

Subor: Sunny Miller
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076517

old man Johnson

written by
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FIRST DRAFT
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EXT. BRIDGE -- DAY

A Greyhound BUS crosses the Harvey Taylor Bridge over the Susquehanna River, towards the modest HARRISBURG, PA skyline.

EXT. HARRISBURG BUS/TRAIN TERMINAL -- DAY

The BUS arrives between other buses. Its DOOR HISSES OPEN. The DRIVER steps down, moving to open LUGGAGE COMPARTMENTS. PASSENGERS get off, tired and unhappy, but grateful to stretch their legs. Some look up to the overcast sky.

A YOUNG WOMAN, ABBIE, 21, climbs off, in a skirt, sweater and untucked oxford, pretty, pensive. She hefts a BACKPACK, a BOOK in hand. A young, HANDSOME GUY gets off next.

HANDSOME GUY

Nice meeting you. Listen... maybe I should get your number? Give you a call sometime.

ABBIE

Probably not.

ABBIE walks to lift her plaid SUITCASE, looking around.

An ELDERLY MAN exits the TERMINAL BUILDING, smiling and lifting a frail hand as he spots ABBIE. This is HENRY, mid-70's, grey; a thin, plain man in plain clothing.

HENRY

Abbie... here I am.

ABBIE smiles. Henry's glad to see her. Their hug is awkward, partly because ABBIE still holds her suitcase.

ABBIE

Grandpa, how are you?

HENRY

Here, let me take that...
(taking her SUITCASE)
How was the bus?

ABBIE

~~You don't have to.~~

HENRY

I've got it. Not too long, I hope.
Not too uncomfortable... the trip.

ABBIE

It was okay.

HENRY

We're this way. I was inside getting
a look at the trains.
(more)

CONTINUED

HENRY (CONT.)
I used to take the train on my sales trips into Philly, did you know that?

ABBiE
Not really. Maybe you told me.

Henry shuffles down the sidewalk, struggling with the weight of the suitcase, but determined.

HENRY
I've got it, I've got it.

EXT. BUS/TRAIN TERMINAL, PARKING LOT -- DAY

Beside his old, beat-up, American CAR, Henry drops the suitcase, mopping his face with his HANDKERCHIEF.

ABBiE
Maybe you should let me...

HENRY
No, I have it. I just...

ABBiE
Don't you want to put it in the trunk?

HENRY
The trunk's broken. Been meaning to have it looked at.

Henry lifts the suitcase, STRUGGLING to position it at the open window of the rear passenger door...

ABBiE
What are you doing?

HENRY
This door doesn't open. It was sticking for the longest time, and it finally gave up.

ABBiE
Can't we just take it around...?

HENRY
Not to worry, dear... the deed...is nearly...done...!

He's only managed to wedge the suitcase halfway in.

ABBiE
Grandpa.

Determined, Henry shoves against the suitcase with his shoulder, PUSHING it through -- a PIECE flying off.

CONTINUED

HENRY
(rubs his shoulder)
Ooof.

ABbie picks up the piece. It's the suitcase HANDLE.

HENRY
Where'd that come from?

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S CAR -- IN MOTION -- DAY

Henry drives. ABbie watches scenery pass.

HENRY
And your mother and father?

ABbie
They're okay. Dad said to say hello,
before they left.

HENRY
Where to this time?

ABbie
Paris, then Italy. Then somewhere
else.

HENRY
My son the international
globetrotter. Who'd have thought it?
I got a postcard last month. Can't
remember where from.
(pause)
I'm glad you could take these two
weeks.

ABbie looks to her grandfather, smiles for him.

ABbie
I'm glad to do it. Then, it's right
off to school.

HENRY
What did you finally decide?

ABbie
Decide?

HENRY
About graduate school?

ABbie
Oh. Business. Management. Business
management.

CONTINUED

HENRY
Your father's footsteps.

ABbie
When you put it like that...

ABbie considers, taps her finger on her window.

ABbie
I suppose so.

HENRY
It's a good, sensible choice.

ABbie
Yeah. That's what he said.

They stare forward. A long pause. Small talk's running low.

HENRY
I don't want this to be like an obligation for you. I want you to have a nice visit.

ABbie
I will. I mean, I always do. It's great seeing you.

HENRY
We'll do all sorts of things. Anything you'd like. I want you to have a good time.

ABbie
I will.

They stare. Driving along.
Another silence lengthens uncomfortably.

ABbie
Looks like rain.

HENRY
What?

ABbie
I said it looks like it might rain.

HENRY
Oh. We got some yesterday night, but the weather's supposed to clear up.

ABbie
Good. That's good.

EXT. INTERSECTION -- DAY

Henry's car STOPS at a RED LIGHT, waiting to make a left.

IN THE CAR

Henry and ABBie wait.
For the longest time, the ONLY SOUND is the steady
TICK... TICK... TICK... of the TURN SIGNAL.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, DINING/LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

In Henry's small, sparsely furnished apartment, Henry wears
OVEN MITTS, bringing two TV DINNERS to the DINING TABLE.

ABBie

Thank you.

Henry sits, taking off the mitts.
He and ABBie eat in silence. Henry refills his GLASS of
iced tea. ABBie mostly picks at her overcooked food.

HENRY

Sorry it's not so good. We can eat
out tomorrow.

ABBie

No. It's... I'm not very hungry.

ABBie nibbles. Henry chews, smiles.
ABBie smiles back. She looks around.

ABBie

So, what have you been up to? What
do you do to keep yourself busy?

HENRY

Eeh. I read. Listen to the radio.
I wish I could still go fishing, but
alone it's a bit much. Mostly
Johnson and I sit around. We play
cards... watch TV...

ABBie

Johnson?

HENRY

He's this friend. Lives next door.
Johnson. Didn't I mention him? I
could have sworn I did.

ABBie

It's nice he lives so close.

CONTINUED

HENRY

Yeah. He's alright. A little moody.

They eat. Silence. The CLICK of SILVERWARE.

HENRY

Hey... I've got a good one. Let's see... there's this absent-minded businessman... he's cleaning out his desk, and he comes across a claim ticket... a ticket for a pair of shoes. He realizes he left these shoes to be repaired 20 years ago and completely forgot them until now.

ABbie's trying to smile, good-naturedly.

HENRY

So, more as a joke than anything else, he goes...the shop is still there. He gives the ticket to the cobbler behind the counter, tells him he realizes it's ridiculous, but can't help checking on the shoes after all these years. The cobbler goes into the back room. The businessman waits. Finally the cobbler returns... hands the ticket back to the businessman and says, "They'll be ready Thursday."

ABbie's laugh is a bit forced, not very convincing.

ABbie

That's a funny one.

HENRY

Well...maybe not. I'm not very good at telling them.

ABbie

That's not true.

HENRY

I don't know. Anyhow.
(eats, quietly amused)
"...be ready Thursday."

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, GUEST ROOM -- NIGHT

Jaunty RAGTIME PIANO MUSIC is HEARD through the wall. ABbie's on the single twin BED in her small room, trying to read her book. She KNOCKS on the wall.

MUSIC STOPS. A loud POUNDING is HEARD in response.

CONTINUED

Jaunty MUSIC RESUMES, to ABBIE's disappointment. A KNOCK is HEARD. ABBIE looks up to see Henry in the doorway.

HENRY

That would be Johnson. Sorry. He's somewhat of a grump.

ABBIE

Plays piano, huh?

HENRY

Not for too long, usually. How's the room? Comfortable?

ABBIE

Yes. Thank you.

HENRY

(pointing his thumb)

Um, there's this comedy show coming on that I watch. It's a dumb little thing, but I thought you might want to join me.

ABBIE

Actually... I think I'll keep reading, if that's okay. I...

HENRY

Alright. Are you sure?

ABBIE

Yeah, I think...

HENRY

No problem.

ABBIE

I'm pretty tired.

HENRY

If you change your mind, invitation's open. It's...it's a funny show.

ABBIE

Okay.

Henry gives a small wave, backing out of the doorway.

ABBIE watches him go, sad.

She tries to get back to reading her book, attempting to ignore the RAGTIME PIANO still HEARD.

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Henry sits alone in the dark, lit by the TELEVISION's GLOW.

CONTINUED

On the TV there's a black-and-white SLAP-STICK COMEDY SHOW of some sort, and it makes Henry LAUGH.

He looks over to the HALLWAY where by a shaft of light shines from the crack of the door to ABBie's room.

Henry's sad. He turns back to watch the TV.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, KITCHENETTE -- MORNING

ABBie comes to stand in PAJAMAS, rubbing her tired eyes. Henry's making SANDWICHES on the countertop.

ABBie

Hey.

HENRY

Hey yourself. How'd you sleep?

ABBie

Like a log.

HENRY

I spoke to Johnson this morning. I asked if maybe, just for the next two weeks, maybe he could keep the piano playing to a minimum.

ABBie

That'd be great.

HENRY

He said he'd take it under advisement.
(shrugs)

I owe you an apology. I forgot he and I are supposed to play gin over lunch today.

ABBie sees BOWLS of PRETZELS and other snacks on the counter.

HENRY

And I'd cancel, you know, except it's kind of a big deal for him since well, other than coming by here, Johnson's mostly a shut-in.

ABBie eats a pretzel.

ABBie

I don't mind. I'd like to meet your friend.

HENRY

That's the other thing. See...
(more)

CONTINUED

HENRY (CONT.)

Johnson's very... he's... shy. I mean, frankly, he doesn't get along with other people. So, I was wondering if you wouldn't mind taking the car... going to a movie, possibly?

ABBIE

Oh.

HENRY

Not for long, mind you. We don't usually last more than a dozen hands.

ABBIE

Okay.

HENRY

I'm sorry. This really is all my fault for being so forgetful, but I'd hate to disappoint Johnson.

ABBIE

No. It's no problem.

ABBIE comes to watch as Henry's cutting the crusts off the SANDWICHES. Henry looks up, a bit sheepish.

HENRY

He's particular about his sandwiches.

CUT TO:

EXT. MALL -- DAY

The large SIGN simply reads: "SHOPPING MALL."

EXT. MOVIE THEATERS -- DAY

ABBIE (dressed in her somewhat 50's influenced style; comfortable-vintage-fashionable) stares up at the MARQUEE...

FESTIVAL CINEPLEX

1 Horror Zone	7 Day of Fury
2 ~~The Slugger~~	8 ~~Blooper: The Movie~~
3 Great Amer. Monkey Adventure	9 The Tomorrow Machine
4 Shattered Reckoning	10 Extreme Vengeance
5 The Angry American	11 R.P.M.
6 Betrayal of Honor	12 Knuckle Sandwich

ABBIE turns, walking back to the PARKING LOT.

CUT TO:

EXT. HENRY'S BUILDING -- DAY

In an older downtown section, tall trees line the street. ABBie parks in front of Henry's brick APARTMENT BUILDING.

INT. HENRY'S BUILDING, HALLWAY -- DAY

ABBie climbs the creaky stairs to the second floor, heading to Henry's apartment, "201."

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, DINING/LIVING ROOM -- DAY

ABBie enters. Henry looks up from the dining table.

ABBie
I know. I'm back already. Sorry.

CARDS are on the table. A CIGAR burns in an ashtray. A CANE leans against an unoccupied chair.

ABBie
Where's your friend?

HENRY
He's using the bathroom. I, uh...
(stands, nervous)
You are back sooner than I thought you'd be.

ABBie
Don't worry. I'll be in my room.

HENRY
Um... alright. Fine. We shouldn't be much longer anyhow.

As ABBie crosses, SOMEONE'S coming down the HALLWAY...

JOHNSON'S VOICE (O.S.)
And another thing... what is the story with this cheap toilet paper you're providing? It's like I'm rubbing sandpaper all over my --

JOHNSON halts upon seeing ABBie. He's about ABBie's age, but his dress and demeanor are that of an elderly man. He holds himself slightly stooped, frowning, dressed in baggy, brown CORDUROY PANTS, a PLAID SHIRT, BOW TIE, SUSPENDERS and an old, mismatched CARDIGAN SWEATER.

JOHNSON
Hello. What have we here?

ABBie stares at Johnson, uncertain.

ABBie
Hello.

CONTINUED

HENRY

Um, this is my granddaughter Abbie.
I told you about her. She's visiting
from Chicago. Abbie, this... is
Johnson.

ABbie

Hello.

JOHNSON

Hello again. So you're the music
lover?

ABbie

I... don't...

JOHNSON.

Banging on my wall. Last night.

ABbie

Oh...yeah.

JOHNSON

Yes. Well. Hmm. Much as I would
love to stand around basking in the
glow of this scintillating
conversation...

Johnson crosses to retrieve his cane and cigar.

JOHNSON

Somewhere there's an afternoon nap
with my name on it.

It's not that Johnson comes off as play-acting. He simply
moves slowly, deliberately, his voice a gruff and grumbly
monotone. He is a peevish old man in a young man's body.

JOHNSON

Sorry to cut the game short, Hank,
but if I sit too long all the blood
collects in my ankles, and before you
know it there's a clot making a
beeline for my cerebral cortex. We
~~can square it later. That's fifty~~
bucks I'm up.

HENRY

I know, I know.

JOHNSON

Lest we forget. Alrightie. I bid
you good day, ladies and germs.

He waggles his cane in the air as a goodbye gesture, heading
to the front door. He stops.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON

The sandwiches were a bit on the dry side. Tasty, but dry.

The door shuts. A PUFF of Johnson's CIGAR SMOKE swirls.

HENRY

O...kay then. That leaves us the whole rest of the day together.

Henry hurries to busy himself, clearing the table. ABBie's still trying to process the encounter.

HENRY

What should we do? I thought we could drive to Gettysburg... tour the battlefield. Or maybe head on over to Hershey...?

ABBie

Grandpa...

HENRY

Did you bring your camera?

ABBie

What was that?

HENRY

Pardon me, dear?

ABBie

You know exactly what I'm talking about. I...don't even know where to begin. You made it sound like this was some old friend of yours.

HENRY

An old friend, yes... but, not really an old friend, if you know what I...

ABBie

Is he always like that?

HENRY

Like what?

ABBie

Grandpa, please!

Henry stops clearing the table, resigned.

HENRY

He moved in, I don't know how long ago. He kept to himself.
(more)

CONTINUED

HENRY (CONT.)

A few months back, I finally went to introduce myself. He didn't want anything to do with me, but we got to talking through the door from time to time. Yes, when I stop to think about it, I guess he seems... odd.

ABBiE

Seems odd?

HENRY

Listen, I was afraid you might react like this. He is the way he is. Let's try not to blow it out of proportion.

ABBiE

So he is always like that? I mean, going around... pretending he's an old man?

HENRY

(considering)

Well, to be perfectly honest... it's very hard to tell if he's pretending.

ABBiE

Great. Great.

HENRY

I admit he's strange.

ABBiE

Clearly he's insane.

HENRY

He's eccentric.

ABBiE

He's crazy.

HENRY

Who isn't a little bit crazy?

ABBiE

He isn't. He's a lot crazy. What does he want from you anyway? Haven't you even considered that?

HENRY

What do you mean?

ABBiE

I don't know. For starters, you didn't tell me you were playing cards for money.

CONTINUED

HENRY
Nickels and dimes.

ABBiE
You owe him fifty dollars.

HENRY
I hit a bad streak.

ABBiE
I'm going to talk to him.

HENRY
Excuse me?

ABBiE
I'm going to find out what the hell's
going on here.

ABBiE's crossing to exit.

HENRY
You're making too much of it, I
assure you. You're worrying yourself
over nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S BUILDING, HALLWAY -- DAY

ABBiE arrives at "202," KNOCKS. She waits, arms tightly
crossed. Waiting. She KNOCKS again.

JOHNSON'S VOICE (O.S.)
(through the door)
Hello? Who is it?

ABBiE
It's Abbie, from next door.

JOHNSON'S VOICE (O.S.)
Who?

ABBiE
I know you can see me through the
peep hole.

No reply. ABBiE KNOCKS.

ABBiE
Hello!

JOHNSON'S VOICE (O.S.)
I'm not accepting visitors, thank you.

ABBiE
I'd like to speak with you.

CONTINUED

The door slowly opens a crack. The CHAIN is on. ABBie reacts as the face of an orange CAT looks out. Then, Johnson, holding the cat, leans his pinched face into view. He comes off as rather convincingly aged, as he will always.

ABBie
What's your game?

JOHNSON
My game?

ABBie
What are you up to? What's with the whole old person act?

JOHNSON
I'm afraid I don't follow.

ABBie
You're no older than me, but you're walking around with a cane... dressed up like some senior citizen. I want to know why.

Johnson looks ABBie up and down.

JOHNSON
Are you a madwoman?

ABBie's fighting to contain her impatience.

ABBie
May I come in?

JOHNSON
You're joking.

ABBie
Do we have to talk through this door?

JOHNSON
Are we talking?

ABBie
~~I'd like to speak to you face to~~
face. All I'm asking for is two minutes.

JOHNSON
I keep this chain on to discourage an undesirable element, and right now I'm as grateful for this chain as I've ever been.

ABBie
What, are you afraid of me?

CONTINUED

JOHNSON
I'm man enough to admit that I am.

ABBiE
Two minutes.

Johnson sighs, reluctantly withdrawals, OPENS the door...

INT. JOHNSON'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- DAY

ABBiE enters. The apartment is meagerly furnished. There's an upright PIANO, an old COUCH and CHAIR covered in PLASTIC, a few ANTIQUES, KNICK-KNACKS and DOILIES. ABBiE is surprised to see this is definitely an old person's world.

Johnson puts his CAT down on a CHAIR.

ABBiE
You live here alone?

Johnson uses a small WATERING CAN on a few potted PLANTS.

JOHNSON
That's right. Now, what can I do for you? I value my empty hours of solitude, and somehow it's just not the same with you here.

ABBiE
I'll make this simple; either you tell me what's going on between you and my grandfather, or I will call the police.

JOHNSON
There's an implication in there I don't think I particularly appreciate.

ABBiE
What are you? Some kind of con man... some sort of hustler?

JOHNSON
Now that I'm certain I don't appreciate.

ABBiE
How old are you?

JOHNSON
What an awfully personal question. Why not just pry my mouth open and start counting my teeth?

ABBiE
Fine. I'd like to know your name, if you don't mind.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON

I believe you already have my name.

ABBiE

All I know is Johnson. Is it your first name or last?

JOHNSON

It's the name I'm known by, and at this time, I must inform you that this interrogation has abruptly reached its conclusion.

ABBiE

What possible objection could you have to telling me your name?

JOHNSON

I suppose I'm feeling a lack of trust. Not too surprising, since you shoved your way in here with all the manners of a feces-flinging baboon.

ABBiE

I think you better stay away from my grandfather.

JOHNSON

You're giving me the willies, and you're frightening Mrs. Grundy...

His cat, MRS. GRUNDY, actually seems placidly bored.

JOHNSON

...so I suggest you exit the premises, otherwise I'll be the one phoning the authorities. The egress directly behind you should suit your purposes nicely.

IN THE HALLWAY

Angry and frustrated, ABBiE steps out of the apartment.

JOHNSON

Farewell.

Johnson SLAMS the door. It's HEARD LOCKING. ABBiE's fuming.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING ROOM -- DAY

ABBiE returns. Henry's seated on the couch.

CONTINUED

HENRY
Is everything alright?

ABbie comes to sit beside Henry, aggravated.

ABbie
He's infuriating.

HENRY
He can be.

ABbie
Is he borrowing money from you?

HENRY
No.

ABbie
Does he take your medication, or have
you get prescriptions for him?

HENRY
Of course not.

ABbie
Will you do me a favor? Will you
steer clear of him for a while?

HENRY
Well now, Abbie, that's easier said
than done, I mean...

ABbie
At least until I can figure it out.

HENRY
I appreciate your concern, but you
know, I might not be as helpless as
you're making me out to be.

ABbie
I'm not saying you're helpless. I
just don't trust him, for obvious
reasons.

HENRY
If you'll hear me out...

ABbie
I don't want you to be naive about
this, that's all. I couldn't stand
to see you taken advantage of.
(looks to Henry)
I'm sorry, what were you saying?

CONTINUED

HENRY

Nothing.
 (smiles for her)
 Nothing, dear.

Just then, RAGTIME PIANO MUSIC is HEARD faintly through the wall. ABBie looks exasperated. Henry pats her leg.

ABBie

Promise me?

Henry considers.

HENRY

I promise to do the best I can to
 avoid Johnson, if possible.

ABBie

Thank you.

ABBie leans to give Henry a peck on the cheek.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, GUEST ROOM -- MORNING

ABBie's peacefully asleep. Daylight seeps through closed blinds. A faint cat's MEOW is HEARD. ABBie stirs. After a long moment, another MEOW is HEARD.

ABBie opens one sleepy eye. Looking. Waiting. Nothing. ABBie closes her eye, going back to sleep.

Another MEOW. ABBie's eyes pop open.

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING -- MORNING

ABBie enters in her pajamas, looking blearily around. She stops in her tracks upon seeing...

A CAT CARRIER on the dining table, with Mrs. Grundy peering unhappily out through the bars. Mrs. Grundy MEOWS.

Just as ABBie's trying to figure out what this could mean,
~~the door to the apartment BANGS open -- swinging wide as~~
 Johnson's UPRIGHT PIANO is slowly wheeled in with two worn
 leather SUITCASES stacked on top.

Henry and Johnson labor to push the piano, its STRINGS giving an off-key KER-CLANG! as its wheels clunk over the threshold. Henry and Johnson straighten, winded. Johnson's in a SEERSUCKER SUIT and PANAMA HAT.

HENRY

Oh...Abbie. Did we wake you?

CONTINUED

ABBiE
What... what is this?

HENRY
This? This is a piano. Uh... right.
You see... I didn't get a chance to
tell you before. And, what I wanted
to tell you is... how should I put
this...?

JOHNSON
I'm moving in.
(big fake smile)
How do you like them apples?

CUT TO:

EXT. HENRY'S BUILDING -- DAY

A POLICE CAR'S parked, lights spinning, RADIO SQUAWKING.

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, KITCHENETTE -- DAY

A uniformed POLICEMAN stands holding his hat. ABBie's still in pajamas, leaning against the counter, upset. Henry's standing with hands in pockets, fretting.

POLICEMAN
I can understand your frustration,
Miss, but like I said...

ABBiE
He's insinuated himself into my
grandfather's life. We don't even
really know who he is. Now he's
going to live here.

POLICEMAN
Your grandfather invited him.

HENRY
I did.

ABBiE
Yes, because my grandfather's good-
hearted. He's trusting, to a fault.
But, clearly this is a scam. There
must be something you can do about it.

POLICEMAN
Afraid not.

ABBiE
You've seen him. He thinks he's an
old man.

CONTINUED

POLICEMAN
There's no law being broken.

ABBIE
He's mentally unbalanced.

POLICEMAN
No law against that either, unless
he's a danger to someone. Your
grandfather vouches for him.

HENRY
This is all my fault, Officer. I
wanted to tell you, Abbie, but... I
chickened out. I was hoping that
once he moved in, you two would get
along. He's in dire straits.

ABBIE
So he claims.

HENRY
I've been losing at cards on purpose,
hoping it would help. He's a proud
man and he won't take charity.

ABBIE
He's moving in!

HENRY
He's at the end of his rope, and I
don't see how we can let him end up
on the sidewalk. It's only till he
gets back on his feet. Besides...a
week and a half from now, it won't be
anything for you to worry about
anymore, am I right?

IN THE LIVING ROOM

The policeman crosses to leave, followed by ABBIE and Henry.

POLICEMAN
I wish you luck, I do. My advice,
~~Miss, for what it's worth; make the~~
best of a bad situation.

ABBIE
Terrific.

HENRY
I'm sorry about all the ruckus,
Officer.

POLICEMAN
Not a problem. You have a nice day.

CONTINUED

The apartment door swings open and Johnson backs in, cane in hand, pointing as... the policeman's uniformed PARTNER enters carrying a large, heavy MOVING BOX.

JOHNSON

Right this way, Officer, right this way. You're a godsend.

And as the first policeman's exiting...

PARTNER

Be down in a minute.

POLICEMAN

Check that.

ABbie watches in disbelief while the partner is shown down a hallway by Johnson, heading towards Henry's bedroom.

JOHNSON

(to police partner)

Yes... that's the room there, on the right. Can't thank you enough.

Johnson makes sure to look back at ABbie, DOFFING his HAT to her just before disappearing down the hallway.

Henry's occupied following the first policeman out.

HENRY

Thank you again, Officer.

ABbie sits on the couch, exasperated.

Mrs. Grundy, still in her carrier on the dining table, MEOWS.

ABbie

Oh, shut up.

CUT TO:

INTERLUDE -- NIGHT

-The brightly lit, beaux-arts DOME of the STATE CAPITAL BUILDING stands against a cloudy night.

-Dead LEAVES flutter from tall, streetlamp lit TREES.

-"FULTON BANK" glows in RED NEON from atop the towering art deco of the FULTON BANK BUILDING.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, GUEST ROOM -- NIGHT

ABbie tries to sleep, tossing, turning, kept awake by the O.S. SOUNDS of HENRY and JOHNSON'S CHATTER and LAUGHTER.

INT. LIVING/DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Some of Johnson's FURNITURE has been fitted into the room. Henry and Johnson play cards in front of the TV. They're watching Henry's favorite b+w slapstick show, LAUGHING hard.

ABbie, in her pajamas, comes down the hallway.

ABbie

Excuse me.

Henry stands.

HENRY

Abbie. We're not keeping you up, are we?

ABbie

Yes, actually.

HENRY

Sorry about that. We got carried away.

JOHNSON

Yes, forgive the laughter. Heaven forbid we should briefly leave behind life's constant joyless discontent.

HENRY

Johnson.

ABbie

Heaven forbid I should get some sleep and try to forget today's miserable turn of events. Thank you.

ABbie heads back down the hall.

HENRY

Good night, dear.

JOHNSON

Sleep well.

ABbie

I will.

JOHNSON

You do that.

ABbie

Count on it.

JOHNSON

Good.

CONTINUED

ABBiE

Great.

Henry gives Johnson a scolding look. Johnson sneers.

IN THE GUEST ROOM

ABBiE enters. Mrs. Grundy is curled up on ABBiE's pillow.

INT. HENRY'S ROOM -- NIGHT

ABBiE enters, carrying Mrs. Grundy. A few more pieces of Johnson's FURNITURE are crowded into this room. ABBiE puts Mrs. Grundy down on the COT beside Henry's bed.

ABBiE

You sleep here. Sit. Stay.

ABBiE's leaving. Something catches her eye...
On the DRESSER by the door, there's a thin, worn WALLET.

ABBiE considers.

IN THE HALLWAY

ABBiE comes out, quietly, peering down the hall to satisfy herself that Johnson's entirely occupied in the card game.

IN HENRY'S ROOM

ABBiE returns to grab the WALLET, hurriedly searching...

She finds a single DOLLAR BILL...a few old STAMPS...some GREEN STAMPS. A COUPON for "INSTANT SOUP." In the inner pocket, there's a SNAPSHOT of MRS. GRUNDY...a dog-eared LIBRARY CARD with only "Johnson" typed in under "Name."

ABBiE's disappointed. Johnson steps up behind her, watching.

JOHNSON

Looking for something?

ABBiE jumps, startled, THROWING the wallet.

JOHNSON

I hadn't pegged you as a thief, but
I see now you're full of surprises.

He goes to retrieve the wallet from under Henry's bed with his cane, groaning as he slowly bends to pick it up.

ABBiE

I... I wasn't going to take anything
and you know it.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON

Luckily for me, there isn't much to take. Is my coupon still in here? If you'd like, each night I'll empty my pockets on top of this dresser so you can rifle through everything... satisfy your pathological curiosity.

ABbie's trying to shake off embarrassment, pointing at him.

ABbie

I'm telling you now, whatever it is you think you're getting away with... you're... you're not going to get away with it!

JOHNSON

You are a strange bird.

ABbie storms out. Johnson watches her go, bemused.

IN THE GUEST ROOM

ABbie retreats behind the closed door, humiliated, giving herself a moment to recover. She looks up.

Mrs. Grundy lifts her head from ABbie's pillow.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, DINING/LIVING -- MORNING

POTS and PANS are HEARD clattering from the kitchenette. CURTAINS are open, BLINDS up. Plodding from the bedroom hallway, Henry and Johnson squint into the brightness. They're still in bed clothing. Johnson wears WOOL PAJAMAS, a ROBE and a NIGHT MASK pushed up to his forehead.

The table is set. An impressive BREAKFAST awaits.

Henry and Johnson share a look of astonishment.

JOHNSON

We're in the wrong apartment.

ABbie'S VOICE (O.S.)

(from kitchen)

Good morning in there. Go ahead and help yourselves.

Johnson shrugs. He and Henry sit, helping themselves to PANCAKES, EGGS, BACON, TOAST and ORANGE JUICE.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON
(toasting with OJ)
Over the teeth and through the gums,
look out, Gall Bladder, here comes
the painful cramping of over
indulgence.

HENRY
This is really quite something.

JOHNSON
It would be more efficient if I just
ate this on the toilet.

HENRY
Have a muffin.

JOHNSON
That's your solution for everything.
I could be laying on the ground, half-
paralyzed from a massive stroke, and
there you'd be hunkered over me
trying to administer a bran muffin.

ABbie enters, bringing WAFFLES and a POT of COFFEE.

ABbie
How is everything?

HENRY
This is a surprise, Abbie. Not to
sound ungrateful, but to what do we
owe the honor?

JOHNSON
What's the joyous occasion?

ABbie cheerfully moves to pour coffee Henry's coffee.

ABbie
I thought you could use a nice big
breakfast. That way you'll have
plenty of energy...
(pours Johnson's coffee)
...for the big day ahead.

HENRY
Big day?

JOHNSON
By "big day," I assume you mean that
I spend the day curled fetal under
the covers of my bed, as is my custom.

ABbie sits, begins serving herself.

CONTINUED

ABBIE

By "big day," what I mean is today's
the day you go out and get a job.

JOHNSON

How's that?

ABBIE

You do want to contribute, don't you?
You must. I mean, you can go on
acting however you want, for all I
care, but you don't actually plan to
live here under my grandfather's
roof, eat, drink, run up his bills...
all without making the slightest
effort to repay him?

Johnson lowers his fork.

JOHNSON

Well, I...

ABBIE

Surely you don't expect him to reach
a point where he's got to chose
between medicine and say...food? Do
you? Or did you think those Social
Security checks were his "mad" money?

Johnson looks to Henry.

HENRY

Any little bit would help.

ABBIE

Eat up.

ABBIE takes a NEWSPAPER from the empty chair, tosses it on
the table. Johnson picks it up. It's the "HELP WANTED."

JOHNSON

Sweet Lord.

(puts newspaper down)
I'm letting you know straight off...
~~I'm not very good out there amongst~~
~~the madding crowd.~~

ABBIE

I'm sure you'll manage. You're not
agoraphobic, are you?

JOHNSON

Certainly not.

(to Henry)

Am I?

CONTINUED

ABbie
You're not afraid to go out?

JOHNSON
No. Just don't like all the people
running around in all directions.

ABbie
Who does?

JOHNSON
It's like a...barnyard out there.
Except animals show more civility.

HENRY
What if I go along? How about that?
I'll be with you every step of the
way.

JOHNSON
What choice have I got?

Johnson resumes eating, depressed.

JOHNSON
I'll look. Doesn't mean I'll find
something suitable for a man of my
particular skills.

ABbie
Whatever.
(eating)
Oh, and one more thing...

ABbie picks up a POLAROID CAMERA from beside her, looks
through it at Johnson. Johnson's confused. The camera
FLASHES -- WHIRRRRING as it spits out the instant PHOTO.

JOHNSON
(blinking)
What the hell's that for?

CUT TO:

EXT. MALL -- DAY

Again, the large SIGN reads: "SHOPPING MALL."

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT -- DAY

ABbie stops Henry's car near one MALL ENTRANCE, dropping off
Henry and Johnson. Johnson's as slow getting out as Henry.

ABbie
I'll be back to get you at five.
Right here.

CONTINUED

HENRY

See you then.

ABBEIE drives. Henry waves. Johnson's miserable, making a face as he mockingly waves the "Help Wanted" newspaper. He wears a BOW TIE, ARGYLE SWEATER VEST and SANS-A-BELT SLACKS, baggy as always. He and Henry head towards the entrance.

JOHNSON

Ah... the shopping center. The swollen teat of suburbia...bruised and bloated by the welting, never-ending suckle of the desperately lonesome consumer.

HENRY

That's disgusting.

CUT TO:

INT. COPY SHOP -- DAY -- MONTAGE

- ABBEIE flips open the lid of one self-serve COPY MACHINE.
- ABBEIE places the POLAROID of Johnson face down on the GLASS.
- The machine's tray catches COPY after COPY of the POLAROID IMAGE of Johnson, now ENLARGED.
- ABBEIE uses SCISSORS to carefully cut around the PHOTOCOPIED IMAGE of JOHNSON'S FACE.
- ABBEIE's HAND trades scissors for a black MAGIC MARKER.
- ABBEIE's FINGERS unscrew the cap on a BOTTLE of "WITE-OUT."
- ABBEIE's HAND yanks SCOTCH TAPE from a DISPENSER.
- ABBEIE's FINGERS press buttons, and in the copy machine's LED WINDOW we see "COPY QUANTITY" being entered at "500."
- Copier LIGHT passes back and forth across ABBEIE's features.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S CAR -- DAY

A thick COPY SHOP BOX is thrown onto the passenger seat. ABBEIE gets in, starts the car. She ponders something, drumming her fingers on the wheel. She looks at her WATCH. Wearing a dubious expression, ABBEIE puts the car in gear.

CUT TO:

EXT. MALL -- DAY

Once more establishing: "SHOPPING MALL."

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT -- DAY

Stopping Henry's car, ABBIE looks out the driver's side WINDOW, and we recognize the "FESTIVAL CINEPLEX" MARQUEE REFLECTED in the WINDOW with it's plethora of MOVIE TITLES.

INT. FESTIVAL CINEPLEX, LOBBY -- DAY

By the CONCESSION COUNTER, far enough away that we CAN'T HEAR what they're saying, ABBIE's talking with the theater MANAGER. The manager nods, pointing across the lobby.

INT. FESTIVAL CINEPLEX, THEATER 5 -- DAY

ABBIE enters, letting her eyes adjust. We HEAR the ZANY MUSIC and FLATULENCE SOUND EFFECTS of some O.S. comedy MOVIE as we FOLLOW ABBIE down the aisle... to where Henry and Johnson are seated, drinking SODAS and eating POPCORN.

ABBIE sits beside Johnson. Johnson and Henry don't notice, laughing at the movie. Johnson's still laughing when he glances at ABBIE, nods, facing front and gulping SODA, suddenly realizing -- doing a soda spraying SPIT-TAKE!

Henry looks, sees ABBIE there, his delight faltering.

HENRY

...oh we're in trouble.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET -- LATE DAY

Weathered 8 1/2" by 11" FLYERS adorn a TELEPHONE POLE with slogans such as, "WORK FROM HOME, MAKE \$\$\$!" Both "LOST DOG" and "MISSING CAT" feature PHOTOS and PHONE NUMBERS. ABBIE arrives, thumb-tacking up her own FLYER...

It features the cropped, enlarged POLAROID IMAGE of JOHNSON'S FACE. "DO YOU KNOW ME?" the FLYER reads, "REWARD for any INFO! (717) 555-9034. ASK FOR ABBIE."

ABBIE's pleased. Henry's car waits with BLINKERS FLASHING.

IN HENRY'S CAR

ABBIE climbs back behind the wheel, drives. Henry's in the passenger seat, the BOX of remaining FLYERS in his lap. Johnson's in back, studying one flyer.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON
(of the flyer)
Not a very good likeness, if you ask
me.

ABBIE
No one asked you.

JOHNSON
Well, I don't pretend to know what
this is all about...

Johnson lays down across the back seat, closing his eyes.

JOHNSON
...but so long as it amuses you.
(yawning)
Wake me when we're home.

HENRY
Is anyone else getting hungry?

ON THE STREET CORNER

ABBIE parks, FLASHERS ON, gets out, carrying a flyer around
to another TELEPHONE POLE. Henry leans out his window.

HENRY
You know, Abbie... I do want to
apologize about earlier.

JOHNSON
Apologize? There's nothing to
apologize for!

Johnson pops his head out the back window.

JOHNSON
(to ABBIE)
We were doing just fine and dandy
before you burst in like some Junior
G-Man. You happened to catch us
resting for one minute. Big whoop!
We weren't even going to watch the
whole movie.

ABBIE finishes tacking the flyer up, heads back...

IN HENRY'S CAR

ABBIE gets in. Johnson leans forward from the back.

JOHNSON
Anyway, it was all my idea. I'm a
bad influence.

CONTINUED

ABbie
No argument there.

ABbie drives.

JOHNSON
I had to drag him kicking and screaming into that theater.

HENRY
Well...not kicking and screaming exactly. Nonetheless, I promise we'll do better tomorrow.

JOHNSON
Tomorrow, we'll rise before the cock crows.

HENRY
That's right. We'll be bright and early and out the door before you know it...

JOHNSON
Right after our enormous breakfast.

HENRY
Not...not that we would be expecting another enormous breakfast, dear, or even deserving of it, certainly...

JOHNSON
But a man can dream, can't he?!

ABbie
If you two are done. With all due respect, tomorrow we'll be doing things a little differently.

Henry and Johnson share a dispirited look between them.

CUT TO:

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE, BREAK ROOM -- DAY

MUZAK PLAYS. A straight-laced MANAGER is seated at a TABLE in front of VENDING MACHINES, holding a JOB APPLICATION.

STORE MANAGER
Johnson. Just... Johnson?

Johnson is seated in a FOLDING CHAIR, cane held, wearing a polyester, one-piece, belted LEISURE SUIT and a woven GOLF CAP topped by a large YARN POM. ABbie sits not far behind.

JOHNSON
That's about the size of it.

CONTINUED

The Store Manager places the application down.

STORE MANAGER
(to ABBie)
And you are?

ABBie
His ride.

STORE MANAGER
Fine. Alright...
(to Johnson)
Before we start, Mr. Johnson, if you
don't mind my saying so, I can't help
noticing your...demeanor.

JOHNSON
My demeanor?

STORE MANAGER
Yes.

JOHNSON
I'm afraid you've lost me.

STORE MANAGER
Well, how should I put this? You
carry yourself in a way...in a way
one might expect from a much older
man, don't you?

JOHNSON
Don't I what?

STORE MANAGER
Carry yourself... in that way.
Surely you know what I'm referring to.

JOHNSON
Can't say that I do.

STORE MANAGER
(frustration)
Okay. How you're dressed, for
example. As a potential employer, I
have to ask if there's some sort of
explanation.

JOHNSON
And as a potential employee, I have
to tell you, I can't imagine what the
devil it is you're jabbering about.

Store Manager swallows.

STORE MANAGER
Moving on, then. Shall we?

CONTINUED

Johnson smiles his big, fake smile.

STORE MANAGER

We do have several positions open,
and I'd like you to tell me...

JOHNSON

If I may interrupt. We should get
something straight right off the bat,
if you don't mind.

Behind, ABBie just rolls her eyes.

STORE MANAGER

By all means.

JOHNSON

I'm not a very particular man, you
understand. I butter my toast one
piece at a time, like anyone else.
But I must insist, whatever job you
want me for, it's got to be something
where I'm sitting down.

STORE MANAGER

Sitting down?

JOHNSON

The whole time, not just part of the
day. Always sitting. That's a deal
breaker for me.

STORE MANAGER

A deal breaker?

JOHNSON

On account of my gouty leg.

CUT TO:

INT. MALL, DEPARTMENT STORE -- DAY

Johnson and ABBie come through a SWINGING DOOR into the
DEPARTMENT STORE proper, ushered by the Store Manager.

~~STORE MANAGER~~

Thanks again. We'll let you know.

The door swings shut as Store Manager retreats.

JOHNSON

Delightful.

ABBie

Let's go wait by the phone.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON

Where to now?

ABBIe

You know what... give me a minute.
I'll be right back.

ABBIe heads back through the swinging door.

IN THE BREAK ROOM

Store Manager's putting coins in a VENDING MACHINE. ABBIe returns, clearing her throat. He's not glad to see her.

STORE MANAGER

Yes? What is it?

ABBIe

No amount of explaining will be enough, so I'm just going to ask. Can I see the job application he filled out?

STORE MANAGER

Whatever kind of prank this was, Miss, I don't know and don't care. But, we're not in the practice here of handing out the private information of prospective employees.

ABBIe

Give me a break. This is important to me, and it can't mean anything to you. Please. Help me out.

Store Manager softens. He crosses to get a BALL of PAPER from the TRASH. It's the application, which he uncrumples.

STORE MANAGER

Screw it.

Store Manager returns to working the vending machines. ABBIe studies the application, her enthusiasm fading as...

ABBIe

(reading application)
Previous Employment... "Tinkering about. Odd jobs around town."
Previous Address... "I'll have to get back to you on that." Date of Birth... "None of your beeswax."
(still reading, despairing)
Desired Position... "Seated."

STORE MANAGER

He's a real winner, he is.

CONTINUED

ABbie sighs, re-crumpling the application, THROWS...
A perfect toss back into the TRASH CAN.

CUT TO:

INT. VARIOUS MALL SHOPS -- SAME DAY -- MONTAGE

Dropping in mid-INTERVIEW, we witness each of the following from the INTERVIEWER'S P.O.V. with Johnson talking directly to us and ABBIE watching from nearby, silently enduring...

-IN A BOOK SHOP BACK ROOM

In front of SHELVES overloaded with BOOKS.

JOHNSON

It's noble work, bookselling. Every book is a journey; each sentence a step forward; each paragraph a doorway; every page... well, the pages are more like the doorways. The paragraphs are like... shiny doorknobs. Maybe not. Nonetheless, books are very wondrous indeed.

(brief pause)

Or, so I'm told. Unfortunately, I'm an illiterate. Cannot read. Not one blessed word.

-IN A CLOTHING STORE BACK ROOM

In front of RACKS of CLOTHING.

JOHNSON

I'm a people person. A people-pleaser, actually. I'm also a good listener, which is important...

(cocks his head, cups

his hand to his ear)

Right? And I like to hug. I'm told if anything I hug too much... too often. That's me in a nutshell: a people-pleasing hugger who listens.

-IN A DISCOUNT STORE

Before WINDOWS overlooking the vast, busy SALES FLOOR.

JOHNSON

For me, it's the hustle. The hustle and the bustle. What would the hustle be without the bustle? It's the American Way, am I right? Grab the brass ring. Kick the other guy in the groin.

(more)

CONTINUED

JOHNSON (CONT.)

Climb the corporate ladder and start crapping down on everyone. There's no greater pleasure in the world than being on the winning team.

END MONTAGE

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING -- NIGHT

Johnson, in his WOOL PJ's and NIGHTCAP, plays a RAGTIME TUNE at his PIANO. ABBie enters, in robe, coming to watch. Johnson finishes playing. ABBie SHUTS the KEYBOARD LID.

ABBie

Curfew's in effect. No piano. No television.

JOHNSON

Thanks for the update, warden.

ABBie walks back towards the bedroom hallway.

JOHNSON

I've come to a realization.

ABBie stops. Johnson chews a cheap, unlit CIGAR.

JOHNSON

This job search ridiculousness... well, it's ridiculous, isn't it? An exercise in futility, performed purely for your amusement and at my expense.

ABBie

You're not for real. Don't expect to be treated like you are. It's all just one big joke to you.

JOHNSON

Not unless you mean the joke's on us.

ABBie

~~You will get a job. If in the~~
meantime it's a miserable experience for you -- bonus.

JOHNSON

Very well. I can run around in circles with the best of 'em.

ABBie

So I'll see you tomorrow, then.

ABBie exits, flicks the LIGHT SWITCH, leaving Johnson in DARKNESS. A moment, then he's HEARD playing "CHOPSTICKS."

INT. HENRY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

ABbie enters. Henry's already in his bed, lowering his BOOK and looking to ABbie over the top of his READING GLASSES.

HENRY
Tired?

ABbie
Exhausted.

ABbie takes off her robe, in pajamas. She sits on the cot. Mrs. Grundy's already lying there. ABbie pets her.

HENRY
Do you think all this is necessary?
The curfew...

ABbie
Yes.

HENRY
...new sleeping arrangements?

ABbie
It's like a frat house when you two share a room.

HENRY
You're right, I know.

ABbie
He's got the guest room to himself.
We get to spend more time together.
Look at it that way.

Johnson comes to the doorway, cigar in mouth, disgruntled.

JOHNSON
Good night.

Henry looks to Johnson, gives a helpless shrug.

Mrs. Grundy looks up as ABbie pets her.

JOHNSON
(points at Mrs. Grundy)
Traitor.

Johnson leaves and we HEAR the guest room DOOR SLAM. ABbie climbs under her covers, leaving room for Mrs. Grundy.

ABbie
How is it you don't seem to see how
bizarre this is? He is?

CONTINUED

HENRY

I don't know. Can't bring myself to worry about it.

ABbie

It's not like you're overlooking the fact that he's sloppy, or he's got poor table manners.

HENRY

I do believe... in spite of his eccentricities, basically Johnson's a good person. Isn't that what really matters?

ABbie's dissatisfied, rolling onto her side.

ABbie

Good night.

Henry's troubled, unhappy, reaching to turn his LIGHT OUT. They both lie there in the DARKNESS. A long silence.

HENRY

There are these three old ladies. One says, "Sometimes I find myself at the refrigerator with a jar of mayonnaise in my hand. I can't remember whether I'm putting it away or taking it out." The second old lady says, "Sometimes I'm on the stairs, and I can't remember whether I was going up or down." So the third old lady says, "Thank God I don't have that problem, knock on wood." And she taps her knuckles, you know, on the table...

(KNOCKING on wall)

And she stands up and says, "That must be the door. I'll get it."

ABbie LAUGHS obligatorily, not very convincingly.

ABbie

Another good... funny one. Funny.

HENRY

Good night, dear.

CUT TO:

INTERLUDE -- NIGHT

-Harrisburg's CITYSCAPE is bright beneath a cloudy evening.

-Spots illuminate the sharp, Neo-Gothic steeple of downtown's GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH.

CONTINUED

-One of ABBIE's "DO YOU KNOW ME?" FLYERS flutters on a street corner telephone pole.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S BEDROOM -- LATER NIGHT

ABBIE turns over in the cot. She opens her eyes. She sits up, squinting in the dark, seeing that...

Henry's bed is empty.

IN THE GUEST ROOM

Door's ajar. ABBIE KNOCKS quietly, looks in... Johnson's bed is empty.

IN THE LIVING/DINING ROOM

ABBIE enters. No one here. She crosses. At the front door, she finds the CHAIN is OFF.

EXT. HENRY'S BUILDING, HALLWAY -- NIGHT

ABBIE opens the door of "201," peering out into the empty, fluorescent lit hallway. A breeze crosses her features. She's about to duck back inside, but stops.

ABBIE comes to look UP THE STAIRWELL, her hair tousled as WIND is HEARD BLOWING gently down.

CUT TO:

EXT. HENRY'S BUILDING, ROOFTOP -- NIGHT

The door to the roof is ajar. ABBIE pushes it open, looks around. HENRY and JOHNSON'S VOICES can be HEARD.

ABBIE comes to hide against the corner of the stairwell exit, peering to see Henry and Johnson in LAWN CHAIRS at the roof's edge. They're drinking BEER, looking out across the rooftops and treetops.

HENRY
What'd you think of dinner?

JOHNSON
Eeh. The meat was stringy.

HENRY
The green beans turned out fine.

JOHNSON
Sure. The green beans.

CONTINUED

HENRY

Know what I wish? I wish I had the money to eat out at restaurants all the time.

JOHNSON

Who doesn't wish that?

HENRY

Better yet, I'd order in every night.

JOHNSON

Why not? Live like a king.

HENRY

Okay. This old man's driving along when his car phone rings. It's his wife on the other end and she's frantic, warning him, "Oh, darling, please be careful, I just heard on the news that there's a car going the wrong way on the interstate." So, the old man says, "It's worse than that. It's not just one car. It's hundreds of them!"

JOHNSON

Hank, I've got to say... your jokes are just awful. Every one of them.

ABbie cringes, concerned for Henry's feelings.

HENRY

I know.

JOHNSON

Seriously. They're the worst kind of cornball nonsense.

HENRY

Are they? Sometimes I can't tell.

JOHNSON

Trust me. They're real stinkers.

Henry laughs. Johnson laughs.

From her hiding place, ABbie's surprised, smiles a little.

Johnson and Henry drink.

HENRY

We're still going to the laundromat this weekend, aren't we?

CONTINUED

JOHNSON
 Been saving my dirty linens in eager
 anticipation.

We FOLLOW as ABBie walks quietly away.

JOHNSON'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Oh, boy. I'm a little gassy tonight.

HENRY'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Thanks for sharing that.

JOHNSON'S VOICE (O.S.)
 My pleasure.

HENRY'S VOICE (O.S.)
 What's tomorrow? Wednesday?

Their VOICES FADE as ABBie heads back in through the door.

CUT TO:

INT. VARIOUS STORES -- DAY -- MONTAGE

Again, from the INTERVIEWER'S P.O.V.: Johnson's blithely
 addressing us, in super-wide TIE and super-wide-lapel SUIT
 with bold stitching, while ABBie wearily bears witness...

-IN A TRAVEL AGENCY CUBICLE

Before POSTERS of EXOTIC GETAWAYS.

JOHNSON
 The very idea of it...that I would go
 into a small, soiled closet, push my
 pants to my ankles and sit my naked
 rear end down. All this after
 literally dozens of men have done the
 exact same thing before me. It sends
 a chill up my spine just imagining
 it. And that's why I can't use
 public toilets. I'm not exactly sure
 why I'm telling you this. What was
 the question again?

-IN A SHOE STORE STOCK ROOM

With SHOE BOXES shelved to the ceiling.

JOHNSON
 The death rattle is a spasm in the
 muscles of the voicebox, caused by
 the sudden acidity in the blood of
 the deceased. I read that somewhere.
 (more)

CONTINUED

JOHNSON (CONT.)

And I'll tell you another thing; it's an utter falsehood that your hair and nails keep growing even after you're dead. Don't you believe it.

-IN A DRUG STORE OFFICE

In front of a large, colorful PILL CHART.

JOHNSON

You know, it's funny how many failures life produces as a matter of course. How people so often expect one happy thing out of life early on, only to end up with another thing altogether, eventually. Not laugh-out-loud funny, mind you. More face-down-on-the-bed-arms-at-your-sides-sobbing-into-your-pillow funny.

END MONTAGE

INT. MALL FOOD COURT -- SAME DAY

CLOSE ON: the "HELP WANTED" covered in circles and X-outs.

JOHNSON (O.S.)

Good God. Look at these folks.

At a PLASTIC TABLE, ABBIE's absorbed in the newspaper, checking the ads with a PEN, eating FRENCH FRIES. Johnson eats a DONUT with a plastic fork and knife, looking around.

JOHNSON

Just so many chickens with their heads cut off. Is it any wonder I never go outdoors?

ABBIE keeps studying want ads. Johnson sips MILK through a straw. He stares off for a long moment, lost in thought.

JOHNSON

You know... the older you get, the faster everyone's flying by. That's what getting old is like. Like turning invisible. Before long, people are walking right through you as they go about their business.

(pause)

You'll see. Sooner than you think. Life is this race you run thinking it's a marathon, but it turns out it's only a 100-yard dash.

ABBIE looks up at this, paying attention to Johnson.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON

Still, live long enough, you survive your friends. You live yourself into isolation. More stories to tell, and fewer people to tell them to.

Johnson still stares off, a sadness creeping into his voice.

JOHNSON

It's okay, mostly. You hide inside yourself. You build up this protective shell of resentment. Resentment and silent rage. You stop giving a damn about what anyone else thinks, which is nice. That's a part of how you get out of bed every day.

(pause)

But, there are these fleeting moments...hard to describe. They feel like small windows into a sort of happiness you once knew. Brief, vivid pangs of happiness. You can't quite put your finger on them, until you realize... certain things are the same as ever; a certain street you walk or drive...a light shining through some trees... something in the weather.

(pause)

They're the same. These you recognize. Your misery is what's different. The familiar is this touchstone that makes you forget you're less happy now, and that's a good feeling... but like I said, it only lasts a few seconds.

Johnson looks to ABBIE. Shrugs. He sips his milk.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S CAR -- EARLY EVENING

Pale dusk. ABBIE drives. Johnson's asleep. They stop at a light. ABBIE takes a moment to look at Johnson.

She studies his placid features. He's handsome.

The light changes. ABBIE drives. Then, something outside catches her attention. She jerks the wheel, pulling over and braking to an abrupt HALT, startling Johnson awake.

JOHNSON

Wha... what the hell...?

OUT THE WINDOW, there's a plain STOREFRONT in a STRIP MALL with painted over windows and a NEON SIGN: "ADULT BOOKS."

CONTINUED

There's a "Help Wanted" SIGN on the door.

CUT TO:

INT. "ADULT BOOKS" BOOKSTORE -- EARLY EVENING

NUDIE MAGAZINES and VIDEOS abound. Johnson's unhappily addressing the disinterested OWNER who's seated behind the REGISTER, wearing thick glasses and a wrinkled shirt.

JOHNSON

...and furthermore, whatever job it is you're looking to fill, it's got to be something where I'm sitting down.

The Owner GRUNTS. Johnson's worried. ABBie's trying not to touch or look at anything while CUSTOMERS avoid eye contact.

JOHNSON

Sitting the whole time, not just part of the day. Always sitting.

(pause)

That's a deal breaker for me.

(pause)

On account of my gouty leg.

OWNER

When can you start?

JOHNSON

What? You haven't even had me fill out an application.

OWNER

You work register. Monday to Friday. Pay's in cash, every two weeks.

ABBie's overjoyed, raising her arms up. Victorious. Johnson's crestfallen.

OWNER

Tomorrow. We open at nine.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING -- NIGHT

Johnson's seated, slumped, watching TV with the SOUND OFF.

INT. HENRY'S ROOM -- NIGHT

In the DARKNESS, ABBie and Henry lie in their respective beds. Mrs. Grundy's curled by ABBie's head as usual.

ABBie

Can I ask you something?

CONTINUED

HENRY

Ask me what?

ABbie

You never have out any pictures of Grandma. I've always kind of wondered... why not?

HENRY

Your grandmother wasn't much for having framed photos around, back when we had the house. They're all in albums. If you'd like, we can look through them before you leave, maybe.

ABbie

I would like that. I wish I could remember her better.

HENRY

I can't believe how long it's been. I never imagined I would end up spending so much of my life without her.

ABbie

I don't mean to make you talk about it.

HENRY

No, it's alright. Hold on, I'm going to turn on the light...

Turning his LAMP ON, Henry gets up, padding across the room in pajamas. He retrieves something from his DRESSER drawer.

HENRY

I want to show you...

Henry sits on his bed, hands his WALLET to ABbie...

In the wallet's PHOTO HOLDER there is an old PHOTOGRAPH of HENRY'S LATE WIFE, a pretty woman of late middle-age.

HENRY

I've carried a picture of her every single day for as long as I can remember. This one since the day it was taken.

ABbie

Look how beautiful she is.
(still looking at wallet)
What's this...?

CONTINUED

The next PHOTO is a picture of ABBie posed formally and looking unhappy in her GRADUATION CAP and GOWN.

ABBie
You carry a picture of me?

HENRY
Your mother sent it.

ABBie
My graduation picture. God. It's horrible. Can I take it out?

HENRY
It's the only recent picture I have of you.

ABBie
(handing wallet back)
At least promise you'll get rid of it if I send you a better one?

HENRY
I promise. Now, you probably want to get some sleep.

Henry drops the wallet on his BEDSIDE TABLE, climbing back into bed, turning out the light.

ABBie
Tell me about her. If you don't mind.

HENRY
Really?

ABBie
How did you meet her?

HENRY
Hmm...let's see. Now that's going back a ways. We were in college. Believe it or not, I can still remember the first time I saw her...

~~As we EXIT the SCENE, it's the first time we feel that Henry and ABBie's conversation will continue in our absence.~~

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY -- DAWN

WATER'S HEARD RUNNING briefly, then Henry sleepily leaves the BATHROOM. He stops, noticing something.

IN THE LIVING ROOM/DINING

Henry comes from the hall's darkness to stand watching.

CONTINUED

Across the room, in dim morning light, Johnson's in his bed clothing, seated at his piano. He's PLAYING, but with the MUTE PEDAL locked, so this slow, sad SONG is reduced to the faint SOUND of the HAMMERS on FELT DAMPENED STRINGS.

Johnson finishes playing. He just stares into the old RAGTIME SHEET MUSIC in front of him, hands at his sides.

Henry watches with a frown.

Johnson closes the keyboard lid, bending to rest his arms on the lid, resting his head upon his arms.

Henry withdraws into the darkness of the hall.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS STOP -- MORNING

Cold morning. CITY BUS arrives. The PEOPLE waiting begin filing on. Johnson's amongst them, cane and BAGGED LUNCH in hand, supremely unhappy. He wears a top-to-bottom PLAID SUIT, TIE, and an ear-flap HUNTING HAT.

DOWN THE STREET, ABBie keeps hidden behind a tree, watching Johnson climb on the bus. Satisfied, she hurries away.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING -- MORNING

Mrs. Grundy's cornered, tail wagging furiously. ABBie closes in on her, trying to grab her, but Mrs. Grundy flees.

ABBie gives chase, across the apartment...
Mrs. Grundy scurries under the COUCH.

ABBie
(to Mrs. Grundy)
Here, kitty-kitty! What are you
afraid of? It's me, Abbie... the one
whose head you sleep on every night!

Henry watches, amused, standing by the dining table where Mrs. Grundy's CAT CARRIER awaits, its door swung wide.

HENRY
She heard her cage rattling. She
knows exactly what you're up to.

ABBie's on her hands and knees.

ABBie
I can see her.

ABBie starts crawling around, trying to sneak up on her prey.

CONTINUED

HENRY

What exactly are you up to?

ABbie readies, determined, then DIVES behind the couch...
Mrs. Grundy sprints out from the other side, KNOCKING a
table... TOPPLING a LAMP...

Henry cringes as we HEAR the LAMP CRASHING O.S. to the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S CAR -- IN MOTION -- DAY

Mrs. Grundy's MEOWING in her carrier on the back seat.
Henry drives while ABBie studies YELLOW PAGES with a PEN.

HENRY

I have my doubts about this entire
scheme. Not to be the pessimist of
the group.

ABbie

It's the best I've got right now, so
I'm going with it.
(looking up, pointing)
I think this is Green Street coming
up, so we should make this left.

Henry obediently makes the turn. ABBie studies Yellow Pages.

ABbie

Besides... how many veterinarians can
there be around here?

CUT TO:

INT. VET'S OFFICE -- DAY

In the waiting room, ABBie's got Mrs. Grundy's carrier up on
the CHECK-IN COUNTER, showing her to a gathering of SEVERAL
VETERINARY NURSES and DOCTORS behind the counter.

ABbie

Can everyone see her alright? I
~~realize it's a long shot, but if you~~
have any information... any
information at all.

Mrs. Grundy stares blankly out at everyone.

ABbie's coming off overzealous, the assembled VET STAFF
regarding her as if uncertain of her sanity.

ABbie

Her name's Mrs. Grundy. Then again,
that might not be her real name.
(more)

CONTINUED

ABbie (CONT.)
Wait, wait! Here... maybe if you
look at them together...

ABbie shows one "DO YOU KNOW ME?" FLYER, holding the picture
of JOHNSON'S FACE close beside Mrs. Grundy...

ABbie
Does that help? Is there anyone else
in back there who can come take a
look?

Henry comes to place a gentle hand on ABbie's shoulder.

HENRY
That's... probably enough, Abbie.
We should go.

ABbie
(still to vet staff)
Johnson and Mrs. Grundy. Ringing any
bells? Anybody?

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET -- DAY

Henry pushes the CART. Mrs. Grundy's carrier's in the cart
amongst GROCERIES. ABbie walks beside, hands in pockets.

ABbie
Is it possible some of his insanity's
rubbed off on me?

HENRY
It was a good effort. Not without
its flaws, but a good effort.

ABbie
I am going to find out who he is.

HENRY
I believe you.

IN ANOTHER AISLE

Henry comes to choose CEREAL. ABbie now pushes the cart.

ABbie
What was my father like growing up?

HENRY
(smiles)
A handful. Boys are, without fail.
How does it go, "...snips and snails,
and puppy dog tails?"

CONTINUED

ABBiE
What's that?

HENRY
Never mind, it's nothing.

They walk on.

HENRY
I think a lot of who he eventually became was a result of his being an only child, to a certain extent.

ABBiE
How so?

HENRY
He developed a very strong...self reliance. I sometimes wonder how good a father I was.

ABBiE
You must be proud of him. All that he's done.

HENRY
Sure. Who wouldn't be? He's accomplished so much.
(pause)
Still, I wouldn't mind if he accomplished just a little less.

ABBiE looks at Henry.

ABBiE
Yeah.

AT THE CHECK-OUT

Henry's paying the CASHIER. ABBiE's ahead with the cart. The frizzy-haired BAG BOY, ABBiE's age, BAGS ITEMS and loads them into the cart. From her carrier, Mrs. Grundy MEOWS.

HENRY
~~I've never said it, Abbie, but I'm~~
sorry for the way they ship you off to me every year or so. For how, as soon as you were old enough, you inherited their responsibility towards me.

ABBiE
I'm not shipped off, I choose to come.

HENRY
I know it's a task, and I know I'm a bore.

CONTINUED

ABBiE
You're not a bore. It's not a task.

HENRY
Please. You visit because you know
it means a lot to me. I want you to
know I appreciate it.

ABBiE
I visit because I want to see you.
You're being ridiculous, and now I'm
ignoring you.

ABBiE pushes the cart through. Henry's accepting his change.

BAG BOY
(to ABBiE)
Thank you. Have a nice day.

ABBiE
Thanks.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON:

A SLOT dispensing FOUR connected PHOTO BOOTH PHOTOS of
ABBiE, black-and-white, into the booth's CATCH TRAY.
And as ABBiE'S HAND collects the photos, we see...

EXT. CAMERA SHOP -- DAY

The rundown PHOTO BOOTH is out in front of this old
STOREFRONT. ABBiE studies the PHOTOS as she walks to where
Henry's waiting by his car. ABBiE tears one photo off.

Henry trades his GRADUATION PHOTO of ABBiE in cap and gown.

Henry slides the new b+w PHOTO of ABBiE into his WALLET.

CUT TO:

INT. "ADULT BOOKS" BOOKSTORE -- NIGHT

ABBiE and Henry enter tentatively. Henry looks around.

HENRY
Oh, my. Maybe I'll wait in the car.

ABBiE
You haven't even got your reading
glasses on.

HENRY
I can still make out a blurry nudie-
ness everywhere.

CONTINUED

ABbie

Try not to focus. Here he is...

They move to the REGISTER, in line behind a sweating, middle-aged NEBBISH whose MAGAZINES Johnson's bagging.

JOHNSON

(to Nebbish, of magazines)
...mighty fine selection. Got all
the bases covered here, haven't we?

NEBBISH

If you could just...

JOHNSON

Nothing to be embarrassed about.
It's a natural curiosity. Be careful
your mother doesn't find them when
she cleans your bedroom in the
basement of her house.

The Nebbish exits with his porn. Henry and ABbie step up.

JOHNSON

What brings you here?

ABbie

His idea.

HENRY

Came to pick you up. We wanted to
see how it was going.

JOHNSON

Not much to it. It's filthy
pornography. It sells itself.

EXT. "ADULT BOOKS," BOOKSTORE -- NIGHT

Henry, ABbie and Johnson exit, crossing towards Henry's car.
Johnson adjusts his ear-flap adorned hunting hat.

JOHNSON

Thanks to Abbie, I'm a smut-peddler.

ABbie

You're welcome.

JOHNSON

A purveyor of purulent periodicals.

HENRY

Still, a job's a job, isn't it? You
made it through your first day. I
think this calls for a celebration.

CONTINUED

ABBiE
I don't think that's what it calls
for.

JOHNSON
All I want right now is to climb into
a hot bath with a big box of "Doc
Oliver's Medicinal Cookies."

HENRY
Don't be wet blankets. I insist.
You name it, Johnson. Anything your
heart desires; a movie... a fancy
dinner, within reason, of course.

JOHNSON
Anything?

HENRY
Anything.

Johnson sets his jaw, considering.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH -- NIGHT

The SIGN reads... "Christ is the Way
BINGO TONITE! Free Snacks"

INT. CHURCH, BASEMENT -- NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Johnson, sweaty-faced, standing up to declare...

JOHNSON
Bingo!

In this large, smoky MEETING ROOM, where 300 SENIOR CITIZENS
are huddled over BINGO CARDS at endless FOLDING TABLES, a
GRUMBLING MURMUR rises. Angry looks are directed at
Johnson. ABBiE and Henry are at Johnson's table, dubious.

At the front, by the rotating BINGO BALL DISPENSER, the
BINGO CALLER'S on a MICROPHONE and SPEAKERS.

BINGO CALLER
(into mic, amplified)
Alright, folks. Let's... let's give
us a minute now...

The CHECKER wends her way through the tables. Johnson sits,
proudly offering his CARD as the Checker arrives.

The Checker looks the card carefully over. She looks to the
front, shakes her head "no." EVERYONE ANGRILY COMPLAINS.

CONTINUED

BINGO CALLER
(over speakers)
Okay, everyone, calm down...

ABbie's amazed by the crowd's vehemence, finds it hilarious.

BINGO CALLER
(over speakers)
For the last time, mister... one more
false "Bingo" and I'm going to have
to ask you to leave. Now...

ABbie
(laughing)
Why do you keep doing that?

JOHNSON
I...I get over-excited. My dyslexia
kicks in.

HENRY
They're going to form a lynch mob.

BINGO CALLER
(over speakers)
Same game, people. Same game...
(picking next BALL)
B-15. B as in Boy... 15.

EVERYONE'S bent, checking, Johnson, Henry and ABbie
included. An OLD MAN stands, shouting out...

OLD MAN
Bingo! I got bingo!

JOHNSON
Damn it!

The CHECKER starts across towards the excited octogenarian.

Johnson's frustrated. He looks to ABbie, who tends a single
CARD PAD to Johnson and Henry's SIX each.

JOHNSON
~~What are you hoping to accomplish~~
with one lowly card, rookie?

ABbie
And you're setting the world on fire,
Mr. False Alarm?

BINGO CALLER
(over speakers)
We've got a winner, folks! This
gentleman won the three pound bag of
old-fashioned-style salt water taffy!

CONTINUED

EVERYONE'S MUTTERING disappointment, simultaneously tearing the used BINGO CARDS from their pads to reveal fresh CARDS.

HENRY
Lucky son-of-a-gun.

ABBiE
What do you want with a three pound sack of taffy?

JOHNSON
Shhhhhh!!

BINGO CALLER
(over speakers)
...new game. And, next is our mystery prize of the evening.

At front, a large, gift-wrapped BOX is brought to be displayed with an oversized PINK BOW. ANXIOUS CHATTER moves through the GATHERING of OLDSTERS.

HENRY
Look at the size of it.

BINGO CALLER (O.S.)
(over speakers)
And the first number is: G-16...

JOHNSON
(to ABBiE)
I hope you're appreciating all this.

ABBiE looks to Johnson.

HENRY
You know, dear, if you simply didn't take the bait...

ABBiE looks at Henry, then looks back to Johnson.

ABBiE
Appreciating what?

HENRY
Here we go.

JOHNSON
Look around.

Johnson and ABBiE are the youngest here by 40 years easily. All the OLDSTERS are stressed, angry and fidgety, tending their many cards. They have all sorts of lucky STAMPERS, TRINKETS, DOLLS and TOTEMS on their TABLES and on NECKLACES.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON

Humanity laid bare... in all its raw,
naked savagery.

BINGO CALLER (O.S.)

B-30... B-30.

One OLD WOMAN in a "BINGO MAMA" T-SHIRT smokes anxiously.

JOHNSON

Greed, envy, rage... in all its
splendor.

An OLD MAN in Mardi Gras BEADS gnaws his RABBIT'S FOOT.

An OLD WOMAN in out-sized STARS-N-STRIPES novelty TOP HAT
rocks back and forth, cursing rapidly under her breath.

JOHNSON

Out there, in the real world; day in,
day out, indignity after indignity...
their bodies fail them. Minds,
hearts, limbs, lungs... faltering.
Shriveling.

BINGO CALLER (O.S.)

A-61... A-61, ladies and gentlemen.

JOHNSON

Did you know, every decade after
you're fifty, your brain loses two
percent of its total weight?

ABBIE

What are you talking about?

JOHNSON

In here, they escape. Even just for
an hour. Unrelenting reality is left
behind, for a taste of what their
lives used to be filled with --
passion. Excitement. Thrill.

BINGO CALLER (O.S.)

~~The next number is... F-3.~~

A few nearby OLDSTERS angrily SHUSH Johnson. ABBIE keeps
updating her CARD all the while, circling in CRAYON.

JOHNSON

Go to church. Listen to their voices
raised in song. You won't hear
anything approaching the passion in
that man's voice when he cried out...

(quietly mimicking)

"Bingo! I got Bingo!"

CONTINUED

Johnson's so earnest, ABBie can't help laughing.

BINGO CALLER (O.S.)

B-46. B-46.

JOHNSON

Want religion? Don't look upstairs Sunday. Look down here after the Saint Pete Pot-Luck Supper Thursday nights.

(motions with both hands)

Here is sanctuary! This is the last hurrah! And thank God for it.

NEARBY OLD LADY

Shut up the hell up, jackass!

BINGO CALLER (O.S.)

G-74.

ABBie

Not everyone's as miserable as you enjoy making them out to be.

JOHNSON

Sure they are.

HENRY

I'm not miserable.

JOHNSON

You only think you're not.

HENRY

What's the difference?

BINGO CALLER (O.S.)

A-16. A-16.

JOHNSON

(pondering)

I'm going to have to get back to you on that.

ABBie

~~You're the worst kind of cliché.~~
Actually, that's pretty much all that you are, isn't it?

ABBie looks down, circling on her card. She freezes.

HENRY

It is possible to grow old without feeling sorry for yourself.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON

Because someone doesn't feel sorry
for himself, doesn't mean he doesn't
have every right to.

ABbie's wide-eyed, studying at her card, realizing...

ABbie

... b-bingo... bingo...

ABbie stands, SHOUTING out...

ABbie

Bingo!

Johnson looks up in horrified disbelief.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S CAR -- IN MOTION -- NIGHT

Henry drives. Johnson's beside, quiet for once.
In back, ABbie's seated, self-satisfied, beside a huge,
cheap STUFFED PANDA with the PINK BOW stuck on its head.

ABbie

(to herself)

One card. And they said it couldn't
be done. Just... one... card.

ABbie WHISTLES happily, annoyingly. Johnson tries to ignore.

JOHNSON

Alright. Yes. One card. You seem
to forget you weren't the only winner
at our table tonight.

Johnson tauntingly waves a plastic BAG of PEANUTS.

ABbie

Oh, you can keep your ballpark
peanuts. They don't impress us...

(turns to PANDA)

...do they, Mandy?

HENRY

That's enough, Abbie.

Johnson looks down at his bag of peanuts. He grips the
plastic, struggling desperately with it... biting at it.
Even after considerable effort, he can't get the bag open.

ON THE STREET

As Henry's CAR PASSES, the BAG of PEANUTS hits the gutter.

IN HENRY'S CAR

Johnson's rolling his window up.

ABbie
Litter bug.

JOHNSON
It's for the squirrels.

ABbie
If you couldn't get the bag open, how
will they?

Johnson slumps, arms crossed.

HENRY
Hey, I've got one. Stop me if you've
heard it, Abbie. There's this old
man, who on his seventieth birthday
decides to change his ways.

ABbie settles back, none too enthused.

HENRY
He quits smoking. He starts eating
right and exercising. After a while,
he looks great, feels great. He even
goes out and buys a toupee. But,
then one day, as he's crossing the
street, he's run down by a city bus.
So, he's lying there, dying. He
looks up and he says..."God, how
could you do this to me?" And a
voice comes down from above, and God
answers, "To tell you the truth, I
didn't recognize you."

ABbie actually laughs a true, honest laugh.

ABbie
Hey, where'd you get that one? It's
actually kind of funny.

HENRY
~~Well, I have to confess, it's~~
Johnson's. He gave me some jokes...
even helped me practice telling them.

ABbie looks up at Johnson.

ABbie
Is that true?

JOHNSON
Certainly not.
(more)

CONTINUED

JOHNSON (CONT.)

I haven't told a joke my entire life,
and I'm not about to start now.

(to Henry)

Don't blame me for your bumbling
attempts at humor.

HENRY

This poor woman... she's very upset
at her husband's funeral. She goes
to the mortician and says, "You have
my husband in a brown suit. I told
you I wanted him in a blue suit."
The mortician says, "I'm very sorry
ma'am. I'll take care of it
immediately." And he yells to the
back room, "Hey Charlie, switch the
heads on two and four!"

ABbie laughs. Johnson can't help chuckling.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING -- NIGHT

Johnson, ABbie and Henry enter. ABbie goes to put her
stuffed PANDA on the couch. Mrs. Grundy jumps up. Johnson
crosses towards the bedroom hallway, tipping his cane.

JOHNSON

That's it for me, folks. Some of us
have to work for a living.

HENRY

Oh, ABbie, I nearly forgot. I have
a surprise for you, although... I'm
not so sure anymore...

Henry glances to make sure Johnson can still hear.

HENRY

See, it seems that I...I went and
arranged a sort of, well, blind date.

Johnson disappears down the hallway.

ABbie

What?

HENRY

A blind date. For you. Tomorrow
night.

ABbie

You're joking?

At the hallway, Johnson pops his head out, listening.

CONTINUED

HENRY

Now, before you say anything, I realize I should have talked to you first. It's just, you've had to spend all your time here with Johnson and me...

ABbie

Grandpa, what were you thinking?

JOHNSON

Did I hear you right, Hank? You set Abbie up on a date without so much as asking her?

HENRY

I thought you went to bed.

JOHNSON

You're sending her off on some...some rendezvous with a complete stranger?

ABbie

Excuse me. I can deal with this. What do you care anyway?

JOHNSON

Well, I don't. It's just... the principle of the thing. Other than that, I couldn't care in the slightest...

(to Henry)

But, since we're on the subject, just who the hell is this "Mystery Date?"

HENRY

If you must know, he's the Bag Boy at the grocery store. His name's Keith. He's a polite young gentleman.

JOHNSON

He may very well be a polite young gentleman, but that's not the point, is it? Don't you think you've overstepped your bounds?

ABbie's taking notice of Johnson's reaction.

JOHNSON

It might not be the easiest thing for her, worrying about your feelings, to tell you the position you're putting her in.

HENRY

Well...

CONTINUED

JOHNSON

Not that it's any of my business, but I think the best thing now is to call this Bag Boy up and tell him the whole thing's off.

HENRY

Maybe you're right.

ABBIE

Actually, maybe not.

Johnson turns to ABbie.

JOHNSON

What?

ABBIE

Maybe I'm overreacting.

(to Henry)

Your heart was in the right place, after all.

JOHNSON

Is that any excuse for meddling in your personal affairs? Not that I care, mind you...

ABBIE

Oh, I know.

JOHNSON

I'm only trying to stick up for you.

ABbie likes the effect all this is having on Johnson.

ABBIE

Still, now that, um... what's his name again...?

HENRY

Keith.

ABBIE

~~Keith. That's a nice name. Now that~~
Keith's expecting to go out, I probably shouldn't hurt his feelings.

JOHNSON

How can you hurt his feelings when he doesn't even know you?

HENRY

Johnson's right. I'll phone the grocery first thing in the morning...

CONTINUED

ABBiE
No, that's okay. As much as I dread
blind dates...I guess I can go
through with it just this one time.

JOHNSON
Well, the whole thing's absurd, if
you ask me. Nonsense.
(walking off, irritated)
I wash my hands of the both of you.
Literally.

He heads down the hallway.

JOHNSON (O.S.)
Absurd nonsense!

CUT TO:

INTERLUDE -- DAY

-Storm clouds threaten over Harrisburg's CITYSCAPE.
-A black CAT sprints across a quiet, residential CITY STREET.
-Rush hour TRAFFIC passes between the TWO towering OBELISKS
at the entrance of the MARKET STREET BRIDGE.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING -- NIGHT

Henry's sitting watching TV. ABBiE enters from the bedroom
hallway, in a pretty DRESS, hair up, wearing make-up.

HENRY
You look pretty.

ABBiE
No, I don't.

Johnson comes from the hall, in a YELLOW PLAID SUIT and TIE,
barely looking up as he collects his COAT from the closet.

HENRY
Where are you going?

JOHNSON
Out.

HENRY
Where to?

JOHNSON
Don't know yet, just going.

CONTINUED

HENRY
Doesn't Abbie look lovely tonight?

JOHNSON
Sure. What do I know?

HENRY
Keith should be here any minute, if
you want to meet him.

JOHNSON
I'll be back later.

Johnson exits. ABBIE seems disappointed, hurt.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

A PIANO PLAYER plays PIANO. The restaurant's busy. ABBIE and KEITH (the frizzy-haired Bag Boy from earlier) are just sitting as a WAITER hands them MENUS.

WAITER
I'll give you a minute to look over
the menu.

They study the menus, uncomfortable. Keith drinks water.

ABBIE
Not a bad place.

KEITH
Yeah. It's alright. He said maybe
I should take you here, your
grandfather. He even gave me some
money to pay for the food.

They both look out into the restaurant.

KEITH
This seems weird, doesn't it?

ABBIE
Very.

KEITH
I know. When he came in...asked if
I'd take you out. That was
definitely weird. What was I
supposed to say? I felt kinda sorry
for him.

ABBIE
There's no reason to feel sorry for
him.

(more)

CONTINUED

ABBIE (CONT.)

He tries too hard sometimes, that's all. He doesn't need you feeling sorry for him.

KEITH

I didn't mean anything by it. He seems like an alright guy.

ABBIE

He is.

KEITH

Anyway. What are you gonna eat?

ABBIE

Oh my God...

ABBIE goes slack-jawed as...

Johnson's waving from a table across the restaurant.

KEITH

What's wrong? Who is that?

Johnson's up and crossing towards them, bringing his menu.

JOHNSON

What the hell are the odds of this? Can you believe it... running into you?

ABBIE

You've got to be kidding.

JOHNSON

Here I am out grabbing a bite. You don't mind if I join you...?

(SITTING down)

Who's your friend? Oh, tonight's date night, isn't it?

ABBIE

You know it is.

JOHNSON

Must have slipped my mind. Nice to meet you...

(extends hand)

Name's Johnson. Friend of Abbie's grandfather.

Keith tentatively offers his hand and Johnson grips it.

KEITH

Keith.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON

A pleasure, Keith. Have you decided what you're having yet? The menu's usually pretty good here. I don't know about you, but I'm famished.

Johnson makes a show of tucking his NAPKIN under his collar.

JOHNSON

And so... how are you two love birds getting along?

ABBIE

You're not staying.

JOHNSON

Pardon me?

ABBIE

You're not having dinner with us.

KEITH

I'm, uh... gonna use the toilet. I'll be right back.

Keith gets up, heading across the restaurant.

ABBIE

What do you think you're doing?

JOHNSON

He's handsome. Don't you think he's handsome? I think he's dreamy.

ABBIE

Leave now.

JOHNSON

I believe I'll also...

(finger quotes)

"...use the toilet," as Keith so charmingly put it.

Johnson yanks off his napkin and goes, following Keith.

~~ABBE rests her head in her hands.~~

INT. RESTAURANT, MEN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Keith at one URINAL, facing the wall. Suddenly, Johnson's beside him, his face creepily close over the DIVIDER.

JOHNSON

Hello, Keith.

KEITH

H...hello.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON

I'd like to speak to you about Abbie. Because she means a great deal to her grandfather and me, you understand. We feel very protective towards her, and if anyone were to upset her or hurt her in any way, well... I'd hate to tell you what might happen to that person.

KEITH

I...

JOHNSON

Believe me, I know what your generation's like...

KEITH

My generation?

JOHNSON

All worked up, with a dope cigarette in one pocket and a fistful of contraceptives in the other. You're a Good-Time-Johnnie, with a smile and a wink and an overactive pituitary. Tell me I'm wrong.

BACK IN THE RESTAURANT

Johnson returns to the table, sits.

JOHNSON

Looks like it's just us.

ABbie sighs deeply, not in the least surprised.

JOHNSON

Keith had to run. Frankly, I think you should consider yourself lucky. There's no mistaking the glassy-eyed gaze of the habitual paint-sniffer. A "Bag Boy" indeed.

ABbie

You are a colossal ass.

JOHNSON

Don't shoot the messenger.

Johnson unfurls his napkin in his lap, SNAPS his FINGERS...

JOHNSON

(to O.S.)

Waiter!

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT -- TIME CUT -- LATER NIGHT

ABBie pours WINE into her GLASS, bored.

JOHNSON

Certain days, you stand in front of the mirror, there's not even a glimmer of recognition on the face of the person staring back at you.

ABBie drinks. They're halfway through their MEAL.

JOHNSON

In time...you'll find your bowels and bladder begin making unfortunate decisions without consulting you. They rule over you like cruel despots.

ABBie

You know what, I get it. You're an old man. You're withered and stooped. Your joints ache on rainy days. Can we for once talk about something else?

ABBie eats. Johnson chews, considers.

JOHNSON

Is it Abby with a Y, or Abbie an I E?

ABBie

Capital A, capital B, capital B, small i, small e.

JOHNSON

Is it?

ABBie

Yes.

JOHNSON

What's the point of...?

ABBie

~~That's how I spell it.~~

JOHNSON

Why?

ABBie

No reason.

JOHNSON

Is that how your parents spelled it?

CONTINUED

ABbie
 No. I changed it.
 (off Johnson's wait)
 I changed it because they hated that
 I changed it. Okay?

JOHNSON
 Fair enough. And Hank's son...he's
 some sort of big-wig business man, is
 that it?

ABbie
 International corporate insurance.

JOHNSON
 Sweet Fanny Adams, what a yawn. And
 you're also interested in management
 or some such other thing?

ABbie
 Not particularly.

JOHNSON
 That's what Hank said you're going
 away to school for.

ABbie
 Not that you're actually interested.

JOHNSON
 You wanted to talk about something
 else. We're talking about something
 else.

ABbie's reluctant.

ABbie
 I graduated with a degree in General
 Studies. If it were up to me, I'd go
 for a masters in literature.
 (pause)
 That's me. That's what I'm good at.
 Postponing real life as long as
 humanly possible.

JOHNSON
 What would you like to end up doing?

ABbie
 I wish I knew.

JOHNSON
 You must have some notion.

ABbie
 I want to accept what I end up doing.
 Live with it. Like everybody else.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON

Don't go setting your sights too high.

ABBIE

Exactly.

She's serious.

JOHNSON

To hear Hank tell it, you're going to change the world. According to him, anything Abbie sets her mind to, Abbie achieves.

ABBIE

He said that?

JOHNSON

Did.

ABBIE

That's nothing but his wanting to believe in me.

JOHNSON

Nothing wrong with that. You're all he talks about. It's Abbie this and Abbie that. I'm sick to death of hearing about you, to tell the truth. If you want know what I think...

ABBIE

I don't.

JOHNSON

I can't see how a degree in literature is any more useless than a degree in business for someone who's got no interest in business.

Not what ABBIE was expecting. Johnson's eating.

JOHNSON

One man's opinion.

CUT TO:

EXT. HENRY'S BUILDING -- NIGHT

ABBIE backs Henry's car into a space.

IN HENRY'S PARKED CAR

Johnson opens his door, about to climb out. ABBIE's pensive.

CONTINUED

ABbie
I'd like to thank you. Thank you for
being a friend to my grandfather.

JOHNSON
Why should you have to thank me for
that?

ABbie
I'm not sure.

ABbie turns the HEADLIGHTS OFF. It's a quiet night.

ABbie
You friendship with him... that
you've been there for him... I feel
like it's a glimpse of who you really
are.

JOHNSON
Who I really am?

ABbie
All this gloom and doom you're always
preaching; your misery rant. I don't
believe it any more than you do.
It's just one more of the endless
affectations you're buried beneath.
So many there's no way of telling
where the affectations end and you
begin.
(looks to Johnson)
Why? What are you hiding from in
there?

JOHNSON
I see your mouth moving, but it's all
jibber jabber coming out.

ABbie grips the steering wheel wearily.

ABbie
Promise me something.

JOHNSON
I doubt it.

ABbie
Let me ask you three questions.
Promise you'll answer them honestly.
Will you promise?

Johnson just looks to ABbie, says nothing.

ABbie
Have you always lived here?

CONTINUED

JOHNSON

All my life. Harrisburg,
Pennsylvania. State flower: the
Mountain Laurel. State bird: the
Ruffed Grouse.

ABBie

Is Johnson your real name?

JOHNSON

Now, what kind of question...?

ABBie

Just, is it?

JOHNSON

Sure it is. Why wouldn't it be?

ABBie

Where did you learn to play piano?

This one gives Johnson slight pause.

JOHNSON

Someone taught me.

ABBie

Who taught you?

JOHNSON

I don't recall. It was a long time
ago.

ABBie

I don't believe you.

JOHNSON

I don't care.

ABBie

I asked you to promise me.

JOHNSON

But, I didn't promise.

ABBie can't help herself... a tear rolling down her cheek.

JOHNSON

Abbie...?

ABBie

I quit, okay? I quit. You win. I
don't want to play anymore.

JOHNSON

What?

CONTINUED

ABbie
 You win, you win, you win! I
 just...I just want to know who you
 are. Is that so much to ask? I'm
 only here a few more days. You can
 tell me...

JOHNSON
 There's nothing to tell...

ABbie
 I won't tell anyone else if you don't
 want me to, I swear. Please...

JOHNSON
 This is it, Abbie.

ABbie
 Please, tell me. Please.

JOHNSON
 This is me.

ABbie turns to grip Johnson's plaid lapel, pulling him into
 a KISS, her eyes shut tightly -- a long KISS that Johnson
 finds himself returning -- until...

Johnson pulls back, GASPING as if startling himself out of
 a dream; recovering, realizing...

JOHNSON
 This... this can't happen. I'm...
 I'm sorry... it's...

ABbie
 Wait...

Johnson scrambles out of the car, flustered.

JOHNSON
 Henry will be worried. We'd better
 get upstairs...

ABbie
 Don't go.

JOHNSON
 He'll be wondering where you are.

Johnson SHUTS the car DOOR behind him.
 ABbie sits back, despairing.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERLUDE -- NIGHT

-The cooling towers of THREE MILE ISLAND nuclear plant,

CONTINUED

rimmed by blinking RED LIGHTS, bellow steam to the sky.

-TRAFFIC SIGNALS turn RED over empty DOWNTOWN STREETS.

-Moonlight shines down upon a vast GRAVEYARD at city's edge.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, HENRY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

In darkness, ABBie keeps her eyes closed as she speaks.

ABBie

I know what I need to do.

Henry stirs sleepily in his bed.

HENRY

Did you say something?

ABBie

(eyes closed)

I have to see him when he's alone.
It's the only way to know. I have to
see what he's like when he thinks no
one's watching.

CUT TO:

EXT. "VIDEO-VIEW" STOREFRONT -- DAY

There's a large EYEBALL on the SIGN for this VIDEO STORE.
ABBie exits, carrying a large SHOPPING BAG. She pulls her
jacket shut to the windy day, heading off, not noticing...

One "DO YOU KNOW ME?" FLYER scuttling into the gutter,
caught there briefly, then blowing away.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING -- MORNING

By early light, Johnson crosses, in baggy CORDUROY SUIT and
FELT HAT, his coat and cane in hand. He exits, and as soon
~~as he SHUTS the FRONT DOOR...~~

At the bedroom hallway, ABBie sticks her head out, looking.

IN THE GUEST BEDROOM

ABBie enters, nervous. Johnson's left his bed neatly made.
ABBie goes straight to a BOOKSHELF, moving a few BOOKS to
retrieve a small VIDEO CAMERA from its hidden niche.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

ABBIE's seated on the floor in front of Henry's TELEVISION, with WIRES trailing from the VIDEO CAMERA in her hand to the back of the TV. She's watching REWIND STATIC on the SCREEN.

ABBIE pushes buttons on the camera. The TV's static is replaced by an IMAGE RECORDED from the CAMERA'S HIDING PLACE: showing the BEDROOM where JOHNSON lies asleep.

ABBIE holds FAST FORWARD...

ON TV: JOHNSON'S seen shifting, time-lapsed, under the covers. The BEDROOM BRIGHTENS quickly as the morning sun intensifies. Johnson sits up, climbs from bed...

ABBIE hits PLAY...

ON TV: Johnson stretches, in PAJAMAS and NIGHTCAP. With his usual stooped demeanor, he shuffles OUT OF FRAME.

ABBIE FAST FORWARDS, impatient...

ON TV: we're watching mostly empty room, with Johnson zipping past a few times. Then, Johnson returns, in a BATHROBE, his hair wet. He's making his bed...

ABBIE hits PLAY...

ON TV: Johnson finishes neatening his bed. He steps O.S., then returns, laying his CLOTHING out. He slips off his robe, in a T-SHIRT and white BRIEFS. He goes to get SOMETHING from a nearby DRESSER DRAWER.

ABBIE leans in, furrowing her brow.

ON TV: whatever Johnson's got, he unfolds it. It looks like another pair of underwear he's putting on... slipping them over his briefs, except they're too thick and bulky, with a wide elastic waist, and.... oh, it's an ADULT DIAPER.

ABBIE deflates under the weight of realization. Horrified. Sad. Angry.

IN THE GUEST BEDROOM

ABBIE pushes the door open, crossing to the dresser DRAWER, opening it... confirming the open BOX of ADULT DIAPERS. She throws the box, looks around. She goes to one SUITCASE on a chair, grips the LUGGAGE TAG...

It reads merely, "Johnson."

ABBIE throws the suitcase open, SEARCHING through the OLD MAN CLOTHING inside, tossing a few items. She finds no answers. She turns, sees...

A SUITCASE under the bed.

ABBIE gets to her knees, pulling this suitcase out, opening it.

CONTINUED

There are more SHIRTS, some RAGTIME SHEET MUSIC, and old, yellowed "LIFE" and "SATURDAY EVENING POST" MAGAZINES.

ABBiE studies the magazines' SUBSCRIPTION LABELS, finding all the name and address info SCRIBBLED OVER, illegible.

She searches the SHIRTS, lifting a DIVIDER within the suitcase, halting, shocked by what she's found...

The bottom of the suitcase is lined with MONEY. Wrapped STACKS. 20's. 50's. At least a few thousand in cash.

CUT TO:

EXT. ADULT BOOKSTORE, PARKING LOT -- MORNING

ABBiE SCREECHES Henry's car into a parking space.

INT. ADULT BOOKSTORE -- MORNING

ABBiE steps up. Johnson looks up from pricing VIDEOS.

ABBiE
We need to talk.

JOHNSON
I'm busy.

ABBiE
Right now.

EXT. ADULT BOOKSTORE -- MOMENTS LATER

ABBiE comes out the front door, waiting as Johnson follows.

JOHNSON
What's the hullabaloo?

ABBiE
I found the money.

JOHNSON
Money?

ABBiE
Your money. The money you keep in the suitcase under your bed. Money, which you supposedly don't have any of, which is the reason you're staying under my grandfather's roof.

JOHNSON
You're telling me what? You went through my belongings? Why am I not surprised?

CONTINUED

ABBIE
I was right about you from the start.
This whole time, you've been lying to
us!

JOHNSON
What exactly are you accusing me of?

ABBIE
We trusted you. You said you don't
have any money to pay rent. You said
you needed our help...

JOHNSON
I didn't say that, did I? Hank said
it. And why do you think that was?
What could possibly be the reason?
Why would I move in with you when I
don't have to?
(waiting, angry)
Because Hank asked me to. Because he
thought that maybe, just maybe, I
could somehow help bridge the
generation gap between the two of
you. Don't ask me why.

ABBIE's taken aback.

JOHNSON
I agree, it was a half-baked scheme.
An unmitigated failure. But he was
so unhappy about his screwy
relationship with his granddaughter,
I guess he didn't know what else to
do. I went along, as a favor. And
this is what I get for my trouble, in
addition to all my suffering. So, go
away, Nancy Drew. You got it wrong.

Johnson heads back in, leaving ABBIE at a loss.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING -- DAY

Henry's seated on the couch, hands folded in his lap.

HENRY
It's true.

ABBIE's standing, disappointed.

ABBIE
Why didn't you just talk to me?

CONTINUED

HENRY

That was kind of the problem, wasn't it? It's not that we were doing terribly, just that we weren't doing terribly well. Right?

ABBIE

Yeah.

HENRY

I feel like I know you better now, I do.

ABBIE

Same here.

HENRY

I'm less afraid now. A bit.

ABBIE

Afraid?

HENRY

At my age, you fear certain things more than others. High on the list is the fear of looking foolish. It's not easy to know how much I can share with you before you see me for the sentimental old fool that I am.

(pause)

Afraid to tell you how proud I am of you. How glad I am when you visit. How sad I am when you leave.

ABBIE sits beside Henry, leaning to EMBRACE HIM... Henry wraps his arms around ABBIE, holding her. There are tears in their eyes.

ABBIE

These past two weeks with you... made me feel like I might be worth something.

ABBIE kisses his cheek. They release their embrace, sitting there, wiping at tears.

HENRY

Don't sell yourself short, Abbie.

ABBIE

I'll try not to.

They share a smile, swallowing back sadness.

HENRY

What happened? What happened with Johnson?

CONTINUED

ABBie

I made the mistake of starting to care about him.

(pause)

He is insane. No matter how much I try to convince myself he isn't.

HENRY

This has to do with the camera you rented... seeing how he's acting when he's alone?

(off ABBie's NOD)

Well, I may have screwed things up on that count. See... as good a scheme as it was, and it was one of your better schemes, you made one slight miscalculation -- you told me.

ABBie

What do you mean?

HENRY

I'm sorry. I told Johnson. I don't even know why I did. I didn't mean to. It just came out...

ABBie

You... told him?

HENRY

I guess I felt sorry for him. Couldn't stand to see him have the wool pulled over his eyes. Please don't be angry.

For ABBie, it's a heartening realization.

ABBie

You told him. He knew. If he knew I was watching, then maybe...

HENRY

Maybe he's not so crazy. A big "maybe," I admit. I don't know. Something awful's weighing on him,
I've come to see that.

ABBie

What am I supposed to do?

HENRY

I'm not sure exactly how you feel about him... but, maybe it's not such a bad idea to tell him how you feel about him.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S CAR -- IN MOTION -- DAY

ABbie drives, anxious. She spots something ahead, slowing...

EXT. CITY STREET -- DAY

Henry's car passes Johnson, who's walking the other direction. Johnson stares down at the sidewalk as he goes, his cane in one hand, BAGGED LUNCH in the other.

IN HENRY'S CAR

ABbie cranes her neck, curious. She pulls over.

ON THE STREET

ABbie climbs from the parked car, looking back to Johnson. She follows, not hurrying. Following at a distance.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

Johnson heads through the CEMETERY ENTRYWAY. It's a large cemetery. Lots of TRAFFIC NOISE from near streets. ABbie's a block away, still following.

ON A HILLSIDE STREET

ABbie comes to stand outside the graveyard's bordering IRON FENCE, looking through the bars. She can see...

Johnson across the cemetery, walking amongst GRAVESTONES.

IN THE CEMETERY

Johnson comes to one HEADSTONE, looking upon it. He sits on the grass of this grave. He opens his lunch, unwraps a SANDWICH from wax paper, eating.

DISSOLVE TO:

IN THE CEMETERY

~~Johnson's finished, folding his trash inside the paper bag.~~
He sets it aside. He lays back on the grave, his head towards the headstone. Arms at his sides. Eyes shut.

ON THE HILLSIDE STREET

ABbie still watches through the fence, saddened.

IN THE CEMETERY

Johnson lies there on the grave, completely still.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY ENTRANCE -- LATER DAY

As Johnson exits the cemetery, going back the way he came.

IN THE CEMETERY

ABbie arrives at the GRAVE where Johnson lay.
The HEADSTONE reads...

"Emmett E. Johnson
1919 -- 2003
Remembered"

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING -- DAY

ABbie enters, hurried.

ABbie
Grandpa. Where are you?

The apartment's quiet. ABbie crosses.

ABbie
Hello?! Grandpa! I think I can find
out...

IN THE KITCHENETTE

ABbie
...who he is.

Kitchen's empty. A distant SIREN can be HEARD from outside.

IN HENRY'S BEDROOM

ABbie looks in, concerned, finding no one.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

ABbie returns. She halts, seeing...
The PHONE is OFF THE HOOK, RECEIVER dangling to the floor.
The SOUND of the distant SIREN is growing LOUDER.

ABbie's fearful. We FOLLOW HER quickly...
~~Down the HALLWAY to the BATHROOM where she starts BANGING on~~
~~the door as the SIREN gets LOUDER, like it's right outside.~~

ABbie
Grandpa! Grandpa...!?

ABbie grips the doorknob, throws the DOOR OPEN...

IN THE BATHROOM

Henry's seated on the edge of the BATHTUB, pale, sweating through his clothing, clutching his dangling right arm, weakly lifting his head...

HENRY

I...I think I'm in trouble, dear.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING -- NIGHT

Johnson enters. It's dark. He turns on a LIGHT.

Mrs. Grundy jumps up on a chair. Johnson pets her head.

AT THE CLOSET

Johnson takes off his coat. Puts it on a hanger. Hangs it.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- NIGHT -- INTERCUT

ABbie's distraught, being talked to by a DOCTOR and NURSE. ABBie tries to move past them, but the doctor gently blocks the way, trying to calm her, reassuring her.

The nurse leads ABBie to a chair.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, CRITICAL CARE -- NIGHT -- INTERCUT

Henry lies breathing into an OXYGEN MASK, eyes shut. One NURSE changes Henry's I.V.. A young INTERN writes on Henry's chart as a DOCTOR dictates.

HENRY'S HAND reaches to grip the NURSE'S WRIST.

Henry's saying something. The nurse leans close to listen as Henry's breath fogs his mask.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- INTERCUT

ABbie dials a PAYPHONE, receiver to her ear.

~~INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- INTERCUT~~

As Johnson crosses to the kitchenette, we SEE... The telephone's still OFF THE HOOK, as ABBie had found it.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- INTERCUT

ABbie limply replaces the receiver, leans against the wall.

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, KITCHENETTE -- INTERCUT

Johnson puts down a dish of CAT FOOD for Mrs. Grundy.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, CRITICAL CARE -- INTERCUT

The nurse Henry spoke to returns to Henry's side, bringing a PEN and CLIPBOARD. She leans to Henry, speaking to him.

Henry manages to open his eyes.

The nurse places the PEN in Henry's hand, holding the CLIPBOARD so he's able to bring the pen to bear on the hospital stationary ENVELOPE held there...

HENRY'S HAND shakily SPELLS OUT... "Johnson."

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY -- INTERCUT

Johnson walks toward his bedroom, halting, looking down to...

A small piece of PLASTIC underfoot. He picks it up.

It's a SYRINGE CAP. Johnson regards it, confused. He looks to the BATHROOM DOOR, which is ajar, pushing it OPEN...

The BATHROOM FLOOR is littered with bits of MEDICAL TAPE and TUBING, a spent TUBE of CONDUCTING GEL, an empty I.V. BAG and other E.M.T. MEDICAL REFUSE.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL, CRITICAL CARE HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Johnson rounds a corner, distraught, hurrying down the busy corridor. It's one of the only times we've seen him without his cane. Looking ahead, Johnson slows... halting...

ABbie's sitting on the floor, her back to the wall, weeping. She looks up, seeing Johnson, trying to stop crying.

Johnson's about to speak, can't find words, his expression questioning, pleading.

ABbie's sorrow answers. She slowly shakes her head.

Johnson's numbed by realization. He looks to the closed DOOR across from ABbie, moving towards it...

~~At the DOOR, he looks in through the GLASS and WIRE MESH~~
WINDOW: where a BODY lies covered by a SHEET. Henry's body.

Johnson can't believe. He turns his back to the door, closes his eyes, balling up his fists.

ABbie stands, feeling Johnson's pain and anguish join with hers. She steps towards him, reaching out.

JOHNSON

NO!

CONTINUED

With a SOB, Johnson turns and POUNDS his fist into the door's WINDOW -- SPLINTERING IT!

Down the hallway, NURSES and ORDERLIES react.

Johnson PUNCHES with both fists -- CRYING OUT his misery -- POUNDING the window over and over!

ABbie backs away, shocked.
EVERYONE'S moving away.

A SECURITY OFFICER pushes through towards the scene.

Johnson's fists BLOODY the FRACTURED GLASS and exposed WIRE!

ABbie
. Stop! Stop it, please!

Johnson falters, falling against the door, going limp...
He slides down to the floor, his hands leaving a terrible red trail. He lies there.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL, PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE -- DAY

The OFFICE and FURNISHINGS are 70's-modern, institutional.
ABbie's seated, in the same clothing as before, numb, eyes red, weary from lack of sleep.

She's waiting. Waiting for what seems an eternity.

A male DOCTOR finally enters, DR. KESSLER, late-middle-aged.

KESSLER
We're going to keep him, for a few days at least.

He sits at his cluttered DESK. ABbie's despairing.

ABbie
You want to commit him.

KESSLER
~~Nothing's decided. These are the~~
first steps in a complicated process.

ABbie
You're going to commit him.

KESSLER
We can and will hold him for now. He injured himself.

ABbie
My grandfather... my grandfather was his friend. His only friend.

CONTINUED

KESSLER

Trust me that this is in his best interest. He's uncooperative. Possibly delusional, if not dissociative. You do realize, by all appearances, he seems to believe he's... elderly.

ABbie

He's pretending to. That's all.

KESSLER

What makes you so certain? You've spent enough time with him, from what you said. You've seen his behavior.

ABbie

He's not crazy. He's not. He can't be.

Kessler's PHONE RINGS.

KESSLER

(into PHONE)

Kessler.

(listens)

Yes. Yes.

(hangs up, to ABbie)

Go home. Get some sleep.

ABbie

Can I see him?

Kessler regards her, uncertain.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, PSYCHIATRIC WARD -- DAY

Johnson lies in hospital GOWN and pajama bottoms, his BED the only object in this windowless, white room. The door is opened by an ORDERLY who remains as ABbie enters.

ABbie

Johnson?

ABbie approaches tentatively.

ABbie

Are you alright?

JOHNSON

That's a loaded question at the moment, Abbie. Ask me some other day, I might feel up to answering.

CONTINUED

Johnson rolls to regard her, his hands heavily BANDAGED.
ABbie tries not to react to this.

JOHNSON
What do you want?

ABbie
We have to get you out of here.

JOHNSON
I only just arrived.

ABbie
They'll try to keep you here. Don't
you understand?

JOHNSON
What of it? They let me sleep. The
drugs feel good. There's pudding
with dinner.

ABbie
You don't belong here.

JOHNSON
You know, I've often said... "It's
not death that bothers me, so much as
its inevitability." And now that the
grave awaits, I take surprising
comfort in it. Won't be long. Till
then, this is as good a place as any.

ABbie
You're not going to die. You're not
going to die anytime soon, here or
anywhere else! You've got your whole
life ahead of you!

JOHNSON
What are you upset about? Don't
bother yourself over me.

Johnson turns slowly, returns to facing away.

JOHNSON
Aren't you supposed to be leaving for
school? Shouldn't you have left
already?

A single tear falls from ABbie's eye.

ABbie
Henry's gone. He's gone. It's just
you and me.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON
It's just you.

CUT TO:

INTERLUDE -- NIGHT

-Spotlights glow up upon the circular modernity of the STATE MUSEUM and the starkly monolithic STATE ARCHIVES.

-A rooftop CROSS and "JESUS SAVES" glow in bright RED NEON.

-The brick-faced BUS/TRAIN STATION is empty, dark and silent.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING -- NIGHT

MOVING MEN carry out Henry's FURNITURE. More MOVING MEN pack FURNISHINGS into BOXES marked "CITYWIDE VAN & STORAGE CO." ABBIE's on the PHONE, miserable.

ABBIE
(listening to PHONE)
Yes, I understand that, but...

She's interrupted, forced to listen.

ABBIE
(into phone)
I know where you are, dad. I know
what it would take for you to...

ABBIE listens, heartsick.

ABBIE
He was your father...your own father.
(listens)
No.
(hardening)
Yes, I realize... but...
(listens, angry)
Whatever you say. Whatever you say.
Goodbye.

~~ABBIE hangs up.~~

CUT TO:

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR -- DAY

There's an URN at the front amongst FLOWERS.
ABBIE's seated in the front row of FOLDING CHAIRS, wearing
black, hands clasped, head bowed. Alone.

CUT TO:

EXT. HARVEY TAYLOR BRIDGE -- DAY

ABbie pulls Henry's car over to the side. Light TRAFFIC moves around as ABBie gets out, carrying the URN.

Against the HARRISBURG SKYLINE, ABBie walks to the bridge RAILING. She takes the lid off the urn...

It's just pale ASHES inside. Henry's remains.

ABbie sadly steps to the rail, holds the urn out. She closes her eyes, overturning the urn...

BELOW THE BRIDGE

Henry's ashes swirl and dissipate, falling to the river.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY, REFERENCE SECTION -- DAY

CLOSE ON: the illuminated SCREEN of a MICRO-FILM MACHINE as NEWSPAPER PAGES whir blurrily past.

ABbie, still wearing black, works the MICRO-FILM MACHINE. ON THE SCREEN: she halts at an "OBITUARIES" section of the "PATRIOT NEWS," scrolling slowly until she finds...

"Emmett E. Johnson
8/14/19 - 4/28/03"

"...Mr. Johnson, age 84, a widower..."

ABbie leans forward, reading...

"...having suffered drug induced respiratory failure..."

"...apparently taken his own life."

"...survived by his grandson, Charles Johnson."

ABbie sits back, absorbing this.

INT. HOSPITAL, KESSLER'S OFFICE -- DAY -- INTERCUT

Johnson's lying on the COUCH, in a ROBE, bandaged hands at his sides. Kessler takes a seat at his desk.

KESSLER

Do you mind answering a few of these questions?

JOHNSON

Is that one of the questions?

KESSLER

Um, no. Try not to over-think this.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON
You're the doctor, Doctor.

Kessler sits forward, looking over a CLIPBOARD.

KESSLER
Do you feel you're often depressed?

JOHNSON
Only appropriately. I mean,
please... look around. The world's
gone to Hell in a hand-basket.

KESSLER
Do you consider yourself suspicious
of others?

JOHNSON
No. Why? Who told you that?

KESSLER
What one word do you feel best
describes your appearance?

JOHNSON
Shrinking.

KESSLER
What one word to you feel best
describes your personality?

JOHNSON
Aghast.

INT. LIBRARY -- DAY -- INTERCUT

ABBIE's at one TABLE, with library-copy HIGH SCHOOL
YEARBOOKS stacked up. She's searching their indexes.

She finishes with one yearbook, takes up another, flipping
pages... running her finger down the INDEX... coming upon...

"Johnson, Charles 5, 13, 15, 44, 52, 88."

ABBIE hurriedly searches for...

~~The individual SENIOR PHOTOS, and amongst them...~~
A PICTURE of JOHNSON as we've never seen him; just a
smiling, typical, pimply teen in a T-SHIRT and bad haircut.

ABBIE FLIPS PAGES, to PHOTOS of...

-JOHNSON in a ROMAN TOGA for a CLASS PLAY.

-JOHNSON posing with the fellow NERDS of the CHESS CLUB.

-JOHNSON amongst other CAST MEMBERS in another CLASS PLAY;
a drawing room drama with Johnson in a SMOKING JACKET.

INT. KESSLER'S OFFICE -- INTERCUT

Johnson still lies gazing up at the ceiling.

KESSLER

Do you prefer to be alone rather than in the company of others?

JOHNSON

I like people better when they're not around.

KESSLER

Do you feel you have any problems with substance abuse?

JOHNSON

Certainly not. That being said, I often find comfort and escape in sweet, sweet booze.

KESSLER

Do you feel your moods strongly fluctuate?

JOHNSON

No. It's a fairly steady flow of anger, tempered by an undercurrent of bitter disappointment.

KESSLER

Where do you picture yourself in five years?

JOHNSON

Six feet under. Long dead. Glad to be done.

INT. HARRISBURG HIGH, SCHOOL OFFICE -- DAY -- INTERCUT

JUNIOR and SENIOR STUDENTS crowd the hallways. We remain outside the SCHOOL OFFICE, watching through the wall of WINDOWS as ABBie enters, hugging the YEARBOOK from the library. SECRETARIES work behind the office COUNTER.

One SECRETARY notices ABBie, coming to help her. We CANNOT HEAR what they say. ABBie opens the yearbook for the Secretary to examine, questioning while she points to a page. The Secretary ponders, examines the yearbook.

The Secretary seems unsure, begins offering advice, pointing to the hallway as she speaks, directing ABBie.

INT. KESSLER'S OFFICE -- INTERCUT

KESSLER

Have you ever contemplated suicide?

CONTINUED

JOHNSON
Only in the last ten minutes.

KESSLER
Do you often have dreams in which
you're falling?

JOHNSON
Yes, but only very short distances.
Mostly tripping over rugs.

KESSLER
Have you had any recurrent dreams
that seem particularly vivid?

JOHNSON
You'd probably read something
negative into the one where I have to
give a speech to the Kiwanis Club
wearing only corrective shoes, so
instead... let me tell you how, each
night, I ride the winged unicorn on
a mystical journey over the rainbow
to the Kingdom of Smiles.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL, COUNSELOR'S OFFICE -- INTERCUT

The DOOR to this OFFICE reads, "Mr. Ramirez, Guidance
Counselor." It's ajar, and we're looking in to see the
balding MR. RAMIREZ leafing through the YEARBOOK.

MR. RAMIREZ
Yes... yes, I knew him very well. He
was a fine student.

ABBIE'S VOICE (O.S.)
Oh, I'd appreciate anything you can
tell me about him.

MR. RAMIREZ
He was a real character, Charlie was.
You're a friend of his, Miss...?
Abbie, was it?

ABBIE'S VOICE (O.S.)
Yes.

MR. RAMIREZ
Please, sit. Make yourself
comfortable.

ABBIE crosses into view, going to sit down.

MR. RAMIREZ
Charlie and I kept in touch even
after he graduated.
(more)

CONTINUED

MR. RAMIREZ (CONT.)

But then, when his grandfather passed away last year, well... Charlie sort of disappeared. As I remember...

Mr. Ramirez SHUTS his office DOOR, shutting us out.

INT. KESSLER'S OFFICE -- INTERCUT

Kessler puts the clipboard down, taps a pencil.

KESSLER

Why do you think your friend's death caused such a violent reaction from you?

Johnson just lays there.

KESSLER

Why should you have such strong feelings about getting old in general?

JOHNSON

Your body quits you, measure by measure. It throws down its arms in the face of the endless germs, microbes and specks of disease laying siege to your innards. Your joints dry up. Your teeth grind down. Did you know your maximum heart rate falls by one beat every year?

KESSLER

You anthropomorphize aging.

JOHNSON

Come again, Fancy-Pants?

KESSLER

You attribute an aggressiveness to it, as if were purposeful. But, aging is a part of the natural order, nothing more, nothing less.

JOHNSON

All part of life's glorious tapestry, eh? Try telling yourself that when you're shopping for a truss.

KESSLER

I'd like to help you to understand why you've been doing what I believe you've been doing.

JOHNSON

And just what have I been doing?

CONTINUED

KESSLER

Trying to put behind you a life you haven't even lived yet. As if you're somehow undeserving.

Johnson says nothing.

KESSLER

Why is that?

JOHNSON

You know, it's been nice answering your funny, headshrinker questions and all...

(sitting up)

But I should be going. I promised one of the shock-therapy patients we'd play "Patty Cake" after lunch. If I'm not back, he starts without me.

Johnson heads to the door, where an ORDERLY waits. Kessler watches him go, taps his pencil.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL, KESSLER'S OFFICE -- DAY

THROUGH THE OFFICE DOOR WINDOW: we see ABBie and Dr. Kessler speaking while Kessler pages through the yearbook.

Kessler closes the yearbook, hands it back to ABBie.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL, CENTRAL COURTYARD -- DAY

ABBie comes out into this large, GARDEN COURTYARD bisected by tree-lined SIDEWALKS. She holds the yearbook. PATIENTS wander here and there, some escorted by ORDERLIES. A few PATIENTS in WHEELCHAIRS smoke cigarettes on the lawn.

ABBie crosses towards where...

Johnson sits on a PARK BENCH, hands in the pockets of his robe, his head back, eyes closed, basking in the sun.

~~ABBie stops some distance from Johnson, uneasy.~~

ABBie

Charlie?

Johnson looks to ABBie, but then immediately realizes what he's done, regretting. Looking away.

ABBie

I know who you are.

It's the same old gruff demeanor from Johnson.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON
What now, Abbie?

ABbie
I found you.
(of YEARBOOK)
In here.

ABbie comes to sit on the bench beside Johnson. She holds the yearbook open, points to Johnson's SENIOR PHOTO.

ABbie
This is you. This is who you are.

Johnson takes the yearbook, regards it.

ABbie
Charles Johnson.

JOHNSON
Handsome fellow.
(hands yearbook back)
I fail to see the resemblance.

Johnson stretches, arms out, yawning.

JOHNSON
You know, I've grown accustomed to this place. Sure, it's stark and institutional. Yes, there's the constant smell of sick people, and the cold showers and nightly beatings, but it's really come to feel like home.

ABbie
I spoke to your guidance counselor from school. Mr. Ramirez.

JOHNSON
Doesn't ring a bell.

ABbie
Do we have to do this still? Can't
~~we just talk for once?~~

JOHNSON
Can't we talk? It seems like that's all I'm ever doing, talking to you. I'm tired of talking. I'm tired of the sound of my own voice.

ABbie takes a moment to decide.

CONTINUED

ABBiE

Mr. Ramirez told me what it's been like for you. How your parents had died when you were young. How your grandfather was the only one left to raise you... your only family.

(pause)

I found your grandfather's obituary.

Johnson stands, grim, walks a few steps, his back to ABBiE. He's fighting the hurt of old wounds opening.

It's not easy for ABBiE.

ABBiE

You lived your whole life with your grandfather. He sounds like he was a great man. He must have meant everything to you. I can only begin to imagine what it must have been like when you lost him.

JOHNSON

Why are you here?

ABBiE

How hard it must have been for you, when...when he committed suicide.

JOHNSON

What do you want from me? I mean, what could you possibly want from me at this point?

ABBiE stands, but keeps her distance.

ABBiE

Doctor Kessler's going to let you go. He said it's your choice. He's not going to try to keep you here any longer.

(pause)

I leave for school tomorrow. I have to go, otherwise I miss the semester.

ABBiE looks to Johnson.

ABBiE

Come with me.

Johnson takes a breath, holds it. ABBiE's voice waivers.

ABBiE

Will you, Charlie? Will you come with me?

Still with his back to her, Johnson slowly shakes his head.

CONTINUED

JOHNSON

Can't.

ABbie

There's no reason for you to stay here anymore. Let's go. Let's just go and we'll figure it all out once we're gone...

JOHNSON

Abbie, please... please!

Johnson's torn, tears filling his eyes.

ABbie

Why not?

JOHNSON

There's no place for me in your life.

ABbie

There is.

JOHNSON

You don't understand. You don't know.

ABbie's trying not to let herself cry.

ABbie

Tell me, then.

It's torture for Johnson as he struggles to find the words.

JOHNSON

There is such a thing...

(pause)

There is such a thing as getting so old that it hurts just to live.

He looks down, clenching his bandaged fists.

JOHNSON

So... what do you do...?

(pause)

~~What are you supposed to do, when the~~
only person you have in the world...
the one person you love, who you
can't live without...

(pause, quietly)

What do you do when they ask you to
help them end their life?

ABbie's heart is breaking for him.

ABbie

I'm... sorry. I... I didn't...

CONTINUED

JOHNSON

Don't be sorry. Don't. I'm not asking for pity. I'm not asking for anything.

Johnson sucks back his sorrow through clenched teeth, willing it back where he harbors it.

JOHNSON

That's not true, actually. I am asking for something. I want you to take Mrs. Grundy when you go.

ABBIE

Don't do this.

JOHNSON

Promise you'll take her. She always liked you better anyway.

ABBIE

Your grandfather would have wanted you to go on. He'd have told you the only worth in growing old is how you live your life.

JOHNSON

Goodbye, Abbie.

ABBIE

Henry would have told you...

JOHNSON

I wish you and I were possible...

ABBIE

You know he would have.

JOHNSON

I wish everything were different. I wish I were a different person... the person you think I am. But, I'm not. I'm just... not.

Johnson walks away, heading back towards the hospital doors.

ABBIE watches through tears, nothing left to say. Desolate.

Johnson reaches the doors.
Goes inside. Not once looking back.

ABBIE walks away.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING -- NIGHT

The PILE of mostly JUNK MAIL beneath the MAIL SLOT is swept aside as the DOOR slowly OPENS. Johnson enters, dressed in the clothing he had on the night Henry died.

Johnson looks around.
He walks to stand in the center of the apartment.
With Henry's belongings gone and only the few pieces of Johnson's FURNITURE left, Johnson looks even more alone.

INT. HENRY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Johnson comes to the doorway, looking in at the emptiness.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING -- DAY

Chinese fast food CARTONS are on a TV TRAY beside PLAYING CARDS left in the midst of a game of SOLITAIRE.

Johnson, in BRIEFS and a white T-SHIRT, sits slumped in a worn RECLINER. He stares at the fuzzy picture of a dinky black-and-white TV, watching some sort of old CARTOON.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, GUEST ROOM -- NIGHT

Johnson turns in his small BED, restless. Unable to sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT, LIVING/DINING -- DAY

Johnson has returned to his seat in front of the TV, again in briefs and t-shirt. On TV, there's some sort of MARCHING BAND on PARADE. The SOUND'S OFF.

FOOTSTEPS are HEARD from the outside hallway. Someone's coming to the apartment door. Johnson turns to look.

At the door, some MAIL slides in through the slot, joining what's already piled up. FOOTSTEPS are HEARD walking away.

Johnson slowly sits up in his chair. He stands.

At the door, Johnson comes to look down at the MAIL. He kicks at it, none too interested. He kicks again, but now slowly reacts... something capturing his attention...

He crouches to pick up an ENVELOPE...
The HOSPITAL STATIONARY ENVELOPE we saw the nurse bring to Henry earlier; the envelope we saw Henry write "Johnson" on, now fully addressed in another hand below that.

CONTINUED

Johnson stares in disbelief, a flood of emotions washing over him. He runs his fingers over his name... "Johnson."

JOHNSON
(quietly)
Henry.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY LIBRARY -- DAY

On the campus of this Ivy League school, we find ABBIE seated on the steps of the LIBRARY. She's reading from a TEXT, making notations in a COMPOSITION BOOK.

Clock tower BELLS are HEARD TOLLING from across the campus. ABBIE checks her WATCH, begins gathering her belongings.

We take note of the BOOKS she's putting in her BACKPACK: "Benet's READER'S ENCYCLOPEDIA." "The Yale SHAKESPEARE." "Encyclopedia of WORLD LITERATURE." She made her choice.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY QUAD -- DAY

At this busy pedestrian intersection mid-campus, ABBIE's trudging along amidst the constant, crisscrossing CROWD of STUDENTS on their way to and from classes.

ABBIE doesn't seem particularly happy or unhappy, just a woman moving on with her life. In the middle of all this humanity, ABBIE passes one PERSON just standing there...

MAN'S VOICE

Abbie?

ABBIE slows... stops, looking back...
It's Johnson. Or, we should say CHARLIE JOHNSON, because here he is finally -- stripped of all old man artifice -- standing straight, in BASEBALL CAP, JEANS and a T-SHIRT, looking startlingly like a normal young man.

ABBIE's trying to believe it's really him, at a loss.

CHARLIE

I found you. It wasn't easy, but I found you.

Even his voice is different now that he's himself. He takes his hat off, wringing it nervously in his now lightly bandaged hands. EVERYONE'S WALKING around them.

ABBIE

Charlie.

CONTINUED

CHARLIE

You were right. Henry would have told me, if he could have.

(pause)

He did. He...he sent me a letter. Just before he died.

Charlie reaches into his pocket. He takes out and unfolds the ENVELOPE Henry sent him, emotion choking his voice.

CHARLIE

He sent me a letter, Abbie. Except... it wasn't a letter.

Charlie opens the envelope to show ABBIE...

CHARLIE

It was just this...

From the ENVELOPE, he takes out...
The small PHOTO of ABBIE that Henry kept in his wallet.

It takes ABBIE's breath.

Charlie's eyes well up with tears this one last time.

Charlie moves to ABBIE...

ABBIE moves to meet him. They EMBRACE, KISSING...
Kissing passionately, at long last.

ABBIE holds his face in her hands, looking at him.

CHARLIE

I'm warning you now, in case you hadn't noticed...I've got some issues.

ABBIE kisses him.

Charlie holds ABBIE, eyes shut, grateful.

Here they are, together, surrounded by thronging humanity.
Here is where we leave them, at the beginning.

THE END