Well, will you be having a groom's cake as well as the bridal cake?

Evelyn looks to Ted. Should they? Before she can answer:

TABITHA (CONT'D)

Because they will have to contrast in taste and style. We did German Chocolate for his cake, and then a pure white cake.

ANTHONY

White, white, white.

TABITHA

Right, right, right.

Anthony and Tabitha giggle. Ted places a hand on Evelyn's, and squeezes, they are both slightly nauseated. Evelyn looks at him and smiles at her comrade across the table.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

We even put white oleander flowers on the top with the bride and groom. So we had the bouquet arrangement as part of it. You can just be so creative!

ANTHONY

That was her idea.

EVELYN

Oleander is a lovely flower.

TABITHA

Oh! And you can get shapes, too. And designs!

ANTHONY

She had them do my cake up like my Army badge.

TABITHA

Oh, yes! Maybe an airplane or a pilot's hat for you, Ted!

TED

Tabitha, I was a bombardier.

Ted and Evelyn repress their laughs.

EVELYN

And you had the ceremony here too?

TABITHA

Oh yes! The whole kit and caboodle!

ANTHONY

She found it - she's a natural at this.

TABITHA

Well every girl plans their wedding from the moment they can walk. We have years of practice behind us, right Evelyn?

Evelyn shrugs an "I guess so" and smiles at Ted.

ANTHONY

So how many you looking to pack into this place?

TED

I'm not sure yet.
Evelyn's parents passed, so it's just her now. And you moved in with your roommate, what, a year ago?

Evelyn feels the attention turn to her, she swallows some water as she nods in agreement to Ted.

TED (CONT'D)

Not much time to make a lot of friends.

TABITHA

Oh, well the lady just knew her priorities is all, Ted! Nab an eligible man and *then* get to worrying about playing bridge and tea parties with the girls.

He regards Evelyn, squinting in the sunlight, noticing her nerves. Tabitha turns to Evelyn, 'girl to girl.'

TABITHA (CONT'D)

I know it's the bride's vision, but
I see you looking just beautiful
with a red bouquet to match your
hair. Don't you think so Ted?

TED

She could be carrying a pineapple
for all I care.

He squeezes her hand again and winks at her.

TABITHA

Oh hush you!
Of course it will depend on your
dress. Where have you been trying
on?

EVELYN

I haven't.

TABITHA

Oh Evelyn! You just have to! The
whole thing rests on the dress. I
think your shape would suit a
princess style. But what do you
want?

EVELYN

I don't know.

TABITHA

But what do you like best? When you
see yourself?

EVELYN

(overly stern)
I don't know, I said.

Tabitha can't decide how to react.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

Would you excuse me? I think I need
to use the bathroom.

Evelyn gets up and walks swiftly towards an exit.

EXT. PARKING LOT ENTRANCE - PARTY CENTER - LATER

Ted exits, calmly scanning for Evelyn. She stands in the sunshine where the parking lot becomes a walkway. He sees her and approaches quietly.

TED

The bathrooms here are very spacious.

Evelyn smiles in spite of herself.

EVELYN

Lots of air.

TED

And trees.

He caresses the sides of her arms, as you might pet a cat to get it to relax in your lap.

TED (CONT'D)

It doesn't have to be in June.

EVELYN

It's not that.

TED

I know it's soon.

EVELYN

No, no. It's --

She turns around. Can she tell him? No.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

There's just a lot to it all. I'm nervous.

TED

I'll say - cakes come in shapes now, did you hear?

She smiles and puts her arms around him, finding solace.

EVELYN

And what shape will the birthday boy be wanting for his party cake? He turns two-four in two-days, you know.

He runs his hands over her.

TED

This shape feels alright to me.

He kisses the top of her head and she smiles into his middle. She rests her chin on his chest and looks up at him, he runs his hand over her face. The world around them doesn't exist.

EVELYN

(whispering)

What do you say... we get in that car over there ... and drive over to city hall and just be done with it?

She thinks she's suggested something exciting and romantic, but Ted's hurt face reflects something else.

TED

Be done with it?

EVELYN

Oh, you know what I mean.

TED

No, I don't.

The moment is broken. She is embarrassed. She pulls away and puts a lock of hair behind her ear.

EVELYN

We should head in. Tabitha probably wants to discuss stationery and garter belts.

She heads inside, Ted watches her for a moment and then follows slowly, hands in his pockets.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

POV CAMERA. EXPOSED BRICK ILLUMINATED BY THE SUN. A CAR SKIDS INTO A PUDDLE, WATER SPRAYS ON A PASSING COUPLE. A MAN IN A BUSINESS SUIT PASSES, HEAD DOWN, HE LOOKS INTO THE LENS AS HE WALKS BY. NO CLICKS. THE SHUTTER DOESN'T CLOSE.

Bobby brings his camera down from his eye and stands stock-still. He sees something, down the street. He throws out his cigarette butt after a long, final drag and walks.

LOOKING UP FROM A RECTANGULAR HOLE, BOBBY PEERING DOWN.

Bobby stands in front of a grave-like hole in the middle of the street, marked off by orange cones. An abandoned work site. The street is empty. He stares down into the darkness. He brings his camera up to take a picture. The distant call of an ambulance siren sounds. Bobby turns, but sees nothing

EXT. BETTY PARSONS GALLERY - DAY

Beth stands outside smoking a cigarette. Bobby lumbers towards her.

BETH
You are late.

BOBBY
And you are smoking.

BETH
What? Sometimes I smoke.

BOBBY
Only when you're sauced.

BETH
It's not even lunch.

BOBBY
That stop you before?

She shrugs 'good point' and finishes her cigarette.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Ladies first.

BETH
Is that what I am now?

BOBBY
Apparently.

INT. BETTY PARSONS GALLERY - DAY

They walk together through the gallery, whispering in respect of The Art.

BETH
I've been thinking about getting a dog or something. Maybe a cat.

BOBBY

You can barely keep yourself alive,
you're gonna throw another creature
into the mix?

BETH

I feel like I need some purpose to
my days. Some meaning.

BOBBY

Don't most people just have babies
for that?

BETH

Why, Bobby Wiles, are you
proposing? Yes, yes, I will! YES!

BOBBY

(wincing)

Oh no, darling, no, I plan to marry
for money.

Beth cracks up.

CUT TO:

Bobby and Beth stand and contemplate an art piece. A giant
canvas, a Pollock or something Pollock-esque. They stand
silent for a long moment. Then:

BOBBY (CONT'D)

I don't get it.

BETH

Quiet.

BOBBY

This is why you brought me here?

BETH

Will you be quiet for one moment?

He is quiet for one moment.

BOBBY

I don't get it.

BETH

What's to get?

BOBBY

I could do that.

BETH
But you didn't.

BOBBY
It's pretty, but what's the story?

BETH
That's not how he works. It's a
conversation.

He looks again. Beat.

BOBBY
I don't hear anything.

BETH
Stop.

BOBBY
What ability do I see here? He's
just flinging paint.

BETH
He stands over a canvas for hours
everyday. You can't call that
random.

Bobby bends over and mocks flinging paint.

BOBBY
How's this? Look. Gimme a brush and
pay me a million.

BETH
Hush.

She looks around, embarrassed.

BETH (CONT'D)
Look at it. There's thought here.
Something this marvelous doesn't
just happen. He knows his tools, he
connects them to something
automatic within. Pure self. The
result is his truth.

As she talks, Bobby shares a stare with a GALLERY MAN across
the room. Distracted.

BETH (CONT'D)
I think it's brave.

BOBBY
What?

BETH
You're not even listening to me.

BOBBY
He's pulling the wool over your eyes, Beth. "Art." Gimme something with a narrative.

He walks away. Beth follows him out.

EXT. BETTY PARSONS GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

Bobby exits and lights a cigarette, Beth shortly behind.

BETH
So that's it?

BOBBY
So that's it, what?

BETH
You're not paying attention. To anything.

BOBBY
(walking to door)
Okay, fine, I'll stare at that miserable painting some more.

BETH
No, no, that's not it.

BOBBY
(returning back to her)
Then what are we talking about?

Beat.

BETH
Did you read the newspaper?

BOBBY
You know I don't.

BETH
They printed her suicide note.

BOBBY
Tragic, I'm sure.

BETH

She didn't want to be remembered by anyone. No funeral, no memorial, nothing.

BOBBY

She threw herself off the tallest building in the world, so I don't really buy that.

BETH

Don't you care at all?

BOBBY

No, Beth, I don't. This is what we do. You can't get emotional about the subject.

BETH

The subject, the subject, that's all she is to you, the subject of some stupid picture.

BOBBY

Stupid? Don't pretend that you think it isn't good. You know it's good. It burns you up how good it is.

BETH

And it was wasted on you.

BOBBY

Alright, in all of your majesty tell me what I should be doing different.

BETH

You treat it like you just woke up and BOOM, like it's nothing.

BOBBY

Yeah and so WHAT?

BETH

Well, from here it looks like you're the one flinging paint.

He watches her walk away. He raises his camera. CLICK.

INT. WYN'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Wyn enters with difficulty, his arms overburdened with a tall stack of magazines. A quick peek to make sure Mother isn't in the kitchen, but the opening of "The Whistler" radio program emanates from the sitting room. Wyn closes the door with his hip and hurries down the hall, quickly past the door to the sitting room. He gets a few steps before:

WYN'S MOTHER

Wyn?

He stops.

WYN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Wyyyn?

WYN

Yes?

WYN'S MOTHER

Would you like something to eat?

WYN

Yes. Thank you.

Wyn's Mother pulls herself out of her chair.

WYN'S MOTHER

Okay. I'll get it.

Wyn continues on to his bedroom.

INT. WYN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Wyn drops the stack of magazines on his bed and we see it is all the May 12, 1947 issue of *Life* magazine.

INT. MCHALE HOME - LATE AFTERNOON

A pile of unformed cardboard boxes drop onto the ground, along with large rolls of packing tape and scissors.

INT. WYN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Wyn turns on his desk lamp and slips on his glasses. A pair of small sewing scissors. Wyn tosses a magazine onto the desk and flutters through the pages until he finds her.

EVELYN SPRAWLED ACROSS THE CAR. WITH AN ARCHAEOLOGIST'S CARE AND PRECISION, HE CUTS THE PAGE OUT OF THE MAGAZINE.

Wyn affixes the page to his blank bedroom wall. One tack on each corner. He is very satisfied.

INT. MCHALE HOME - LATE AFTERNOON

RITA BREAKING OPEN A FLAT CARDBOARD BOX, FORMING IT AND TAPING IT. SHE SITS IT ON THE GROUND, OPEN.

INT. WYN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Some of the images he cuts carefully around, pulling Evelyn off the car. Some he uses only parts: her face, her hands.

INT. MCHALE HOME - LATER

Rita throws folded clothing, papers, knick-knacks into the boxes. Her movements quick, driven.

INT. WYN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Using paste that drips and wrinkles the paper, he affixes images, forms, shapes to the wall. He's Pollock, greatly focused, his mind whirring, this wonderful, miraculous, beautiful woman emerging. Nothing can deter him.

INT. MCHALE HOME - LATER

RRRRRRIP, Rita pulls out tape, seals the box and starts labelling it with a marker.

WYN'S MOTHER (O.S.)
Wyyyyyyyyn.

INT. WYN'S BEDROOM - LATER

WYN'S MOTHER (O.S.)
Wyyyyyyyyn.

She rattles the doorknob, breaking his concentration.

Wyn opens the door a crack. His Mother tries to peer in.

WYN
Yes?

WYN'S MOTHER
I've been calling you. Your
dinner's getting cold.

WYN
Oh. I must've fell asleep.

WYN'S MOTHER
It's six o'clock.

She's still trying to peek in. This is very unlike him.

WYN
Busy day.

WYN'S MOTHER
What are you doing in there?

WYN
Nothing.

WYN'S MOTHER
What's that smell?

WYN
I'll be out in a minute.

WYN'S MOTHER
I don't like...

He closes the door in her face.

INT. MCHALE CAR - EVENING

Jerry pulls into the driveway. Stacked boxes block the entrance to their garage. He stops abruptly in the drive, turns off the car and sighs.

INT. MCHALE HOME - EVELYN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A roll of packing tape. RRRRRRRrip! And Rita seals a box.

Evelyn's room is bare. The bed has been stripped. The walls are empty. She's shoving the last of it into one more box. Jerry appears in the door behind her.

JERRY
What are you doing?

RITA
The ladies at Church are taking
donations for a second-hand sale.
(MORE)

RITA (CONT'D)

I thought we could get rid of some of these things.

He looks at her like she's said something insane.

JERRY

You should have asked me.

RITA

Asked you what? To come out and stop pouting for a moment so you could help me?

Rita continues to shove things in boxes. Jerry watches her.

JERRY

What's the matter with you?

RITA

Me? Nothing. This is what she wanted, and I am not in the habit of denying a woman her dying wish.

JERRY

You don't know what she wanted.

Rita stands and reaches into a pocket of her dress and pulls out Evelyn's note. She opens it and reads as if dispassionately reciting an essay.

RITA

(reading the note)
"Dearest Rita,--"

JERRY

What is that?

RITA

It's her note, Jerry. She left me a note. See?

She passes it to him. He takes it and begins to read.

RITA (CONT'D)

No service, no remembrance. That's what she said.

He continues to read.

RITA (CONT'D)

I mean, a *fiancée*? Did you have any idea?

Jerry finishes reading. He turns it over to check the back.

RITA (CONT'D)
What did she mean about your
mother?

Jerry looks at her. Beat.

JERRY
I don't know.

Rita snatches it from him and shoves it in her pocket.

RITA
It was cruel of her to do that to
me. A bunch of nonsense.

Rita goes back to packing.

RITA (CONT'D)
She would have been better off just
disappearing. Perhaps then she
could have found some redemption.
Now she's just...

JERRY
She's what?

She doesn't want to say.

JERRY (CONT'D)
She's WHAT, Rita?

RITA
(not without pity)
You know what happens to people
who...do what she did. It is a
mortal. Sin.

Jerry doesn't know what to say. He knows she's right.

RITA (CONT'D)
She made a choice, Jerry. Scripture
is very clear. She wants to be
forgotten? Let us forget her.

INT. WYN'S BEDROOM - EVENING

POV WALL. WYN STANDS PROUD AND DEFIANT, SLEEVES ROLLED, HAIR
MUSSED, SCISSORS IN ONE HAND, THE OTHER IN A LAYER OF STICKY
PASTE. A HERO.

Wyn stands before the beginning of his creation: a wall full
of Evelyn. We take in each detail.

Bobby's photo repeated and showcased throughout. Evelyn's parts re-formed into poses and scenes. We see fresh glue seep from the paper's wounds.

We pull back, back, taking in the elaborate, impressive totem. He stares lovingly at his masterpiece.

INT. CHURCH - SUNDAY MORNING

Pews packed with ladies in hats, men in suits, children bouncing about. Rita and Jerry sit among the congregation. Here and there are side-glances from women. A little boy in front of Rita and Ted is turned completely around and stares at them, just his eyes visible over the pew. Finally, his mother gives him a swat and he turns back.

The Father gives his homily.

FATHER

We share our Earth. And its pieces stay with us. They float in the air around us. Pieces of the world that have existed since God separated Heaven and Earth. This is life. This is His design. Things you do cannot be undone or unsaid. They persist. You carry them with you and they propel the next action, the next word.

But, if we ignore these things that are set upon us, if we do not listen, do not see, then we deny His will. And if we deny Him, the design lays in wait to be completed.

For if you neglect the steel of a structure, or even that bolt that joins two beams, what would happen to the structure?

To complete his plan. This is our job, as His children. This is life.

Father returns to his seat. The Church silently ponders his word.

Rita's head is bowed in contemplation, but something makes her look over. DAISY, 30s, a flamboyant blonde, bends and peers at Rita from far down the aisle and gives an over-sympathetic pout.

Then Father stands and signals to the Church to stand as he begins. The congregation rises around Rita blocking out Daisy. They all join in prayer. After a beat, Rita stands.

CONGREGATION
 Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem.
 Creatorem caeli et terrae.

We pan across as they continue saying the Creed, bent over in their pews, hands clasped.

EXT. AQUEDUCT RACETRACK, QUEENS - DAY

EUGENE, SCARF WEAVED THROUGH HIS FINGERS HELD IN PRAYER,
 MUTTERS AN INCANTATION UNDER HIS BREATH

CONGREGATION (V.O.)
 Et in Iesum Christum.
 Filium eius unicum.

A gun SHOT rings out.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 AND THEY'RE OFF!

The men are on their feet in the stands.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Coming around the first turn Mama's
 Teacup in the lead, Sunshine on the
 Andes second, Plain White Doily
 third followed by My Sister Lisa!

Eugene, death-gripping a track form in one hand, waves the scarf in the air like a flag, screaming 'come-ons' through clenched teeth. Liam and the boys cheer for their horses.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Doily BURSTS ahead and she's neck
 and neck with Teacup!

HOOVES GRIND INTO THE MUD THRUM, THRUM, THRUM!

EUGENE
 Come on! Come on!

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 It's gonna be a close one, folks!

A HORSE'S BLACK ORB-LIKE EYES.

The pack zooms across the finish line.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And it's DOILY by a nose!

Eugene waves the scarf furiously, his champion's flag. Liam jumps up and down and hugs his brother.

LIAM
By a nose? She blasted 'em!

EUGENE
I knew it! I had a feeling. Didn't I tell ya I had a feeling?

LIAM
You did, Gene-y boy! You sure did!

EUGENE
I just knew it! Ha!

Liam holds out his racing program.

LIAM
Alright, what are you feeling, huh?
Odds are even on Waterloo and
Cherry Grove. Who you got?

Eugene clenches the scarf and concentrates.

EUGENE
It's Waterloo.

LIAM
Yeah?

EUGENE
Definitely. Sure thing.

LIAM
Great. Here's ten. Boys, you getting in on this?

BOYD
I got a fiver. Put me in, too!

LIAM
Tiny?

TINY
Nah, I'm bone dry!

LIAM
Alright, go on, let's make some dough!

Gene heads up the stairs.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Gene!

Gene turns.

LIAM (CONT'D)

(with a smile)

Don't let me down.

Eugene nods and waves before he turns and goes up the stairs.

INT. MCHALE CAR - LATER

Jerry and Rita are driving home. They have been riding in silence for a long time.

RITA

I think I'll go into the city tomorrow. Could you drop me at the station in the morning?

JERRY

I'll take the day. We can drive.

RITA

I think I'll like the train. It gives me time to think.

Jerry turns his eyes to the road.

INT. PHOTOBOOTH - DAY

Wyn on a bench in the photobooth. He is unsure of where to look for the camera. FLASH! The bright light blinds him.

EXT. PHOTOBOOTH - CONTINUOUS

The booth spits out the photo card.

INT. PHOTOBOOTH - DAY

Wyn puts his arm around an imaginary person next to him and smiles big. FLASH!

EXT. STREET - LATER

Bobby lowers his camera from his eye. Cigarette hanging out of his mouth. Waiting for lightning to strike twice. Reluctantly he snaps a picture of something dull. FLASH!

INT. PHOTOBOOTH

Wyn has his arm around a fake companion, pulls a kiss-face. FLASH!

EXT. STREET

POV CAMERA. THE SHUTTER CLOSES ONCE, TWICE.

Bobby doesn't even have the lens to his eye. He depresses the shutter again. FLASH!

INT. PHOTOBOOTH

Wyn makes a face of surprise! FLASH!

EXT. STREET

Bobby flicks his cigarette away. Then he opens the back of the camera, exposing the film, and violently tears out the whole ribbon. He leaves it on the ground as he walks away.

INT. PHOTOBOOTH

Wyn pretends to sleep. FLASH! Tongue out. FLASH! FLASH!

CUT TO:

BLACK AND WHITE NEWSREEL FOOTAGE

Film grain and pops of celluloid. Figure's movements are quick, jerky. A soundtrack of patriotic music. Wyn, in a fine suit surrounded by other men in fine suits, cuts a ribbon to flashbulbs and wild, muted claps. Large white text splashes across the screen: MAN ABOUT TOWN!

Wyn, in tux and tails, waves from the doors to a Broadway theater. Throngs of waving and screaming fans flank either side of the flashbulb-littered carpet.

ANNOUNCER

From Broadway to the beltway, he is
sweeping America with his charm.

Wyn stands before a large chalkboard with vast, detailed
algorithms. He is in the middle of a lecture to a crowd of
white-haired men.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

With brains...

Wyn, in climbing gear, walks vertically along a taut rope up
the side of a stage 'mountain' set.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

And with braun...

He salutes the camera.

Wyn is shaking the hands of a crowd of people, shirt sleeves
rolled up, in a Huey Long-esque political rally.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Wyn went from zero to hero in
record time!

Women in the audience scream, try to tear at his clothes.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Careful ladies, there's only one
gal this fella has his eye on.

Heeled feet gracefully descend a winding staircase.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

And here she comes. The darling
Evelyn McHale.

Evelyn. Elegant. She waves to the camera as she takes Wyn's
arm. The couple walks off.

They are on a beach at sunset, frolicking in the surf.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Look at them go! A couple to be
admired.

Evelyn calls out to him.

EVELYN

Wyn! Wyn!

He goes to her in the surf. It's like a movie moment.

WYN
Oh, darling!

They kiss passionately. She looks up at him.

EVELYN
Wyn!

It's not her voice...

EVELYN (CONT'D)
Wwyn!

When she speaks, it's the voice of Wyn's Mother we hear.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
Wyyyyyyyn!

The illusion crumbles and Wyn is thrown back into reality:

INT. WYN'S BEDROOM - EVENING

The final moments of "--yyyynnnn!" lingering from the living room as we watch Wyn lay the last veneer of glue over pieces and parts of pictures and ads rigged to look like the scenes we just saw in his newsreel: Evelyn and Wyn on a beach smiling. He sits back and takes in this bit of work, pleased. From here we can see other scenes he's created: holding her in his arms, kissing, him on top of a mountain with a flag, on a roller coaster with hands in the air.

WYN'S MOTHER (O.S.)
WYYYYYN!
Wyn - I have a chill!

Just as grating as usual, but her plaintive calls don't cut as before. This place of happiness he has now makes it easier. He grins.

WYN
Coming!

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

Shouldering his camera, Bobby shuffles up the stone steps of his village walk-up. He reaches the top floor, out of breath, and opens his door with a hard turn of the key and a push:

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

ALL
Surprise!

People surround in celebration. A perma-cloud of smoke in the room. Loud, thumping music cues. Bobby's picture is hung around the room like a banner, surrounding the space, inescapable. Bobby stands in sweaty shock and masked terror.

Hal comes from behind and slaps him on the back, Bobby reflexes with his first breath drawn since entering.

HAL
Congratulations ROBERT.

Bobby, slightly disoriented, manages a weak half-grin.

NEIL
Oh, yes, care for a beverage,
ROBERT, darling?

HAL
Are we all calling you Robert now?
Or just the fine people at *Life*?

Neil passes Bobby a drink. Bobby speaks but looks elsewhere.

BOBBY
Robert is my name.

NEIL
No, Robert is my FATHER's name.
(spotting someone)
Meryl, hey!

Neil hurries off.

HAL
Maybe I should switch majors again,
art parties are a gas.

Hal puts his arm over Bobby's shoulder and looks at Evelyn.

HAL (CONT'D)
It's a little morbid but I like it.

Hal knocks his glass in a toast, and drains the cheap liquor. Bobby rubs his forehead. Sweaty, anxious.

BOBBY
Beth here?

HAL
Yeah, somewhere. You want another?

Bobby grins, nods. Covering. He moves through the sea of people as if through mud. Wherever he goes, Evelyn hovers in the frame. He wants out, but doesn't want them to notice, so instead he nods, handshakes and gives in to the event.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Bobby stands alone in the crowd, his eyes are on Evelyn. Unsettling, smothering.

BETH (O.S.)

Bobby?

Bobby looks over to find Beth with SAL GOLDBERG (50s), her photography professor.

BETH (CONT'D)

This is Sal Goldberg. From the Photo League.

BOBBY

Hey.

He shakes his hand swiftly, nervous.

BETH

Sal really responded to your work, so I thought he should meet you.

SAL

Congratulations.

BOBBY

Thanks.

Beat.

BETH

Well - I'm sure you both have plenty to talk about. I'll go grab another drink.

She grins tightly and walks away.

SAL

Don't worry, I'm not here to register you for classes.

BOBBY

I wouldn't tell her that...

Beat.

SAL
You two met...?

BOBBY
She was taking pictures of some kids in the park. I was taking pictures of her...She nearly broke my camera.

Sal laughs, Bobby watches the ice in his glass swim.

SAL
It really is a fantastic photograph.

BOBBY
... someone at *Life* called it a 'masterpiece.'

SAL
We all establish the rule by which we are measured. Maybe that's why I photograph dance clubs in Harlem.

Beat.

SAL (CONT'D)
And how's the rest of it?

Bobby considers saying 'it's fine' but doesn't.

BOBBY
I can't get back to it. She trumps everything I do.

SAL
Old friend of mine worked for *Life* himself. War photographer. Always said, "If your picture isn't good enough, you aren't close enough." Immediacy, gets you what you want.

BOBBY
I should ask him for some pointers.

SAL
Can't. He stepped on a land mine while photographing the American advancement in Sicily.

They contemplate the photograph. Sal contemplates Bobby.

SAL (CONT'D)
Why did you take this picture?

BOBBY
The juxtapositi --

SAL
No. Wrong. Why?

Bobby searches.

BOBBY
The light on her --

SAL
Light, light, fuck the light. Why
HER?

BOBBY
There was beauty in--

SAL
Art isn't beauty, Bobby. Not good
art. Beauty is everywhere. Beauty
is shit. Beauty is on the bottom of
my shoe. Art is sex. Art is raw and
dirty. Needy, ravenous. You see
that person across the room and you
don't want dinner or butterfly
kisses or happily ever after. You
want to devour that person right
there up against the fucking wall
for everyone to see.
The woman in that photograph? That
isn't beauty. That's desire. You
wanted to have her--Needed to have
her--Couldn't live a moment longer
if you didn't. So you took her.
Your body said, "That. Here. Now."
And you acted. Animalistic... That.
Find that again. Don't run from it.
Don't be ashamed of it. Desire is
all you've got.

INT. WYN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

"A Little Bird Told Me" by Evelyn Knight plays.

Wyn wakes, a smile immediately comes to his lips.

He snaps on his suspenders.

He kisses the mural of Evelyn. "Have a good day, Sweetheart."

INT. WYN'S KITCHEN - LATER

WYN'S PLATE ON THE TABLE. PLOP. A MESS OF MUSH.

Hair combed, clothes pressed. Wyn smiles up at his mother.

WYN

Thank you, Mother.

He enthusiastically gobbles up his breakfast.

INT. STAIRWELL - LATER

Wyn climbs the stairs, now whistling, a bounce in his step.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - LATER

Wyn knocks rhythmically on a door.

INT. STAIRWELL - LATER

Wyn dances down the stairs. For a finish, he slides off the bannister.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Wyn is fixing a hinge on the front door. He sees the Woman and her Children from the previous scene charging for the door. He opens it with pomp and tips an imaginary hat.

WYN

Good afternoon.

She nods politely and guides the kids out the door. He beams.

WYN (CONT'D)

Sure is a lovely day, Mrs. Baldwin!

She casts a look back at him.

WYN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And she looked at me! Hand to God -

INT. WYN'S BEDROOM - LATER

WYN'S FACE, HE'S EATING HIS BOLOGNA SANDWICH.

WYN

- Like she'd never seen me in her life!

He takes a bite, chewing and gurgling with laughter.

WYN (CONT'D)
 Oh, and you know, I went up to old
 Mrs. Simcoe's place and talked to
 her about that dog...

We pull back to reveal that Wyn is conversing with a diorama
 of his dreams. Dramatic scenes between her picture and his.

WYN (CONT'D)
 I know! The gall!

INT. WYN'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Wyn's Mother presses her ear against the door. She can hear
 Wyn's muffled speech. Then a loud, booming laugh. She brings
 her hand to her mouth in concern. Who is he talking to?

INT. WYN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Finishing his lunch, he stands up and shakes off crumbs.

WYN
 Alright, darling, I'll be back in
 time for supper.

He grabs his toolbox off his bed, but stays rooted in place,
 looking at her. Tremendous joy forces a smile.

WYN (CONT'D)
 I love you.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Jerry pulls up to the station entrance. Rita pecks him on the
 cheek and hops out of the car.

RITA
 See you tonight.

She shuts the door and Jerry watches her enter the station.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - LATER

Rita waits on a sofa in a flowery parlour. A large
 grandfather clock ticks in the corner.

MR. WAITE, a pudgy, kind, soft-spoken man in his 40s wearing an immaculate suit, sets a small cardboard box on the table before Rita. Evelyn's ashes. It seems to loom over her. Something she's been saddled with. Mr. Waite presents her with some documents.

MR. WAITE
Please sign here--

She does, always keeping an eye on that box.

MR. WAITE (CONT'D)
--and here--

She does.

MR. WAITE (CONT'D)
--and one more time.

She does. Mr. Waite takes the pen from her hand.

MR. WAITE (CONT'D)
Thank you, Mrs. McHale.

No reply.

MR. WAITE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry for your loss.

INT. ELEVATED TRAIN CAR - LATER

Rita sits in the rumbling train and bumps along with the other passengers, all tightly packed in the hot car. She tries to keep the box on her lap steady and protected.

INT. KITAB ENGRAVING CO. - DAY

The ticks and sparks of metal engraving machines, phones ringing and the easy mill of workers buzzing in their hive. Rita enters through the large doorway and doesn't fully approach the reception desk, she looks around, unsure. The box is tucked under her sweaty arm. JONAH, a short man in his 20s, mops in the lobby. He notices Rita.

JONAH
Has anyone helped you?

RITA
Sorry? Oh. No, not yet.

JONAH

Don't be nice. These guys are lazy.
What can I help you with?

RITA

Oh.

She takes a step closer.

RITA (CONT'D)

I'm Rita McHale.
I came for Evelyn's things.

INT. KITAB ENGRAVING CO. - EVEYLN'S DESK - MOMENTS LATER

JONAH

Shouldn't be anything but hers in
that desk, so feel free to...

He gestures to indicate that she should feel at home.

RITA

Thank you.

She sits at the desk. Beat. She looks back at him and grins politely. He gets the hint.

JONAH

I'll be up front.

He exits. She opens a drawer and peers in. A few rubber bands, pencils. She opens the drawer below. Files and steno pads. She opens a pad. Dictation here and there, but some pages have elaborate drawings of palm trees, bloodshot eyes, a shopping list. Stuffed inside is a tear-out magazine recipe for a garishly decorated birthday cake. She lingers on it.

Rita hears sharp clanging of pots and pans behind her. She turns to look, suddenly, before us is:

INT. MCHALE HOUSE - ENTRY/KITCHEN - EVENING - A FEW DAYS AGO

POV RITA. ENTERING HER HOME, A CLAMOR OF PANS AND CUPBOARDS OPENING IN THE KITCHEN STEPS AHEAD. SHE SLOWLY INCHES CLOSE, GRABBING AN UMBRELLA FROM THE HAT STAND ON HER WAY.

In the kitchen, cupboard doors are flung open and items are askew. Pots, pans, bowls, discarded batter. A complete mess. Someone is bent down, rummaging around in a low cabinet.

RITA

Who's there? Come out!

Evelyn stands, bag of flour in hand.

EVELYN

Oh. Hello, Rita.

She upends the bag of flour into a giant bowl. Flour goes EVERYWHERE. Rita gives a yell and her hands go to her mouth.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

Are baking soda and baking powder the same thing? The recipe calls for powder but you don't have any in the house.

Rita moves into her kitchen as if she's witnessed a gruesome crime scene. She seethes, fighting to keep it together. But she won't let Evelyn get to her. Not this time...

EVELYN (CONT'D)

It just never looks like the picture, I don't understand. And the last one was really good but I forgot to grease the pan so, and I tried to cut it out but just made it worse. Do you have any more shortening?

She approaches Evelyn, struggling to stay calm.

RITA

Evelyn. Stop it right now.

EVELYN

I have to finish this.

RITA

Just get out of the way. Please.

EVELYN

(reading from the book)
"Add eggs, milk, vanilla, and oil. Mix thoroughly for two to three minutes."

She starts to whisk, counting to herself.

RITA

I have a whole cupboard full of boxed mixes. We can just start over.

EVELYN
I don't want to use the box.

RITA
It's so easy. Really.

EVELYN
But I don't want to use the box.

RITA
Look at the mess you've made!

EVELYN
I'm trying to count.

RITA
This place is a disaster! This is unacceptable.

EVELYN
(counting to herself)
20, 21, 22...

RITA
Please, just--Evelyn.

EVELYN
It has to be perfect. I want to make it perfect.

RITA
I'll help you make it perfect just put down the bowl.

EVELYN
You made me lose count!

RITA
Put it down!

EVELYN
I don't want to use the box, Rita. Leave me alone!

She tries to count again.

RITA
I mean it! Put it down! Right now!

EVELYN
I don't WANT to use the box! I don't want to use the box, Rita! I want to make him a cake. I want to MAKE it, okay? I want to MAKE it!
(MORE)

EVELYN (CONT'D)

I want to make the cake. Please.
Rita. Please...

Evelyn's explosion stuns Rita. With eerie calm, she continues:

EVELYN (CONT'D)

30...30?...30.
(Yes! She stirs.)
31, 32, 33, 34...
(no, that's not right.)
45?...No.
Where was I? Rita? Where was I?...

Rita looks on in horrified silence. In her mind, Evelyn tries to find her spot. She goes over her motions, as if walking through her day to find the lost item. Frantic eyes, lips working over the equation. So close! I was so close! Without warning she throws the bowl to the floor in frustration. Batter flies, the utensils clatter to the tile. After a long, tense moment, Rita stoops down and picks up the bowl, whisk, and puts them in the overflowing sink.

RITA

(stern, like a mother)
This is unacceptable.
Evelyn?
This is unacceptable.
Look at yourself. You are behaving
like a child.

EVELYN

Then you must be thrilled to
finally have one in the house.

It hits Rita in the gut. Hurt, embarrassed, she turns on her heels and flees stoically to her room.

A passing sound of YOUNG SECRETARIES giggling...

INT. KITAB ENGRAVING CO. - EVELYN'S DESK - DAY

Rita, alerted from her memory, shuts the drawer. She has a view of the elevator from her seat. She watches people get on, get off. A man and a woman pass smiling conspiratorially.

EXT. NYC STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Rita comes out of the building carrying the ashes and another cardboard box with all of Evelyn's things. She walks to a garbage can on the corner and stuffs the box of Evelyn's things inside. She stares at it for a moment.

DAISY (O.S.)
Rita! Rita Mchale!

Rita looks up to see a cab pulling to the curb. Daisy is waving and halloo-ing from the open window.

DAISY (CONT'D)
Halloo!

The cab stops beside Rita. She turns to spot the woman hanging out the window and waving.

DAISY (CONT'D)
Rita, dear, my Lord! How are you?

RITA
Daisy, hello.

DAISY
I said, "Is that her? Well, it can't be." But sure enough!

RITA
(disingenuously)
Good to see you.

DAISY
Where are you going to, dear?

RITA
Just uptown a bit--

DAISY
Well get in, get in, I'll take you.

RITA
No, really I can use the air.

DAISY
I insist please, please get in.

Daisy is out of the cab, shoving Rita inside. Rita relents.

DAISY (CONT'D)
There now, isn't that so much better. Driver?

Daisy nods to the driver, as if she's in a town car and the cab continues.

DAISY (CONT'D)
I swear, when Melora Burton showed me the *Post* I said "It couldn't possibly be!"
(MORE)

DAISY (CONT'D)

It can't possibly!" But oh you poor dear, you poor dear. I'm so sorry.

RITA

Thank you.

DAISY

Tell me. Tell me everything please, I'm an open book.

RITA

I appreciate that Daisy, I do, but--

DAISY

Well it's the least I can do, isn't it? I mean, honestly, in times of tragedy such as this we really must be there for each other, we simply must. Don't you agree?

RITA

That's very kind--

DAISY

Yes yes, of course, of course, it's nothing, really.

RITA

But--

DAISY

It's so terrible I don't even know what to say. How is Gary?

RITA

Jerry.

DAISY

Yes, Jerry. How silly of me. How is he?

RITA

He's taking it very hard.

DAISY

Of course he is, no question. And what about the police? What have they told you?

RITA

What do you mean?

DAISY

About the investigation. Is there any suspicion of foul play?

RITA

Foul play? Why--

DAISY

Well, that mysterious fiancée of hers, the young man.

RITA

Oh, Daisy --

DAISY

Something must have been going on there, no? Perhaps an affair? Have they questioned him?

RITA

I don't know, I--

DAISY

I mean, to do something like that. Who knows what was really going on?

RITA

You can't believe everything you read in the papers.

DAISY

Rita, they wouldn't print it if it weren't true--

Rita scoffs. Beat. Daisy soldiers on.

DAISY (CONT'D)

But you must be so exhausted, dealing with all of this. You hear so much about trauma from the war and all that, but to think it could lead to this. My word. You know, Orin and I went to see that glorious picture, that one about the soldiers, you know the one. That man with the hooks! How horrible! And I was so moved by it, Rita dear, I was in a funk for days. Honestly! And what those women go through taking care of those men. Oh! The sadness. The loneliness.

(MORE)

DAISY (CONT'D)

My dear friend Bessie Fishman told me her husband won't put down the bottle, just drowns himself in it. Can you believe it? She doesn't know what to do. She... Oh...

Daisy looks dramatically out the window, up at the buildings.

DAISY (CONT'D)

She must have felt so alone. No one to talk to. So trapped, I can't imagine. What she must have gone through. Can you? I mean, really, can you?

RITA

What are you talking about?

DAISY

I'm sorry?

RITA

All this blathering. What the hell are you talking about?

DAISY

I see you're very upset.

RITA

Of course I'm upset.

DAISY

But there's no need to be rude about it.

RITA

I need to get out of here.

DAISY

There isn't!

RITA

I need to get out of here. I need to get out of this cab.

DAISY

I'm only trying to--

RITA

Let me out!

DAISY

Rita!

RITA

Let me out! Let me out! Let me out!

DAISY

Have you gone bonkers!

RITA

Let me out! Let me out! Let me out!

DAISY

(to the driver)

Pull over, goddamnit!

Rita screams until the cab pulls over. She climbs over Daisy to get out, and slams the door behind her. Rita smooths her skirt, calming herself. Daisy stares, Rita turns to look at her and Daisy signals the driver to go. Rita seethes on the sidewalk, then continues walking, her dress akimbo over her swollen, sweaty body, box of ashes in her arms.

The CLICKing of a roulette wheel...

INT. NIGHT CLUB - EVENING

SPINNING ROULETTE WHEEL. "WHEEL OF FORTUNE" SUNG BY A BEAUTIFUL CABARET PERFORMER RINGS OUT. THE WHITE BALL JUMPS AND ROLLS IN THE SPOKES UNTIL IT LANDS ON RED 23.

A CHEER explodes from the roulette crowd. The croupier smacks the marker on the winning number and slides a large pile of chips to the winner: Eugene. He is sweaty and smiling. Liam has his arm around him. They are flanked by women. He kisses his lucky scarf then places another bet. The wheel spins.

Cheers as we snake through lamp-lit tables of dapper boys and girls about town. Moving past the stage we see the striking beauty as she croons and sways in a gold lamé gown, flowers in her hair. It is a smoke-hazed playground.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - LATER

The gang--Eugene, Liam, Boyd, and Tiny--is in a corner booth with ladies draped across their laps. They are posing as a beautiful young CAMERA GIRL takes their picture.

CAMERA GIRL

Cheeeeeeeese!

The camera flashes. Gene gives her some cash and a wink.

LIAM

Thanks, Doll. You bring that back
yourself, you hear?

She smiles, takes the money, and bounces off. Liam watches.

LIAM (CONT'D)

That, gents, is a fine piece.

BOYD

So what's next, Gene? Slots?
Blackjack? Little back room poker?

EUGENE

Nah, I'm played out for the night,
fellas.

LIAM

Come on, Gene, don't go! We're just
getting started.

EUGENE

It's late. Mona's waiting.

LIAM

Well we wouldn't want Mona waiting,
would we?

EUGENE

Come on, Liam.

LIAM

She runs roughshod over ya! Telling
you what to do, when to come home!
That ain't no way to live!

EUGENE

Nah, she's a good woman.

BOYD

You're the man of the house, Gene.
She can't forget that.

TINY

Gotta exert your dominance. Like in
the wild.

EUGENE

I don't think that'd go too well.

LIAM

Don't you wanna have fun, Gene?
Don't you wanna let loose? Don't
you wanna LIVE!?

EUGENE

I think I've lived more these past few days than in my entire life.

Liam winks and raises a glass.

LIAM

You're welcome.

EUGENE

It's been a real blast.

LIAM

If you're interested in living a little longer, I got a proposition for you. You'd make some real REAL dough, none of this felted-table small-time shit.

EUGENE

(suspicious)

What're we talking about here?

LIAM

Look, it ain't been easy since I got back. The shop just doesn't cut it, and all the guys who didn't ship out in '41've got seniority. So, me and guys we've been moving some merchandise for a few extra pennies. Nothing big.

Liam leans in conspiratorially.

LIAM (CONT'D)

But I just knew there was more water at the well. So I started asking around, and boy oh boy have I got the tip, Gene.

EUGENE

I'm not sure I like where this is heading.

LIAM

See, there's these boats, small ones, slip in real early before the traffic gets in. And they're loaded. Loaded, Gene. They got deals with the shoremen to store the goods for a night, a day, and then a few wise guys come by, get the stuff -- on their merry way.

EUGENE

Wise guys? Are we talking about
what I think we are talking about?

LIAM

Hey, wait wait, hear me out. I
figure -- what's it to those guys
if they're missing a peck or two of
pears, am I right? Load like that?
Won't even miss 'em. We hit the
take early, before these guido
middlemen get involved, then WE
sell direct. One-hundred percent
profit.

EUGENE

So you want to steal?

LIAM

Stealing from thieves, Gene-y!
Ain't hurting anybody who don't
deserve it anyway.

EUGENE

Aw, Kid. I dunno. I can't be
getting wrapped up in that.

Liam puts his arm around Gene's shoulder. "Trust me."

LIAM

Look, I know you got those pesky
morals--

EUGENE

And my job.

LIAM

Come on, don't pretend the entire
force don't dip its greasy hand
into the cookie jar.

EUGENE

This all sounds--

LIAM

It's all planned out perfect. To
the T. Besides, that late? Won't
anybody even be there. We move in,
cover of darkness, take the stuff,
by morning we're rolling in wealth!

EUGENE

I dunno.

LIAM

Come on, Gene-y. We're brothers,
ain't we? I'm asking for your help
on this.

EUGENE

It's just--

LIAM

You gonna make me beg?

EUGENE

No.

LIAM

Please don't make me beg.

EUGENE

Look, if you've got trouble I can
give you money.

LIAM

(suddenly serious)
I don't want your money.

EUGENE

Come on, Kid--

LIAM

(forceful)
I don't want your money, I want MY
money, Gene. MY money, what's owed
ME. I almost gave my life for this
fuckin country and what's it given
back, huh? Bullet in my side and
what? When do I get what's owed?
You and Patrick and Bernie, all the
girls, you got it all, all you
could want, life of luxury.
Married. House. But me? Fuckin
nothin. I want it. I want what's
mine. Well, being over there taught
me something. Taught me, anything
that's yours in this life, the
world ain't gonna hand it to you.
You gotta claim it, Gene. You gotta
take what's yours. Now you gonna
help me or not?

Gene looks at him, concerned.

EUGENE

Just me and you?

LIAM

You and me. And the boys.

The boys look on, apes observing the scene.

LIAM (CONT'D)

You're my brother, Gene. I can't do this without you.

Eugene grips the scarf in his hand and sees the need in his brother's face.

EUGENE

Yeah. Yeah, alright. I'm in.

LIAM

That's it! That's my boy! The Queely Brothers back again! See fellas, did I tell ya or did I tell ya?

Cheers and raised glasses and slaps on the back.

LIAM (CONT'D)

(signaling to the waiter)

Hey Jeeves! Another round for the table!

Liam notices Eugene is looking worried.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Don't you worry, brother! All this is on the up and up.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE/BUILDING ROOF - NIGHT

Inside the apartment a party rages, but Hal and Bobby are climbing out the window onto the fire escape. As they climb, Hal waxes poetically. He is drunk. He is high. Excited.

HAL

(climbing out the window)

Because our desires are what MOVE us! You see a beautiful woman, you go to her, you see a hefty broad, you stay back. But it's all relative, see? Good, bad, desire changes from me to you to him and her! Maybe you're into that hefty broad. Maybe you're into the hefty broad's mother! Who knows?

They climb up the ladder and land on the roof.

HAL (CONT'D)
 (screaming)
 "That which men desire they are
 said to love. So that desire and
 love--"

Want. Desire. Deliberately Bobby raises his camera. He focuses the lens. Hal is talking. CLICK.

HAL (CONT'D)
 (irritation dulled by
 drink)
 Goddamnit what the hell?

Bobby peeks at him over his camera.

BOBBY
 Sorry, I couldn't help it.

HAL
 Can you ever just listen? Can you---

CLICK.

HAL (CONT'D)
 Come on now.

BOBBY
 Keep talking.

HAL
 Knock it off.

BOBBY
 Keep talking.

Hal gives an annoyed "Really?" glare. CLICK.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 That was a good one.

Bobby moves around him.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 Tell me more about desire.

CLICK. Hal stares at him as if it's all a joke.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 Come on. Tell me.

Hal relents.

HAL
Ugh. Well. Where was I?

CLICK.

 BOBBY
Desire and love.

 HAL
Right. Desire and love are the same
thing, see? Except desire is--

CLICK. It becomes a photo shoot. CLICK.

 BOBBY
Turn your head that way, toward the
light.

 HAL
--desire is the absence of the
object. Or something.

He leans against the wall and drunkenly poses. CLICK.

 BOBBY
Take a drag off your cigarette.

Hal follows Bobby's instructions. CLICK.

 BOBBY (CONT'D)
Exhale.

Hal does. CLICK. Bobby is alive. He is giving Hal
instructions and the two continue their dance. Rapid fire,
passion, excited laughs. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. Close on the
camera, hands, eyes, lips, smoke spinning in the air, the
burning nub of a cigarette.

 HAL
But I like the guy that says love
and JOY are the same thing. Except
external.
Because...well, when you feel joy,
it's you moving to greater
perfection. But joy for something
outside you? That's love.
Like, I feel joy for this
cigarette. This cigarette makes me
a better man. So I LOVE this
cigarette. I mean, I REEEEEALLY love
this cigarette.

He takes a heavy drag on the cigarette. Relishes it.

BOBBY
 (comprehending)
 We love the thing that makes us a
 more perfect human being.

Hal smirks and points at him, "You got it." CLICK. CLICK.
 CLICK. The roll is done.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 That's the roll.

HAL
 (the word makes him smile)
 Roooooooll.

They share a boozy smile. Hal is staring at Bobby.

HAL (CONT'D)
 You're gonna be famous, you know
 that? Everyone is gonna know your
 picture, Bobby. Everyone's gonna
 know you. You're gonna be famous.
 Everyone's gonna know your na--

Bobby kisses him. Hal freezes. Both men afraid to move,
 afraid of what a move would mean. Break the kiss? Escalate
 it? Hal almost...almost...he relents. Electricity. Then he
 puts his hand up and pushes Bobby away.

HAL (CONT'D)
 Don't do that.

Beat.

HAL (CONT'D)
 Bobby?

BOBBY
 I'm sorry.

HAL
 You can't do that.

Bobby nods.

HAL (CONT'D)
 You can't do that.

BOBBY
 I'm sorry. I.
 (a shake of the head and a
 little laugh)
 Drunk.

They stay close, nearly forehead to forehead, as if they almost might kiss again. A long time seems to pass.

HAL

I'm gonna go back to the party now.

Hal leaves. Bobby is alone. He barely moves from the position he was in, as if Hal was just erased from the scene. He clutches the camera, the photos that are within.

INT. EUGENE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Emerging from his bedroom, Eugene is wrapped in a large raincoat, holding the collar tight at his throat. Tiptoeing down the hall toward the door...but Mona, in her pink housecoat, is standing in front.

MONA

Going somewhere?

EUGENE

Out.

MONA

Out where? It's the middle of the night!

EUGENE

I'm just helping my brother.

MONA

OH-kay, your brother. Well, I don't know what brand of crazy the two of you've cooked up but don't come to me when it all goes to shit.

EUGENE

Fine.

MONA

I ain't bailing you out, Gene.

EUGENE

I heard you already!

MONA

Who is this person? Really, who is this man in my house? It's not my husband. This is... some, some selfish --

EUGENE

This is me ALIVE goddammit!
Remember that? Remember what that
feels like?

MONA

What are you even talking about?

EUGENE

You know exactly! I can't waste
away in this tomb. No. I'm going
out there, I'm going out and
helping my brother and everything
will be fine.

MONA

Oh sure, sure, fine, Fine! Always
the same. It's gonna be fine!

EUGENE

How can you *possibly* know it won't?

MONA

(spits it at him)
"Nothin bad'll happen." Right?

Eugene stops.

MONA (CONT'D)

"Don't worry, Ma. Nothin bad'll
happen. Back by Christmas."

He grimaces back a retort.

MONA (CONT'D)

I know some things.

EUGENE

Got the whole world figured? You
predict the weather too?

MONA

No, Gene, but I read the forecast.

He breaks her stare and steps past her to open the door.

MONA (CONT'D)

You go out that door -

EUGENE

And what? What?
Go ahead.
You don't need me around here,
anyway. What for?

(MORE)

EUGENE (CONT'D)

My life hasn't shrunk to the size
of these walls.

MONA

Then throw it away for all I care.

Fine, then! Eugene turns and swiftly exits to the stairs.

INT. PENN STATION - EARLY EVENING

Men in suits and hats, women in fancy attire, kids wailing. Rita's hair has fallen from its set curls. Towering over her is the Arrivals/Departures board. She scans the town names.

HER HANDS CLUTCH THE BOX OF ASHES.

INT. TRAIN CAR - EARLY EVENING

Rita settles into a window seat, placing the box of Evelyn next to her.

EVELYN'S ADDRESS BOOK. THE PHOTO OF TED AND EVELYN. TED'S ADDRESS ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE.

She closes the address book as the train jolts and begins to chug along. She closes her eyes for a moment, gaining composure. She opens her eyes and then spies something.

A SMALL HOLE IN THE SEAM OF THE SEAT IN FRONT OF HER. A BIT OF LOOSE THREAD AND STUFFING.

Rita eyes it with curiosity.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM/DARK ROOM - LATER

Bobby flips on the light. He is still a little drunk, or hung over, or both? Dazed. Deliberate. Without the hurried excitement of the last development series. He puts down his camera. He sets up the chemicals. He picks up the camera. He shuts off the light.

INT. WYN'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Wyn enters the front door, whistling a chirpy tune.

WYN

Evening, mother!

He waves to his mother as he passes her sitting in the living room, devotedly listening to her radio thriller program. She doesn't look his way or call out to him. She sits still, hands folded and gripped tight to each other in her lap. Her eyes follow the sound of his walking to his bedroom.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM/DARK ROOM - LATER

Bobby turns on the light. He is running tap water into the film can. He shuts off the water. He drains the can. He cracks it open. Here will be the pictures of Hal: energetic and erotic and lustful. He takes out the film roll. It drips.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM/DARK ROOM

Bobby holds the end of the film as it unrolls. He examines the pictures. His face: concern. Then horror.

THE SHOTS ARE USELESS. EACH IMAGE IS DISTORTED. FOGGY OR WARPED. HAL'S FORM IS MISSHAPEN. BLOTCHES ON HIS FACE. UNFOCUSED SHOTS.

INT. WYN'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Still whistling, Wyn opens his bedroom door and -- it's blank, white, stripped. Hard push into the room, a disorienting immensity to the white. Wyn steps in slowly, horrified, his heart beating into his throat. She's gone. All gone. He could rip out his hair, he could scream, he could upend the entire room. All this bubbles and steams in his overcooked head. Gone. Gone.

Mother.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM/DARK ROOM

BOBBY

No. Please.

Bobby panics. He scours the roll for one usable frame.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Pleeeeee. Please please please
please please please please PLEASE!

INT. WYN'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

WYN

Mother!

Seething, Wyn barrels down the hallway to the living room. He hovers heaving in the doorway, every muscle tensed.

WYN'S MOTHER

Yes?

Beat.

WYN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

What is it?

He sets his jaw. His lips flutter, words escape his anger.

WYN

Nothing.

She looks at him. He's broken.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT

Bobby throws the roll. He throws the canister. He slinks down the wall to the floor, head in his hands. He looks up at the large banner of Evelyn leftover from the party.

BOBBY

(to Evelyn)

So? What next?

INT. WYN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wyn closes his door and sits on the edge of his bed.

Water laps, gulls call and we're brought onto:

EXT. DOCKS - 3AM

Eugene, Liam, Boyd, and Tiny hide behind a large pile of shipping crates and watch from afar as two workers begin to unload cargo from a small vessel.

EUGENE

You said nobody'd be here.

LIAM

'Salright, Gene-y. We're twice their size. Besides, we got your lucky charm, right? We'll be fine.

Instinctively, Gene feels for the scarf in his pocket. Nothing. Panicking, he fishes for it, tries the other pocket. Nothing. Nervous and scared of his error, he keeps quiet.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Change of plans, boys. Tiny, give him a piece.

Tiny reaches into his coat and pulls out a pistol. He offers it to Eugene.

EUGENE

What's this?

LIAM

It's a pistol. You never seen a pistol before?

EUGENE

For what?

LIAM

We're just gonna scare 'em a little. Done this plenty of times.

Eugene gives him a look: "You have?"

LIAM (CONT'D)

Take the gun.

EUGENE

No, no I can't.

BOYD

Take the gun, Gene.

TINY

We'd all feel better if you take the gun.

Eugene caves. He takes the gun. As Liam, Boyd, and Tiny draw their weapons, Eugene shoves his into his waistband. Liam slides in a clip.

LIAM

Let's go.

EXT. DOCKS - MOMENTS LATER

With weapons drawn, the gang marches with purpose down the worn wood docks towards the fishing boat.

Liam takes a small lead in front of the boys. They reach the semi-hidden corridor between ship and warehouse.

LIAM

Alright! Hands in the air!

The two men on the boat stop and stare at the gang.

LIAM (CONT'D)

C'mon! Put 'em up!

BOAT MAN 1 and BOAT MAN 2 slowly put up their hands. The two workers, in dungarees, boots and work gloves, in a state of fear and confusion. They are small, old Italian immigrants.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Nobody try any funny business and this'll go smooth as silk.

The Boat Men look at each other. Liam turns to Eugene.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Alright. Keep watch.
(to Liam and Boyd)
Fellas?

Liam, Boyd, and Tiny step aboard the boat while Eugene stays on the dock. The action on the boat is only steps away from Gene's position. He looks on nervously. Liam is talking to the two men, who seem confused. He taps Boat Man 1 with his gun and indicates he go to the unopened crates on deck. He doesn't move, so Franky and Liam drag him over there.

Liam picks up a crow bar laying on top of a crate and shoves it at Boat Man 1. Then he points his gun at his head.

The man, scared, shakes like a leaf. Tiny gives him a shove as Liam yells:

LIAM (CONT'D)

Open the box!

Boat Man 1 pries the lid off the crate. Liam peeks inside. Bulbous-eyed fish packed in ice. He's confused.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Open that one!

Boat Man 1 pries off another lid. More fish. Liam shoves in his arm and digs around. Nothing. Now he's pissed.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Where's the stuff?

The men, confused, clearly don't speak English.

BOAT MAN 1
Stuff?

LIAM
The stuff! The dope! Where's the
dope!

Boat Man 1 looks to Boat Man 2, he speaks to him in Italian.

EUGENE
(calling from the dock)
What's going on?

LIAM
Quiet!

Liam storms to Boat Man 2. He pulls the slide on his pistol to load the chamber.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Where?!

BOAT MAN 2
(terrified)
Fish only!

LIAM
Don't lie to me!

BOYD
What's goin' on, Boss?

EUGENE
Liam!

Liam is panicking. He swings around to Eugene.

LIAM
We got your charm, we got that
goddamn scarf, this shouldn't be
happening.

EUGENE
(an apology)
I don't have it.

LIAM

What?

EUGENE

I'm sorry, kid, I --

LIAM

How could you be so stupid? One thing. One thing to do and you screw it up!

EUGENE

You didn't tell me to bring it!

LIAM

Why the fuck else would you be here?

Gut punch to Gene. Liam tries to think, licks his lips, scratches his head with the butt of the gun. A decision.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Alright. Empty your pockets.

Boat Man 2 does not understand and says something in Italian. Liam whacks him with his pistol. Gene's hands shoot up to his head, startled and scared. He looks around, panicking.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Empty your fucking pockets!

EUGENE

Liam! Stop this! Let's just go!

Liam ignores him. The man falls to his knees, blood trickles down his head. Liam and Boyd dig into his pockets. They pull out a meagre find. Liam shoves it into his own coat. Gene watches as Liam does the same to Boat Man 1. Gene mutters 'Jesus, Jesus, Jesus' under his breath, the world spins.

IN LIAM'S HAND A PATHETIC BUNDLE OF A COUPLE NICKELS, A CANDY WRAPPER AND A PEWTER MEDAL WITH THE IMAGE OF ST. JOSEPH HOLDING BABY JESUS AND THE PHRASE "ST. JOSEPH PRAY FOR US".

LIAM

SHIT!

Liam kicks over a crate. Ice and fish spray over the deck. Suddenly, Boat Man 1 raises the crowbar he's kept with him and smashes it down on Tiny's outstretched gun arm. CRACK!

Tiny SCREAMS, his gun BLASTS, a bullet ricochets off the ground. Eugene hits the deck.

Boat Man 1 swings the crow bar at Liam, who dodges it but slips on a chunk of ice. Boat Man 1 jumps to the dock, racing into the shadows. Boat Man 2 tries to run but Boyd tackles him. Liam rises to his hands and knees and fires two poorly-aimed shots after him.

EUGENE
Stop goddammit!

TINY
My fucking arm!

Boyd beats on Boat Man 2. Sirens in the distance. Eugene spins.

EUGENE
Liam, we gotta go! Now!

Liam gives a swift kick to the man on the deck. Franky joins in. Eugene looks on, disturbed, powerless. Sirens grow.

BANG! A gunshot! The men freeze. They look over to see Eugene standing with pistol in the air, smoke leaking from the barrel. He lowers it on them.

EUGENE (CONT'D)
That's enough!

LIAM
Gene...

EUGENE
That's enough. Let's go.

Eugene stares down Liam, then pulls the gun's hammer. Click.

LIAM
Alright, boys. That's it. Let's go.

Eugene lowers his gun but keeps it at the ready as they slump off the boat. Liam stops to meet Eugene's eyes, full of disgust. Eugene breaks the stare, turns, and tosses the gun into the murky drink. Sirens blare.

BOYD
(beginning to run for it)
Liam! We gotta get outta here!

Tiny pulls on Liam, his eyes lingering on his brother as they start to pull him away.

LIAM
You better run, Gene.

Liam and the boys take off. Gene has nowhere else to go but run too, trying to reach the main gate. They round a corner and suddenly BRIGHT LIGHTS blaze! A line of police cars, officers with guns drawn.

OFFICER
Freeze! Nobody move!

Liam, Eugene and the men freeze. Busted.

INT. PRIVATE RESIDENCE, EASTON PA - EVENING

POP! A champagne cork flies and the bottle foams to great cheers. Ted Weems' 'Heartaches' plays. Catching the bubbly liquor comes one glass after another.

Ted pulls Evelyn along by the hand as they weave through a clump of guests. Anthony, Tabitha, JOHN, Ted's father, and JANE, his mother, greet them. Evelyn's surrounded.

ANTHONY
Birthday Boy!

TABITHA
Hope you made a good wish!

Ted brings his hand, still clasped to Evelyn's, up to his chest, pecking her on the knuckles.

TED
Sure did.

TABITHA
Let me guess - twins?

Jane giggles, Anthony fake-punches Ted in the arm.

TED
One kid at a time sounds good to me.

JANE
Well as long as I finally have a granddaughter I can spoil rotten.

TED
Odds are that at least one of them will be, Ma.

Ted, laughing, turns to Evelyn, but she looks blank.

TABITHA
Did everyone try Evelyn's cake?

TED

She didn't do too bad, did she?

JANE

Give her to me for a few days and we'll have her shipshape in the kitchen, won't we Evelyn?

JOHN

She can give you girls a helping hand with Thanksgiving this year.

JANE

I'll say!

EVELYN

It's not real.

TABITHA

What's that, dear?

EVELYN

(louder)

The cake is from a box. It's not real.

A few nervous laughs, Tabitha jumps in:

TABITHA

And you can't even tell! I can't imagine what they'll come up with next. It makes being a woman a whole lot easier than your time, Mother, wouldn't you say?

Evelyn attempts a smile. They continue talking. She looks for Ted's eyes, he squeezes her hand reassuringly.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

Say, Evelyn, do you have your Maid of Honor yet?

Evelyn shakes her head, but the conversation barrels on.

JOHN

You can count on me to give you away good and proper, sweetheart.

John winks at her. Tabitha and Jane smile wide.

JANE

Are you going to settle in Philadelphia or back in the city?

TED
We were thinking Chicago.

Evelyn shoots him a confused look: 'We were?'

TABITHA
So far away!

ANTHONY
Tabby...

TED
They have great neighborhoods out there for us. Lots of growth. Good schools.

JOHN
The Moses effect is everywhere.

TED
Sure is, Dad. Sure is.

Ted brings up Evelyn's hand and taps it lovingly, he looks down to cast her a smile but she is staring straight ahead, dazed. The sounds of the party surround as he focuses in on her. He's about to speak to her when an errant arm brushes past and knocks a plate out of her hand. It SHATTERS on the floor and she jumps, her attention drawn to the spray of shards at her feet. She doesn't move, she's somewhere else.

TED (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Evelyn?

Nothing.

TED (CONT'D)
Evelyn.

Nothing. He jostles her a bit, waking her. She's back in the room. She looks at him, embarrassed, tears tempting to fall.

EVELYN
(quiet)
I'm sorry.

Her eyes break from him and quickly she stoops to pick up the shards littering the floor, her hands trembling.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

TABITHA
That's okay! Why don't I help you?

Before she can bend down, Evelyn says:

EVELYN

No, no, it's fine! I'll do it.

She scoops together all the pieces she can and hurries off, pushing through the crowd. Ted watches her go. Slowly he turns back to them and cracks a joke to recover the mood.

INT. PRIVATE RESIDENCE - EASTON PA - LATER

Ted stands awkwardly by the refreshment table, unsure of what to do with himself. Evelyn swans in, catching his attention.

EVELYN

Phew. That's better. Too much champagne!

Evelyn kisses Ted on the cheek and takes his hand.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

Let's dance. Shall we?

He doesn't move. 'Should he?', his eyes ask her. She smiles reassuringly, as if to say "I'm fine." And so he chooses to believe her. He pulls her close and they dance.

INT. WYN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Wyn wakes to a bare, lonely cave. He stares at the ceiling.

INT. WYN'S KITCHEN - LATER

WYN'S PLATE ON THE TABLE. A MESS OF MUSH PLOPS ONTO THE DISH.

Wyn, disheveled, hair uncombed, eyes the mush. Despondent.

INT. WYN'S APARTMENT BUILDING LATER

Wyn stands forlorn at the bottom of the staircase looking up. He has to climb all those? Again? What's the point?

Reverse, looking down the stairs at Wyn. He seems so insignificant. He exhales in resignation.

INT. APARTMENT BOILER ROOM - LATER

Wyn eats a bologna sandwich, huddled on a crate next to the boiler. Eyes blank, jaw moving as a sheep chewing cud.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - LATER

Wyn, carrying his toolbox, faces an apartment door. Knock knock. After a moment, the door opens: It's Mona.

MONA

Well, it's about time.

WYN

Mrs. Queely.

MONA

Don't give me that. I have been on you for weeks to get up here and do something. We pay our rent, on time, every week, so I expect some courtesy from you, sir.

WYN

Yes, ma'am.

MONA

"Yes, ma'am." "Yes, ma'am," he says, as if that means anything. Well, come on, then.

She is leading him into the kitchen.

MONA (CONT'D)

There it is. Of course, the thing has been leaking for weeks and weeks then the day you come it seems to work fine. But take a look, because I know the minute you're out the door it's gonna start up again.

Wyn is opening the cabinet, taking out whatever items are stored there. He handles something aggressively.

MONA (CONT'D)

Now, careful with that!

He sets it down far too gently, shrinking from her glare, and climbs underneath.

MONA (CONT'D)

How's it look?
Do you see anything?
Eugene says those pipes are older
than St. Patricks --

Door BUZZES. Mona is unsure about leaving this strange man alone in her kitchen. BUZZES again.

MONA (CONT'D)

I'd better get that.
But I know exactly where everything
is in here, so don't you go
snooping around.

She casts a disapproving glance at his legs and wanders away.

EXT. STREET IN EASTON, PA - EARLY EVENING

Rita stands outside an apartment building. She checks the number in Evelyn's book.

INT. TED'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Rita comes up the flight of stairs and into the hallway. She scans the doors for the right number. Here. "What am I even doing here?" She readies herself. Rita shifts the box under her arm and gives a brusque knock. No answer. She knocks again. A young STUDENT exits an apartment across the hall.

STUDENT

He's probably across the street. I
see him there sometimes.

RITA

Oh. Thank you.

STUDENT

He won't talk to you.

Student exits down the hall.

INT. EUGENE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER

BELOW SINK LOOKING OUT OPEN CABINET. WYN'S LEGS STICK OUT INTO THE KITCHEN, HE IS REASSEMBLING THE PIPES. MONA ENTERS, WE SEE JUST HER LEGS. SHE STOPS, WAITS, IMPATIENT. SHE BENDS OVER TO PEEK IN. SHE IS WEARING HER HAT, GLOVES, AND COAT AND CARRIES HER HANDBAG. WAITS. HE DOESN'T ACKNOWLEDGE HER.

MONA

Well?

He looks out at her.

MONA (CONT'D)

Will it be much longer?

He goes back to work.

Mona sets her bag on the table. Her normally immaculate spread tainted by the litter of Wyn's tools, work gloves, dirty plunger, etc.

MONA (CONT'D)

I haven't got all day, you know. Maybe if I had known you were coming, a little notice...

WYN

Almost finished.

MONA

No no, no bother now. A little notice, is all I'm saying. Might be nice. In case people have plans. But what's done is done. Just be sure you get it fixed. I don't want it leaking for another six weeks.

A page from a magazine peeks out of a pocket of the toolbox. The crossed legs of a woman, panty hose around her ankles, faces staring. Unnatural. Mona slyly tilts it, sliding it out enough to see Evelyn on the smashed automobile.

MONA (CONT'D)

Oh my...

Wyn shoots up, eyes wide. He sees Evelyn in Mona's hands. A forgotten talisman left behind.

WYN

What are you doing?

MONA

I didn't mean to snoop, I only--

Wyn snaps it from her hand, protecting it from view, almost petting it.

MONA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, that woman--

WYN
I forgot she was in there.

His outburst stops her. A creature protecting its young. Mona sees Wyn, this sorry sad sniveling creature and recognizes something disturbing, some connection he has with this woman:

MONA
...Did you know her?...

Wyn doesn't respond. A slew of answers rushes through his head. He didn't, but he does, but that's crazy, right? He struggles for an answer. But she saves him:

MONA (CONT'D)
Oh, you poor dear...

Mona is not often speechless. The two sit in awkward silence.

MONA (CONT'D)
Were you close?

Wyn nods.

MONA (CONT'D)
Oh.
I saw her in the paper.

WYN
She was such a dear friend, Kind.
But alive. So alive. Full of fire.
...When you were with her, it was
like anything was possible.
I loved her dearly.

MONA
I'm so sorry...
I lost someone. My son. In the war,
my youngest. He was--

She shakes her head. She breathes. She gives him a weak half-smile. She fiddles with her glove.

MONA (CONT'D)
Difficult times for all, I suppose.

Beat.

MONA (CONT'D)
Why did she do it?

A dreamy look in Wyn's eye.

WYN
I don't think anyone really knows.
I only wish she had come to me,
before.

MONA
But why do you think?

WYN
Me?...I think... What if you don't
want to be the person the world
tells you that you are? That you
were born to be? It don't seem
fair, not getting a choice.
I guess that's what dreams are for.
But -

Wyn stops suddenly, overcome.

MONA
What?

WYN
Who says everyone's cut out to be
alive?

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - DAY

A garbage pail full of black and white photo prints. In falls a tangle of film stock. The photograph of Beth walking away at the gallery.

Bobby sits before the pail, tossing away his work. His furniture has been pushed aside and stacked along the walls. He is disheveled: hair unkempt, in his underwear. Added to that towering banner of Evelyn --hanging from a clothesline, littering the walls -- are the failed photographs he's taken this week. An eerie, odd art exhibition. Bobby tosses in the last handful of shots and stares up at Evelyn, pleading.

A door opens.

BETH (O.S.)
Bobby?

She enters, looking around for him. She spots him in front of his shrine.

BETH (CONT'D)

Bobby?

He is silent.

BETH (CONT'D)

(a touch exasperated)

Where have you been? No one's seen you for days.

BOBBY

Here.

She walks toward him, and is immediately assaulted by his smell, his appearance. She notices the garbage full of work.

BETH

Jesus, Bobby...

He doesn't react or move. She looks around, as if maybe someone's there who can help, but of course there isn't.

BETH (CONT'D)

You need to tell me what's happened.

BOBBY

Shhh...

He lazily turns his head to her, his eyes bloodshot, tired. Meeting his weary gaze stuns her a little.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

I can't go outside.

BETH

Okay.

BOBBY

It's no good.

BETH

Okay.

Beat.

BETH (CONT'D)

Hal wouldn't come. Did you have a fight?

BOBBY

NO! No.

She halts.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
I'm blind.

Beth waits, unsure what he means.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
I can't see.

BETH
What are you talking about?

BOBBY
She's punishing me. She stole my
eyes, my hands. Everything.

Beth looks at Evelyn, then him. Adding it up.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
I thought: it's just a picture...

BETH
It *is* just a picture.

He shakes his head in wide, lolling arcs, like a kid.

BOBBY
Noooo. She's... powerful. Gives and
takes, gives and takes.

BETH
Bobby, she's dead.

BOBBY
Shut up! What do you know?
(to Evelyn)
What does she know?

BETH
Come on, you need air.

BOBBY
You were right. I shouldnt've taken
her. Now look what she's done.

BETH
That's not what I meant.

BOBBY
She took the only thing that
mattered. The only thing I cared
about.
(to Evelyn)
You can have anything else! This is
how I live! You get that?

BETH
You're scaring me.

BOBBY
(to Evelyn)
I'm nothing without it! Nothing.

BETH
That's not true, stop it.

BOBBY
You don't know, you don't know
anything, you *parasite*.

He knocks the wind out of her.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Feed feed Feed. Both of you.

BETH
That's enough. I'm calling someone,
a doctor.

This makes him laugh.

BOBBY
(Evelyn)
You hear that?..Oh, of course not.

BETH
I mean it.

BOBBY
Because she's not *listening*.
Neither of you *listen*.

BETH
Bobby. She's not REAL.

BOBBY
Shut UP! You have no idea what this
is. There's nothing you could ever
do to make this better: no calls,
no books, no galleries, NOTHING.
This is *beyond* you, what we're
doing. Out of your *depth*.
You talk and talk and snap-snap-
snap your pretty little pictures
like a fucking TOURIST. This is
real. This is truth. You can't come
near it. So you can disLODGE
yourself from me. Now.

She stands before him, heartbroken, not moving.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Get OUT!

BETH

Stop it.

He charges at her, pushing her toward the door as she lets out a frightened YELP and struggles.

BETH (CONT'D)

Let go. I said let go!

He gets her to the door, gripping her arms with sweaty paws.

BOBBY

Take a good look. You think they see this when they look at her?

She shakes, scared, tears coat her cheeks.

BETH

You're insane!

She goes, slamming the door behind her.

Bobby stares at the door, shaking. Beat. He turns back to Evelyn, desperate for vindication.

BOBBY

Happy? ... Is that it? Is that enough?

He waits for a reply. Nothing. He is angry, near to tears.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Or what? What else can you have? What do you WANT?!

He digs in his pocket for a matchbook. He strikes a match and flicks it into the garbage pail.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

How's that? More? You need more?

Fire engulfs the celluloid and photos. He rushes to the clothesline and rips off a handful of prints. He tosses them into the flaming pail.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Fine! Take it all! Take it all!

He grabs pictures - tearing, wadding them up. He circles the apartment, destroying anything he can touch. Paper flutters through the air as he rages.

Abruptly, he stops. His camera. He picks it up. He walks across the detritus, and stops in front of her. He looks at the camera in his hands. It's all he has left.

He holds the camera out to Evelyn. An offering. His eyes lock on her. "Don't make me do this."

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 (grows from low whisper to
 a shout.)
 I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm Sorry.
 I'm *sorry*. I'm SORRY. I'M SORRY!

He hurls it at the wall, and it explodes into a brilliant shattering of pieces.

Bobby collapses to his knees before her, a supplicant with head bowed.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 (softly, making himself
 believe it)
 I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry...

His sorries fade away. He laughs. Then:

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 She'll never give it back. She'll
 never give it back because she
 knows.
 (to Evelyn)
 Don't you? You know.
 I'm lying.

INT. TED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

BRIGHT ORANGE FLAMES FLUTTER OUT OF A WASTEBASKET.

The bed and the room are hazy, unclear against the crisp flames in the foreground. Slowly all comes into focus as a figure rises in bed, hand to face, groggy. Ted freezes, stunned by the sight.

Evelyn stands over the trash can. It emits an eerie glow. She is holding her party dress before her, as if deciding if she likes the cut.

TED
 Evelyn?

She calmly lowers her dress into the burning bucket. Flames climb up the fabric.

TED (CONT'D)
Evelyn my god!

She watches the dress burn.

Ted rockets out of bed. He grabs a pillow and extinguishes the fire.

TED (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

EVELYN
I don't want that dress anymore.

TED
You could've burned this place to the ground, you know that?

EVELYN
Do you hear the crashing?

TED
What are you talking about?

EVELYN
I saw it on the floor in shatters--

TED
Darling, you're not making any sense.

EVELYN
--all those pieces.

TED
For God's sake, Evelyn, it's 3 a.m.
I'm tired--

EVELYN
Ted! Please! Just-- Listen.

She breaks away, her back to him. She struggles to put thoughts and words in order. The only thing that makes sense is the motion.

So she replicates it: putting her hand out like she's holding something, then turning her hand over, miming the dropping of a plate.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

At the party -- that plate at the party...I felt it leave my hand, saw it spinning to the ground, and in an instant I was five years old.

Evelyn mimes the rhythmic motion again, eyes glazed. She continues miming while she talks.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

My brother and I came home from school, and there was my mother, in the kitchen, dropping plates on the linoleum.

Evelyn mimes the motion again. But this time, when the imaginary plate drops, there is an audible dull CRASH. The sound startles Ted, his heart beating rapidly.

As if pulling back a curtain, a wall in Ted's apartment dissolves to reveal a sunny afternoon in a kitchen in 1929.

EVELYN'S MOTHER, 25, stands at the counter in a housedress and apron, her hair done up. A perfect wife. The cupboard is open in front of her. Just as Evelyn has described, she is reaching in, grabbing a plate, and dropping it to the floor. Evelyn and her mother move in unison, like puppets, but which one is the puppeteer?

Ted's eyes widen as light from the kitchen warms his face.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

One after another. Letting them fall. Like some machine.

EVELYN'S HAND AS IT TURNS IN THE AIR.

EVELYN'S MOTHER'S FEET AS A PLATE SHATTERS AROUND THEM, THE FLOOR ALREADY LITTERED WITH BROKEN SHARDS.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

Each plate, the link of a chain she had to break.

HER MOTHER'S SMALL HAND LETS A PLATE DROP OH-SO-EASILY.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

I called to her but she didn't hear. Her eyes were dead. Hypnotized by the motion.

FROM UNDER THE KITCHEN TABLE, WE WATCH HER MOTHER'S BACK AS SHE GRABS A PLATE.

EVELYN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I stayed with her while Jerry ran to phone our father. I hid under the kitchen table and watched her hand.

EVELYN'S EMPTY HAND MOVES IN THE AIR.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
Gentle. Calm. Like riding a current of air.

Ted watches as shards spray the floor.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
She told me her story with those plates. It was a warning. She was warning me.

They let plates go. CRASH.

The floor of the apartment and the floor of the kitchen are both covered in broken plates.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
And the next morning she was gone.
And we never saw her again.

Sunlight from the kitchen slowly dies, and Ted's wall returns. The plates are gone. Evelyn's shaking hand is still in the air as if it just let something fall.

Ted's hand enters the frame and he tries to take Evelyn's but she pulls away. She turns to him.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
I'm not who you think I am.
I told you I was alone. I'm not alone.
I told you I live in the city. I don't live in the city. I live with my brother and his wife on Long Island. Jerry and Rita. I have a father, he lives in Tuckahoe.
I told you...so many things.

TED
Why?

EVELYN

I don't know. I thought all I needed was the life. I thought, "What if I did it differently? Maybe in this other world I could be happy." I could build a new me, a happy me, and then...But it's just a new costume and a new set of props.

TED

I don't make you happy?

EVELYN

I love you. But what if tomorrow I don't? I could never bear it.

Beat.

TED

That won't happen.

EVELYN

You don't know that. You can be born out of someone's womb and it not matter.

Beat.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry I lied to you.

TED

I don't care about that.

EVELYN

I regret everything.

TED

I don't care.

EVELYN

I don't want to hurt you.

TED

We all have things, Evelyn. We've all got stories we don't want to tell. Things I won't admit even to God if He asks. But what's done is done, you can't take it back. There's just what you do after.

EVELYN

But I'm not -

TED

Wait. My father always says, Only things worth regretting are the things you don't do. And I know that if I don't love you, if I don't marry you, if I don't spend the rest of my life with you? That's the thing that will eat away at me until I'm old and rusted and useless.

(an attempt at a joke)

Like the tin man.

Evelyn doesn't laugh.

TED (CONT'D)

You're terrified, I know. But sometimes it takes the big scary things to get you to a better place. And then we'll be okay. Then we'll be happy.

EVELYN

You can't say that. How do you know?

TED

I know that I love you. That's all I need.

He puts a strand of her hair behind her ear. She looks in his eyes, wanting so badly for him to be right.

TED (CONT'D)

You must be so tired.

EVELYN

I'm exhausted.

TED

Surely. All the excitement, the wedding, the party. You just need to rest. Can we go to bed? Please? You will wake up and in the daytime, everything will be fine. I promise.

She relents. Ted leads her to bed. They lay down together. Ted pets her face, wipes her tears.

EVELYN

I'm so sorry.

TED

Go to sleep, Evelyn McHale. You seem so peaceful when you sleep.

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

JUKEBOX. THE HAND SELECTS A RECORD. NEEDLE DROPS. "RUM AND COCA-COLA" BY THE ANDREWS SISTERS PLAYS.

Rita steps into the dingy establishment. She scans the few guests. Bingo. There he is at the bar slumped over a glass, this man is disheveled, being pulled apart at the seams, not the man she expected but certainly the same man from the photograph. Ted is hypnotized by the reflection of lights on the bar. Perhaps there in this replicate world is a replicate man for whom things turned out well.

The sad sight steals her breath. What now? She gathers herself and approaches the bar. She picks a place only a few seats down from Ted.

BARKEEP

Hello, Miss.

RITA

Good evening. Um. Gimlet, please?

BARKEEP

Coming up.

She folds her hands lady-like, in an effort to seem natural. She sneaks looks at him, too scared to speak. The kindly bartender places in front of her a gimlet with a serious green hue, too heavy on the Rose's lime. She is unused to drinking hard liquor and only has gimlets at holidays or a work function for Jerry.

RITA

Hello.

He shakes his head, smirks. "Unbelievable."

TED

You got me! Barkeep! They got me!
Well, come on, lady! Lay it on me.
Don't keep me waiting.

BARKEEP

I'm sorry, Miss. He's having a rough time.

Rita nods.

BARKEEP (CONT'D)

That's on me.

She smiles a "thanks" as Ted makes mocking little whispers.

TED

What's that little birdie tellin' ya, huh? "Such a nice young man. Full of promise. But there he was, drunk as a skunk in a barrel of rye." Drunk as a skunk in a barrel of rye... not half-bad, what do you say? You can have that one, your readers'll love it! ... Prettier than the rest. You with the *Post*? *Daily News*? I told that guy I'd break his camera.

RITA

I don't work for a paper.

BARKEEP

Teddy, leave the lady alone.

TED

Here's another freebee: "The only thing you have to fear is fear itself." And your friends. And your neighbors. And the woman in your bed.

BARKEEP

The war's over, Son.

TED

No, no it's never over, don't you know? We dropped a goddamn sun on 'em and it ain't over! Enemies all around, Sir! Commies in the shadows, who's who? You never know! You never really know. It's true. Print that! "You never really know anybody!" Theodore. Vassallo. Write that down.

BARKEEP

Teddy--

TED

We THOUGHT it was over. All that death. For what? It's never over.

BARKEEP

Go home.

TED

No sir, I set myself the goal to finish that bottle and I intend to make good.

BARKEEP

How about I put the rest of it away for later?

TED

How about I put my fist in your face?

BARKEEP

Alright, buddy, you're done.

Barkeep moves to take the glass but Ted swats it away. It clatters and spills. Ted stands off his stool to grab at the barkeep's arm. They scuffle and Ted tries to shove the bartender but only succeeds in knocking himself. He stumbles into Rita, fails to catch himself and falls flat on his face.

He is laughing now. Rita slides off her stool and bends down to help him.

BARKEEP (CONT'D)

That's it. I asked you nice. Time to go.

RITA

Are you okay?

TED

Time to go! Time to gooooo! This'll sell some papers for ya, huh lady?

Rita helps him to roll over and sit up.

RITA

I'll get him home.

BARKEEP

You a friend of his?

RITA

We have a class together.
 (to Ted)
 Come on.

She hoists him up, grabs her things with difficulty, and leads him toward the door.

TED

It's never over, Smitty! We'll never be safe!

With that, Ted kicks open the door.

INT. BAR - MOMENTS LATER

"Smoke Dreams" by Jo Stafford

Bobby opens a heavy door and steps in. Red light. A haze of smoke drifts about like a sultry siren. Lounge music softly plays. He has nothing left to lose now and so steps forward, descending the stairs. We move with him to discover a sparsely populated boy bar. Men at the bar or paired up at tables in dark corners, eyeing him, suspicious and flirtatious. Bobby sidles up to the bar. The tender, STAN, nods at him and he orders a drink. As the man prepares it, Bobby looks at the men reflected in the long bar mirror. A mural on the mirror reads: "Liberte'. Egalite'. Fraternite'." and depicts images of the American and French Revolutions.

A MAN standing in the back shadows is looking at him. Bobby accidentally catches his eye and quickly looks away, staring ahead. Stan slides him his drink and Bobby lays down cash.

MAN (O.S.)

One for me too, Stan.

The Man from the back of the bar has sidled up next to Bobby. 40s, put-together, businessman. Bobby takes a sip.

MAN (CONT'D)

Careful. He has a heavy hand.

Bobby gives a half-laugh but barely looks at the Man. He takes another nervous sip then sets down the drink but his hand is still clamped around the glass.

MAN (CONT'D)

I saw you come in. First time?

Bobby nods. He meets the Man's gaze in the mirror. Another half-smile. The bartender sets down the Man's drink.

MAN (CONT'D)
Thanks, Stan.

The Man takes a drink, sets it down, gives Bobby a look in the mirror. Then he slowly and deliberately slides his drink across the bar right next to Bobby's. The backs of their hands are touching. The Man is waiting for a reaction. They stare at each other in the mirror. A long, tense silence.

MAN (CONT'D)
What's your name?

Neither man breaks the gaze.

INT. TED'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

His front door bursts open to reveal Ted supported by Rita. She juggles the drunken man, her bag, and Evelyn's box.

RITA
There we go. Alright, we're here.

He barges into the room of his own accord.

TED
Home sweet home.

He takes off his coat and throws it somewhere. There's an open pint of whiskey near the stereo and he's already drinking when he drops the needle to the record. "I'll Be Seeing You" by Billie Holliday. He listens to the lyrics, the woman's voice pulling him deep into melancholy.

Rita loiters awkwardly in the center of the room. The place is a sty. Clothes and trash piled up. Unmade bed. He hasn't been living well.

AN INDENTATION ON THE PILLOW WHERE EVELYN LAID HER HEAD.

Should Rita find a seat? Stand and chat? Or run while she has the chance?

RITA
I think I should go.

He realizes she's still there.

TED
Where are my manners?

He offers her the bottle. "Want some?" She shakes her head.

TED (CONT'D)
Cheers, then.

He takes a chug. Swaying to the music.

RITA
I really don't work for the papers.

Beat.

RITA (CONT'D)
I'm going to go.

TED
No. No no not yet.

He moves to her, reaches out a hand and pulls her to him.

TED (CONT'D)
Stay, stay.

But Rita pulls back.

TED (CONT'D)
Here. Put this down.

Ted takes the box. Overly gentle because of the swirling booze. He sets it on the table. He takes her purse and sets it next to the box. He is back to face her. Hands at their sides neither knows what the next move is.

THEIR HANDS. TED'S FINGERS REACH OUT TO BRUSH RITA'S.

They stare into each other's eyes. His head bends forward as if he might kiss her... then moves off to the side and comes to rest on her shoulder. He wraps his arms around her middle and holds on. The moment is getting away from her. She's unsure and trembling. Rita wraps her arms around him to find stability. And comfort. They stand like this.

TED (CONT'D)
Something 'bout the shape of a
woman. Holds up a man real nice.
Like they were built for this one
thing. Don't know if a man is
s'posed to hold himself up. Alone.
Can't.

They sway. He starts to sing drunkenly to the song lyrics.

TED (CONT'D)
*"...I'll be looking at the moon/
but I'll be..."*
(MORE)

TED (CONT'D)

...out there, England, nights
before we'd fly, us boys'd go into.
Town. A few people, sheep n a pub.
Anyway. We'd go. Pile up in a open
jeep. Pubs'd have music playing,
girls, nurses. Knock back some
courage and grab onto one a them
for dear life. Dear, dear life...
hold so close, she'll never let you
fall.

Beat. The song is over. The record spins beneath the needle.

RITA

I think I'll take that drink now.

He pulls back. He presents her with the bottle and she takes a nip. Licks her lips.

He sits on the bed and guides Rita down beside him. Rita is trembling, almost in tears, she wants to shout out to him.

His lips move to her collar bone. He kisses her there. Gently, lovingly, he moves up her neck, placing delicate kisses along the way. He pauses momentarily at her ear. Then along her jaw bone to her chin. She wants to yell out, she's on the verge of tears. Their foreheads are pressed together. Lips barely apart. He moves in.

RITA (CONT'D)

Wait.

His eyes focus, as if waking up from sleep to find her.

TED

Who are you?

RITA

I'm sorry.

His grip on her tightens. It is not a heated exchange, but a desperate one.

TED

Who are you?

RITA

My name is Rita. Rita McHale.

Ted blinks.

TED

What do you want?

Rita's body is buzzing, with fear, anger, tension.

RITA
What did she say to you?

TED
Nothing.

RITA
Did she leave you a note?

TED
No.

RITA
(pleading)
Please. I have to know.

TED
She didn't. Not a word.

RITA
Then why? Tell me why?

TED
You think I don't ask myself every
minute?

RITA
There must have been something. You
said she kissed you goodbye, in the
paper, you said. There must have
been something, then. In a look. In
a, in a -

TED
I lied! Get it? She got up, easy as
you please, and walked out the
door. Ring on the pillow. Real kind
of her.

RITA
That doesn't make any sense.

TED
Then you didn't know her at all.

RITA
Neither did you. No one did.
And yet - how can that *be*?
How can it change so fast? How can--

Thoughts racing faster than she can speak.

RITA (CONT'D)

It's not fair. It's not fair she gets to decide this.

(a command)

You don't get to decide.

You walk the path that God has given you and if you're unhappy you pray for strength. You don't do...THIS. Something like THIS.

And was she scared? Did she cry?

Why didn't she call out? Why wasn't someone there to take her hand and help her down?

It's not fair.

Embarrassed, she begins to gather her things. Ted is at the point where drunk and exhausted converge. While she dresses he contemplates, falls further into himself.

RITA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. This was...a mistake.

Yes. A mistake. And...yes. So.

Rita is dressed and ready to go, but his words catch her.

TED

Is it hard? Loving a man?

RITA

Sometimes.

Sometimes it's easy, if you let it.

TED

I think I was doing it backwards. Loving backwards. I thought love's a thing you *do*. But it's a thing you *ask*, isn't it? An invitation. You say "Please? Can you take this? This is my whole me." A real act of courage, placing your life in someone's hands... because... what if they don't know what to do with it?

Rita doesn't know what to say. Ted curls up in his spot on the bed, he stares at Evelyn's bare pillow. Fighting sleep.

TED (CONT'D)

I went to the top.

I had to, you know. To see, and maybe...Just see.

...there's something...

Seeing something you adore for what it is: Dirty. Tough.

(MORE)

TED (CONT'D)

Madness forced to order with concrete and steel. When you're standing in the canyon it seems infinite. But it isn't. It's just another city. And standing on top the world like that? You see its end.

The borders that confine you.

The limits.

That's what did it. The limits.

EXT. MCHALE HOME - NIGHT

Rita passes money to a cab driver outside her home. He pulls away as she heads in, box still in her arms. She is on the other side of tired, in that placid calm. Night sounds surround and the air is still, crisp in the early Spring.

INT. MCHALE HOME - ENTRY/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She slips off her shoes at the door and tiptoes through the dark house, leaving the box on the table.

INT. MCHALE HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jerry is in bed, on his side with his back to the door. Under the covers but wide awake. Moonlight through the window.

As quietly as possible, Rita undresses and slides under the covers. Back to back, neither of them move, breathing in sync. In, out. In, out. Jerry turns to her.

JERRY

Rita?

RITA

Mm?

JERRY

Are you happy?

RITA

Yes.

JERRY

Are you? Please tell me.

Rita turns to face him.

RITA

Jerry. I am immensely happy.

JERRY
I couldn't bear it if I lost you.

RITA
I'm not going anywhere.

INT. HOLDING CELL - BREAK OF DAWN

THE PEWTER SAINT JOSEPH'S MEDAL HELD BETWEEN LIAM'S THUMB AND FOREFINGER. HE FLICKS IT IN THE AIR AND CATCHES IT.

Eugene and Liam are in a dank, bare cell. Some cots and a toilet. Eugene watches Liam, disillusioned, angry.

LIAM
How much you think I can get for this?

Eugene watches Liam, unsure what to say.

EUGENE
Is that all you got to say for yourself?

LIAM
(dumbfounded)
For what?

Eugene stares at Liam, amazed at his complete ignorance.

GUARD (O.S.)
Officer Queely. Your ride's here.

Eugene looks up to see the guard searching for his key, and Mona steps into frame. Her hair is mussed and she wears an old wool coat over her pajamas. She's tired, she's enraged, her eyes are red from worry and tears. But more than anything she is relieved to see him alive. They stare at each other as the guard slides open the bars.

Eugene walks out of the cell and the guard closes the door behind him. Mona is shaking, clutching the coat shut. She can't think of what to say. Liam comes up to the bars.

LIAM
Hey Gene, put in a word for me up front, would ya? You owe me.

Eugene can't look at him.

EUGENE

Make sure you get your phone call,
Kid, but don't waste it on me.

Eugene and Mona walk side by side down the hall away from
Liam, who calls after them.

LIAM

C'mon, Gene, don't be like that!
Gene. You owe me! Eugene!

INT. TAXI - LATER

Mona and Eugene sit in the back seat. They ride in silence.
Gene feels something, and reaches in his back pants pocket to
find what's bothering him. His eyes widen. He pulls out the
scarf. He considers it, tries to rip it apart, fails, and
then unrolls the window and shoves it through. He lays his
head in his hands. In time, he weeps.

MONA

Gene?

EUGENE

If I hadn't a - If I hadn't - If I
hadn't -

MONA

Hadn't what?

He looks up, his face contorted in pain.

EUGENE

If I hadn't a let him do it. Why'd
I let him do it? I shoulda listened
to you. We coulda went home, from
the station, no harm. Why'd I let
him go?

He is breathing hard and looking ahead, brain spinning. Mona
realizes who he is talking about, but she doesn't say a word.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

But he was a man, how could I say
no? He wanted so bad, something for
himself. "Something that's mine,"
he said. "Something I made." I
couldn't say no, Mona. I couldn't
take that from him, he was my
blood. My son. My son.

Mona puts her hand on his back. She is calm.

MONA

There's nothing you could have done
to make him choose different.

He looks in earnest at his wife, his face wet from tears.

EUGENE

I miss him so much.

She nods, and stifles her own tears before pulling him into
her arms. They hold each other and find comfort there.

INT. BAR - LATER

The Man is holding up the negative of Bobby's shot of Evelyn
McHale, eyeing it through the dim bar light. On his second
drink, and it's easier for Bobby to talk.

MAN

So it's just light, really.
Captured light.

BOBBY

"Painting with light," as they say.

MAN

That's nice.

BOBBY

(taking a drink)
Hm.

MAN

Capturing light.

BOBBY.

Capturing reality.

MAN

I was stationed in the Pacific,
Army, and our base was right
outside this tiny village on the
coast. And there was a woman there.
She was very old, had one tooth and
these bony fingers, and if you
brought her a picture of someone,
she could tell you everything about
that person. Who they were, what
they meant to you. She said a
photograph is like looking into the
person's soul.

He snickers, "Crazy right?"

Bobby thinks about this. A look from Man.

BOBBY

Light bounces off people and things...everything...Who knows what it carries? And you capture that light, with all the pieces of everything it ever touched, across the universe, capture it forever on this little piece of plastic. And this little piece of plastic with the light it captured, has the power to resurrect. Emotions and memories, fear, regret--

MAN

Love.

BOBBY

...who knows what else? Forever.

MAN

Then that's what you have to reckon with.

BOBBY

What?

MAN

The immortality of what you do.

Beat.

BOBBY

Someone asked me why I took the picture, and I didn't know before. But now I do.

MAN

Why did you take it?

BOBBY

Because I wanted people to believe me.

MAN

That you were there?

BOBBY

What I saw. During the war, all those things in the newspapers, magazines, on the movie screens.

(MORE)

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Soldiers washed on shore like fish. Desperate people shivering behind barbed wire. Our own people, loyal people, carted away to makeshift barracks in the desert. Soldiers in cages--torture--open pits full of bodies-- Living nightmares.-- And the ruin. And the bomb, the fucking bomb...

Someone stood before those things, looked them in the face, and photographed them. And he had to, because he knew that if he didn't, no one would believe it. He'd tell them back home about wading through drifts of ash or babies with their skin burned away, but they'd say, ..."HOW? That can't be true. I won't believe it." But they can't deny it, because it's captured on film.

This woman...

I saw her at her end. At what should have been a gruesome, terrible scene. But I saw beauty. I saw peace. And I knew that if I didn't show them, no one would believe me.

INT. TED'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Ted wakes up alone in bed, a drunken, sweaty mess. He rubs sleep out of his eyes and notices something on the night stand. Propped up on the lamp is the photo of Ted in his Army uniform with Evelyn in his arms and a little folded note with "Rita" scrawled on the front: Evelyn's suicide note.

INT. MCHALE HOME - KITCHEN - MORNING

Rita and Jerry in funeral attire. Rita straightens the lapels on Jerry's coat and pecks him on the cheek.

INT. WYN'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

WYN'S MOTHER

Wyyynn?

She hobbles to the end of the hall and pushes open his bedroom door. It's empty.

WYN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Wyn?

INT. WYN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRCASE

The staircase is empty.

INT. WYN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - ENTRY

An empty entryway. Wyn's tool box props open the front door.

INT. EUGENE APARTMENT - HALLWAY MORNING

Eugene hoists on his uniform shirt and starts to button it up in the mirror. Finished, he puts his hands in his pockets.

EXT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Bobby smoking on his stoop, looking up the street, waiting.

INT. TED'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Ted sits on the side of his bed. He picks up the note like it might crumble in his hands. He unfolds it. He reads:

EVELYN (V.O.)
Dearest Rita--

INT. MCHALE CAR - LATER

Jerry drives, Rita has the box of ashes on her lap.

EVELYN (V.O.)
I don't want anyone in or out of my
family to see any part of me.

EXT. NYC - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Evelyn looks up at the building.

POV EVELYN. THE BUILDING TOWERS OVER US.

Camera swings back down to find:

EXT. NYC - EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Wyn gazing up at the building.

EXT. NYC BRIDGE - DAY

Rita and Jerry on the bridge walkway. They look out over the water and the city.

EVELYN (V.O.)
 Could you destroy my body by
 cremation?

They turn and see a man approaching, hands in his pockets against the wind. Rita recognizes it is Ted. He stops a step or two back and watches.

EXT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - OBSERVATION DECK - MOMENTS LATER

Evelyn steps out onto the deck. Her hair dances.

EXT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

A jalopy slides in front of Bobby. He gets up, throws his cigarette aside and hurls himself into the back seat.

EXT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - OBSERVATION DECK - AFTERNOON

Wyn, standing back, people crossing this way and that in clumps of families or couples. Noises of excitement and joy.

POV WYN: A YOUNG BOY IN A BACKWARDS CAP VIGOROUSLY LICKS A VANILLA ICE CREAM CONE WHILE STARING AT HIM.

EXT. NYC BRIDGE - DAY

EVELYN (V.O.)
 I beg of you and my family -

Rita holds the container before her. A "goodbye". She glances back to Ted, with care and reverence, she empties the ashes into the air, camera following the wind as it carries them off, through the sky until we land on:

EXT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - OBSERVATION DECK - MORNING

Evelyn's scarf tumbling and twisting through the air.

INT. CAR - MORNING

A pack of bohemians, a precursor to the Beats, are piled in the car. PAUL, the driver wearing dark glasses, cigarette and a lopsided pork pie hat, turns around in his seat and regards Bobby, scrunched in the back.

PAUL
No suitcase?

Bobby shakes his head. Paul levels him a cheshire grin. He starts to bob up and down excitedly in his seat.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Hi-Ho, Cali - Forn - I - A.

They peel off to their awaiting adventures.

EXT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - OBSERVATION DECK - AFTERNOON

Wyn scans the crowd for the right opportunity. There is none. It's now. Right now. Do it! He dashes to the edge and LEAPS!

EXT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - MORNING

We watch the scarf fly away down, down down.

EVELYN (V.O.)
Don't have any service for me or
remembrance for me.

EXT. NYC BRIDGE - DAY

The ashes settling into the breeze.

Rita takes Jerry's hand. Ted looks out over the water.

EVELYN (V.O.)
My fiancée asked me to marry him in
June.

INT. EUGENE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Mona walks over to place a plate of food in front of Eugene. Before she can pull away, he grabs her arm, not letting go. A touch that says, "Thank you. I'm sorry. I love you." They are so happy the other is there, and they are loved. Rising back up, she pecks him slyly on the head before dabbing a finger across her eyes.

EVELYN (V.O.)
I don't think I would make a good
wife for anybody.

EXT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - OBSERVATION DECK - AFTERNOON

Screams as people rush to the edge and look over.

POV ONLOOKERS. WYN'S MANGLED BODY LAYING FAR BELOW WHERE HE
LANDED ON A LOWER DECK. WE SLOWLY PUSH IN.

EVELYN (V.O.)
He is much better off without me.

EXT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - OBSERVATION DECK - MORNING

Evelyn on the edge. Hair whipping. The city is silent from
that high up. All we hear is wind beating against her.

EVELYN (V.O.)
Tell my father, I have too many of
my mother's tendencies.

She steps off the edge and disappears.

CUT TO BLACK.

EVELYN (V.O.)
Evelyn.

THE END.