

The Words

by
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Registered: 1311988

VOICE ON PHONE
Sir, your car is ready for you.

CLAY HAMMOND'S VOICE
Thank you. I'll be right down.

The sound of the phone being hung up as we...

FADE IN

1 CU: A CLOSET DOOR.

1

We see the form of a man finishing dressing in his bedroom, but we do not see his face. His hands adjusts a beautiful Marc Jacobs, silk tie. He puts on his suit jacket and we can see he is impeccably dressed.

He picks up the cigarette burning in the ashtray, and lifts it out of frame to take one last puff before stubbing it out.

From the tray on the night table he picks up his wallet, a small notebook and Mont Blanc pen placing it into his breast jacket pocket.

Finally, he picks up a hard bound book with no cover jacket. On the spine is the

TITLE: THE WORDS

He places it into a small leather bag.

Finally, he steps before the closet door and stares into the mirror. For the first time we see the man's face: This is **CLAY HAMMOND** (early 50's,) handsome with an intense gaze. He stares at himself in the mirror, one last breath. We hear the sounds of RISING APPLAUSE, and he closes the door...

JUMP CUT TO:

2 INT. AUDITORIUM. NIGHT.

2

We see a PACKED AUDITORIUM applauding. Standing before them, from behind a lectern, Clay Hammond stares out nodding his appreciation.

Standing in front of the audience Clay's presence is composed, confident and quietly commanding; he is the picture of the successful, respected, cosmopolitan author of acclaimed, literary fiction.

Clay waits for the applause to quiet. He takes a sip of water and leans into the microphone.

CLAY
"The Words," by...me.

The crowd laughs.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

CLAY(CONT'D)
Part One. 'The Old Man.'

Clay takes another sip of water and begins reading.

CLAY(CONT'D)
The Old Man stood in the rain...

CUT TO:

3 EXT. NEW YORK CITY - RORY'S HOTEL. TWILIGHT.

3

It is pouring rain at rush hour in Manhattan. People shielding themselves with umbrellas and newspapers running this way and that to get out of the rain.

In the midst of the chaos we push in on an old man who looks to be about seventy years old. He is leaning against the outside wall of this extravagant hotel.

Wearing a long tattered rain coat and a rain cap, we can see his face is worn, yet the eyes are still filled with a fire; you could map out a life lived on the deep lines of this face.

Like the eye of a storm, **THE OLD MAN** seems indifferent to the rain and the people rushing to get out of it. Cabs and limos pull up to the hotel as the valets rush people in and out.

Suddenly, emerging from the front doors of the hotel is a younger man, **RORY JANSEN** (early 30's,) who seems to stand out from the rest. Somehow, it appears that the rain misses him.

Rory's face is youthful, vigorous, and vibrant; he is dressed elegantly in a tuxedo and top coat, and on his arm is a beautiful and sophisticated woman, **DORA JANSEN**, (early 30's,) wearing a black Yves Saint Laurent dress and a beautiful red shawl.

As Rory passes The Old Man steps away from the wall and studies the Rory and Dora closely. He follows the couple a few steps behind watching as Rory tips a valet and steps into a waiting limo with Dora. The limo pulls away leaving The Old Man standing there.

The Old Man pulls the collar of his jacket tight around his neck and turns to the valet. In a raspy voice, The Old Man asks the valet:

THE OLD MAN
Excuse me. Excuse me.

VALET
Yeah?

THE OLD MAN
Do you know who that was?

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

The valet looks the man over.

VALET
I'm sorry, I'm not permitted to give out
information about our guests.

THE OLD MAN
C'mon, humor me a little bit here.

VALET
I'm sorry, sir...

The Old Man grabs the valet by the arm.

THE OLD MAN
Just tell me, was that Rory Jansen?

VALET
I believe so.

THE OLD MAN
The writer?

VALET
I think so.

THE OLD MAN
I knew that was him.

VALET
You win the gold star.

The Old Man walks off into the rain, disappearing into the crowd.

TITLE CARD: 'THE OLD MAN'

CUT TO:

4 EXT./INT. RORY'S LIMO. NIGHT.

4

We follow the Rory's limo as it glides through traffic. Rory is now on his cell phone while Dora sits next to him sipping a drink.

RORY
Pop...yeah...it's a very nice limo.
(BEAT) Black, Pop. The interior is
black.

Rory makes a 'help me' face. Dora giggles.

RORY(CONT'D)
Pop, listen to me, don't worry about it,
I understand. Tell Mom I hope she feels
better. I wish you could be here too.
(BEAT) Yeah, I'm sure they'll take lots
of pictures.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

He looks at Dora and rolls his eyes. She laughs.

RORY (CONT'D)
Okay. Okay. I'll be sure and tell her.
I love you too, Dad.

Rory closes the phone and looks over at Dora.

RORY (CONT'D)
My father's very proud of me, and he...
loves you very much.

DORA
He's excited, huh?

RORY
More than I am, I think.

DORA
Spoiled already.

Rory reaches towards the bar and begins to mix himself a drink.

RORY
No, I'm very excited. A big honor,
right?

He takes a long sip, then stares out the window.

DORA (CONT'D)
Rory...where are you?

RORY
I'm sorry. I'm just a little
overwhelmed. I never expected any of
this.

DORA
You're just nervous.

He gulps the drink.

RORY JANSEN
It was this little book.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL. NIGHT.

5

The limo pulls to the front and the doorman opens the door. A few photographers snap photos as Rory and Dora step out of the limo and make their way inside. Rory and Dora are immediately swarmed by a crowd at the head of which is a short, bald man dressed daintily in a three piece suit. **NELSON WYLIE**, has the appearance of a true dandy ala a cross between Tom Wolfe Truman Capote.

(CONTINUED)

He is constantly followed by two assistants, all effeminate looking boys in their early twenties, who wait on his every word.

NELSON

Mr. Jansen? Mr. Rory Jansen? It's a pleasure to finally meet you. Nelson Wylie, as you may have heard.

Wylie extends his hand.

RORY

The pleasure is all mine, Mr. Wylie, I'm a great admirer of your work.

NELSON

Oh please, call me Nelson. You're right on time. So nice to not have to deal with a prima donna for a change.

His assistants all laugh while Wylie shakes Rory's hand. We follow them as they pass through the lobby. Many of the guests are dressed in tuxedos or dark suits and dresses. They stare at Jansen and Wylie as they pass.

NELSON (CONT'D)

... We truly are honored and privileged to have you with us this evening. Glad you could make time for our little award, we know how busy you must be.

RORY

Thank you. Really, the honor's all mine. I...

NELSON

Oh come now. Your book is fabulous. But you know that already. Right? You've read the reviews!

The assistants laugh again, on cue.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Honestly, it's refreshing to see a first work of such raw emotional power from one so...

He looks Rory over for a moment.

NELSON (CONT'D)

...young.

RORY

Thank you, but you know it's just...

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

NELSON

No, no, don't be too modest. In this world of mediocrity genius needs to be celebrated. I celebrate my own every day. (To Dora) And who do we have here?

DORA

Dora Jansen, such an honor to meet you.

Nelson takes her hand and nods at Rory.

NELSON

And I am very pleased to meet you.

He kisses her hand.

NELSON (cont'd)

(To Rory) This must be your Celia, no?

Dora blushes.

DORA

I've read all your books, Mr. Wylie. You are so...

NELSON

No, no, let's not talk about my work, not tonight. I've had my accolades, countless accolades. Tonight is about this young find here. Tonight is about celebrating the future, while I am merely the past.

They step into an elevator, and Wylie continues his monologue as the doors close...

CUT TO:

6 INT. COFFEE SHOP. NIGHT.

6

The Old Man sits at the counter of a very cheap Times Square diner. "Wheel of Fortune," plays on the TV.

He looks around and lifts his coffee to his lips. Just as he does...

MAN

(O.S.) YOU NEVER GIVE ME A BREAK!

The Old Man turns and we see a man squabbling with a woman at a table by the door.

WOMAN

YOU WANT ME TO GIVE YOU A BREAK?! WE DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY!

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

MAN

What do you want from me! What the fuck
do you want from me? I'm doing all I can
here...

WOMAN

I want you to help me. I can't be the
only one...

The male customer bangs on the table and storms out leaving
the woman sitting in tears.

Everyone in the diner goes back to eating, as the woman sits
quietly sobbing to herself. For a moment The Old Man watches
her.

CUT TO:

7 INT. WALDORF ASTORIA BALLROOM. EVENING.

7

Nelson Wylie stands at the front of an elegantly decorated
and lit ballroom filled with New York's intellectual elite.

NELSON

...'The Window Songs' has introduced us
to one of the most exciting and sensitive
young writers to appear on the literary
horizon in a very long time. We are
privileged to have with us this evening,
the winner of this year's American
Fellowship of Arts and Letters, Mr. Rory
Jansen.

The crowd applauds as Rory rises, kisses Dora, and steps
forward shaking Wylie's hand. A few cameras flash. Wylie
whispers in his ear as they hug.

Rory steps to the podium. The crowd quiets in anticipation
as he prepares to speak...

CUT BACK TO:

8 INT. COFFEE SHOP. NIGHT.

8

We see The Old Man laying a few dollars on the table. He
puts his hat on, buttons his coat. He stare up at the TV
where the waitress is trying to solve the just started "Wheel
of Fortune" puzzle.

THE OLD MAN

"A bird in the hand is worth two in the
bush."

The waitress turns and looks at him. He shrugs and makes his
way to the door. Just before he steps out he looks back at
the woman.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

THE OLD MAN

Excuse me...

She stares up at him, tears and mascara staining her eyes and cheeks.

WOMAN

What?

THE OLD MAN

You'll get through it.

She stares at him for a moment longer.

WOMAN

Fuck off.

He shrugs and steps outside. An ambulance speeds by, lights flashing.

CUT TO:

9 INT. BALLROOM. EVENING.

9

Rory speaks to the crowd from a hand written speech.

RORY

...I simply tried to set down the truth as I imagined it, the story of one man, his wife and his child. I never expected a small book like this to affect so many different people. (BEAT) I only wish I had an idea for my next book...

The crowd laughs.

RORY (CONT'D)

But I am thinking of titling it, 'Sophomore Slump.'

The crowd laughs harder.

RORY (CONT'D)

Anyway, before I take up any more of your time this evening, let me finish here by saying the honor tonight is all mine. From the bottom of my heart I thank you.

The crowd breaks into applause as Rory looks on.

CUT TO:

10 INT. BALLROOM. LATER.

10

A group of photographers surround Rory who poses with his award, with Wylie, and with Dora.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

The flashes snap, and while Rory appears awkward and a bit uncomfortable with all the attention, Wylie is a seasoned vet able to slip in and out of the "pose" for the cameras seamlessly...

CUT TO:

11 EXT./INT. THE OLD MAN'S RUN DOWN HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.

11

The door opens and The Old Man enters a tobacco stained room. The curtains match the bed spread in a dreary brown, and on the wall hangs a paint by numbers picture of a boat on stormy seas.

The Old Man takes off his jacket and hat. He walks into the bathroom and washes his hands and face, staring at himself in the mirror long and hard. He coughs lightly, and we see the bathroom is cluttered with prescription medicine bottles.

He takes a few pills, drinks a glass of water, smooths back what's left of his hair, and walks out of the bathroom. He opens his suitcase and takes out a copy of the book, 'The Window Songs.'

He turns the book over and studies the author's picture of a very serious and intellectual looking Rory Jansen. The Old Man opens the book and flips through it.

We push in on The Old Man's face.

DISSOLVE TO:

12 INT. TRAIN STATION - FRANCE - 1946. DAY.

12

It is 1947, post war Paris, and we see a **YOUNG MAN** frantically searching the station platform. He bumps into pedestrians who curse at him. Ignoring them, The Young Man knocks over satchels, valises, and suitcases continuing to search frantically. He grabs a **CONDUCTOR** and we see the Young Man yelling at him, trying to explain. The Young Man pushes past him and continues searching all of the bags desperately. As the train pulls out of the station we...

CUT TO:

13 INT. WALDORF LOBBY. NIGHT.

13

Rory and Dora stand by the doors with Nelson Wylie and his assistants in tow. Rory signs a few offered books and accepts congratulations.

NELSON

Rory, let me just say that you are as charming, intelligent, and lovable as your work.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

RORY

Thank you. And you, Mr. Wylie, are as witty, cynical, and flamboyant as yours.

NELSON

(Wylie laughs) We must get together sometime.

RORY

I'd like that very much.

NELSON

Next week, perhaps?

DORA

Maybe the week after. Next week we're in The Hamptons.

NELSON

What is it about the Hamptons? Everyone goes to the Hamptons. Why don't you try Trenton or Newark, at least that would be original.

He looks at Dora.

NELSON

Dora, it was delightful.

He kisses her hand again.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm off to find some young boys at the bar. (To his assistants) Come along puppies!

Nelson goes back into the hotel followed by his assistants.

DORA

What a character.

RORY

I've about had it with literary genius for one night.

He pulls her close, and the two slide into the limo.

14 INT. RORY'S LIMO. LATER.

14

The limo drives. She's got her leg thrown over his hip, running her fingers through his hair.

DORA

I told you that you would be fine. They loved you. They...

RORY

Okay. It's over. Enough.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

Rory looks away. Dora stares at him.

DORA

What?

RORY JANSEN

Can we just talk about something else?
Can we do that? I don't know,
anything...you. Let's talk about you.

Dora glares at him.

CUT BACK TO:

15 INT. AUDITORIUM. NIGHT - PRESENT.

15

Clay Hammond continues to read from his book as we see in the background the two main doors to the auditorium quietly open...

CLAY

It was a crisp and clear Autumn
morning...

DANIELLA, (20,) intellectual and very sexy, faced flush from the cold, dressed fashionably in black, quietly enters the auditorium.

She stands for a moment as she focuses on the author reading. We push in on her face for a BEAT as she watches him, transfixed.

Then, coming out of the trance, she quietly takes a seat in the back row, her eyes still completely focused on Clay, as he reads.

CLAY

The Old Man was dressed exactly as the
day before...

CUT TO:

16 EXT. RORY JANSEN'S HOTEL. MORNING.

16

The Old Man stands in the same spot as the night before outside the hotel, wearing the same clothes.

The Old Man pages through a New York Times. He comes to the 'Arts and Leisure' section, and in the middle of the page is a photo of Rory Jansen, Dora, and Nelson Wylie from the night before. Below the picture is the caption:

"First Time Novelist Awarded American Fellowship of Arts and Letters"

Just then Rory Jansen steps out the front doors, nods hello to one of the valets.

(CONTINUED)

VALET

Can I hail you a cab this morning, Mr. Jansen?

RORY

No, I think I'm just gonna take a walk, like the old days.

Rory begins to walk down the avenue with a book tucked under his arm. The Old Man begins to trail Rory about a half block behind him. Rory walks down the stairs to the subway station as The Old Man follows him down, huffing and puffing.

CUT TO:

17 INT. SUBWAY. DAY.

17

Rory is seated near the door. The Old Man stands across from him, studying him. The Old Man suddenly breaks out into a coughing fit and no one seems to notice, except Rory, who looks up at him. Their eyes meet for a moment, then Rory looks back down at his book.

An attractive middle aged woman seated next to Rory is reading The Times.

18 CU: PHOTO OF RORY, DORA, AND NELSON WYLIE.

18

She looks up from the paper and stares at Rory, then back down at the photo, The Old Man watching everything.

She catches his eyes, and smiles.

WOMAN

I'm sorry... I, don't mean to be rude. I just wanted to tell you, I loved your book.

RORY

Thank you...very much.

She leans in very close.

WOMAN

I don't know if anyone's ever told you this, and I can't believe I'm going to say it, but...(whispering) I've never ever seen a woman's orgasm described as...perfectly as you did in your book. I mean the way you...that's the way it feels, (she laughs) at least for me...

She looks at him, without blinking.

RORY

Well, wow. Thank you...again...very, very much.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

She laughs again, just a bit too loud.

CUT TO:

19 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CENTRAL PARK. DAY.

19

Rory enters the park. A moment later The Old Man comes up behind grabbing the rail, huffing and puffing. He continues to follow Rory into the park.

CUT TO:

20 EXT. CENTRAL PARK BENCH. LATER.

20

Rory sits reading, as people pass. The Old Man leans against a tree, watching him. After a moment, he crosses and sits down on the far end of the bench.

The Old Man pulls out a half a sandwich out and begins feeding the pigeons the bread who quickly gather around.

THE OLD MAN

Hello, birdies. How are you today? A little bit of food for you? There you go. Tired of digging around in trash cans, huh? Well, we're all scavengers here.

The Old Man continues to talk to the pigeons as Rory looks up from his book, slightly annoyed, but slightly amused.

THE OLD MAN (cont'd)

What are you guys doing in this God forsaken city, huh? You got wings. What are you stupid or something? You could fly anywhere you want to go. Why don't you go north, go south, go anywhere but here? At least go to the beach for God's sakes. Coney Island's just that way. I haven't been in New York City since 1961. I hate this town. I hate everything about it. There you go, boys. Eat up. Eat up.

The Old Man looks over at Rory.

THE OLD MAN (cont'd)

How you doing today?

RORY

I'm okay. And you?

THE OLD MAN

Comme ç*i*, comme ç*a*. Know what I mean?

Rory nods, goes back to his book.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

THE OLD MAN
What are you reading?

He shows the book to The Old Man.

RORY
'Ask The Dust.' John Fante?

The Old Man nods his head in recognition.

THE OLD MAN
The "Old Bull Dog." An unknown.

RORY
You've read Fante?

THE OLD MAN
Read him? I knew him.

RORY
You knew John Fante?

THE OLD MAN
Bandinni himself. I met him in Los Angeles...that must have been 1958.

RORY
What were you doing in Los Angeles?

THE OLD MAN
Whatever I could, like everybody else. Fante and me, we played cards, we went to the racetrack together. He was a terrible gambler. Fantastic writer, though. Should have been one of the greats. Should have been somebody everybody knew.

RORY
So, why wasn't he...known?

21 BEAT.

21

THE OLD MAN
Fate.

The Old Man slowly takes out the newspaper and opens it to the page with Rory's picture.

THE OLD MAN (cont'd)
So tell me something, how does it feel?

Rory looks up.

RORY
How does what feel?

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

THE OLD MAN

To not be...an unknown.

The Old Man holds up the picture of Rory in the paper.

THE OLD MAN (CONT'D)

You're famous now. So tell me, because I'd like to know, how that feels?

RORY

Well...I haven't really given it much...

THE OLD MAN

Oh come on! Don't bullshit an old bullshitter. You know how it feels. It feels good. It's okay to admit it. It's what you worked for, right? It's what you dreamed about when you were slaving away putting those words down, hoping somebody, anybody, would understand them, understand you.

RORY

Yeah, I mean, I guess...it feels good to have your work recognized...

THE OLD MAN

Ehhhhh, sure! You probably get good tables at restaurants now. People, people you don't even know look at you with respect, admiration, wondering why you were chosen when so many are called.

RORY

I just worked. I just...

THE OLD MAN

Fate was kind to you. The Gods smiled on you. And when you were born they said that one, that one is a writer and his words will be celebrated.

Rory shifts nervously in his seat.

RORY

I think that may be a little grandiose...I don't exactly know about the gods and all that. I...I mean...I just wrote a book and people happened to like it. I mean, who knows how anything happens? I mean, I wrote two others that nobody would publish before this one.

THE OLD MAN

But I'll bet they'll publish them now.

Rory shrugs as if to end the conversation.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2)

THE OLD MAN

I read your book. I liked it very, very much.

RORY

Well, thank you. I appreciate that.

Rory acts like he's trying to get back to his book.

THE OLD MAN

Tell me something, would you?

RORY

What?

THE OLD MAN

How do you write?

RORY

How do I write?

THE OLD MAN

I mean, what's your process?

RORY

My process?

THE OLD MAN

Your process.

RORY

My process is...I sit down and I write.

THE OLD MAN

(Laughing and then coughing) That's not what I mean. Maybe I'm being a little vague. Indulge a fan for a moment. There is nothing so mysterious as the writer of words. You wrote about Paris right after the war, and as I was reading your novel, I was there with your characters. I tasted the sweetness of the wine. I made love with the girl. I smelt the coffee, and felt the steam of it on my cheeks. I sat at that cafe in the morning wondering what the future held for me, or if it held anything for me at all. I listened to the child cry in the middle of the night. I felt the longing for home so far away. That is how much you captured it for the reader, for me, at least. (BEAT) You are some kind of writer, my friend.

Rory looks at him.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (3)

THE OLD MAN

But you, you're what, a kid? You weren't even a thought when this story takes place.

RORY

Well, I did a lot of research. I spent some time in Paris. I read first person accounts of...I imagined...

THE OLD MAN

Oh, but this wasn't imagination, this wasn't research, this was real. This was talent. See, I know because I was in Paris after the war, son. I walked the streets your characters walked, and I can tell you, it was just like you wrote.

Rory looks at him and starts to stand.

RORY

You're very flattering, sir. Thank you. I really have to go now. My wife...

THE OLD MAN

Sit down. Hey, sit down. (He grabs his arm) I know an artist gets uncomfortable when it comes to talking about his own work. And I'll stop, but would you do me a favor? Would you autograph a copy of your book? It would be an honor.

The Old Man pulls the book out of his jacket pocket and offers Rory a pen. Rory looks at him incredulously. He takes the book and tentatively signs the inside cover.

RORY

It was a pleasure talking to you...

THE OLD MAN

I was an artist once.

RORY

Sir, I really, I have to...

THE OLD MAN

Yeah, actually I was a writer myself. Didn't work out so good, though.

RORY

Why not?

22 BEAT.

22

THE OLD MAN

Fate. I have a story, though. A good story. I'm sure you get that line all the time now, huh?

(CONTINUED)

RORY

I'd love to hear it, but right now...

THE OLD MAN

You'll like this story. I always wanted to write it, but now I'm too old. (He holds up a battered hand) Arthritis. Maybe I tell it to you and you could use it sometime? And if you use my story, you could maybe give me a little credit.

RORY

Sir, have a nice day.

Rory begins to walk away. The Old Man stands up and calls after him.

THE OLD MAN (CONT'D)

It's about a man who once wrote a book but then lost it, and the piss ant kid who found it and called it his own!

The Old Man begins to cough and sits down on the bench. Rory turns around staring at The Old Man.

THE OLD MAN (CONT'D)

I see you're still here. (He coughs) I thought maybe you'd be interested in my little story.

Rory turns around.

THE OLD MAN

You want to hear it, or don't you have time?

RORY

I'm listening...

THE OLD MAN

I'll bet you are.

The Old Man clears his throat.

THE OLD MAN

Okay. It's 1944 and here I am a kid dressed as a soldier in the army. I never saw any action, I got sent to Paris right at the end of the war. We were gonna 'clean up the mess.' So here's me...

DISSOLVE TO:

23 EXT. LATIN QUARTER - PARIS. DAY.

23

The Old Man, now only twenty years old, is walking down a cobble stone street in the Latin Quarter of Paris with two other soldiers. His packed duffle bag slung over his shoulder, he is dressed in an army uniform: buck Private. **THE YOUNG MAN** is the picture of a life ready to be lived.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)

... A dumb kid from Philadelphia, with a dumb-ass grin on his face, who ain't never seen nothing but Morris Street. Here I am in Paris, the other side of the God damn world.

As he speaks we see shots from around Paris.

-Sacre Coeur Church
-Notre Dame
-The Eiffel Tower
-The Luxembourg Gardens...etc.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)

Paris. I must have walked that city a thousand times just breathing it in. Don't get me wrong, I wasn't just grab-assing around over there. There was a hell of a lot of work to do.

CUT TO:

24 INT. SEWAGE TUNNEL. NIGHT.

24

A line of sweaty soldiers stand with shovels, picks, and hammers, as pipe is being laid along the sewers.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)

I was repairing and laying sewage pipes 'cause most of em' had been blown apart by the Germans during the war. It was God awful work, but I was happy, like a pig in shit.

SOLDIER #1

So Vukovitch says to her, either take a bath first or we're not paying nothing.

SOLDIER #2

These French broads, I can't figure em' out. If they ain't tempting you, they're repelling you.

SOLDIER #3

Man, it smells terrible down here!

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

SOLDIER #2

Whole city smells! The people smell, the food smells, the streets smell! I miss Utah.

Soldier #3 suddenly wretches, bends over, and vomits.

SOLDIER #1

You got that Jewish stomach, ahh Barry!

Some of the other soldiers laugh, while others hold their noses. In the midst of it all stands The Young Man. He is working and smiling.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)

Literally, I was working in shit and I loved it.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. DAWN.

25

The American platoon digs through smoldering rubble, we see their boyish, innocent faces from all over the country.

THE OLD MAN V.O.

The guys in my unit, most of them were different from anybody in my neighborhood, they were from all over, but over there we all stuck together.

We push in on The Young Man who is picking up boards and bricks at the center of the destruction, and throws them into a wheelbarrow.

The Young Man lifts a large board and suddenly, something catches his eye. He stares down and we see beneath the board are two feet, one in a brown shoe, the other foot bare, bruised badly. The young Man lifts another board and we see the body of a boy about the same age as The Young Man. Next to the dead boy's head is a dog, bleeding profusely from his side, but still struggling for breath. The dog stares up at the Young Man.

YOUNG MAN

Sarge!

The sergeant and a few other soldiers come over and stare down at the body.

The sergeant takes out his revolver, aims it at the dog, and fires.

THE OLD MAN V.O.

That was the only time I saw a dead body my whole time in the army.

We push in on The Young Man's face.

26 EXT. FIELD. DAY.

26

The entire unit is taking a break in the fields, eating, drinking, carousing. The Young Man sits playing cards with DAVE.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)

There was this guy in my unit, we were real different, he was a real bookworm, an intellectual, but he was my best friend, probably because we were so different. He gave me some books to read about Paris, probably the first books I ever read about anything...

CUT TO:

27 EXT. CAFE. TWILIGHT.

27

The Young Man sits in a cafe reading "The Sun Also Rises." He closes it and looks up as we push in on his face.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)

I don't know if it was the things I had seen, or the romance of Paris, or simply just growing up, but for the first time I could see a world that was bigger than the one I had known and I wanted more. I wanted to be something, more...more than I ever was, maybe more than I ever deserved to be.

CUT BACK TO:

28 EXT. CENTRAL PARK BENCH. DAY.

28

RORY

A writer?

THE OLD MAN

You bet your ass, kid. But I had no idea what that really meant...

CUT TO:

29 EXT. CAFE. NIGHT.

29

The Young Man and Dave sit at the same cafe sipping wine and taking in the bohemian scene.

A young and beautiful waitress comes over to the table. She has short, black hair and quickly gathers empty coffee cups and piles them on her tray. Suddenly, The Young Man and the woman's eyes meet and they stare at each other for a moment. She finally blinks and mumbles something in French to The Young Man, and then walks away.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

YOUNG MAN
What'd she say?

Dave thinks.

DAVE FARBER
I'll tell you, my French is a little
weak, but I think she said (BEAT) she
loves you?

The Young Man stares at her with wide eyed amazement as she
works.

CUT TO:

30 EXT. CAFE. NIGHT.

30

The Young Man sits with the waitress, **CELIA**. A bottle of
wine on the table. The two hold hands across the table
staring at each other, looking very much in love.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
I found out sometime later what she had
actually said was, 'Pay your check and
get the hell out of here' but who was I
to question fate.

The Young Man pours her some wine.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
I knew one whole word of French.

The Young Man looks at her and whispers:

YOUNG MAN
Oui.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
And she knew one word of English:

She looks at him and whispers:

CELIA
Yes.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
It was a perfect relationship.

31 EXT. PARIS PARK. DAY.

31

Celia and The Young Man are laying on the grass eating ice
cream. Suddenly, Celia grabs her forehead, dropping the
cone.

CELIA
Oooh! Oooh!

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

YOUNG MAN
What's wrong?

CELIA
Iz cold in my head! Pain!

YOUNG MAN
Ice cream headache.

CELIA
Ed-ache? I ate dis!

She takes the ice cream and throws it at a tree. The Young Man indicates for her to take her pinky finger and stick it under her tongue.

YOUNG MAN
Old trick. Makes it go away.

Celia does so. She suddenly pulls her finger out of her mouth.

CELIA
It doesn't work! (Grabbing her head) I
don't know what to do! I don't know...

She looks around, suddenly relieved of her headache.

CELIA (cont'd)
Iz gone!

He shrugs.

CELIA
I ate when zat 'appens.

He laughs.

CELIA
I want more. More!

They start fighting for the cone, making a mess, rolling around in the grass.

CUT BACK TO:

32 EXT. CENTRAL PARK BENCH. DAY.

32

The two sit talking.

RORY
So what happened?

THE OLD MAN
I got discharged from the army...

33 EXT. PARIS TRAIN STATION. NIGHT. 33

The train station is packed with American G.I's leaving for home. The Young Man and Celia stare into each other's eyes. He kisses her on the forehead, looks at her once more, and enters the train. He watches her through the window standing on the platform as the train slowly pulls out.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. PHILADELPHIA CITY STREET. TWILIGHT. 34

35 MONTAGE sequence. 35

The Young Man walks the streets in Philadelphia on a warm summer night. He is dressed as a civilian.

In the background we hear a baseball game being announced over the radio, The Phillies vs. The Brooklyn Dodgers. As we hear the announcers' voices we see...

-He sees an old man pulling a trash can up the steps.
-He sees some young men fist fighting in the streets outside a bar.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)

I went back home to Philadelphia, but what once was my whole world suddenly seemed...small. I hate to say it, and it made me feel sick to my gut, but everybody seemed...Nothing had changed since I had gone away, y'know...

CUT TO:

36 INT. BUTCHER SHOP. DAY. 36

The Young Man stands with a cleaver cutting a large slab of meat into steaks. His apron is stained with blood and he sweats beneath the lights as he works.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. BUTCHER SHOP ALLEYWAY. DAY. 37

The Young Man, still in his apron, sits on the stoop smoking a cigarette. He watches the life of his neighborhood from the stoop all to the soundtrack of the baseball game still being called.

-A group of young children playing marbles.
-A man sweeps the sidewalk in front of his grocery store. He greets The Young Man.
-A woman pulls a cart full of fruit down the street.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
 Except me, I was different. But nobody
 could see it.

CUT TO:

38 INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY. DAY.

38

The young man walks down the aisles and aisles of books
 looking uncomfortable and utterly out of place here.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
 For the first time, after living in
 Philadelphia for eighteen years, I
 finally went to the public library. Now
 let me tell you something, before I left,
 I didn't even know we had a library. I
 sat in there for days, trying to write.

We see The Young Man sitting at a desk. There is a stack of
 books on the table in front of him.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
 I was trying to write about Paris, about
 what I had seen and felt, but no matter
 how hard I tried, I couldn't get the
 words right.

As we push in we see that he is writing in a notebook. He
 stops and crosses out what he has written and begins again.
 The Young Man looks up in frustration.

CUT TO:

39 INT. YOUNG MAN'S PHILADELPHIA BEDROOM. DAY.

39

-We see The Young Man in his room, packing his things and
 closing his suitcase.
 -We see him hugging his parents, his grandmother, and his
 little sister.
 -We see him stepping out the door and walking down the street
 as people wave goodbye.

CUT TO:

40 EXT. PARIS STREET. TWILIGHT.

40

It is a beautiful spring night in Paris and we see The Young
 Man walking down the street through the crowd. He has a bag
 slung over his shoulder, a cigarette dangling out of his
 mouth, and a smile splattered across his face.

He comes to the cafe where he first met Celia. He spots her;
 she's is serving drinks to three young men sitting at a
 table.

He stares at her as she does her work, completely
 unsuspecting that he is there. Suddenly, she turns her head.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

Their eyes meet and lock. The world stops, time stops, everything stops.

She drops her tray filled with drinks onto the three men and runs. The men stand up yelling and cursing.

The Young Man drops his bag and runs. They meet in the middle of the street. He grabs her. She grabs him. They cover each other in thousands of kisses as people stop and watch. The two lovers fall to the ground laughing and crying.

CUT TO:

41 INT. YOUNG MAN'S SMALL APARTMENT. NIGHT.

41

A small light burns in the corner of the apartment. The Young Man sits at the table in front of a typewriter working away.

The girl comes over and puts a small cup of coffee next to him. He does not look up, and she stares at him with love.

THE OLD MAN (V.O)

We rented a small apartment, and I began my apprenticeship as a writer. I was in love with Paris, with Celia, with writing, with the possibility of writing, with the possibility of words.

CUT TO:

42 EXT. PLACE CONTRESCARPE. DAY.

42

We see Celia and The Young Man walking down the street together holding hands, smiling, and laughing through the outdoor market.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)

We were poor, sure, but it was okay. I mean, everybody was poor then, and Paris was still cheap, and a good place to be if you wanted to be an artist.

CUT TO:

43 INT. NEWSROOM. DAY.

43

We see The Young Man working at writing copy as the sounds of teletypes rattle in the background.

THE OLD MAN V.O.

I got a job as a journalist for a small English language weekly.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

43

THE OLD MAN V.O. (cont'd)
There were a lot of them springing up for
all the ex-pats, and they'd hire anybody
who could string a few words together.
It was a good place to make mistakes, to
learn.

CUT TO:

44 INT. YOUNG MAN'S KITCHENETTE. MORNING.

44

Celia kisses The Young Man. They break, and look at each
other. They kiss again...and suddenly they are going at it,
passionately, falling to the floor, stripping each other's
clothes off.

CUT TO:

45 EXT. PARIS COBBLE STONE STREET. NIGHT.

45

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
Celia and I were married a couple weeks
later.

Beneath the lamp light, the lone couple dance to the night
sounds; the Young Man dressed in a second hand suit and Celia
wearing a second hand white gown. Alone they dance, staring
into each other's eyes, the only two people in the world.

THE OLD MAN'S (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I was finally making a little bit of
money, and my writing was slowly getting
better too.

CUT TO:

46 EXT. FIELD. DAY.

46

A beautiful field of flowers.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
It was six months after we were
married...

We see her grab his hand, and mouth something to him. He
looks at her and says something. She jumps up and down and
says something else. He picks her up and twirls her round
and round.

DISSOLVE TO:

47 INT. YOUNG MAN'S APARTMENT. DAY.

47

Celia lays in the bed and The Young Man holds a baby bundled
up. Light streams in through the window. The baby begins to
cry and The Young Man laughs, bobbing the baby up and down.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
 6 pounds and three ounces. Eyes like her
 mother. That was my moment. But I
 didn't know that then, you never do.

CUT TO:

48 EXT. PARIS STREET. DAY.

48

Celia and The Young Man walk down the street, the same as
 before, only this time with a baby stroller between them.
 They walk past two street performers. They watch a little
 show and one of the clowns bows dramatically and offers a
 flower to Celia. She takes it and curtsies as the performers
 run off down the street.

CUT TO:

49 INT. YOUNG MAN'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

49

The apartment has more furniture and there is a sense of home
 and a young family. The Young Man sits in front of the same
 typewriter at a table in the corner a vase with the flower
 from the street performer inside of it. He punches the keys
 with an easier expertise as Celia dances around the apartment
 with the baby, who cries uncontrollably. He looks up and
 laughs at them.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
 She used to cry so much I could barely
 think for two seconds let alone write.
 But I didn't mind...most of the time.

50 EXT. YOUNG MAN'S PARK. DAY.

50

The young man, Celia, and the baby lie on a large blanket in
 the garden. They are sharing a picnic and The Young Man
 holds the baby up above his head as she giggles.

CUT TO:

51 EXT. CENTRAL PARK BENCH DAY.

51

The Old Man sits lost in thought for a moment.

RORY
 Sir...

THE OLD MAN
 She was sick.

Rory
 Your wife?

THE OLD MAN V.O.
 My daughter, and there was nothing I
 could do.

52 INT. YOUNG MAN'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

52

A doctor leans over the crib as Celia cries uncontrollably into The Young Man's chest. He holds her and stares at the doctor.

The doctor covers the baby with a blanket, turns, offers some words of condolence and leaves the two standing there. The Young Man stares out the window, no expression on his face as Celia continues to weep and wail in some primordial scream.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
Afterwards, Celia was never the same, and
I wasn't the same either, even though I
tried to be...

CUT TO:

53 INT. NEWSROOM. DAY.

53

The Young Man sits at his desk working on a story. Suddenly he stops, takes the piece of paper, crumples it up into a ball, and rubs his temples.

CUT TO:

54 INT. YOUNG MAN'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

54

The Young Man sets down a plate of food in front of Celia. She makes no move towards it, as he sits down across from her. He forces a smile, but she makes no expression.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
Celia couldn't look at me.

He stares at her for a moment, pushes his plate away, gets up, and walks out of the apartment leaving her sitting there.

CUT TO:

55 EXT. PARIS ALLEY. DAWN.

55

The Young Man wanders down an empty alley holding a bottle of wine as he sings drunkenly to himself and dogs bark out at the night.

CUT TO:

56 INT. YOUNG MAN'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

56

The door opens and we see The Young Man enter. He is obviously drunk.

YOUNG MAN
Celia. Celia? Celia!

(CONTINUED)

He checks the apartment but it is empty. He sits down at the kitchen table where he finds a note. He picks up the note and reads it.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)

It said she had gone back to her mother's in the country. It said she needed to be apart. It said she needed time to think. Alone.

He drops the note to the floor, expressionless, and looks around the apartment for a moment. He goes to the ice box, opens it, stares at it for a moment, then walks away.

Suddenly, he begins destroying the apartment.

He smashes dishes and overturns the kitchen table. He punches walls and rips the paintings off of them.

He spots the typewriter and crosses to his writing table. He picks up the typewriter and throws it across the room, and then smashes the table.

He ends up on the floor by the window, crying into his hands. He finally looks up and sees the typewriter lying on the floor on its side.

He crawls over to it and turns it right side up. He picks up a knob off the ground and re-attaches it. He takes Celia's note from off the floor and feeds the blank side into the typewriter.

Beneath the moonlight, lying on the floor, he begins to press the keys very slowly. Then the typing begins to grow faster, and The Young Man becomes lost in his own world.

THE OLD MAN (V.O. CONT'D)

I don't know how long I was in that apartment. I can't remember sleeping or eating. I do not know that I went to the bathroom.

TIME LAPSE.

We see the night become dawn, then day, then night again, as The Young Man continues to work typing away, the words splaying across the page, the pages piling up on the floor around him...

THE OLD MAN (V.O. CONT'D)

The words, they just came in a stream that I could not control nor stop, nor question where they came from.

CUT BACK TO:

58 EXT. CENTRAL PARK BENCH. DAY.

58

The Old Man sits talking to Rory.

THE OLD MAN

For the first time in my life I was not copying anyone. The words became form, and the form became whole. And after two weeks, finally, I stopped. I was empty. I had nothing left inside of me. So I sat there and read through what I had written. Some of it, I realized, was true, some of it was embellished, and some of it was just dreams, our dreams, all there on those sheets of paper.

RORY

And then what did you do?

THE OLD MAN

I slept. Dreamless sleep. And when I woke, I cleaned the apartment.

CUT TO:

59 INT. YOUNG MAN'S APARTMENT. DAY.

59

-The Young Man lifts a bookcase from off the ground.

THE OLD MAN V.O.

I took a shower, I had a shave. I put on a suit. I took our story and I went to find my wife.

-He washes his face and shaves with a straight razor in the mirror.

CUT TO:

60 EXT. CELIA'S FAMILY'S HOUSE. DAY.

60

It is a large house in the countryside. The door opens and Celia stands in the doorway silently staring at The Young Man.

We can see that she has black circles around her eyes and her face is very pale. He takes her in his arms.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)

She pleaded with me to go back to Paris without her.

CUT TO:

61 INT. CELIA'S BEDROOM. EVENING.

61

The two sit in the room. Finally, he gets up, takes out a **LEATHER VALISE** from his suitcase.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

He takes out the folder containing the pages of the story.
He leaves the pages on the bed beside her and walks out.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
So I gave her the story and I left, not
knowing if I would ever see her again.

The Young Man walks out of the house and down a country road
despondent.

CUT TO:

62 INT. PARIS TRAIN. DAY.

62

Celia sits on the train.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
Three weeks later she wired me to say she
was coming back.

She's reading the pages when THE CONDUCTOR comes in and
announces that the next stop will be Paris. She puts the
pages back in the folder and into the valise.

As the train pulls into the station Celia gathers her
belongings and stands up. As she moves down the corridor the
valise falls from her hand without her knowing. The valise
is then kicked around by the passenger disembarking and
finally under one of the seats.

Celia gets off the train and The Young Man is waiting for her
on the platform. They embrace, holding each other.

We CUT BACK inside the train and see the valise on its side
beneath the seat as the train pulls out of the station. On
the platform The Young Man and Celia disappear into the
crowd...

CUT TO:

63 INT. YOUNG MAN'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

63

We see The Young Man unpacking her things. Occasionally he
grabs her from behind and kisses her neck.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
I asked her if she had read the story.
She said "no." She had started but could
not bare to think about the past. She
said she wanted to start life over fresh,
a clean slate. She said it like she had
decided it was the easiest thing in the
world to do. Then I asked her where the
pages of the story were...

CUT TO:

64 INT. YOUNG MAN'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

64

The Young Man searches through the bags, becoming more and more frantic.

(*French with subtitles)

YOUNG MAN
Where? I don't see them.

CELIA
In the valise. I know it's here. I brought it...

YOUNG MAN
Are you sure you didn't leave them at your mother's?

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
'No,' she said. She was sure she brought them with her, because she knew how much it meant to me.

CUT TO:

65 INT. YOUNG MAN'S TRAIN STATION. NIGHT.

65

We see THE SAME SHOTS from The Old Man's memory in the HOTEL ROOM. The Young Man weaves frantically through the train station, searching all the bags, knocking some over, and fighting with other travellers who curse at him.

A conductor grabs him and they exchange words. The conductor shakes his head 'no.'

Celia, running in behind him, stares at him helpless.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
I hated myself for caring about those pages, those stupid words. Words, they ruin everything...

CUT BACK TO:

66 EXT. CENTRAL PARK BENCH. DAY.

66

Rory now looks sickened and pale as he listens to The Old Man.

THE OLD MAN
We tried to put things back together for a while, but you can't erase the past, no matter how much you want to. For the first time I longed for home. I longed for myself.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

66

THE OLD MAN (cont'd)

A few weeks later the longing became so unbearable I left, and I never returned to Paris, and I never saw Celia again. I wrote her, but she never wrote me back.

He lights a cigarette.

THE OLD MAN

Over the next twenty years I wandered, hoping I could find some place that felt like home, or my idea of what home should be. I worked as a stringer for a series of newspapers; I dealt blackjack in Vegas; I tried to work as a screenwriter in Hollywood, that's where I met Fante; I pumped gas; and I even sold light bulbs door to door for a while. But after I lost those pages, I never set a word down that looked right to me again. Maybe I just didn't want to go that far in again, or maybe I just couldn't, so eventually I just stopped trying. Finally, I settled in up north.

CUT TO:

67 INT. GREENHOUSE. DAY.

67

The Old Man waters the plants and sweeps the floors. Somehow, he appears content.

CUT TO:

68 EXT. CENTRAL PARK BENCH. DAY.

68

RORY

That's uh...

THE OLD MAN

Ahh, it ain't over yet. See, this is where it gets really interesting, kid.

CUT TO:

69 INT. BOOKSTORE. DAY.

69

The Old Man wanders around the bookstore.

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)

See, about a year ago I wandered into one of those big chain bookstores on a Saturday afternoon. At the front of the bookstore was one of those large promotional setups.

The Old Man stands in front of cardboard setup that reads: 'The Window Songs.' There is a large picture of Rory.

(CONTINUED)

THE OLD MAN (V.O.)
 Interesting, yet ridiculous title. Books
 are the easiest things to judge by their
 covers, so I picked up yours.

We see The Old Man picking up the book and reading the flap.

THE OLD MAN (V.O. CONT'D)
 It said that the young author was a fresh
 new voice with something to say. They
 even compared you with writers like
 Hemingway and Faulkner. You didn't look
 like Hemingway, but what can you do?
 Anyway, I flipped open to a story and
 began to read...

We see The Old Man flip open the book and begin to read.

THE OLD MAN(V.O.)
 The narrator was standing over a crib.
 His eight month old daughter was dying
 and there was nothing he could do about
 it...I read one line...

We see The Old Man close the book and look up, an awed
 expression on his face.

CUT TO:

70 EXT. CENTRAL PARK BENCH. DAY.

70

THE OLD MAN
 One line of your story... And then I
 started reading more about this young man
 who had written this great work. He'd
 already received countless awards, and
 the public eagerly anticipates his next
 effort, and I must confess, as do I.

RORY
 (Shaking his head) Look, I-I-I think we
 have a misunderstanding. See, I found...

THE OLD MAN
 There's no misunderstanding here, kid.

RORY
 But, you see, I...

THE OLD MAN
 That's my story. My words. What the
 fuck is a Window Song anyway?!

Rory shrugs...

RORY
 My publisher...thought the title...

(CONTINUED)

THE OLD MAN

I don't know why you did it, and I don't really care. I'm not gonna hurt you. I just thought you should know the story behind the stories you robbed in case anybody ever asks.

Rory can't look at him.

THE OLD MAN (CONT'D)

So, maybe now, you can write your second book. (He stares at Rory) I'll see ya around, kid.

The Old Man gets up and slowly walks away, coughing to himself.

We see Rory's overwhelmed expression as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

71 INT. AUDITORIUM. NIGHT.

71

Clay Hammond is still reading his book at the front podium.

CLAY

... And he sat on that bench unaware of the world or of time passing around him. After a few hours the sun finally set, and Rory Jansen slowly rose, searching for his way home.

Clay Hammond closes the book and looks up at the audience.

CLAY (CONT'D)

That's, uh, the end of part one.

He smiles and steps away from the microphone. A short balding man, **RICHARD FORDHAM**, dressed in a decadent white suit rushes to the microphone.

RICHARD

There will be a half hour...

He looks at one of his assistants standing off to the side for confirmation. The assistant nods his head.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

...half hour intermission, giving us all a chance to catch our breaths, especially Mr. Hammond.

There is scattered applause as the crowd files out towards the lobby. Clay exits backstage.

72 INT. AUDITORIUM LOBBY. NIGHT.

72

In the lobby various people meandering around. A few of them clap as Clay enters, and some holding books approach him for autographs and pictures.

Richard Fordham rushes over to where Clay is standing, followed by his two assistants.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

People, please! Give the Man some breathing room. It's his break, for Krishna's sake!

Clay and Richard shake hands and begin to walk.

CLAY

Ahh, you're just jealous it's not for you, Richie.

RICHARD

My dear, if I never see my own name scribbled upon the inside cover of a book again it will be too soon.

CLAY

Your nobility knows no bounds.

RICHARD

No, my ego knows no bounds. My nobility is a sham.

RICHARD

You know where your room is so if you just want to lie down, relax for a while, that's fine. Did I ever tell you that when I was doing my first book tours, at intermission, I would go to my room and masturbate.

CLAY

You don't say, Richard.

Suddenly, **DANIELLA**, the young, attractive, intellectual looking girl who entered the reading late approaches Clay and Richard.

Clay and Richard stop and stare at her. She smiles at Clay, fresh faced, open, engaged. She holds a glass of wine towards him.

DANIELLA

I read that you like the 2005 Rhones because they relax you.

She hands the glass to Clay. Clay takes it, looking her over. She does not look away. Richard studies the two of them.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

Did you also read he has an eight inch penis?

CLAY HAMMOND

Richard!

DANIELLA

Actually, I read that it was six.

CLAY HAMMOND

You shouldn't trust what you read in the gossip pages.

RICHARD

Are you kidding? As far as I can tell that's the only part of the press that you can actually trust. Well, I should be going before I let my wicked tongue snap again.

He snaps his fingers at his assistants.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Come along, boys! Don't forget, Clayton, 30 minutes. No time for foreplay. Oops! There it goes again.

He begins to walk away.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Thirty minutes! I once kept them waiting for two hours... And they waited.

Daniella and Clay watch as Richard walks away.

CLAY

Sorry about that.

DANIELLA

Don't worry, I've read his books.

Clay sips his wine, nods appreciatively.

CLAY (CONT'D)

So what did you say your name was?

DANIELLA

I didn't. It's Daniella.

CLAY

That's a beautiful name.

DANIELLA

Can't you think of anything better to say?

He looks at her and gulps the rest of the wine.

(CONTINUED)

CLAY

Why don't we go back to my little room?
It's got much better wine and cheese, and
I won't have to sign any more books.
Maybe I'll even be able to think of
something interesting to say.

DANIELLA

Lead the way.

Clayton offers his arm to her. She takes it and they make
their way through the crowd.

VOICE (O.S.)

Clayton! Clayton!

A silver haired man in a dark suit, **JOEL WEINSTEIN**, rushes up
to Clay and Daniella. He shakes Clay's hand vigorously.

JOEL (cont'd)

You remember me, don't you?

CLAY

How are you, Mr. Weinstein?

JOEL

Joel. Please, Clay. Call me Joel.

CLAY

I'm sorry, Joel, how are you?

JOEL

I'm very well. I just wanted to tell you
I love the novel. I love all your
stories and novels, but this one...

CLAY

Well, thank you very much.

JOEL

(To Daniella) You know, I was his first
fan.

CLAY

Yeah, you just couldn't publish me.

Joel laughs.

JOEL

I know, I know... Actually, you're the
reason I went out on my own. I was tired
of having to sell work I didn't believe
in.

CLAY

I'm glad I could help (BEAT) Well, if
you'll excuse us...

(CONTINUED)

JOEL

Sure, sure... We really should get together sometime, Clay.

CLAY

That would be great. Call me.

Clay and Dora walk away and Weinstein stares after them.

CUT TO:

73 INT. AUDITORIUM DRESSING ROOM. LATER.

73

Clay and Daniella are stretched on the couch. They both hold glasses of wine. Daniella has removed her Balenciaga heels as they sit laughing.

DANIELLA

So why don't you stop asking me questions and tell me something about yourself?

CLAY

Ahhh, I want to rest my voice. I read and it gets very dry. I still have a whole other section...

He pretends to clear his throat.

DANIELLA

Don't bullshit me.

CLAY

I'm not.

He sips the wine, smiles.

DANIELLA

Well that's okay, I know everything about you anyway.

CLAY

Oh, yeah. Everything?

DANIELLA

Everything.

CLAY

What do you know?

DANIELLA

I know...that you hate tomatoes. I know that you think Miles Davis' 'Kind of Blue' is the best jazz recording ever made. I know that Paris is your favorite city. I know...that you love to watch reruns of Cheers. I know that you took Latin for seven years in high school, but cheated on every test.

(CONTINUED)

CLAY

Wait a minute. How do you know that?

DANIELLA

Esquire. You said it yourself.

CLAY

I really have to start reading these interviews with me. What else do you know?

DANIELLA

Uh, I know that you've been with your wife since your Freshman year of college, and that you met her in your American Cinema 101 class. I also know that you go to every home Yankees game. And I know that you, Clayton Hammond, are a genius.

BEAT.

CLAY

Shows how much you know.

Daniella

What's that?

CLAY

I missed two Yankees games last year.

She laughs. He becomes quiet.

CLAY (CONT'D)

And my wife and I are separated.

She stares at him.

DANIELLA

I actually did know that.

He stares at her and takes a sip of wine.

CLAY

How'd you get backstage tonight anyway, Daniella?

DANIELLA

I'm a student at Vassar. I begged my professor for his ticket.

CLAY

What do you study, I mean other than me?

DANIELLA

French Literature, you're just my minor.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: (2)

CLAY
French Literature, Jesus.

She slaps his leg and smiles at him.

CLAY (CONT'D)
So you begged your professor, huh?

DANIELLA
Hmmm hmm.

CLAY
And that worked?

She scoots closer.

DANIELLA
I can be very persuasive when I want to be.

CLAY
You don't say...

The moment is sexually charged and building towards contact when there is a sudden knock at the door.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Yeah! Come in.

The door opens and Thomas, the assistant from the beginning of the film, peeks in.

THOMAS
Mr. Hammond, they're ready for you.

Daniella looks at him.

DANIELLA
Yes, Mr. Hammond, we're ready for you.

CUT TO:

74 INT. AUDITORIUM. NIGHT.

74

Clay stands before the podium. He opens the book and the crowd becomes silent.

CLAY
This is, uh, the second and final selection of the evening.

CUT TO:

75 EXT. NEW YORK CITY. DAY.

75

The sun rises over the city.

76 TITLE CARD: '**RORY**' 76

77 INT. RORY AND DORA'S NEW YORK CITY APARTMENT. DAY. 77

A real estate agent is showing them a depressing, small, railroad apartment looking annoyed and rushed as she looks the young couple over.

 DORA
You said this is the cheapest apartment
you have?

 REALTOR
It's the cheapest you're gonna find on
the island, sweetheart, or at least in
any neighborhood you want to live.

 DORA
Rory, can we afford this?

Rory tries to open a cabinet that is painted shut and the knob breaks off in his hands. He smiles at Dora.

 RORY
If we can't afford this, what do you
think the place is gonna look like that
we can afford.

Dora thinks, looking troubled.

 REALTOR
Honey, you're lucky to have this, believe
me. If you don't take it now it'll be
gone by noon and then it could be
weeks...

 RORY
We'll take it.

DISSOLVE TO:

78 INT. RORY AND DORA'S APARTMENT STAIRWELL. DAY. 78

We see Rory and Dora struggling with boxes, trying to get them up the many flights of stairs.

 CLAY (V.O.)
He loved her. He loved New York. But
most of all he loved living all the
cliches, believing that he alone was the
master of them. The young struggling
writer fighting for his voice to be
heard...

CUT TO:

79 INT. RORY AND DORA'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

79

The apartment is half decorated. We see candles burning and two half full wine glasses. Rory and Dora are making love on a make shift bed on the floor.

CLAY (V.O.)

He loved the idea of fighting to make the rent, fighting to make his art, living on as little as possible, like all the great writers he had read about. He liked cheap bottles of wine and candles, a pack of cigarettes, and nothing to do but wander the streets of his city.

CUT TO:

80 EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET. NIGHT.

80

Rory and Dora wander the streets of the Lower East Side, holding hands, looking at the little trinkets the street vendors are selling.

They stop at a table where an old lady is selling pins. Dora stares at them.

RORY

How much for the one with the butterfly?

VENDOR

Twenty dollars. It's part silver.

RORY

Part?

VENDOR

It's silver plated.

Rory

Plated?

VENDOR

Plated.

RORY

I'll give you fifteen.

VENDOR

\$17.50

RORY

Deal.

He hands her the money, she gives him the pin.

(CONTINUED)

DORA

Wow, Rory, you really drive a hard bargain. Remind me never to get into a negotiation with you.

He playfully slaps her on the ass and pins it on Dora's blouse brushing her hair back. She kisses him.

CLAY (V.O.)

It was perfect, exactly as he had imagined it. He was where he was supposed to be, his first novel was almost done, and he figured it was just a matter of time for greatness to find him.

CUT TO:

81 INT. RORY AND DORA'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

81

Rory sits at a table in the corner writing. Dora comes over and rubs his shoulders.

RORY

I'm just doing a final pass.

DORA

And then what?

RORY

And then I'm going to send it out. To that agent who Professor Wallen recommended.

DORA

And then?

He pulls her onto his lap.

RORY

And then we're gonna celebrate.

DORA

Rory, we don't have the...

He holds his hand to her lips.

RORY

Shhhhhh. And then we celebrate.

Suddenly they kiss, the kissing becoming heated. Rory breaks away.

RORY (cont'd)

I better get back to this.

DORA

Too bad...

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

81

As she walks away, she teasingly lifts her skirt just enough to give Rory a good look at some thigh and the very bottom of some ass. He shakes his head and goes back to his work. From the hall Dora watches him working.

DISSOLVE TO:

CU: PRINTER.

The printer is finishing up with the last page. At the bottom we see the words "The End." Rory pulls the last page out of the printer staring at it. He puts it on top of the large stack on his desk, smooths them out, inserts them into a folder and puts them into the top drawer of his desk that he locks with a key

CUT TO:

82 EXT. STREET. DAY.

82

Rory walks down the street in his best jacket and tie, fresh hair cut, cleanly shaved, bright faced, excited.

83 INT. NEW YORK CITY RESTAURANT. AFTERNOON.

83

Rory sits across from a very well dressed, short, yet powerful looking man. **TIMOTHY EPSTEIN** chatters away as Rory fidgets nervously.

TIMOTHY

...He said you were a great student. One of the best he's ever had.

RORY

Well, Professor Wallen was tough. He taught me a lot.

TIMOTHY

He's one of the few that I trust as far as young writers to watch. When he tells me to read someone, which isn't often, I read them, and that's why I took the time to read your book...

RORY

Well thank you for taking the time.

They stare at each other awkwardly for a moment.

RORY

So...what do you think?

*

TIMOTHY

It's really, really great. A fantastic piece of writing, Rory, you should be very proud of this especially for a first novel.

(CONTINUED)

RORY

Thank you...very much. I worked very hard on it.

TIMOTHY

Well, the work shows. I saw a lot of truth in your writing and I can't say how impressed I was. And you're a kid. I mean, I can't believe how young you are. I even called Jeff right after I finished to thank him.

RORY

Well, uh, that's great...thank you. Thank you very much. I can't even believe this. So, uh, what do we do now, Mr. Epstein?

TIMOTHY

Please, Rory, call me, Tim.

RORY

Tim, what do we...do now?

TIMOTHY

Rory, I'm going to be honest with you. Your book, it's exactly the kind of material I want to be involved in representing. It's why I got into this business.

RORY

That's great to hear.

TIMOTHY

It's great, yeah, but unfortunately, the reality of the publishing world at this particular moment is such that...Rory, I don't know how to get a book like this published.

Rory stares at him.

RORY

What does that mean, exactly?

TIMOTHY

Rory, I even took this book into my...partners to see if there was any way. He, I mean, they read it, and he really liked it, and he said the same thing I'm saying to you right now.

RORY

Well, what are you saying, exactly?

(CONTINUED)

TIMOTHY

No one's going to support this book from a first time novelist right now, at least we can't do it. There's no market for it.

Rory begins to speak but, choking on his words, can't say anything.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Look, don't take this the wrong way. It's hard for a first timer with no track record to get published no matter what the circumstance, but especially when the book is very..."interior" like yours is.

RORY

Interior? What does that...?

TIMOTHY

Subtle, artistic, just good, Rory, not Danielle Steele, not some celebrity tell all, obvious. Unfortunately, there's a small market for a book like this. Movies, TV, the internet, blogs; we live in the world of transmedia...

RORY

Trans...media?

TIMOTHY

A lot less people read now, and that means there's very few spots for new work from unknown writers. Publishers, they don't take the time or investment to develop a young writer...

RORY

I understand, but, Mr. Epstein, Tim, what am I supposed to do? I mean this, writing, this is what I'm going to do.

TIMOTHY

What are you supposed to do? You keep writing. Send your stories to magazines, journals, any place they'll publish you. You've got to develop an audience. Then, with time...

RORY

But what about this book? They don't publish novels in magazines. Am I supposed to just shelve it and forget about it? I worked on it for three years.

(CONTINUED)

TIMOTHY

What do you want me to say, Rory? I'm just explaining the reality to you. You don't have to forget about it, you just have to be patient, or you can publish it on the internet, lots of people do...

Rory looks down at his plate.

TIMOTHY

Look, when you're ready, it'll happen. Or it won't happen. If you're looking for guarantees you should be an accountant.

The waitress comes over and places some appetizers on the table.

TIMOTHY

Hmmmmmmmmmmmm. Apps.

Timothy looks at Rory.

TIMOTHY

Come on, Rory, let's have something to eat. The oysters are the best in the city. Get whatever you want, it's on the agency.

Rory sits in his chair across from Epstein, dazed.

CUT TO:

86 EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET. DAY.

86

Rory walks down the rush hour street in a daze, tie undone, shirt untucked, one face in a million.

CUT TO:

87 INT. RORY AND DORA'S APARTMENT. EARLY EVENING.

87

Rory and Dora sit across from each other, eating silently. She reaches across and touches his hand. He looks up at her.

DORA

I remember...

She takes his hand. Rory looks up at her.

DORA

I remember when we first met, Rory, in the quad. I remember that shirt you were always wearing. And I looked at you and I had a flash...never happened with any other guy. I jumped ahead and I saw our lives together...

(CONTINUED)

RORY

Yeah?

DORA

We're going to be fine, Rory.

He reaches across the table and kisses her on the cheek.
They quietly go back to eating.

CUT TO:

88 EXT. JANSEN SUPPLY CO. DAY.

88

We see Rory walking into the warehouse.

89 INT. MR. JANSEN'S OFFICE. DAY.

89

A man just past middle age sits at a desk barking on the phone while looking over some paperwork. It is a very musty old office with no windows. On the desk is an INBOX overflowing with a seemingly endless amount of papers.

MR. JANSEN

Look, if he doesn't want to do it, he
doesn't want to do it! Hey, I said I'll
try... Of course that's my word!

Rory knocks on the door. **MR. JANSEN** motions for Rory to come in and sit down, but to hold on for a moment while he finishes the call.

MR. JANSEN (cont'd)

Look, the bottom line is, I need to know
by Wednesday, because that's when I place
the orders!

Mr. Jansen hangs up the phone and rubs his temples.

RORY

Working hard, ah, Pop?

MR. JANSEN

Ahhh, all I do is put out fires. Never
stops. (BEAT) So, boyo, to what do I owe
this honor, or shouldn't I ask?

RORY

Look, you seem busy so I'm just gonna
come at you straight...

MR. JANSEN

How much?

RORY

Just enough to get us through the next
month.

(CONTINUED)

MR. JANSEN

And then what? You show up here the month after that?

RORY

Pop, look, I got a book into this agent and they said it shows real...

MR. JANSEN

Rory, did they give you any money?

RORY

Pop, it's not like that. It's not like your business, okay, where you do work and you know you're gonna get paid for it. I gotta pay my dues.

MR. JANSEN

No, Rory, I gotta pay your dues. And I keep paying and keep paying...

RORY

Look, I wouldn't ask you unless I really needed it. You think it's easy for me to come down here like this?

Mr. Jansen takes out his check book.

MR. JANSEN

And do you think it's easy for me to say no? Look, I feel like I'm hurting you more than I'm helping you. And it's not just about the money. You need to start taking some responsibility for your life.

RORY

Pop, do you know how hard it is to be a writer?

MR. JANSEN

Well, maybe it should be a hobby instead of a profession, at least right now until you get your feet on the ground.

RORY

Thanks for the encouragement, Pop.

MR. JANSEN

And what about that girl of yours, huh? You can't get married without any money.

RORY

Who said anything about getting married?!

(CONTINUED)

MR. JANSEN

Well, you've been going out for five years, you've been living together since college. This isn't a ridiculous assumption...

RORY

You know what, I'm sorry came down here. Forget it.

Rory stands up to leave.

MR. JANSEN

Rory, hold on a second, okay.

Rory turns back around and stares at him. Mr. Jansen writes the check out and holds it out to Rory.

MR. JANSEN

Look, this is the last time, Rory. You gotta get a job. Find something that will allow you to support yourself. That's just part of being a man.

Rory takes the check, folds it, and puts it in his pocket without looking at it.

RORY

I'm trying to be a man.

MR. JANSEN

The other part of being a man, no matter how painful it might be, is accepting your limitations. No one can do everything they want to do in this life. That's not reality.

Jansen looks at Rory.

MR. JANSEN

You're gonna do what you want to do, right? (BEAT) Look, I got work to do. Maybe you and Dora can come in for dinner one night next week? You're mother would like to see you once in a while.

Rory stands to leave. His father picks up the phone. As Rory gets to the door he turns.

RORY

You think this is easy for me?

His father covers the phone.

MR. JANSEN

Hey, Rory, you can always work here.

(CONTINUED)

He goes back to talking on the phone and Rory stares at him.

CUT TO:

90 EXT./INT. INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING CO. OFFICE BUILDING. DAY. 90

It is an antiseptic, large, and busy office. Rory, wearing a terrible tie, ill fitting khaki pants, and a blue apron over his shirt, walks beside a middle aged, bearded, balding, man dressed very similar to Rory. **JEFFREY BIRKMEYER** pushes a cart past secretaries and offices. On his lapel is a tag that reads 'Supervisor.'

JEFFREY

So, anything marked in blue needs to be delivered ASAP. Every piece of mail goes right to the assistants, never bring it into the office, the agents, they're inept. Protocol, you understand?

They come to a secretary on the phone.

JEFFREY

Hi, Irene, how ya doing today?

They continue to push the cart down the hall.

JEFFREY

So, the system's pretty simple. It can get crazy after Wednesday though, especially around the holidays.

RORY

Can I ask you a question?

JEFFREY

Shoot.

RORY

Has anybody who ever started in the mail room gotten representation here?

JEFFREY

You're a writer.

Rory nods.

JEFFREY

Sure. It's happened. Most of the guys who work here are writers.

JEFFREY

Really?

JEFFREY

Yeah, there was this guy down in the mail room, his name was David Edelson.

(CONTINUED)

RORY

Edelson? You mean the guy who writes those legal thrillers?

JEFFREY

That's the one. He had only been working for four weeks and he got in with Steltzer upstairs. Just ran into him in the hallway. They started talking and Edelson passed his book to him. Steltzer read it, loved it. Six months later Edelson's got a best seller out. You know the rest, book tours, film rights...

RORY

When was that?

JEFFREY

I think it was about five years ago. I never met the guy, I just heard from people who were here. It's kind of become a legend. But it happens, y'know. I mean take me for instance.

RORY

You?

JEFFREY

Yeah, I've made a million connections here. See, I'm a writer too.

RORY

Really?

JEFFREY

Yeah, I got all my stuff into different agents around here.

He nods, trying to feign excitement.

JEFFREY

I'm actually glad it's taken me a while to break through, it's really given me a chance to develop my style. (BEAT) So what kind of stuff do you write?

RORY

I don't know. "Angry young man," I guess.

Jeffrey laughs.

JEFFREY

I used to be like that. Now I write sci fi. You mature, y'know. Just give it time.

Rory looks at him and half smiles.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: (2)

90

JEFFREY

Anyway, to get back to this...

They continue wheeling the cart down the hall.

CUT TO:

91 INT. RORY AND DORA'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

91

Rory is lying on the couch staring at the TV. He looks at his desk, the computer, the notebook, then goes back to watching the TV. Dora comes over, rubs his shoulders and kisses his head.

DORA

Are you going to write tonight?

RORY

I'm pretty tired. You just want to grab some dinner, maybe watch a movie.

DORA

Sure.

RORY

Okay.

DORA

Well, get up, ya bum!

He kisses her and pulls her down.

CUT TO:

92 INT. HALLWAY. DAY.

92

Rory pushes a mail cart down a very large and very long hallway. The hallway is lined with a series of symmetrical desks behind which sit secretaries, who are all dressed alike and wearing the same black glasses. On each desk Rory places a copy of his book with red ribbon around it. As he passes each office door, a man dressed in a black suit and red tie walks out of the office briskly and robot like.

RORY

Mr. Kimmelman!

The man does not acknowledge him.

Rory pushes the cart to the next office and another man exits.

RORY

Mr. Toffsky!

The man does not acknowledge him.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED:

RORY
Mr. Barish, Mr. Reiver, Mr. Chilewich,
Mr. Sussman!

None of the men acknowledge him.

Rory keeps pushing the cart. He comes to the last secretary on the row. She looks up. It is Dora.

RORY
Dora?

DORA
Hi, Rory.

RORY
When did you start working here?

DORA
I've always worked here, Rory.

Rory places the book on her desk.

RORY
Dora?

But she is now typing, not paying attention to him. Rory continues pushing the cart down the endless hall...

CUT TO:

93 INT. RORY AND DORA'S APARTMENT. DAWN.

93

Rory opens his eyes. He is lying in bed, Dora asleep next to him. There are the sounds of early morning traffic on the street. Rory rises, walks to his desk, and sits down before a pile of mail. He picks up an envelope and opens it. The letter inside is a form letter rejection slip from a publisher. Stoically he stares at it then unlocks and opens his drawer taking out his manuscript and a pile of rejection slips. He places this one with the others and stares at the manuscript for a moment, then out the window. He places the manuscript and the rejection slips back into the drawer and locks it.

CLAY (V.O.)
Without so much as an effort he was
promoted to supervisor, and six months
later he and Dora were married...

CUT TO:

94 INT. RORY AND DORA'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

94

Suddenly, the door is kicked open. Rory in his tuxedo and cummerbund carries Dora, holding an open champagne bottle across the threshold, the two of them completely drunk.

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED:

94

Rory stumbles and they fall onto the couch laughing. She pours champagne all over him and they play fight...

CLAY (V.O.)
They honeymooned in Paris.

CUT TO:

95 EXT. RUE CARDINAL LEMOINE. DAY.

95

Dora and Rory stand outside of a small unassuming apartment in the Latin Quarter.

People pass as Rory stares up at the window, Dora standing beside him looking bored. A small plaque on the door is the only marker that Hemingway once lived there.

96 CU: THE PLAQUE OF HEMINGWAY.

96

DORA
This is it?

RORY
Yup, this is it.

Rory stares.

DORA
Ready to go?

RORY
Yup.

CUT TO:

97 EXT. PARIS STREET. TWILIGHT.

97

Rory and Dora wander down the quiet alley holding hands in a LONG SHOT.

CUT TO:

98 INT. ANTIQUE SHOP. DAY.

98

It is a small antique shop filled with old trinkets, tables, chairs, and lamps. A few old bikes hang from the ceilings. Rory is looking at small nick-knacks on the table. Dora approaches him holding a small glass lamp.

DORA
This would be great for my mother, don't you think?

RORY
Sure.

(CONTINUED)

He goes back to looking at the trinkets, and Dora disappears. A moment later she calls out.

DORA
Rory, come here!

Rory puts the trinket down, and walks over to Dora. She is holding an old, weathered, leather valise with a strap.

RORY
What?

DORA
What do you think of this?

Rory takes the bag.

RORY
I think it's...old.

DORA
This would be great for you.

RORY
What am I going to do with it?

DORA
I don't know, you could clean it up, use it for work. It's classy.

Rory studies the bag, unzips it, looks inside.

DORA
I'm going to buy it for you.

He looks at the bag for a moment longer.

RORY
I love it, thank you.

He kisses her and goes back to looking at the bag, shaking his head.

CUT TO:

Rory and Dora walk through the park, Rory now with the bag over his shoulder. They pass some street performers. The performers put on a little show for them, and one of the mimes bows dramatically and offers Dora a flower, which she takes and smells, as the two continue walking.

CLAY (V.O.)
They returned to New York and the honeymoon was over...

100 INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT. 100

Rory and Dora are at the sink washing the dishes together.

CUT TO:

101 INT. RORY AND DORA'S APARTMENT. DAY. 101

Rory sits alone on the couch looking over some of the things they brought back from Paris. On the coffee table sits the valise. Rory picks it up, stares at it, and starts looking through it. He puts a few papers in the valise, then flips it over onto his lap. There is a second almost hidden zipper on the outside part of the bag. Rory opens it up, looks inside, and pulls out an old manilla folder.

Rory looks at the folder with some writing on it, much of the ink smudged, and opens it. Inside there are about two hundred sheets of yellowed typewriter paper. On the paper is faded yet still legible typeface. Rory looks down at the first page and begins reading.

TIME LAPSE as Rory reads, becoming more and more transfixed.

CLAY (V.O.)

As he read the story on those pages, it was as if the words were infecting him. They were simple words, yes, but they were true, inevitable, carved out of emotion and experience, and in those words, he saw the embodiment of everything he had ever aspired to be, and the reality of what he would never become...

Rory turns over the last page and looks up.

102 SFX: UNLOCKING DOOR. 102

DORA

Rory? Hello?

Rory, coming out of the dream, quickly puts the pages back into the folder and then into his desk drawer locking it up. He looks up at Dora just as she walks in.

RORY

Oh, hey...

He stares at her, smiling lightly.

CUT TO:

103 INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT. EVENING. 103

Rory and Dora sit looking very out of place across from another young and very gawdy looking couple at an upscale Chinese Restaurant **JASON** and **CATHERINE ROSEN**.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

You know, Jason and I are planning a vacation to Turks and Caicos in March. You two should try and make it. We're going to cruise the Caribbean.

JASON

(mouth full of noodles) They kiss your ass, Rory!

Dora laughs.

DORA

I don't think we're going to be able to make that trip.

CATHERINE

These summer noodles are delicious.

JASON

What'sa matter, no flow, bro?

Rory half laughs.

JASON (CONT'D)

I miss this guy!

He puts his arm around Rory's shoulder.

JASON (CONT'D)

You couldn't tear us apart in college, and now he won't even return my calls. Ahh, that's all right. I'll tell ya, this guy, I remember...

The sound dissolves as we see Jason continue to speak as Rory looks on more and more disgusted with each passing moment, and Dora shifting uncomfortably in her seat.

CLAY (V.O.)

Three years later and nothing had happened to him but his life. All the cliches had worn thin. The apartment was too small, cheap wine just tasted cheap, and the nobility of being an unknown had shown itself for what it was. How long had it been since he had tried to write a word? How long had it been since he felt like he had anything worthwhile to say or the words to say it?

Rory suddenly stands up and slams his hand down on the table.

RORY

FUCK! Do you ever shutup.

JASON

Jesus, Rory! What the...

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: (2)

103

Rory rushes away from the table and out the front door.

DORA

Rory! (To Jason and Catherine) I'm so
sorry. I'm...

Dora runs out after Rory.

CUT TO:

104 EXT. STREET CORNER. NIGHT.

104

It is lightly snowing. Rory, hands in his pockets, paces
around, angrily muttering to himself as Dora approaches him.

DORA

What is...?

Rory holds his hand up to her face.

RORY

Don't! Just don't, because right now I
just can't...

DORA

What is the matter with you?

Rory paces back and forth

RORY

I don't...how the fuck...do you get... to
where...you are? How the fuck does that
happen?

DORA

Rory...

RORY

I look at my life, I look at his life, I
look at your life, I look at my father's
life, I look at everyone's life, and I
don't have any fucking clue how anyone
ends up where they do. I don't know. I
don't know. I don't know...

DORA

It's okay. You don't have to know. You
don't. (BEAT) There's so much time,
Rory. Rory, we have so much time...

RORY

I'm talking about my fucking life here!

DORA

What about your life?

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED:

RORY

It's...It's not...It's not right...I
don't know. Nothing is right. It wasn't
supposed to be...like this.

Dora looks at him in disbelief.

DORA

Fuck you. How's that supposed to make me
feel? How's that supposed to make me
feel?!

RORY

I'm not...I'm not what I thought I was,
Dora, and I never will be. I am
not...I'm sorry.

He suddenly hugs her, and buries his head in her neck,
surrendered. She embraces him. We watch them as the snow
falls harder and city buzzes around them, without caring.

CLAY V.O.

That night Rory went home with his wife
to their apartment as they always had
before. They washed the dishes together
like they always did, then Dora took a
bath while Rory read on the couch.
Afterwards they laid in bed watched a
talk show, turned out the lights, made
love, and Dora fell asleep...

CUT TO:

105 INT. RORY AND DORA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

105

The apartment is dark and Dora is sleeping. Rory lies on the
bed staring at the ceiling. He stands and goes to his desk,
opening up the drawer with the key.

CLAY V.O.

But Rory did not...

Rory removes some pens and papers, finally pulling out the
folder with the yellowed manuscript. Still standing, Rory
begins to read.

CUT TO:

106 INT. AT RORY'S DESK. NIGHT.

106

Rory sits typing at his computer as the words appear on the
screen.

CLAY (V.O.)

...and when he had finished reading he re-
typed every word as it was written on
those pages.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED:

106

CLAY (V.O.) (cont'd)
 He did not add a period, change a comma,
 or even correct the spelling mistakes.
 He didn't know why he was doing it, he
 just knew he wanted to feel the words
 pass through his fingers, through his
 mind; feel what it might have felt
 like...To touch it, if only for just a
 moment.

Rory continues typing...

DISSOLVE TO:

107 INT. RORY AND DORA'S APARTMENT. DAWN.

107

Rory sits at his desk reading over the now freshly printed
 out novel as the sun rises over the city. He stacks the
 pages neatly together and then places the pages on the corner
 of his desk. He shuts out the lamp and walks out.

CUT TO:

108 INT. RORY AND DORA'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

108

Dora sits on the couch. Rory enters holding a bag of
 groceries and eating an apple.

DORA

Rory?

Rory puts the groceries down.

DORA (cont'd)

Honey, come here.

RORY

What is it? Are you okay?

Rory sits down on the couch.

DORA

Kiss me...

RORY

What?

She kisses him furiously. He pulls away.

RORY (CONT'D)

What's going...Oh my God! Are you
 pregnant?

DORA

No. Rory...

RORY

Then what then? What?

(CONTINUED)

DORA
I...

RORY
What?

DORA
I read your book.

RORY
My what? Book...Oh, Dora!

DORA
No, Rory. Stop. Let me explain. It was on your desk. Listen to me. I swear, I never looked through your stuff before. But I was cleaning up, and it was just lying on the desk and I was...I just read the first sentence. And then I read the second, and then I picked it up...

RORY
No. Oh, no. Dora, look...You don't...
She kisses him again. He pulls away.

DORA
You are everything you always wanted to be.

RORY
Dora, look...

DORA
Why would you keep these a secret from me?

RORY
It's not a secret. It's not...

DORA
These stories they're just so different from everything else you've done. They're fuller, truer, more honest...

RORY
Dora...

DORA
You need to publish this, Rory. They'll publish these. They have to. They'd be crazy not to.

RORY
Okay, I think we're going a little overboard here.

DORA

Rory, I'm telling you, this is special. I see parts of you in this novel that I always knew were there, but I had never seen before in your work.

He looks at her quietly, intensely for a moment.

RORY

What parts of me, Dora?

She stares at him.

DORA

What? Well...all of you. I mean, it's just so real. This needs to be seen.

RORY

Look, do you know how many guys in the mail room have been slaving on the great American novel for the last twenty years, dreaming their lives away? You should hear how they talk. All of them deluded. You know what? They're pathetic, and I won't be one of those guys. I won't.

DORA

Yeah but this isn't...You always said you wanted to be a writer. But, this...you are a writer, Rory. Take these into work and give them to somebody.

Rory looks down. Dora grabs him and kisses him.

CUT TO:

109 INT. INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING CO. OFFICE. DAY.

109

An office with a beautiful view. A very obese man, **JOSEPH CUTLER**, sits behind a wooden desk reading over some paper work when there is a knock on the door.

Joseph looks up. Rory stands in the doorway in his supervisor uniform.

RORY

I'm sorry to bother you, Mr. Cutler.

JOSEPH

Hey, Rory, how are you today?

RORY

I'm good.

JOSEPH

Good. (He speaks into a speaker phone.) Debra, will you get me a copy of the Bricklin Contract?

(CONTINUED)

Cutler goes back to his paper work.

RORY

Mr. Cutler, do you have a minute?

Cutler looks up.

JOSEPH

Well, I'm kind of busy here. What can I do for you?

RORY

Mr. Cutler, I've been working here for two years now, and I've never asked anyone for a thing.

JOSEPH

I have a feeling you're about to ask for a thing now, Rory.

Cutler smiles.

RORY

See. I have this book, this novel, and I know you get submissions all the time, and you're very busy...I'm not looking for anything other than your opinion, because I would really appreciate it.

JOSEPH

Well, Rory, unfortunately, I can't read everything everyone asks me to read. I wouldn't have time to breathe.

RORY

I understand.

JOSEPH

But I'll tell you what I'm going to do. You leave the manuscript with my assistant and I'll make sure she reads it. If she likes it, I'll have a look.

RORY

I would really appreciate it.

CUT TO:

110 EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND. DAY.

110

Dora sits in a circle with her class of seven year olds. She's reading to them from a book of Shel Silverstein poems, 'Where The Sidewalk Ends.'

DORA

(Reading) Each man and woman, girl and boy, put down their ploughs and pots and toys, and pulled until kerack!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED:

DORA (cont'd)

Oh, joy- They broke right through that peanut butter sandwich. A puff of dust, a screech, a squeak - The King's jaw opened with a creak. And then in a voice so faint and weak - The first words that they heard him speak were, 'How about a peanut butter sandwich?'

The children and Dora laugh.

CHILD #1

Peanut butter sandwiches!

There is a knock on the door. Dora turns and through the window we see Rory. He smiles and waves. He opens the door and walks in.

DORA

Well, boys and girls, it looks like we have a visitor!

CHILD #2

Who, Hungry Mungry?

DORA

Are you Hungry Mungry?

RORY

No, I don't think so.

ENTIRE CLASS

HUNGRY MUNGRY! HUNGRY MUNGRY!

CHILD #3

(To Dora) Is that your boyfriend?

DORA

This is my husband, Mr. Jansen.

ENTIRE CLASS

Hi, Mr. Jansen!

She gives him a kiss.

THE ENTIRE CLASS

EHOOOHHHHHHHHH!

DORA

Okay, quiet down, boys and girls. (To Rory) What are you doing here? How come you're not at work?

RORY

I need to talk to you.

DORA

Ten minutes. I'll meet you on the swings.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: (2)

110

RORY
The swings? Okay.

She kisses him again.

THE ENTIRE CLASS
EHHOOOOOOOHHHHHHH!

DISSOLVE TO:

111 EXT. PLAYGROUND. AFTERNOON.

111

Rory sits on the swings alone. The playground is quiet and tranquil. Suddenly, the doors swing open and a mad rush of children pour out of the school and onto the playground like the storming of the beaches at Normandie.

Rory watches children playing on the jungle gym and swings. The boys chase the girls, the girls scream and chase the boys. Dora walks over to him holding the hand of a little girl.

DORA
Okay, Cynthia go and play now.

Cynthia shakes her head adamantly, no.

DORA (cont'd)
C'mon. Go play.

CYNTHIA
Will you watch me?

DORA
Of course I will.

CYNTHIA
You promise?

DORA
Yes. Go play.

She runs away. Dora look at Rory who is still on the swing.

DORA (cont'd)
And what's your problem, little boy?

RORY
Will you swing with me?

She takes the swing next to him and they sit for a moment. Rory takes her hand in his as they sit for a moment.

RORY
I gave them the book.

Dora looks at Rory for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

DORA
That's great, Rory.

112 BEAT.

112

Rory doesn't say anything. The sound of the squeaking swings. He looks up at Dora.

DORA
Why are you smiling?

He looks away.

CYNTHIA'S VOICE (O.S.)
LIAR! YOU'RE A LIAR!

They turn and the little girl who she has just sent away to play stands there.

DORA
Cynthia!

CYNTHIA
You said you were going to watch me.
They pushed me again. They always push me.

Dora stands up.

DORA
Okay, Cynthia I'm coming. (To Rory)
Rory, I got to work. I'll see you at home, okay?

She kisses him on the cheek and starts to leave.

RORY
Dora...

She turns around and looks at him. He stares at her for a moment.

DORA
I'll see you at home, okay.

Rory watches Dora as she walks away with Cynthia and the sounds of the children's screams and laughter swells.

CUT TO:

113 INT. INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING CO. OFFICE HALLWAY. DAY.

113

Rory pushes a mail cart down the hall. He is talking to a fresh young trainee. On Rory's lapel is a red 'supervisor' tag. The kid is also dressed in a mail room apron...

(CONTINUED)

RORY

... So, like I said, anything marked in blue needs to be delivered ASAP. Always give all packages and mail to the assistants. (They pass Irene) Hey Irene. Don't take anything into the offices, they'll just lose it and then they blame us. All right. So, the next thing is...

A voice calls out from inside an open office.

JOSEPH (O.S.)

Rory!

RORY

Hold on a second.

Rory leans into the open door.

RORY

What can I do for you, Mr. Cutler?

JOSEPH

Come on in here for a second.

RORY

I'm actually in the middle of training...

JOSEPH

Yeah, yeah, he'll find his way back.
Shut the door.

Rory shuts the door.

JOSEPH

Sit down, sit down. Can I get you a bottle of water, cup of coffee.

Rory sits down.

RORY

I'm fine, thanks.

JOSEPH

You know what I did last night? On the absolute insistence of Nina, and God knows I tried to blow her off, I read your novel last night.

RORY

You did?

JOSEPH

Have you shown this to anyone else?
Anyone outside the agency.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED: (2)

RORY
Uh, no, I haven't, sir.

JOSEPH
You haven't sent it out anywhere?

RORY
You're it, Mr. Cutler. I mean, well, you know, besides my wife.

JOSEPH
And what did she think?

RORY
She's the one who insisted I bring it to you. I mean, I told her you were busy and wouldn't have time...

JOSEPH
I can't wait to meet your wife so I can thank her.

RORY
You can't wait... I'm not sure I understand what it is...

JOSEPH
Rory, I would very much like to represent you and your work and see that this book gets published in the right way, with the right marketing, and the kind of support it deserves. It's a remarkable work of fiction.

CUT TO:

114 INT. RORY AND DORA'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

114

Rory is on the phone.

CLAY V.O.
It didn't take long...

Rory hangs up the phone and shuts his eyes.

CLAY V.O.
All that was left to do was to sign the contract.

CUT TO:

115 EXT. CITY STREET. DAY.

115

Rory walks through the open market of Chinatown at rush hour. The streets are packed, and the vendors are screaming as Rory passes through them all.

(CONTINUED)

CLAY (V.O.)

He thought about the last few years. He thought about his father. He thought about Dora. He thought about the person who wrote those stories and tried to imagine him, wondering if he was alive or dead.

Rory continues to walk through the crowd.

CLAY (V.O.)

There was no epiphany, no earth shattering moment, no single sign from the Gods to point him in the right direction as there had been in all of the literature he had loved growing up.

Rory suddenly stops on the corner, and it is just another day. We push in on his face.

CUT TO:

116 MONTAGE SEQUENCE.

116

-We see Rory standing with Cutler in his office. The signed contract lies on Cutler's desk and he pats Rory on the shoulder.

-We see Rory and Dora moving the last of the boxes out of their old apartment and shutting the door behind them.

-We see Rory signing books at a bookstore. There is long line. He sits beside a display for The Window Songs, looking cleaned up in a nice suit now. Success looks good on him.

MR. JANSEN

To my son, the writer.

EVERYONE

To Rory!

-We see Rory being interviewed for television by a Charlie Rose like character.

-We see Amazon.com on a computer screen

-"Oprah has Chosen - 'The Window Songs.'

CLAY HAMMOND (V.O.)

The book was a unanimous critical and commercial success. It seemed to speak to people in a way that no one could have anticipated. Without sentimentality or pretension, it seemed to address a collective longing for a simpler time that had long since passed and would never be again. It won 'The American Fellowship of Arts and Letters Award' which had never been given to any first time writer before Rory Jansen.

CUT TO:

117 INT. RORY'S NEW YORK CITY HOTEL. NIGHT.

117

Dressed in a tuxedo, Rory and Dora, dressed in a black Yves St. Laurent dress and wrapped in a red shawl, emerge from an elevator into a crowded hotel lobby.

They pass through the crowd and approach the concierge desk.

CONCIERGE
Your limo is waiting out front, Mr.
Jansen.

RORY JANSEN
Thank you.

He slips the concierge a bill.

CONCIERGE
Congratulations again, sir.

RORY JANSEN
Thank you very much.

They walk out the front door into the rain, and the limo driver opens the door.

CLAY (V.O.)
Rory Jansen had made his choice....

Dora steps into the limousine. Rory, following her, looks around at the street around him, and then, finally, steps inside.

The door closes and the limo pulls away. We see The Old Man standing off to the side, staring at the limo as it disappears down the street.

CLAY (V.O.)
And then he met The Old Man...

CUT TO:

118 INT. AUDITORIUM. NIGHT.

118

Clay looks up from the book. Silence from the audience.

CLAY
Thank you.

The audience suddenly applauds.

CLAY (cont'd)
Now, if you'd like to know the rest of
the story, well, you'll just have to buy
the book.

He shuts the book. The audience breaks into more applause and laughter as Richard Fordham steps up behind Clay.

(CONTINUED)

He shakes Clay's hand, whispers something in his ear, and steps to the microphone.

RICHARD

First, I'd like to thank Clay for sharing selections from his new novel with us. I'm sure I speak for everyone when I say it was truly...grim.

The crowd laughs.

RICHARD

And wonderful, of course.

Richard applauds and the crowd joins in again.

RICHARD

Let me remind you that all of tonight's proceeds from your donations go to 'The Young American Authors Endowment.' Once again thank you to Mr. Hammond. And now drinks and cocktail wienies will be served in the lobby. So make sure you indulge because, as you all know, you paid for it.

There is a bit more muffled applause and laughter as the crowd disperses.

TITLE CARD: '**CLAY**'

CUT TO:

119 INT. AUDITORIUM LOBBY. NIGHT.

119

There are a few signs posted around the lobby reading: 'An Evening With Clayton Hammond.' The crowd hovers around with drinks, stuffing their faces with hors d'oeuvres. Clay stands in the middle speaking with an elderly couple as others stand around waiting to speak with him.

ELDERLY WOMAN

I was just saying to Melvin the other day that in our society there is an increasing decline in moral behavior, that people have no scruples anymore.

ELDERLY MAN

And I think it's no different then it's always been. Man's been screwing over his fellow men since the beginning of time.

ELDERLY WOMAN

How can you say that when you look at the world around you? When you turn on the news...

(CONTINUED)

Clay stares at them silently as the argument continues. A young man looking very 'pseudo-intellectual' steps forward

YOUNG MAN

I've read that you love Turgenev. What would you say is your favorite book of his?

CLAY

'First Love.'

YOUNG MAN

Really, I would have pegged you more for 'Father's and Sons.'

CLAY

Well...you would have pegged me wrong.

A middle aged woman steps forward to speak with Clay.

WOMAN #1

In your work you seem hesitant to draw conclusions about our moral behavior, or to make any statements about it...

CLAY

Uh, yes. I would say I am hesitant.

WOMAN #1

Don't you think you owe it to your readership to be more than just a mirror of society, but to have a viewpoint, to draw a line. I just think that the work, especially your characters might suffer for a lack of...

She looks around, finally spotting Clay in the center of a crowd as he listens to the woman. She stares at him. For a moment, he turns and sees her, smiling, then goes back to the woman...

Woman #1

...And in the end the greatest works expose themselves, don't you think?

Clayton thinks.

CLAY

I write stories the way I see them, imagine them, the way they want to be written. I'm not trying to make any points, to make a grand statement about humanity, that's for pundits and politicians.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED:

120

CLAY (cont'd)
In life we have to judge to make
decisions about how to live our lives,
but in art we get to ask questions and
have the luxury of trying to understand.
That's all I want: to understand.

121 SFX: LAUGHTER

121

We see Richard Fordham in the background with a group of
people. They are all laughing as he talks.

WOMAN #2
Is your wife here? I would love to meet
her.

CLAY
Unfortunately she couldn't make it this
evening.

He smiles, his face betraying nothing. Clay looks around and
now spots Daniella at the wine table, alone, looking back at
him, sipping from a glass.

CLAY
I'm sorry, will you excuse me for a
moment...?

Clay crosses to her, picking up a glass of wine as people
continue to pass and offer congratulations. Daniella turns
to him.

CLAY
Do you have some I.D. I could see there,
Ma'am?

She wipes a smudge from his cheek.

DANIELLA
You looked like you were drowning.

CLAY
Are you kidding? I'm right in my
element.

He laughs. Then stops. They look at each other.

DANIELLA
You want to get out of here?

Clay looks around.

CLAY
Well, I'm supposed to be mingling,
smiling, taking pictures, got to raise
that money in these troubled economic
times. Y'know, got to move that
product...

(CONTINUED)

DANIELLA

Oh well...

He looks at her as she bats her eyelashes and turns away, smiling to herself. Clay shakes his head.

Clay

All right, fine, you convinced me.

DANIELLA

I thought you'd never ask.

He takes her arm and they begin to walk towards the door.

RICHARD

Clayton, Clayton!

Richard Fordham breaks away from the group he is talking to and intercepts Clay and Daniella.

RICHARD

Leaving us so soon?

CLAY

It certainly appears that way, Richard.

Richard nods to Daniella.

RICHARD

My dear, do you know what they say about patience?

DANIELLA

What do they say?

RICHARD

Patience, my dear, is a virtue.

DANIELLA

T'is a virtue I do not possess.

RICHARD

(To Clay) Quite a little snapper we've reeled in this evening.

Clay puts his hand on Richard's shoulder.

CLAY

G'night, Richard.

RICHARD

Well it's good to be the king. Good night. Sleep well. Or, don't. Drinks on Tuesday night?

CLAY

How about raquetball?

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD FORDHAM

And then drinks. You buy after I wipe
the floor with your ass.

Clay and Daniella walk towards the door, making their way
through the crowd.

CLAY

Used to be wrestling partners. I
retired. He's still bitter.

She laughs. They ward off a few people holding books. Clay
signs one or two as he walks.

FAN #1

Man, I'm a writer and when I read your
books it makes me want to...disappear
into a monastery and take a vow of
silence.

CLAY

Thank you...I think.

They continue walking towards the door, but another man
follows them.

DANIELLA

Daddy, don't we have to leave?

He looks at her. She smiles big.

CLAY

Uh, yes, dear. We do. (To fan) It was
nice to meet you.

They walk towards the door.

FAN #1

Great to meet you, Mr. Hammond!

122 EXT. AUDITORIUM. CONTINUOUS.

122

Clay and Daniella walk through the doors. Clay loosens his
tie as he approaches his car.

CLAY

Get in.

She looks at him.

DANIELLA

Whatever you say.

She steps into the car and for a moment Clay looks around at
the city, takes a deep breath, and then finally steps into
the car himself shutting the door as it pulls into traffic.

123 INT. CLAY'S TOWN CAR. CONTINUOUS.

123

DRIIVER
Where to, sir?

CLAY
Are you hungry? You want to get some
dinner?

DANIELLA
Let's go to your place.

CLAY
My place?

DANIELLA
I want to see where you write.

CLAY
It's really not all that exciting.

DANIELLA
Why don't you let me be the judge of
that?

She stares at him and Clay turns to the driver.

CLAY
You heard the lady. Take us home.

DRIIVER
You got it, Mr. Hammond.

With that the car disappears into traffic.

DISSOLVE TO:

124 INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT. LATER.

124

The lights turn on and Clay and Daniella enter the apartment.
She spins around...

DANIELLA
This place is so elegant...

Clay smiles and comes up behind her.

CLAY
May I take your coat?

DANIELLA
Thank you.

She slides her coat off and he takes it watching her as she
looks around. He looks at the coat in his hand and then
tosses it onto the couch.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED:

Daniella spins around

DANIELLA
If I lived here I would never leave.

CLAY
What about food?

DANIELLA
I'd order in.

CLAY
Money?

DANIELLA
Mail order business from home.

CLAY
Clothes?

DANIELLA
Who needs them?

He stares at her as she turns...

DANIELLA
Is that a real Miro?

She approaches the painting.

CLAY
I sure hope so or we were overcharged.

She stares at it, turns back to him.

DANIELLA
Show me where you work.

125 INT. CLAY'S OFFICE. CONTINUOUS.

125

She sits in his chair behind his desk looking around.

CLAY
See I told you, not that exciting, is it?

DANIELLA
Well, it is to me.

CLAY
I got a nice bottle of Bordeaux, I've
been waiting for an occasion...

DANIELLA
Hmmm. Sounds good.

CLAY
C'mon...

(CONTINUED)

DANIELLA
Can we drink it in here?

CLAY
In my office?

DANIELLA
Yeah...Can we?

Clay looks at her.

CLAY
Well, we can do anything we want.

DANIELLA
Get the wine.

Clay walks out leaving her alone in the office. She runs her finger across the keyboard of the computer. Gets up, walks to the bookshelf and glances over the titles. She picks up a photo off of the table by the couch of a young Clay and a beautiful red haired woman on the street in Paris. We push in on the photo, the outline of Daniella's face staring at it.

126 INT. CLAY'S KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS.

126

Clay finishes uncorking the bottle. He grabs two glasses from the shelf and turns to walk back up the stairs, but just then he catches his reflection in a mirror on the wall.

From afar he stares at himself for a moment, runs a hand through his hair, breathes, and then walks towards the stairs.

We follow him as he walks into the office but it's empty. He looks around.

CLAY
Hello?

DANIELLA'S VOICE
Out here!

He steps out onto the verandah which overlooks the street below and the park.

He hands her a glass of wine.

CLAY
What should we drink to?

DANIELLA
Your new book, of course.

CLAY
How about we drink to...?

(CONTINUED)

She clinks his glass with hers.

DANIELLA
Your book.

She takes a sip. He smiles.

CLAY
It's cold out here.

She sidles up to him.

DANIELLA
It's perfect.

He leans down and the two almost kiss. Just as suddenly she turns away staring out at the skyline as he looks at her.

DANIELLA
Will you tell me something?

CLAY
If I can.

DANIELLA
What happens?

CLAY
What do you mean?

DANIELLA
In your book, what happens to Rory? I mean, after the old man finds him.

Clay takes a sip of wine and leans against the railing..

CLAY
Will you tell me something?

DANIELLA
If I can?

CLAY
Why would a beautiful, intelligent girl like you ever want to be something as silly as a writer?

DANIELLA
Silly?

CLAY
Don't you know that words ruin everything?

DANIELLA
I don't believe you for a second. You love words. Now tell me what happens.

(CONTINUED)

CLAY

The book's going to be out at the end of the month...And for just \$19.95 and you'll be able to find out for yourself.

DANIELLA

But I'm here with you now and I can't wait that long. I'm young, spoiled, impetuous, and American. Humor me.

He stares at her.

DANIELLA

Please, pretty please. Tell me.

He smiles, laughs a little, takes her hand, staring down at the palms, then stares up at her as she waits.

CUT TO:

127 EXT. CENTRAL PARK BENCH. DAY.

127

The Old Man looks at Rory Jansen.

THE OLD MAN

...but I just thought you should know the story behind the stories you robbed, in case anybody asks. So, maybe now, you can write your second book. See ya around, kid.

The Old Man walks away coughing.

Rory sits on the bench dazed as the afternoon passes.

An old lady saunters towards him and sits down on the bench, staring straight ahead.

128 TIME LAPSE.

128

Three little kids play a game of catch around Rory.

129 TIME LAPSE.

129

A homeless man digs through the trash can next to the bench, mumbling to himself.

Finally rising and walking out of the park, Rory leaves his book on the bench.

The homeless man sees the book, picks it up, and drops it into his shopping cart.

CUT TO:

130 EXT. STREET. EARLY EVENING.

130

Rory wanders the streets, bumping into people, walking aimlessly...

CLAY (V.O.)

And so, like many of the great cliches in the history of civilization who were faced with a difficult question of the soul, Rory Jansen decided the only thing to do was to drink on it...

CUT TO:

131 INT. BAR. EVENING.

131

Rory sits at the bar extremely drunk.

RORY

...Did you know that there are more insects in one square mile of rural earth then there are people on this entire planet?

The bartender stares at him.

BARTENDER

No, pal, I didn't know that.

RORY

Did you know that if a foul ball is hit behind third base it's the shortstop's play? Fuck the third baseman!

BARTENDER

Actually, I did know that. Fuck the third baseman.

BARFLY #1

Yeah, fuck the third baseman, the bum!

RORY

Did you know that some Chinese typewriters have 5,700 characters, and the keyboards are almost three feet wide?

BARTENDER

No shit? I don't know Chinese.

BARFLY #1

Fuck the Chinese!

BARTENDER

Hey, did you know that the right lung takes in more air then the left lung?

(CONTINUED)

RORY

Did you know that Ernest Hemingway lost five stories and they were never found? And they're just out there, somewhere.

BARTENDER

You want another drink pal, or you want to play Trivia Pursuit?

RORY JANSEN

More whiskey.

The bartender takes down a bottle of whiskey and pours Rory a shot.

RORY

Do you think man is born inherently a desperate creature?

The bartender looks at Rory. We see a few faces of the barflies sitting around the bar as they drink and smoke at mid-day on a Thursday.

BARTENDER

Inherently? Nah. But I think this world we made does a pretty good job on us along the way, pal. Just take a look around.

Rory laughs, lifts the shot in toast and downs it.

CUT BACK TO:

132 EXT. CLAY'S VERANDAH. NIGHT.

132

Clay is telling the story to Daniella.

CLAY

So he gets rip roaring, death defying drunk. So now he's got his nerve. And he starts thinking, allowing himself to think, maybe for the first time in his entire life. And he comes to the conclusion, or more appropriately, this myth he had heard so many times before that, 'The truth shall set you free.'

Clay takes a big drink, then fills his glass. He offers it to Daniella who puts her hand up...

DANIELLA

Go on...

CUT TO:

133 INT. RORY AND DORA'S NEW APARTMENT KITCHEN. NIGHT.

133

Rory stands in the doorway, watching Dora who is humming as she cleans some vegetables in the sink.

She turns and sees him.

DORA
Hey, when did you get home?

Rory crosses to the table and sits down.

RORY
Why do you love me?

DORA
What?

She looks at him.

DORA (CONT'D)
Are you drunk?

RORY
Dora.

DORA
What?

RORY
I need to know why you love me.

She crosses to the table and sits down across from him.

DORA
I...I love you because you have beautiful eyes. I-I love you because you act serious but you're really just a goofball underneath all that. I love you because you're good, and you're sensitive and you're talented and you respect your talent. I just love you, Rory. There's hundreds of other reasons that I could never ever say, that I wouldn't even know how to say, and I don't know if I ever will or would ever want to.

She takes his hand.

DORA (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

RORY
You really think my eyes are beautiful?

DORA
Yes.

148

148

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

He looks up at her.

RORY
They're not mine.

She laughs.

DORA
Your eyes aren't yours? What'd you steal
em' off the back of a truck, kid, or
what?

RORY
I'm a liar.

She laughs again.

DORA
What do you mean?

RORY
Dora I...

DORA
What?

RORY
I didn't write the book.

BEAT.

DORA
I don't... Rory, what do you mean you
didn't write the book?

RORY
The book. I just...I stole it. I mean,
it's not even like I changed it. I mean,
I didn't know who I was stealing it from,
but it wasn't mine, and I knew that all
along. I knew that the whole time. But
I, I did it anyway.

DORA
You...stole it. How? Where?

RORY
Does it really matter now?

DORA
Why? Why would you do this? How could
you do this?

RORY
Look around us, Dora. Look at where we
are, remember where we were?

Dora steps back from him.

(CONTINUED)

RORY

It doesn't matter, that book, I didn't write a word. I just found it, copied it over word for word, everything you read, everything everyone read, not one word is mine. Not one single word.

DORA

WHY?! And don't you tell me it was for us, for this...

RORY

Because it was there, and I wanted it so badly to have come from me. And the way you looked at me when you thought that it did. And for a moment I actually almost convinced myself that it was mine. Can you believe that?

DORA

Rory, Rory...

RORY

Those words, they're better than anything I could ever write. I knew that. I know that. I mean, you said so yourself, didn't you?

DORA

I never said that, Rory. I never...

RORY

It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter now.

Rory laughs, drunk.

RORY (CONT'D)

You're going to tell me you couldn't tell those weren't my words when you read them? You who knows me so well?

DORA

You were reading all about Paris. We had just gotten back from the honeymoon...I thought...

RORY

You had to have known!

DORA

No, I didn't know! And I didn't know because I believe in you! I just...I believed in you.

Suddenly, she stands up and walks out of the kitchen. We stay on Rory as he sits there, staring for a long BEAT.

(CONTINUED)

Dora re-enters, goes to the oven, takes out the chicken and begins basting it.

Rory finally turns and looks at her.

RORY (CONT'D)
Say something, please!

Dora continues basting, calmly.

DORA
What do you want me to say? What am I
supposed to say to you?

RORY
Anything. Just say something. Tell
me...

Dora finally turns to him, wiping her hands.

DORA
Forget the book. Forget the stupid
awards, the people, and everything else.
I don't give a shit about any of that.
You lied to me! This whole time you've
been lying to me.

He stares at her.

DORA
What about the future? Did you even stop
and think about that when you read those
words? When you copied them. What it
would mean? What it would do to you? To
us?

RORY
Dora, if I tell them now, it's over for
me. Everything. This. Everything.
That's it. I'll never have another
chance.

She looks at him.

RORY
I mean, how am I supposed to even tell my
parents, Dora, my father...I know I'm
wrong, and I know what's right, but I
don't know if I can do it. I don't know
if I can live with that. It just was so
easy and small and stupid, and now...

DORA
So what do you want to do?

RORY
I DON'T KNOW!

(CONTINUED)

She kisses him and stares at him then bangs on his chest.

DORA (CONT'D)
Why did you do this? Why did you do
this?! How could you do this?!

Rory pulls away.

RORY
It was easy.

CUT TO:

A dishevelled Rory sits across from Joseph Cutler who stares at Rory silently then rises from behind the desk, shuts the door of his office, and sits back down.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
Hear me out here for a moment...

RORY
I don't want to be talked out of this.

JOSEPH
You don't want this. Everything you're
saying you want, you don't want it.

RORY
Just take my name off the fucking book,
Joe.

JOSEPH
And what do you think is going to happen?
The media, the press, they're going to
crucify you. It is over for you.

RORY
It's finished for me anyway.

Cutler opens a drawer and pulls out a copy of the Sunday Book Review. He stares at it for a moment then fires it on the desk in between them.

JOSEPH
You see that? Look at that. You got the
front cover of the book review this
Sunday.

RORY
No, I don't have the front cover, some
old man has it!

JOSEPH
You're through the door. Now, if you
never want to write another word again...

(CONTINUED)

RORY
I DIDN'T WRITE THIS!

JOSEPH
The other manuscripts of yours I sold,
did you write them?

RORY
Of course I wrote them. This isn't
something I do...or ever planned to do!

JOSEPH
Of course you wrote them, Rory

He smiles.

RORY
But no one even wanted to look at my work
before this book! You wouldn't look at
my work.

JOSEPH
But I did now and it's good. It's really
good.

He stares at Cutler. He holds up the book review.

RORY
Is it as good as this book, the one on
the cover of the book review?

Joseph looks at him.

JOSEPH
Absolutely, it is.

RORY
You're king bullshit.

Rory stands to leave.

JOSEPH
You want to pay this man off your
advance, that's the right thing to do.
You want to cut him in on the movie
rights, fine. You want to buy him a
house, a car, a fucking boat, but don't
screw yourself for the rest of your life
for one stupid mistake. You have such a
bright future ahead of you, Rory. You
have a lot to give to the world.

RORY
Sure I do.

JOSEPH
Trust me, you're not the first author to
do this. Not by a long shot.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

134 CONTINUED: (2)

134

JOSEPH (cont'd)
Writers you would never expect have done
the same...You ever heard the expression,
'ghostwriter?'

RORY
No. Don't you do that...

JOSEPH
Don't do this to yourself.
You may not believe this now, but you
will thank me later.

CUT TO:

135 INT. RORY'S OFFICE - NEW APARTMENT. DAY.

135

A beautiful wood panelled office with a large desk. The
shelves of the office are lined with books, old and new,
paperbacks and vintage hardcovers.

We watch as Rory pulls the bottom drawer of his desk all the
way out. He reaches his arm back behind it into the space
and takes out the old manila folder with the stories.

He opens the folder on his desk, staring at the pages. He
turns the first page over and we see Celia's note written in
faded ink.

Rory sits in his chair and stares at the note.

CUT TO:

136 EXT./INT. RORY'S BMW CAR. DAY.

136

Rory drives a BMW on the Merritt Parkway. He stares out the
window. We see the sign for Cape Cod and the Islands...

CUT TO:

137 CU: A SMALL BELL JINGLING AS A DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES.

137

Rory steps into a GREENHOUSE.

He looks around, checking down aisle after aisle. Suddenly,
a couple people move. Behind them stands The Old Man,
tending to some plants.

Rory freezes, staring at The Old Man as he works, lost in his
own world.

The Old Man suddenly coughs, and then looks up staring
directly at Rory. They share a moment of awkwardness, then
The Old Man goes back to spraying the plant.

RORY
How you doing?

The Old Man does not acknowledge him.

(CONTINUED)

137 CONTINUED:

RORY (CONT'D)
What kind of plant is that?

BEAT.

THE OLD MAN
It's a Ficus. Ficus Elastica.

RORY
It's nice. It's...

THE OLD MAN
Did you come all the way up here to
bullshit about plants?

RORY
Uh, no, sir. No. I suppose I didn't.

THE OLD MAN
Well, if you came here to find out
whether I'm going to blow the whistle on
you, you can relax and go back to your
great big life. I want no part of your
world.

RORY
That's not what I came here for.

THE OLD MAN
So what do you want?

RORY
I need you to tell me what to do.

THE OLD MAN
You don't have to do anything, kid. You
just have to go about your business and
act like nothing happened.

The Old Man coughs. Rory stares at him.

RORY
If you didn't want anything from me why
did you find me? Why did you tell me?
Did you just do it to torture me? You
don't know me, you don't know what and
why and how...

The Old Man suddenly looks up at him.

THE OLD MAN
I just wanted you to know, that's all.

BEAT.

The Old Man goes back to spraying the plants. Suddenly, he
looks up.

(CONTINUED)

THE OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Do you think you can steal my life, any man's life and claim it as your own, and expect to not have to pay?

RORY

Well, maybe that's why I'm here.

Rory puts an envelope down in front of The Old Man. The Old Man doesn't say anything for a moment. He looks at the envelope.

THE OLD MAN

You better pick that up, kid, before I take you out back and kick the shit out of you.

RORY

Look, I'm not trying to pay you off. I'm going take my name off the book. I'm going to tell everyone the truth. I'm going to...

THE OLD MAN

You're even more lost then you seem.

RORY

Please, tell me what this is about!

THE OLD MAN

It's about my wife, and my child. And if you take responsibility for those stories you take the legacy of those lives that created those stories. You take all their joy and all their pain. And you are responsible for them. You can run from a lot of things in this world, kid, but you're not going to run from that. No.

The Old Man looks down at the envelope.

THE OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Now why don't you buy a plant with that money? A Ficus. You seem to like them so much. And then you can take your plant, and your money, and all your bullshit guilt, and go home.

RORY

I just want to make things right.

THE OLD MAN

Things are just things, kid. And nobody can make em' right whether you martyr yourself or not. This isn't fiction.

RORY

But, there has to be something...

(CONTINUED)

RORY (CONT'D)
To right your conscious, to eliminate
your guilt? I can't offer you
absolution, kid. Try a priest.

RORY (CONT'D)
Let me at least...

THE OLD MAN
I have work to do.

Rory stares at him.

THE OLD MAN (CONT'D)
You really want to do something for me?

RORY
Anything. Anything you ask.

THE OLD MAN
Walk out that door and don't look back.
We all make our choices, the hard part is
living with them. And ain't nobody who
can help you with that. Ain't nobody.
Now go, please.

Rory picks up the envelope, turns, and walks away. Suddenly
he stops.

RORY
Hey, old man...

The Old Man looks up from his work. Their eyes meet for a
long BEAT.

RORY (CONT'D)
I loved your stories.

138 BEAT.

138

The Old Man looks at him, finally nods his head, then goes
back to work, coughing lightly to himself.

Rory stares at him and leaves.

The Old Man looks up again and stares out.

DISSOLVE TO:

139 EXT. YOUNG MAN'S LES JARDINE DES PLANTES. DAY.

139

The Young Man, lying on the picnic blanket, Celia lies next
to him. He puts the baby down on his chest. From OVERHEAD
we see the three of them together, sleeping peacefully on the
blanket in the grass.

DISSOLVE TO:

140 EXT. CENTRAL PARK. DAY.

140

Rory and Dora walk slowly through the park together.

DORA
We're supposed to have dinner at your
parents house tonight.

RORY
I really don't feel up to going.

She looks at him.

DORA
Fine, I'll call your mother.

He stares out. She looks at him frustrated

DORA
How long? How long does this go on for?

RORY
What do you want from me?

She stops dead in her tracks.

DORA
Shit or get off the pot, Rory.

RORY
What?

DORA
Tell them or don't tell them but I don't
know how much longer I can watch this
show.

RORY
Do you understand...?

DORA
Stop being so God damn self important!
You fucked up, yeah, but do you think
you're the only person whose ever made a
mistake in this world?

He turns away.

DORA
Listen to me, Rory. Maybe you were
right, maybe when I read that story
somewhere I knew it wasn't you, but just
like you, I wanted it to be. I wanted so
badly for it to be you. If that makes me
wrong or bad, then fine.

He looks at her.

(CONTINUED)

DORA

I can see how it happened, I understand, and in some strange way I think I even admire you for it. I still believe in you, I still love you, always.

She takes his hand.

DORA

Let's have a family, Rory, just like we always dreamt. I want to have a child with you.

RORY

I'm going to break. I'm going to break in half. I'm really going to break.

DORA

No you're not. You're not. I won't let you. C'mon, let's go home.

RORY

I can't.

She takes her hand back.

DORA

Well I'm cold. I'm going home.

She walks away down the path leaving him standing there.

DISSOLVE TO:

141 EXT. CENTRAL PARK BENCH. DAY.

141

Rory sits on the park bench watching a group of children playing.

CLAY V.O.

He was sitting and watching a group of kids playing in the park. They were just playing catch, wrestling around, y'know, being kids. They couldn't have been more than eleven years old, and they looked like they were having the time of their lives. But suddenly, a fight broke out. And all these kids, at least six or seven of them, ganged up on this one child...

We watch as the gang of kids beat up on the child.

CLAY (V.O)

Rory started to get up, but then he stopped...

(CONTINUED)

141 CONTINUED:

141

We see Rory staring at the children walking away. A woman runs over to the little boy whose been beaten.

CUT TO:

142 EXT. CLAY'S VERANDAH. NIGHT.

142

Clay and Daniella, as before.

CLAY

Those kids, they had no guilt. They had not learned the meaning of that word yet. It was just something they did Like the old men said, "things were just things.

CUT TO:

143 EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET. AFTERNOON.

143

Rory walks, a dazed expression on his face.

Rory walks into his apartment building and rides up the elevator. He goes to the door of his apartment, opens it, and walks inside. He enters into the kitchen where Dora stands, her back facing him, at the sink. She suddenly turns. The two stare at each other in silence.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

144 EXT. CLAY'S VERANDAH. NIGHT.

144

Clay takes a sip of wine.

DANIELLA

So what happened?

CLAY

I'm cold. Let's go inside.

The two walk inside. They sit down on the couch very close.

DANIELLA

What?

He touches her hair.

DANIELLA

Wait, wait, wait...

CLAY

What?

DANIELLA

You didn't finish yet.

CLAY

C'mon, it's late. Enough of this.

(CONTINUED)

He tries to kiss her but she pushes him away again.

DANIELLA

"Oh, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?"

Clay looks at her.

CLAY

So what's my line?

DANIELLA

And Juliet says: "What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?"

CLAY

I'm Juliet? You made me Juliet?

She shrugs.

DANIELLA

Tell me what happens and then you can be Romeo.

CLAY

You just don't quit, do you.

DANIELLA

Why won't you tell me?

CLAY

I'll give you a copy of the book, I'll even sign it for you, okay.

He looks at her, she looks at him, a momentary battle of wills fought between two sets of eyes...

She leans in so her lips are practically touching his ear as she whispers:

DANIELLA

Tell me...

We push in on his face and...

CUT TO:

145 EXT/INT. BRENTANO'S BOOKSTORE. DAY.

145

A few people are gathered in the reading room as Rory stands before them at a lectern. He stares out empty eyed as the applause quiets. A LONG SILENCE as people wait, staring back at him. Awkward. Strange. Rory seems to be swaying there and looks as if he may run out. He stares down, takes a deep breath opens the book and...very clearly reads:

RORY

The Window Songs...By Rory Jansen.

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED:

145

He looks up, staring straight out at the crowd, and as if by memory begins to read from the book.

CUT TO:

146 INT. RORY'S NEW APARTMENT OFFICE. NIGHT.

146

Rory sits alone in his office in front of the fireplace. He holds the yellowed manuscript. Page by page he feeds the stories into the fire, watching as they are consumed by the flame.

CLAY (V.O.)

He would not allow himself to look back.
whatever he had to do, whatever he had to
lose, he would seal it off. And it was
as if by locking off the secret of one
man's life for forever, he had unveiled
another much deeper and darker secret
within himself...

147 CU: THE LAST PAGE.

147

Rory looks over the last page. It is the note Celia had written to The Old Man. He is about to throw it into the fire, but then does not. The rest of the pages curl in the flames and burn away, turning to ash.

CUT TO:

148 INT. CLAY'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

148

The two sit on the couch, Daniella still right next to him.

DANIELLA

And The Old Man?

He stands up leaving her sitting on the couch and goes to the wine pouring himself another drink.

CLAY

A few weeks after Rory came to visit him,
The Old Man died. He found him in his
room. He died, and for days no one even
noticed he was gone...

Rory takes a swig.

CUT TO:

149 EXT. CEMETERY. AFTERNOON.

149

A beautiful Spring day. Rory, dressed in a dark suit, overcoat, and sunglasses watches as the coffin is lowered into the grave, and a priest offers absolution.

Rory and an old lady with a flowered scarf wrapped around her head are the only mourners.

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED:

149

Rory takes a folded sheet of paper from his breast pocket. He opens it and stares at it; it is the letter from Celia.

He bends down and places it onto the coffin.

Rory begins to walk away, the Priest still giving prayers, and, as we pull back, we watch Rory disappear among the rows and rows of anonymous white tombstones.

CUT BACK TO:

150 INT. CLAY'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

150

Clay leans against his desk as Daniella stares at him.

CLAY

166 That's it. That's the end.

166

She is visibly shocked.

CLAY

No moral. No comeuppance. No incredible knowledge gained other than to believe, that even after a terrible mistake, you can continue to live, and perhaps even live well.

She pours herself her own drink.

DANIELLA

Bullshit and you know it. Everyone has to sleep at night.

Clay takes a big sip of wine without saying anything. He smiles.

DANIELLA

What really happens to him, Clay, after he's told himself all of that? What happens?

CLAY

I just told you...

DANIELLA

No, what really happens to...(BEAT) Rory? Tell me the truth.

CLAY

I told you already...He goes on. He lives. He writes...as well as he can. He's a big success.

DANIELLA

What does that mean? You're just...avoiding...guilt.

He glares at her.

(CONTINUED)

CLAY

Why don't you tell me?

DANIELLA

What?

CLAY

You're so smart, you got in here, got me talking, acting so precocious, throwing your ass around, quoting Shakespeare and batting your eyelashes, but I want to know what **you** think. Tell me what happens after all this.

DANIELLA

I...

CLAY

No, tell me what happens or get the Hell out of here!

She stares at him, shakes her head, goes to the door. Without turning around.

DANIELLA

He's fucked.

Clay gives her a golf clap as she turns around.

CLAY

Go on.

DANIELLA

Maybe he is able to forget. And maybe he can really write, create, but it doesn't matter because he'll never, ever believe it. He robbed himself of the chance to find out.

CLAY

Not bad...

DANIELLA

Or maybe he can't write, although he's able to fool a few people.

He lifts his glass drunkenly.

CLAY

Even better.

DANIELLA

Maybe his marriage falls apart because for him and his wife to look at each other is to look at the truth.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DANIELLA (cont'd)
Maybe he can put on that confident,
sophisticated mask in public, but late at
night, no matter what he tells himself,
he can't sleep because when he closes his
eyes he still sees the face of that Old
Man.

Clay laughs.

CLAY
Or maybe it's his own face and the Old
Man is just a story he made up...

Clay looks at her, eyes full, then away.

CLAY
Or maybe he winds up in his beautiful
apartment overlooking the park with a
girl who's much too young for him,
telling her what he knows are tired old
stories because she, for some reason,
believes he has something he can give
her...

He looks at her, then smiles.

CLAY
You're very talented, Daniella. But at
some point you have to choose between
fiction and life; they come close, but
they never actually touch. They're two
very, very different things

She crosses to him and he looks at her. She finally kisses
him long and hard.

After a moment he pushes her away. He closes his eyes and
breathes deep.

BEAT.

He opens them....

CLAY
I'm sorry...I...

Daniella looks at him.

DANIELLA
What? What's wrong?

CLAY
I don't...

DANIELLA
You don't want me?

(CONTINUED)

CLAY

No, no, no, no...

She looks at him.

DANIELLA

Look, it's not like you're corrupting anything here. I want this. I want you.

CLAY

I-I...I

DANIELLA

I want you, Clay. I want you...

She starts to kiss him. He kisses her back, and they fall onto the couch going at it again. He finally breaks away from her.

CLAY

You should go. Trust me. You should go.

She stares at him.

DANIELLA

Is that what you really want, Clay? What do you really want?

She looks up at him.

He stares at her intensely, wide eyed, unblinking as we slowly...

FADE OUT.

DANIELLA'S V.O.

What do you want?